

# **FLORA; OR, SELF-DECEPTION**

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Flora; Or, Self-Deception by Charlotte Maria Tucker

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**CHARLOTTE MARIA TUCKER**

**FLORA; OR,  
SELF-DECEPTION**



FLORA;

OR,

SELF-DECEPTION.

# FLORA;

OR,

## SELF-DECEPTION.

By A. L. O. E.

Author of the "Ghost-Killer," "The H.A.Y. Family," "The Young Pilgrims,"  
"Wings and Stings," "Rambles of a Rat," &c.

---

"A sower went forth to sow."

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LONDON:  
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;  
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

MDCCLXIII.

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# FLORA;

OR,

## SELF-DECEPTION.



### CHAPTER I.

#### TOWN AND COUNTRY.

“WELL, there certainly is a charm in the country!” exclaimed Ada Murray, as, with the assistance of the hand of her companion, she sprang lightly down from a stile on the soft daisy-spangled grass beneath.

“The charm of *novelty*, I suppose,” replied Flora.

“Well, I am afraid that I must plead guilty to knowing very little more of rural life than I have gathered from, ‘Let me Wander not Unseen.’ Ever since I came down here, I have been looking out for the shepherds tell-

ing tales 'under the hawthorn,' and the village maidens dancing to the sound of the rebeck; but no livelier piece of gaiety can I hear of than a feast to the school-children in a field! I suppose that you could not have archery here?" she added, suddenly, as the thought crossed her mind.

"Oh, yes; we have an old bow and some arrows at home, that belonged to my brother."

"Oh, that's not what I mean," replied Ada, laughing; "bows and arrows do not make an archery-meeting, they are a mere excuse for drawing people together. But you don't seem to have any neighbours?"

"How can you say so?" cried Flora, playfully, pointing to a village on their right, nestling amidst elm-trees, above which the spire of a little church gleamed in the evening sun.

"You will not understand me, you malicious little thing! You don't call visiting old women and sickly children, and questioning a prim class of tidy girls in a school-room, seeing anything of society? Have you no neighbours in your own rank of life within ten miles round?"

"Not many," replied Flora; "but a few. There's the clergyman, you have seen him, good old Mr. Ward"—

"Oh, yes, I have seen him,—the bald-headed little man, with such a benevolent look and patronizing smile, that I quite expected him to pat me on the head, and say, 'There's a good little dear!'"

"Naughty little dear, I should say," laughed Flora. "Oh! he is such a kind old friend, and preaches so beautifully, I don't know what we should do without him. We have known him and his dear old lady so long,—he was a school-fellow of my dear father. Then there's Captain Lepine"—

"A captain! that sounds more lively. Is he an agreeable individual?"

"Yes; he takes care of my garden, and brings me cuttings of his roses. He's an invalid"—

"Interesting of course."

"And he lost a leg in battle"—

"I hope that he does not stump about on a wooden one; one could hardly stand that, even in a romance! I suppose that he was wounded at Sobraon, or some of those Indian battles with unpronounceable names?"