

Cobbett, William (b. 1762, d. 1835), farmer and political critic, born at Farnham, Surrey, worked in the king's garden at Kew; enlisted in 1784, and served in America from 1785 to 1791, devoting his leisure to the improvement of his education. After obtaining his discharge returned to America in 1792, opened a bookseller's shop in Philadelphia, and conducted a journal under the name of "Peter Porcupine." Returning to England in 1801 he started *The Weekly Political Register*, in which he at first supported Pitt, but about 1804 his views suddenly changed, and he became a champion of popular rights. He spent much time on his farms in Hampshire and Surrey, and after 1832 sat in the House of Commons as member for Oldham.