

**LIFE: A ROMANCE,
IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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Life: A Romance, in Three Volumes, Vol. I by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

**LIFE: A ROMANCE,
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L I F E :

A ROMANCE.

By ***

"Fast, fast it fleeth, even as a dream, human life away."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
T. C. NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
72, MORTIMER STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1844.



J. HILLING, PRINTER, WORKING, DURHAM.

LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

“ My mother, when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unseen, a kiss,
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away ;
And turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu.”

WHY should I now, grown old and feeble, raise
the curtain of the past, or rehearse the myste-
ries of by-gone years ? Why should I recal the
long-lost faces, the sweet memories of the loved
and unforgotten ; or trace with trembling hand
the bright and joyous times of childhood, the

glowing and enthusiastic period of youth? Perchance a desire to survive in the remembrance of those who shall come after me—perchance a wish to leave a heirloom to my children, prompts the vain attempt.

Of earliest infancy, I retain brief recollections; but I know that I was tended with surpassing care. The lineaments of the authors of my being, are dimly shadowed in my memory; yet, long after remorseless disease and the fast-fleeting years had snatched them from my embrace, gentle loving faces hovering over my couch, were portrayed in my dreams; and eyes that uttered what tongue could not speak. "Son of our hearts," they seemed to say, "may the blessing of heaven descend upon thee—may ever-watchful angels guard thy rest." Alas! the dark cloud fell; my parents were no more! Long, long, was my young heart sad; long, long, was it ere the carolling birds, the gay flowers, and the bright sun-shine, were what they had once been. This was my first sorrow; but the

tears of childhood soon shed, are sooner dried ; grief does not then sear the heart, as in the after years of existence.

Poetry has sung, eloquence has dilated on the spring-time of life ; yet its charms have never been fully told in song or story. The unconscious youth or maiden only feels ; the art of describing what they feel has to be learned, and when learned, the period of youth is no more. How then, shall pen, or tongue, however eloquent, recount particulars which have passed ere they can be described ? Is it even possible to recal what we have once felt, but feel no more ? Can we give a tongue to the gushing winds, to the music of birds or brooks, or to the perfume of flowers ? Oh, for those fresh sensations which render life a paradise while they last ; oh, for the play of the life-renewing blood through the elastic frame—the pleasurable motions—the delights of vision, the pleasant fatigue and pleasanter repose, and that sweet, sweet sleep which links the past with the coming day. Oh,

for the blissful innocence that dreams no ill, imputes no sin, and which passes or should pass, without the sad experience that man could enact evil towards man.

With the death of my parents in rapid succession, my father's home ceased to be one for me. The more recent servants were discharged, while the sorrowing remnant—for servitude is not heartless—were appointed to the charge of the now desolate mansion. I went through the empty apartments, and looked again and again, at the portraits that smiled on me from the wall, and which seemed to say—"Poor child, of all art thou now the last?" I entered the garden. The walks were weed-grown, the fountains choked up. I trod again the shaded alleys wherein my mother with gentle hand, had aided my feeble steps. The silent, but now cheerless ray streamed through the stained glass into the hall; a strange unwonted silence pervaded it; and I started when the tardy footfall of the domestics announced their proximity.

I was a child ; I could not occupy my inheritance alone. Official persons took the needful temporary charge of the property ; and it was announced that ere long, my uncle, whose earlier arrival had been retarded, should make his appearance. Uncle, second parent—best of men—hail to thy memory ! At the time I hardly understood the nature of the relation. Circumstances of which I was imperfectly aware, had prevented much intercourse. In other respects, my relative's pursuits were peculiar, and he was indisposed to relinquish them ; add to this his remote residence, which, without any actual or formal estrangement, contributed to render him as one apart. He had learned with surprise and dismay, his brother's somewhat unexpected decease ; that he had survived his partner but a few months, and that I was now an orphan, and alone.

My uncle at length arrived, pressed me to his bosom, and carried me away. "I cannot be to thee" he said, "a parent in blood, but thou shalt be the