This book is a compilation of short stories originally published in several series in The Lady's Magazine. Volume 1 covers a period of about 18 months, then later, Volume 2 chronicles the changes when Miss Mitford returns to the village some 2 years later. The book's subtitle is “sketches of rural character and scenery”... and this perfectly describes its contents. People and nature are minutely observed and the language reflects Miss Mitford's exquisite eye for detail and love of the changing seasons and the impact they have on the flora and fauna around her. The village characters are described mainly fondly, but not without the occasional wry reference to their faults! In her introduction to a later edition, Anne Thackeray Ritchie quotes from Miss Mitford's reply to William Elford when asked if her characters and descriptions are true........"Yes, as true as is well possible....you, as a great landscape painter know that in painting a favourite scene you do a little embellish and can't help it; you avail yourself of happy accidents of atmosphere; if anything be ugly you strike it out, or if anything be wanting, you put it in. But still the picture is a likeness." But even if seen through rose-coloured lenses, these gentle little sketches conjure up a time and place long gone and transport us for a while to another, simpler world. (Anne Fletcher)