



A JEFFERIES PILGRIMAGE

Twenty-eight years ago last Saturday Richard Jefferies died, and the Brighton Selborne Society and others made a pilgrimage to his last earthly home at Goring, near Worthing, and his grave at Broadwater Cemetery, near the same town. The last few years of Jefferies' life were years of much acute suffering. A privately-subscribed fund helped him to keep a roof over his head, and it was in December, 1886, that he moved to Goring. There he studied works on tuberculosis (one of his own diseases), and wrote an account of his illness, in which he said that his distressing neuralgia and other nerve sufferings were caused by over-work.

"There are few – very few, perhaps none living – who have come through such a series of diseases." Some of his "Field and Hedgerow" papers were written or dictated when he was very ill at Goring. He wrote an introduction to an edition of Gilbert White's *Selborne* in the last months of his life. Jefferies was a Wiltshire man, as everybody knows, and lived and wrote in the county for the first thirty years of his life. He was a journalist in Swindon for a time, and there are several of his early articles in the files of the "North Wilts Herald" for 1866-72. He wrote of Somerset with inspiration equal to that of his best writing about Wiltshire. Wiltshire, however, is the county for his admirers to visit and pay tribute to his genius as a poet-naturalist.

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