

**LADY BLESSINGTON'S
CONFESSIONS OF AN
ELDERLY LADY AND
GENTLEMAN, VOL. II**

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Lady Blessington's Confessions of an elderly lady and gentleman, Vol. II by Marguerite Blessington

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MARGUERITE BLESSINGTON

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CONFESSIONS
OF AN
ELDERLY
LADY
AND
GENTLEMAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.
1838.

THE
CONFESSIONS
OF AN
ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.

BY
THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

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1838.

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UNIV. OF
TORONTO

THE CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.

“Who cares, or thinks, about elderly Gentlemen,” methinks I hear a young lady exclaim, as throwing down this book with a disdainful air, she demands of the shopman at the library, “If there is not something new?”

You mistake, fair lady, many are they who think of little else than of Elderly Gentlemen; but, alas! these are young *wives* impatient to enact the part of young *widows*; heirs in a hurry to come into possession; holders of post obits; expectant legatees; and *faithful* servants anxious to render the last duties to their dear masters, and to receive the meed of their *disinterested* services. This is an autobiographical-loving age: why, then, should I not amuse myself, if not my readers, by revealing the experience I have acquired, if it were only for the purpose of establishing two facts which many young men seem to doubt; namely, that *vanity* is not solely confined to *women*; and that all old gentlemen, however improbable it may appear, were once young. Perhaps, I have also another, and less disinterested object in view—the discomfiture of time, that ruthless enemy, which has lately be-

gun to press heavily on me. I endeavoured to kill *it* in my youth, but now it has laid me by the heels ; for, in sober sadness, I am a victim to gout, unable to move from my easy chair, and, consequently, more than ever sensible of the power of my antagonist. *A propos* of gout : I wish the erudite ‘ Doctor,’ who has helped me to beguile many a tedious hour, by his recondite and ‘ right merie ’ lucubrations, would favour the world, in his next volume, with an etymological chapter on that malady ; proving, for instance, as he might easily do, that it derives its cognomen from the French word *gôût*, which we translate by taste ; for who, *without* taste, ever had the gout ? and how few *with*, have ever escaped it !

* * * * *

I have been many years absent from England, wandering in search of that yet undiscovered good, “ a fine climate : ” which, like happiness, for ever eludes the pursuer, though constantly holding out delusive prospects of its attainment. The searchers of *one*, like those of the other, are, in general, confined to the class who, possessed of more wealth than wisdom, make unto themselves an imaginary good ; and then set out in a weary chase of it.

Blasé with that most fatiguing of all lives, a life of pleasure, and suffering under its never-failing consequences, a mind teeming with *ennui*, and a frame weakened by luxurious indulgence, I determined to visit the Continent ; and traversed France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, in the vain belief.

that a 'mind diseased,' and worn-out constitution, were to be renovated by the magical air of the south. What its effect might have been, I have yet to learn ; for, I have been nearly frozen by the *bise* in the south of France ; enervated almost to annihilation by the sirocco in Italy ; reduced nearly to a state of fusion in Sicily ; and scorched into a cinder in Spain and Portugal, without having yet discovered the object of my search, a fine climate.

I returned to England after many long and weary years of absence, rather worse in health than when I left it ; as the incursions made on my already debilitated constitution, by undue heat, unlooked for winds, and unwholesome diet, instead of retarding, tended to advance, the effects of that cruel enemy, Time. Wine too sour to admit of its copious use, food too insipid to induce even a gourmand, much less an epicure, to commit an excess, enforce the adoption of *temperance* on those who are the most opposed to it ; and *this virtue*, so seldom practised at home, is the whole, the sole, advantage to be derived from a continental residence. Tired of feeding on flour tortured into all the varied forms cycled macaroni, vermicelli, lasague, tortellini, papadella, patta di puglia, ravioli, and a half hundred other insipid dishes ; and of devouring beccaficos, thrushes, and blackbirds, washed down by ungenerous liquids, misnamed wines, I left the Continent ; my stomach weakened by unsubstantial sustenance, and my skin seamed by the repeated and vigorous attacks of those murderers of sleep, mosquitos