

**RURAL TALES,
BALLADS,
AND SONGS**

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Rural Tales, Ballads, and Songs by Robert Bloomfield

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ROBERT BLOOMFIELD

**RURAL TALES,
BALLADS,
AND SONGS**

**RURAL TALES,
BALLADS, AND SONGS,**

BY

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD,

Author of 'THE FARMER'S BOY.'

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE Poems here offered to the public were chiefly written during the interval between the concluding and the publishing of 'The Farmer's Boy,' an interval of nearly two years. The pieces of a later date are, '*The Widow to her Hour-Glass,*' '*The Fakenham Ghost,*' '*Walter and Jane,*' &c. At the time of publishing the Farmer's Boy, circumstances occurred which rendered it necessary to submit these poems to the perusal of my friends; under whose approbation I now give them, with some confidence as to their moral merit, to the judgment of the public. And as they treat of village manners, and rural scenes, it appears to me not ill-timed to avow, that I have hopes of meeting

in some degree the approbation of my country. I was not prepared for the decided, and I may surely say extraordinary, attention which the Public has shown towards the *Farmer's Boy*: the consequence has been such as my true friends will rejoice to hear: it has produced me many essential blessings. And I feel peculiarly gratified in finding that a poor man in England may assert the dignity of Virtue, and speak of the imperishable beauties of Nature, and be heard, and heard, perhaps, with greater attention for his being poor.

Whoever thinks of me or my concerns, must necessarily indulge the pleasing idea of gratitude, and join a thought of my first great friend Mr. Lofft. And on this head, I believe every reader, who has himself any feeling, will judge rightly of mine: if otherwise, I would much rather he would lay down this volume, and grasp hold of such fleeting pleasures as the world's business may afford him. I speak not of that gentleman

as a public character, or as a scholar. Of the former I know but little, and of the latter nothing. But I know from experience, and I glory in this fair opportunity of saying it, that his private life is a lesson of morality; his manners gentle, his heart sincere: and I regard it as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life, that my introduction to public notice fell to so zealous and unwearied a friend*.

I have received many honourable testimonies of esteem from strangers; letters without a name, but filled with the most cordial advice, and almost a parental anxiety, for my safety under so great a share of public applause. I beg to refer such friends to the great teacher Time: and hope that he will hereafter give me my deserts, and no more.

* I dare not take to myself a praise like this; and yet I was, perhaps, hardly at liberty to disclaim what should be mine and the endeavour of every one to deserve. This I can say, that I have reason to rejoice that Mr. GEORGE BLOOMFIELD introduced 'THE FARMER'S BOY' to me. C. L.