THE DESERTED VILLAGE

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The deserted village by Oliver Goldsmith

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH

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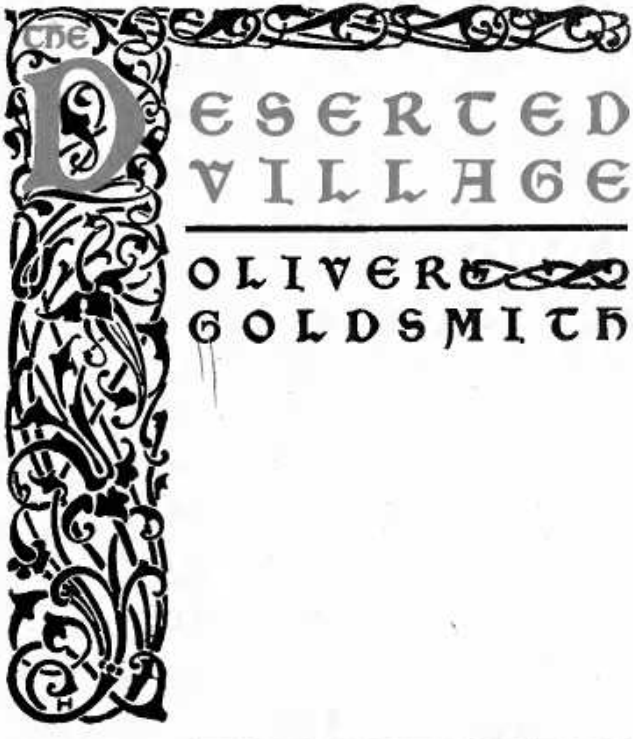

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CUSTOMERS AND FRIENDS

The Deserted Village

SWEET AUBURN! loveli-
[est village of the plain,
Where health and plenty
cheared the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its
[earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lin-
[gering blooms delayed:
Dear lovely bowers of inno-
[cence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport
[could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy
[green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,

The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil, remitting, lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,

With sweet succession, taught even toil to please:
These round thy bowers their chearful influence [shed:
These were thy charms—but all these charms [are fled.

SWEET smiling village, loveliest of the [lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms [withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choaked with sedges, works its weedy [way;

Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their ecchoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering [wall;

And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's [hand,
far, far away thy children leave the land.
ILL fares the land, to hastening ills a [prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.
A TIME there was, ere England's griefs [began,
When every rood of ground maintained [its man;
for him light labour spread her wholesome [store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no [more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
BUT times are altered; trade's unfeeling [train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;