

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WILLIAM COBBETT IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

INTRODUCTORY

William Cobbett's goodly conceit—His favourable opinion of himself expressed in his writings—His insistence upon the fact that his fame was mainly due to his industry—"Always in spirits"—Everything sacrificed to his work—His scorn for the idle—"Thirty-five minutes a day at table"—Appreciation of natural beauties—Lack of interest in art—His disapproval of fiction—His low estimate of Shakespeare—His liking for the theatre—His epitome of the struggles and achievements of his life—A remarkable record—His egotism—His respect for education—His cocksureness on all subjects—Cobbett as a politician—True to his ideals—His desire to benefit the condition of the poor—His championship of their cause—His inconsistency arises from his ignorance—Not a philosophical statesman—His blunders—His views on the Jewish question—Sayers's skit—Cobbett's attack on pensioners and pluralists, tithes, and on corruption in the public service—His life an uphill battle—Heine's opinion of him—Cobbett a typical John Bull—The lust of battle strong within him—Cobbett as a writer—His triumph.

If there has lived any one with a more goodly conceit of himself than William Cobbett, more convinced of his virtues as a man, more satisfied with his achievements as a politician, and more delighted with the effects of his writings, history has failed to record his existence. In the realms of vanity—albeit it must never be forgotten that there was in him a substratum of sound common sense—it is verily William Cobbett first, and