

**THE LADIES OF LOVEL-  
LEIGH; IN  
THREE VOLUMES;  
VOL. III. PP. 1 - 40**

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The Ladies of Lovel-Leigh; in three volumes; Vol. III. pp. 1 - 40 by Julia Cecilia Collinson Stretton

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**JULIA CECILIA COLLINSON STRETTON**

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# THE LADIES OF LOVEL-LEIGH.

BY



THE AUTHOR OF

"MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS,"

"THE VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES,"

&c. &c.

Out of God's choicest treasury we bring down  
New virtue to sustain all ill—new power  
To braid life's thorns into a regal crown.  
We pass'd into the outer world to prove  
The strength miraculous of Sisters' Love."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:  
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,  
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,  
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1862.

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But I am tired of all this incessant running after fashions and fine clothes.

It is pretty and nice for an amusement, but to be the sole occupation of one's life, is painful. More painful is it still to see the worship of it. That old lady, of high rank, they said,—richer than rich, how she sat this morning, hour after hour, debating on some dresses to take down to the country. "No one was to have the same; Mrs. Watson must assure her of that. She heard she kept a young woman shut up, solely to invent new trimmings; she would give twenty guineas to the girl, if she invented a new and original fashion for her, to be called by her name." A sorry ambition that. And the anxiety of some of the girls to have their dresses sooner, better, more tasty, than some other girl who is to be at the same party.

Eve alone was justified in daily seeking a new dress; she had to weave hers out of leaves and flowers, every day fresh and sweet.



I think I should have liked that. It must be true that I am whimsical. How strong whims are! A few months ago, I thought this life happiness; now I am weary of it. I like to go to sleep, and dream. Sleep is a wondrous key put into a closed locked door, which, when opened, discovers beautiful fancies that arise into marvellous deeds, palaces of fairy structure, panoramas of exquisite cloud things, and sweet, soft, luscious music all the while; dream eyes see what wakeful ones cannot. I shall tell Mabel that; and I shall tell her I have had enough of this life. I wish now to go to the sea; so does Otto. He and I have not now to learn that when we two wish a thing 'tis very likely to be done. Mabel will be glad — glad, I know, to have her little wayward Rose back again; but I think Mrs. Watson was wrong to tell her of my lover. The little dumb Rose has a lover! The handsome young cavalier who accompanied Lady Arlington, and is her half brother, I believe;

very rich, very much in love with me! He writes little notes, and sends them to me. I only opened the first; all the others I give to Mrs. Watson. Sometimes they are thrown into the carriage window, sometimes they are given to the girls to give to me—those poor girls always to be dress-making. When we go back to Lovel-Leigh, when I am safe again by my father's grave, I shall have some of my present companions down, to see what the glorious country is like. What a wealth of trees—what a richness of green—what beauty in the budding chestnuts! The flowers, with their scented breath, rising up like pretty maidens, gaily clad; and the arbours latticed in with ivy meshes, through which we see the lake, and hear the cool sound of the plashing water; and then at night, when the lady moon comes out, and rides through the heavens, with the stately majesty of a virgin queen, all the little stars crowding to worship her, she looks down on the lake, and her image is reflected on its bosom

like a jewel; and the little stars do the same, making her rich with gems, while they tremble, with excess of happiness, at the beautiful sight. But here, here in this London—I am interrupted. A message from my Mabel to come to her; the carriage sent; Mr. Moore's housekeeper in it to take care of me. I don't anticipate evil, so I obey; bespeaking a happy evening, and the certainty that Otto and I will make a request that shall be granted. Then we shall behold the sea!

*Two hours later.*

My Mabel sent no message. This is the history of my adventure.

As I stepped into the carriage, I noticed the Arlington liveries, but only as he shut the carriage door did I see the footman was not Otto's.

I turned instantly to the woman seated in the carriage, whom I had understood to be Mr. Moore's housekeeper. It was not the housekeeper, but a stranger.