

**THE CONTRAST,
VOL. III**

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The contrast, Vol. III by Constantine Henry Phipps Normanby

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CONSTANTINE HENRY PHIPPS NORMANBY

**THE CONTRAST,
VOL. III**



THE
C O N T R A S T,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MATILDA," "YES AND NO,"
&c. &c.

Take but degree away—nunciate that string,
And hark ! what discord follows.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
1832.

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THE CONTRAST.

CHAPTER I.

Thou art in London, in that pleasant place
Where every kind of mischief's daily brewing,
Which can await warm youth in its wild race.

BYRON.

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
As seeking not to know it. SILENT LOVE.

Is there one—the veriest citizen of the world though he may be—who has not felt a sudden chill seize upon his energies, a blight fall as it were upon his faculties, when in the varied changes of his chequered life, he has found himself amid scenes to which he alone is strange, whilst all around are, as it were, “to the manner born?” The sense of inferiority can take

no more painful shape than the impossibility of entering into sources of enjoyment, which seem open to every one else. This impression can only occasionally and incidentally afflict the man of the world, its repetition is evaded by shunning the unusual society which caused it, or quitting those foreign sojourning places where it was found. He therefore could have no idea of the oppressive sensation of hopeless solitude which overpowered Lucy when she first found herself dropped in the midst of the ever busy crowds of London. Your true cockney is apt to speculate, with no little self satisfaction, upon the first impression that the largest city in the world must make upon that foreigner who has only seen Paris or Petersburgh, or that countryman who has only visited Bath or York; but how could he estimate the bewilderment of her who had never, till within a short time, strayed from the solitary shores

of Morden Bay? Country girls have no doubt constantly before come up to London, without any previous preparation; but then their impressions have been limited by their own straitened circumstances, and their individual cares for the coming day have much confined the effects produced on them by the surrounding grandeur; and the smallness of their own share of the comforts which they beheld, has limited their admiration of the marvellous variety which was to be divided among others. On the other hand, the strange conviction on Lucy's mind, that she would now have as large an individual command as any one, of all the varied luxuries which on all sides bewildered her sight, gave her a painful consciousness of her own littleness.

For nearly seven miles of suburb, she had been expecting to stop at every door she passed, thinking it quite impossible the town

could extend any farther. A curious inquiry it would be, and probably puzzling to more experienced investigators than Lucy, who live in those houses, which are perpetually building in most out-of-the-way districts? Are the houses built for the inhabitants, or the inhabitants fitted to the houses?

The carriage at length stopped at Lord Castleton's door, which was in one of the *soi-disant* fashionable squares in the west end of London. It was still very early in a London spring morning, that is, it was not above two hours after noon, and Castleton determined to go out, to collect new gossip from old acquaintance at the clubs, and Lucy was left alone; and she felt as if she was the first person in the world who had ever known the most extended signification of that word *alone*.

The *soignée salon* in which she had been left, opened, behind its muslin draperies, upon a bal-

cony and veranda, filled with rare and sweet plants, and from thence she looked forth upon the scene beyond, having first stepped out merely to catch the last glimpse of Castleton as he turned the corner. By one used to the more busy parts of the metropolis, it would have been styled a quiet situation; but to Lucy it appeared as if some great event must have collected an unusual crowd. And there they all hurry on, she thought, whether on business or pleasure, sent by one person seeking another. And I, perhaps, of all this moving crowd, am the only creature who know no one, and for whom no one cares. Castleton has gone forth, and however surprised, there is no one of whom I can ask a question; however pleased, no one to whom I can express my admiration: and whatever may be the destination of all these ever-moving busy ants below, the only thing certain is, that their pursuits have no connexion whatever with me.