

**SIR JASPER'S
TENANT. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Sir Jasper's Tenant. In Three Volumes, Vol. II by Mary Elizabeth Braddon

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MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON

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VOLUMES, VOL. II**

SIR JASPER'S TENANT

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET"
ETC. ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

FIFTH EDITION



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SIR JASPER'S TENANT

CHAPTER I.

DOROTHY'S ENGAGEMENT.

THE arbitrary baker who dealt out his customers' dinners like a pack of cards at a given hour, and thereby obliged Mr. Dobb to dine at one o'clock on a Sunday, exercised no influence upon that gentleman's domestic arrangements for the rest of the day; and on almost every Sunday evening throughout the year the brewer's clerk was wont to entertain his friends in a manner which was as economical as it was primitive. No troublesome preparations, to be achieved with wailing and gnashing of teeth by Mrs. Dobb, were involved in Henry Adolphus's "Sundays;"

sumption; but Mr. Dobb, in the character of Amphitryon, preferred the half-and-half procured for ready money from the tavern; for the "Yorkshire" system would have been clumsy in its application to beer supplied from the entertainer's private cellar, and might have entailed long credits and even bad debts. When the domestic returned from her mission, the can of half-and-half was placed in the centre of Mr. Dobb's round-table, and an array of blown-glass tumblers ranged at its base; the bird's-eye circulated amongst the guests in a jam-pot; and the evening's entertainment commenced. The evening's entertainment appeared to consist chiefly in the consumption of the beer and bird's-eye. Sometimes the maid-of-all-work was despatched for a second gallon; very frequently she had to fetch fresh supplies of tobacco; although every one of Mr. Dobb's visitors carried in his waistcoat-pocket a fragment of a black-looking compound, which he chopped or scraped solemnly at intervals to mingle with his bird's-eye, and which he called Caven-dish. The capacity which Mr. Dobb and his

friends displayed for the consumption of beer was something startling. They were not particularly thirsty; and the half-and-half, always growing gradually flatter as the evening waned, was by no means particularly nice; but the visitors imbibed glass after glass of the beverage with as solemn a relish as if the muddy-brown mixture in their tumblers had been the rarest vintage of the Rhine. With beer and tobacco Mr. Dobb's acquaintance seemed to find a perennial charm in his society. Without beer and tobacco they could not endure him for a moment: for it happened sometimes that the guests, unmindful of the hour, allowed the public-house to close before they had renewed their supplies; and lo, suddenly, when the genial spirit of good fellowship was at its brightest, the tin bottom of the can revealed itself glimmering through a swiftly-ebbing tide of half-and-half, and the revellers were fain to part sad and despondent. To have continued their conversation, to have sung another song or listened to another recitation, or to have lingered together in friendly intercourse for