

**LORD OF HIMSELF;  
A NOVEL; IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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Lord of Himself; A Novel; In Three Volumes, Vol. I by William Pitt Lennox

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**WILLIAM PITT LENNOX**

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# LORD OF HIMSELF.

A Novel,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

LORD WILLIAM PITT LENNOX.

*Author of "Fifty Years' Biographical Reminiscences," "Celebrities I have Known," "Fashion Then and Now," &c., &c.*

"Lord of himself; that heritage of woe."

BYRON.

VOL. I.



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# LORD OF HIMSELF.

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## CHAPTER I.

Si l'uniforme militaire  
Sourit plus à votre raison,  
Allez goûter sur la frontière  
Les douceurs de la garnison  
Mon cher ami, faites vous donc soldat.

GUSTAVE NADAUD.

THE gallant 90th Hussars, one of the crack cavalry corps, were stationed at the Preston Barracks, Brighton, at the period this history commences. The devotion of the officers to the fair sex during the piping times of peace was as great as their prowess in the field when the blood-stained banner of war was unfurled. Hence their sobriquet of "Les Crève-Cœurs." When their allegiance to Mars, the god of battles, was

changed to that of Venus, the goddess of love, it is hardly necessary to say that, at least, all the youngsters became *les enfans chérie des dames*. Among the cornets was the hero of this tale, a good-looking young man, and heir to a coronet in an adjoining county, and who was very naturally sought after by scheming, match-making mothers. Francis Hovingham, usually called Frank, greatly preferred roving "free and unfettered through the wilds of love" to binding himself in the chains of matrimony, and his friends gave out that he was not a marrying man. Some years ago an ill-natured scribbler got up a story which spread like wild-fire that "the 10th did not dance;" whether that was true of those "elegant extracts," as they were called, I know not, but assuredly it was not the case with the Crève-Cœurs, who not only gave an annual ball in every town in which they were quartered, but got up many small dances in their mess-room. The ball-room is said to be the paradise of young ladies, the purgatory

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of elder chaperons, and the pandemonium of every paterfamilias; whether such is really the case I must leave to others to decide. Suffice it to say that the invitations to "an early party-dancing" of the 90th Hussars were eagerly sought after by the *élite* of Brighton visitors. The excitement of all the young ladies was greatly increased, when a rumour was spread abroad that a grand fancy-dress ball was to be given by the Crève-Cœurs at the Royal Pavilion. Then commenced that system of cringing, bowing, and begging for tickets for the forthcoming *fête*, which is so lowering to those who are mean enough to adopt it, and which is yet a prominent characteristic of modern society.

There is not a more delightful spot on the south coast than the terrace of the Brighton Aquarium. One fine, brilliant day in October, the sun shining resplendent in glory, the sea scarcely ruffled by the light breeze that blew from the west, a party of young men were sitting in front of the pavilion watching the



skaters on the highly polished asphalt pavement, smoking cigars, taking their coffee, and indulging in what is termed "small talk." Their theme, for they were officers, as will readily be believed, was about "shop"—what the colonel of "ours" said at morning parade—horses, balls, concerts and women.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and there was a goodly gathering of the gentler sex :—

To sweep  
On sounding skates, a thousand different ways  
In circles poise—swift as the winds along.

"Who is that devilish pretty girl—(surely 'angelic' would be a more appropriate term)—that Hovingham was spooning yesterday on the West Pier?" asked a young cornet, Fawley by name.

"Oh," replied the other, Captain Brandon, "she's a Miss Margaret Charleville, second daughter of the Reverend John Charleville, one of those clerical coves who denounce the ball-room and theatre as the temples of Satan."

"That's unlucky," renewed the cornet, "for Frank Hovingham was at the colonel this morning for invitations for the parson, his wife, and two eldest daughters."

"Hovingham's not much in the lady line," continued Brandon. "I wish he was. Pretty milliners' apprentices, and blooming barmaids are the objects of his devotions. By-the-way, he got a good wiggling yesterday from the colonel for driving that notorious London traviata on his drag to the races."

"You ought to keep your sub. in better order," said Fawley; "that frail, fair one is apt to indulge too much in champagne, and after lunch she was not 'a very dainty dish to set before' an assemblage of modest women."

"Well, Frank is a good fellow," replied Brandon, "a tolerable smart officer, and I do my best to keep him from kicking over the traces, but with his wealth and prospects he is a difficult one to manage, and would send in his papers if I drew the string too tight."

“Here he is to answer for himself,” exclaimed Fawley. “Why, what is the matter, you look as if:—

The whimpled, whining, purblind wayward boy,  
The senior, junior, giant, dwarf, “Don Cupid”  
Had got hold of you”

“Only fancy,” replied Frank. “When I told Mr. Charleville that I had, with some difficulty, procured tickets for him, his wife, and two of his daughters, he pulled a long face, thanked me courteously, saying his people never went to balls.”

“What an old bigot,” said Fawley. “Low Church, and no mistake.”

“You recollect,” chimed in Brandon, “the story of Wilberforce, whose sobriquet, ‘Soapy Sam’ was so far appropriate, inasmuch as whenever he got into hot water he came cleanly out of it.”

“Let’s have the story.”

“Well, upon one occasion he had to reprimand a hunting parson for following the hounds. ‘But,’ said the clerical Nimrod, ‘I never rode to the hounds. I was only in