

**GREAT PORTER SQUARE:
A MYSTERY. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOLUME I**

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Great Porter square: a mystery. In three volumes, Volume I by B. L. Farjeon

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B. L. FARJEON

**GREAT PORTER SQUARE:
A MYSTERY. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOLUME I**

GREAT PORTER SQUARE:
A MYSTERY.

BY

B. L. FARJEON,

*Author of "Grif," "London's Heart," "The House of White
Shadows," etc.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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GREAT PORTER SQUARE; A MYSTERY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES MRS. JAMES PREEDY ; HINTS AT THE
TROUBLE INTO WHICH SHE HAS FALLEN ; AND
GIVES AN INSIGHT INTO HER SOCIAL POSITION.

MRS. JAMES PREEDY, lodging - house
keeper, bred and born in the vocation,
and consequently familiar with all the moves
of that extensive class of persons in London
that has no regular home, and has to be
cooked for, washed for, and generally done
for, sat in the kitchen of her house, No. 118,
Great Porter Square. This apartment was
situated in the basement, and here Mrs.
Preedy received her friends and "did" for

her lodgers, in so far as the cooking for them can be said to be included in that portentous and significant term. The floor of the kitchen was oil-clothed, with, in distinguished places, strips of carpet of various patterns and colours, to give it an air. Over the mantel-piece was a square looking-glass in a mahogany frame, ranged on each side of which were faded photographs of men, women, and children, and of one gentleman in particular pretending to smoke a long pipe. This individual, whose face was square, whose aspect was frowning, and whose shirt sleeves were tucked up in an exceedingly free and easy fashion, was the pictorial embodiment of Mrs. Preedy's deceased husband. While he lived he was "a worryer, my dear," to quote Mrs. Preedy—and to do the lady justice, he looked it; but being gone to that bourne from which no lodging-house keeper ever returns, he immediately took his place in the affections of his widow as "the dear departed" and a "blessed angel." Thus do we often find tender appreciation budding into flower even

at the moment the undertaker nails the lid upon the coffin, and Mr. Preedy, when the breath was out of his body, might (spiritually) have consoled himself with the reflection that he was not the only person from whose grave hitherto unknown or unrecognised virtues ascend. The weapons of the dead warrior, two long and two short pipes, were ranged crosswise on the wall with mathematical tenderness. When her day's work was over, and Mrs. Preedy, a lonely widow, sat by herself in the kitchen, she was wont to look regretfully at those pipes, wishing that he who had smoked them were alive to pull again as of yore; forgetting, in the charity of her heart, the crosses and vexations of her married life, and how often she had called her "blessed angel" a something I decline to mention for defiling the kitchen with his filthy smoke.

The other faded photographs of men, women, and children, represented three generations of Mrs. Preedy's relations. They were not a handsome family; family portraits, as a rule,