

**MASTER AND MAN:
A TALE FROM REAL
LIFE**

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Master and Man: A Tale from Real Life by S. J. Fitzgerald

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S. J. FITZGERALD

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* Walking slowly up and down the smooth walk, with his hands clasped behind him, is to be seen the rector.—P. 7.

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A TALE FROM REAL LIFE.

By S. J. FITZGERALD,

AUTHOR OF 'THE LANCASTERS AND THEIR FRIENDS,' 'EQUALLY YOKED,'
'COALS AND COLLIERIES,' ETC.



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CHAPTER I.

THE RECTORY.

Beside the dewy border let me sit,
All in the freshness of the humid air ;
There, in that hollowed rock, grotesque and wild,
An ample chair, moss-lined, and overhead
By flowering umbrage shaded, where the bee
Strays diligent, and with the extracted balm
Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh.

THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

IN one of the many beautiful corners to be found in Shropshire stood a low, old-fashioned house, with curious chimney-stacks and square windows. These same windows were divided by stone mullions. The small diamond panes were of a greenish colour, and were held together by the well-known leaden bands of ancient date. The doors, as well as all the original wood-work employed in the construction of the building, were of oak—strong as iron, and made nearly black by the hand of time. The interior of the fine old place, with its thick walls, high chimney-pieces and low fire-grates, old 'banisters' and wide staircases, need not claim our attention.

A few rooms only will present themselves to us, as we proceed with our story. One of them was cosily fur-

nished and brightened, as rooms can be by the hands of women of taste, with flowers, pictures, and the various 'odds and ends' that together make a pretty room. There were pamphlets and newspapers, pens, ink, and a paper-knife; drawing materials, too, on a small table by themselves, not in use at present, but ready to be taken up at any time. There was, too, that without which any room (that is intended to live in, and is not kept for mere show) is incomplete—a lady's work-basket. Some dainty work had just been laid down, and the chair appeared to have just been pushed from before the table where the work-basket was located. There were evidences of the frequent visits of a gentleman to this room, as well as those of a lady. A pair of slippers lay on the hearth-rug, a loose reading-coat was thrown lightly over the back of a large easy-chair, and on the floor by the side of it lay a volume of Sermons by Archbishop Tillotson. It is a nice room, just the room to read or rest in. There is a passage that leads to another—a dark-panelled room with a shining oak floor. That is known as 'the study,' sometimes as 'the library,' for it is both, as we shall see.

To return to the outside of the old house: a verandah sloped away from the main building, and was supported by oaken pillars of gnarled and grotesque shape. Up these pillars and over the trellis-work ran creeping plants of great beauty. Lavish of their perfume were the rose and honeysuckle. The jessamine and clematis threw their clinging tendrils high, their star-like blossoms showing in beautiful relief against the dark green foliage. At one end of the building grew the thick,