

**THE LAUREL BUSH.
AN OLD-FASHIONED
LOVE STORY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649360277

The laurel bush. An old-fashioned love story by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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LOVE STORY**

THE LAUREL BUSH.



SHE WENT ALONG THE SHINING SANDS IN A DREAM OF PERFECT CONTENT.
[p. 30.]



FOR ONE INSTANT, ONE INSTANT ONLY, FORTUNE FELT SURE, QUITE SURE, THAT SOME WAY OR OTHER SHE WAS VERY DEAR TO ROBERT ROY. [p. 49

THE LAUREL BUSH.

An Old-fashioned Love Story.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN," &c.



NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.

1876.

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THE LAUREL BUSH.

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CHAPTER I.

IT was a very ugly bush indeed; that is, so far as any thing in nature can be really ugly. It was lopsided—having on the one hand a stunted stump or two, while on the other a huge, heavy branch swept down to the gravel-walk. It had a crooked, gnarled trunk or stem, hollow enough to entice any weak-minded bird to build a nest there—only it was so near to the ground, and also to the garden gate. Besides, the owners of the garden, evidently of practical mind, had made use of it to place between a fork in its branches a sort of letter-box—not the Government regulation one, for twenty years ago this had not been thought of, but a rough receptacle, where, the house being

a good way off, letters might be deposited, instead of, as hitherto, in a hole in the trunk—near the foot of the tree, and under shelter of its mass of evergreen leaves.

This letter-box, made by the boys of the family at the instigation and with the assistance of their tutor, had proved so attractive to some exceedingly incautious sparrow, that during the intervals of the post she had begun a nest there, which was found by the boys. Exceedingly wild boys they were, and a great trouble to their old grandmother, with whom they were staying the summer, and their young governess—"Misfortune," as they called her, her real name being Miss Williams—Fortune Williams. The nickname was a little too near the truth, as a keener observer than mischievous boys would have read in her quiet, sometimes sad face; and it had been stopped rather severely by the tutor of the elder boys, a young man whom the grandmother had been forced to get to "keep them in order." He was a Mr. Robert Roy, once a student, now a teacher of the "humanities," from the neighboring town—I beg its pardon, city; and a lovely old city it is!—of St. Andrews. Thence