

**BARBARA DERING:  
IN TWO VOLUMES;  
VOL. II**

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Barbara Dering; in two volumes; Vol. II by Amélie Rives

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**AMÉLIE RIVES**

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BARBARA DERING

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# BARBARA DERING

BY

AMÉLIE RIVES

AUTHOR OF 'THE QUICK OR THE DEAD' ETC.

'———Life teaches us  
To be less strict with others and ourselves;  
Thou'lt learn the lesson, too. — So wonderful  
Is human nature, and its varied ties —  
Are so involved and complicate, that none  
May hope to keep his honest spirit calm  
And walk without perplexity through life.'

GOETHE: *Iphigenia*



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOI. II.

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1892

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## BARBARA DERING

### XXII.

BRANSBY had never before been called upon to face such a problem as that which now presented itself. After a night and day spent in uncomfortable consideration of the matter from every aspect, he was forced to admit that the time had come when his wife could no longer be coerced by a disapproving word or glance, and that she was fully determined to carry out her intention of thinking and acting for herself. As for Barbara, her influence in all this was very apparent. That it was an unconscious influence Bransby did not know, and certainly could not have been expected to imagine. He regarded her as one of those alluded to by St. Paul, 'who creep into houses and lead captive silly women,'

and his feeling of animosity to her was not decreased by his realization of the justice of many of his wife's personal remarks.

Altogether, Barbara stirred in him sentiments of a nature akin to those which the heirs of a blind person would probably feel towards a physician who had restored him to sight when his former state of darkness would have better suited their interests. To the weak no sensation is so delightful as that of power, whether worthy or unworthy. A vague suspicion of his own lack in certain virile qualities had been lulled, for Bransby, through all his married life, by the unquestioning sway which Eunice had allowed him to exercise over her.

It pleased him to see this bright young creature become staid, meek, reserved, at his behest, to hide the beauty of her arms and throat from others because he desired it, to lock up her favourite music and refrain from singing all but sacred songs because he found this course preferable. He had restricted her reading, dictated her occupations, overlooked her correspondence, and even selected her hours for exercise. He had

occasioned her much suffering during the illness of her children, because, as a devout Tolstoian, he did not believe in doctors, and would never send for one until the last moment.

In all this petty indulgence of an egoistic authority he had found that curious delight which some children find in pretending that their image in the glass is a real person, although they know perfectly well that there is nothing substantial behind the frame. It was in his character as reflected in Eunice's submission that Bransby found compensation for the emptiness which existed in its actual counterpart. There was a tinge of the bully in his composition, if so masculine a word can be used in so shadowy a connection, and now that his victim, his 'fag,' as it were, had turned and faced him the idea of attempting to reconquer his old position never occurred to him. His chief thought was how to acquiesce with the greatest show of firmness and dignity, how to agree to his wife's requests without seeming to have been forced into an agreement; in a word, how to assume the attitude of one who bestows a benefit, rather than of one who accedes to a demand. Above all, he