

**ANNA
LOMBARD**

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Anna Lombard by Victoria Cross

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VICTORIA CROSS

**ANNA
LOMBARD**

ANNA LOMBARD

The most Widely-read Novel of the Day

ANNA LOMBARD

Some Press Opinions

Review of Reviews.—'A very remarkable story; a novel to set people thinking. It is a bold, brilliant, defiant presentation of a phase of the relations of the sexes which I do not remember ever having seen treated with the same freedom, delicacy and audacity. It is difficult to praise the book too highly.'

Literature.—'Anna Lombard loves two men at once, and is so entirely non-moral as to think nothing of living with both. The daughter of a general and the heiress of a thousand conventions, she is sometimes mysteriously Greek, sometimes Oriental, and sometimes Machiavelian. She is generally wicked, and always interesting. Her lovers are endowed with an air of romance, and set in scenes of gorgeous Eastern colouring, so that one forgets something of right and wrong as they are understood in the Occident. The reader will not, perhaps, be the better for reading this strange and contradictory book, but he will find in it many a fine passage, many a brilliant picture of life and emotion.'

Daily News.—'India forms a vivid background to the story. The writer realises the special quality of the atmosphere. She has managed to convey to her pages "the perfumed psagent, the magic, and the mystery of the East." The heroine forms a striking character in the portrait galleries of fiction.'

Vanity Fair.—'Anna Lombard remains throughout everything a pure woman—good, sincere, clean, fit to be admired and beloved with the faith and passion given to her by Gerald Ethridge, a manly, interesting, very sane, and real person.'

Standard.—'A very remarkable and powerful book.'

Academy.—'The writer uses India, as recently she used the Klondyke, as the immense theatre of an immense passion.'

JOHN LONG, Publisher, London

F

Anna Lombard

BY
VICTORIA CROSS

AUTHOR OF
'THE WOMAN WHO DIDN'T,' 'A GIRL OF THE KLONDIKE,'
'SIX CHAPTERS OF A MAN'S LIFE,' 'PAULA,'
'TO-MORROW,' 'EVELYN HASTINGS,'
'THEODORA,' ETC.



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1905

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1905

Dedicated

TO

C — MY C —

¹ Verona's summer hath not such a flower.²

A

PREFACE

I HAVE been challenged by certain papers to state my intentions in writing Anna Lombard. This is my reply:—I endeavoured to draw in Gerald Ethridge a character whose actions should be in accordance with the principles laid down by Christ, one that would display, not in words but in his actual life, that gentleness, humility, patience, charity and self-sacrifice that our Redeemer Himself enjoined. It is a sad commentary on our religion of to-day that a presumably Christian journal, *The Daily Chronicle*, should hold this Christ-like conduct up to ridicule and contempt, stigmatise it as 'horrid absurdity,' and declare that for such qualities a man ought to be turned out of the service. I challenge *The Daily Chronicle* and all who follow its opinion to find one act which does not reflect Christ's own teaching,

Preface

committed by Gerald Ethridge. He forgives the sinner, raises the fallen, comforts the weak. He works and suffers to reclaim the Pagan and almost-lost soul of Anna Lombard. Fearlessly, and with the Gospel of Christ in my hand, I offer this example of HIS teaching to the great Christian public for its verdict, confident that I shall be justified by it.

VICTORIA CROSS

ANNA LOMBARD

CHAPTER I

A FLOOD of glaring yellow light fell from the chandeliers overhead, a sheen of light seemed to be flung back from the polished, slippery, glittering floor which mirrored a thousand lights above and a hundred lesser lights fixed to the walls, dazzling in white and gold. There was so much light, so much glitter, that it seemed to hurt the eyes coming directly from the soft dark night outside. It seemed to wound mine as I stepped through the long window open to the marble piazza where I had been sitting, silent, by a pillar, alone with the gorgeous Eastern night.

The music, too, was stirring, and martial rather than soothing. It was the splendid band of the Irish Grenadiers, and just then they were playing for all they were worth. It seemed as if someone had bet them they could not make a noise, and they had bet that they could. From end to end the room was one blaze of colour, the scarlet and gold of countless uniforms standing out prominently in the general scheme. There were comparatively few present in plain civilian dress and no undress uniforms were to be found, for it was