



AN EVESHAM ORCHARD.

Dorset

2390

RURAL ENGLAND

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF
AGRICULTURAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCHES CARRIED
OUT IN THE YEARS 1901 & 1902

BY

H. RIDER HAGGARD

‘I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man
than the golden wedge of Ophir.’—ISAIAH

‘The highways were unoccupied . . . the inhabitants of the
villages ceased.’—JUDGES

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

WITH 13 MAPS AND 46 ILLUSTRATIONS
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Up 1857-45

I DEDICATE THIS WORK
TO
ARTHUR H. D. COCHRANE
THE COMPANION OF THESE JOURNEYINGS AS OF MANY
PREVIOUS ADVENTURES
AND TO ALL THROUGHOUT ENGLAND
WHO HAVE ASSISTED ME IN MY UNDERTAKING

INTRODUCTION

FOR a long while past I have been anxious to undertake a very heavy task, that of the investigation of the conditions of the rural England of our day. Towards the end of the eighteenth and the commencement of the nineteenth centuries my great predecessor, Arthur Young, wrote many volumes on this subject which must always remain our chief source of information as to the agriculture of England during that period. William Marshall also treated of it between 1787 and 1800 in his 'General Survey of the rural Economy of England.' Later, in 1830, William Cobbett published his 'Rural Rides,' which are full of useful information, but, perhaps, somewhat too highly tinged with the hue of the writer's own political opinions. Lastly, fifty years ago, Sir James Caird, under the title of 'English Agriculture,' collected into a volume the valuable and interesting letters which he wrote upon this matter as Commissioner for 'The Times,' since which date, so far as I am aware, no one has attempted to carry out similar researches on any considerable scale.

During the last half-century, however, our agriculture, and indeed everything connected with the land, landowners, and husbandmen of England, have undergone great changes; it seemed to me, therefore, that there was some need for a new work treating of these questions. Such a work I purposed to write, and at length, through the enterprise of the 'Daily Express' newspaper, discovered an opportunity of carrying out my design. The articles that form the