

**THE KING OF BATH; OR, LIFE AT A
SPA IN THE 18TH CENTURY. A
PICTURE OF THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF BEAU NASH. IN TWO
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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The King of Bath; Or, Life at a Spa in the 18th Century. A Picture of the Life and Times of Beau Nash. In Two Volumes, Vol. I by Mrs. Hibbert Ware

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MRS. HIBBERT WARE

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THE KING OF BATH;

OR,

LIFE AT A SPA IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

A Picture of the Life and Times of Beau Nash.

BY

MRS. HIBBERT WARE,

AUTHOR OF

'DR. HARCOURT'S ASSISTANT,' 'THE HUNLOCK TITLE DEEDS,'
'THE HUNCHBACK CASHIER,' ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CHARLES J. SKEET, 10, KING WILLIAM STREET,
CHURCH LANE.
1879.

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NOTICE.

THE Authoress considers it proper to intimate that this novel appeared in a leading Bath Journal, during the year 1877; and, at the instance of many residents in the locality, she is encouraged to submit the work to the public, in the present form.

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THE KING OF BATH.

CHAPTER I.

I KNOW WHAT I KNOW.

‘Do you purpose going to Oxford, brother?’

‘No, Winifred; as soon as I have completed my business here I shall return to Swansea. Trinity Term will soon be over, and then Dick will come home, so ’twould be a useless expense for me to go to Oxford; and, in good truth, Dick’s extravagances at the University are no slight matter, so it behoves me to save where I can.’

And the speaker gave something like a sigh as he uttered the last few words.

Winifred was a lady of middle age, still beautiful, and with a very animated counte-

nance, set off by a pair of bright, searching hazel eyes. She was short in stature, and with neatly formed, small limbs: she was somewhat hasty and impetuous in temper, as was evidenced by the abrupt way in which she started from her seat, hurried out of the low-latticed casement opening into the garden, and pounced upon a man working amongst the flower-beds, rating him smartly for having rooted up a choice flower along with the weeds.

The garden was large and pleasant, laid out in a cradle walk, and intervening parterres of roses and other flowers. The wide-spreading branches of fine old elms cast cool and pleasant shadows on the sun-lit paths, and the balmy summer breeze, stealing in through the open casement, by which Mrs. Winifred Herbert had passed into the garden, came laden with the sweet perfume of jasmine, which mingled its fragrant blossoms with the broad leaves of the vine clustering around and over the casement.

The chamber itself was spacious, though the ceiling was low, and raftered with heavy

beams of dark oak. The walls being wainscotted with the same wood, gave the room somewhat of a gloomy appearance ; but the dark polished oak floor was covered in the middle with a bright-coloured Turkey-carpet, and the table that stood upon it shone resplendent with white damask napery and dazzling goblets of silver and crystal.

Pushing aside the curtains of red cloth from the casement, Mrs. Herbert's brother watched her altercation with the gardener with an air of some amusement ; then he turned to a youth who had just entered the room, and said : ' Ned, is it possible your mother still keeps old Roger working for her ? Every time she hath written to me, or that I have seen her, for the last seven years, she has been on the point of dismissing him, and yet here he is still.'

Ned shrugged his shoulders, laughed, and, sitting down on one of the tall, highbacked oak chairs, began tuning a violin he had brought in with him, whilst he said, in a jesting tone, ' You know my dear mother will always be an autocrat in her garden,

and she has her own way with old Roger, or thinks she hath, which comes to the same thing, so she'll not dismiss him, though she threatens and scolds, and he argues, in his own stupid obstinate fashion.' Ned was a smart, lively-looking youth, of middle size, with merry blue eyes ; and though his hair was of as reddish a hue as the flaming marigolds which his mother held in her hands as she re-entered the room, his head was unadorned with the huge fashionable periwig of the period.

'Richard,' she said, addressing her brother as she lingered near the casement watching the refractory Roger, 'could you send me a good gardener from Swansea ? I am fairly worn out with Roger's insolence and obstinacy, and I am quite determined to part with him.'

'Nay, my dear sister, we have no gardeners in Swansea ; I doubt if any of our labourers would know the difference between a poppy and a Flanders' geranium.'

'You had better put up with Roger, madam,' said Ned, laughing ; 'though he