

**RANK AND FASHION! OR,
THE MAZES OF
LIFE: A NOVEL IN
THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Rank and fashion! or, The mazes of life: a novel in three volumes, Vol. II by B. Frere

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B. FRERE

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RANK AND FASHION!

OR THE

MAZES OF LIFE;

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

“SATIRE—NOT MALEVOLENCE.”

BY MR. FRERE.

VOL. II.

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THE

MAZES OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE VINTAGE.

SOME time after his return to town, weary of incessantly beholding the same objects, he thought in good earnest of taking a trip to France, of which country he had heard so much and seen so little, and whither numbers from these Islands were daily flocking, after the second return of

Louis and the conclusion of the treaty of Paris.

The rival nation in arms, in arts and literature must ever be an object of curiosity to any liberal minded Englishman: but, in order to view the French people unobstructed, to see and to judge for himself, he adopted a method which we recommend to all those whose motive for the journey is similar to his own. He declined making up one of a party, proceeded leisurely, avoided the principal roads, and reached Paris by a circuitous rout, sometimes messing at tables d'hote, sometimes faring more sumptuously in hotels and, now and then, taking his meal and bed in a *Cabaret du Village*, freely mingling with whatever company he should chance to meet.

Those whose love of good living should deter them from venturing on such an ex-

cursion, we can assure that, wherever they roam, they will hardly fail to meet with the produce of the dairy, good poultry, eggs, excellent bread, wholesome palatable wine and kind usage. Moreover, their abstinence from more costly viands will have the effect of preparing for them a keener relish, on their return to the luxuries of the table. A portion of the *savings*, thus obtained, may be bestowed upon some unfortunate, meritorious, dwellers in those districts in which they have tarried, as a grateful acknowledgment for the increase of health and gaety they will have acquired; and where, with much greater probability, they will meet with such adventures as the one following.

On the flowry banks of the Aisne, a few miles below Rethel, at the extremity of a pretty hamlet, chiefly

composed of small proprietors, stands the neat dwelling of Joseph Tourville. He had been a soldier, but, preferring the satisfaction of cultivating his own acres to the glory of devastating those of others, he returned home, his principles undebauched by the licentiousness of a camp, and his heart still faithful to his first love.

Fair and exhilarating was the morn that brought on the wedding of Joseph Tourville with Manon Sorglie. The invitation was general, the parish hailed it as a holy day, and every guest, in consequence, was *endimanché de son mieux*. Our Hero, whose devious tract had brought him to the spot the day before, was also included in the invitation.

Start not, Reader, at the somewhat unceremonious civility thus shewn to a stranger; consider you are not now knock-

ing double and triple raps on the outer doors of any great house in the British Metropolis, where access to the master can be obtained but through the medium of porter and footmen, and where no access is allowed, unless names be known or business previously specified. We have brought you out of the beaten tract of travellers to a little society, whose manners are much nearer to those of a primeval state. The members of which, instead of denying admission, solicit the honor of giving it, chiefly on such a festive occasion as a wedding day.

Domville saw the ceremony performed, and the sight affected him. The altar was decked out in all its finery. Festoons of flowers hung from the cross in the centre and, in graceful folds, twined round the *chandeliers* on each side; flowers were

also profusely scattered from the entrance to the steps of the altar. The Bride and Bridegroom, arrayed of course in their gayest suits, had each an enormous bouquet stuck in front; indeed a nosegay decorated the breast of every one present. One would have supposed that all the Parterres, for miles round, had been stripped of their pride for the occasion. The dress of the officiating Ecclesiastic alone, corresponded with the religious solemnity of the Sacrament;* but, above all, the impressive, yet benign, manner of the man, reduced to a proper feeling the too mundane hilarity of the congregation.

As they entered and left the church, Tourville's attentions to his bride, perhaps, to a stranger, excessive, yet altogether not unbecoming, seemed the product of real attachment. She was pretty and en-

* The Catholics contend for seven Sacraments.