

**A CHARMING
FELLOW. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649035410

A Charming Fellow. In Three Volumes, Vol. I by Frances Eleanor Trollope

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE

**A CHARMING
FELLOW. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

A CHARMING FELLOW.

A CHARMING FELLOW.

BY

FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE," "MABEL'S PROGRESS,"

Etc. Etc.

In Three Volumes.

VOL. I.



London :

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1876.

251 . d . 268

A CHARMING FELLOW.

CHAPTER I.

"To be frank with you, Mr. Diamond, I don't believe Dr. Bodkin understands my son's genius."

"I beg your pardon, madam, you said your son's——?"

"Genius, sir; the bent of his genius. Algy's is not a mechanical mind."

Mrs. Errington slightly tossed her head as she uttered the word "mechanical."

Mr. Diamond said "Oh!" and then sat silent.

The room was very quiet. The autumn day was fading, and the mingling of twilight and firelight, and the stillness of the scene, were conducive to mute meditation. It was a long, low room, with an uneven floor, a whitewashed ceiling crossed by heavy beams, and one large bow window. It was furnished with the spindle-legged chairs and tables

in use in the last century. A crimson drugget covered the floor, and in front of the hearth lay a rug, made of scraps of black and coloured cloth, neatly sewn together in a pattern. Over the high wooden mantelpiece hung, on one side, a faded water-colour sketch of a gentleman, with powdered hair; and on the other, an oval miniature of much later date, which represented a fair, florid young lady, with large languid blue eyes, and a red mouth, somewhat too full-lipped. Notwithstanding the years which had elapsed since the miniature was painted, it was still sufficiently like Mrs. Errington to be recognised for her portrait. There was an old harpsichord in the room, and a few books on hanging shelves. But the only handsome or costly object to be seen were some delicate blue and white china cups and saucers, which glistened from an oaken corner-cupboard; and a large work-box of tortoise-shell, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, lined with amber satin, and fitted with all the implements of needlework, in richly-chased silver. The box, like the china cupboard, stood wide open to display its contents, and was evidently a subject of pride to its possessor. It was entirely incongruous with the rest of the furniture, which, although decent and serviceable, was very plain, and rather scanty.

Nevertheless the room looked snug and home-like. The coal-fire burnt with a deep glowing light; a small copper kettle was singing cheerily

on the hob; tea-things were laid on a table in front of the fire; and a fitful, moaning wind, that rattled now and then against the antique casement, enhanced the comfort of the scene by its suggestion of forlorn chilliness without.

But however the influences of the time and place might incline Mr. Diamond to silence, they had no such effect on Mrs. Errington.

After a short pause, during which she seemed to be awaiting some remark from her companion, she observed once more, "No; I do not think the doctor understands Algy's genius. And that is why I was anxious to ask your advice, on this proposition of Mr. Filthorpe's."

"But, madam, why should you suppose me likely to understand Algernon better than Dr. Bodkin does?"

"Oh, because—— In the first place, you are younger, nearer Algy's own age."

"Ah! There is a wide gap, though, between his eighteen and my eight-and-twenty—a wider gap than the mere ten years would necessarily make in all cases."

Mrs. Errington glanced at the speaker, and thought, in the maternal pride of her heart, that there was indeed a wide difference between her joyous, handsome Algernon, and Matthew Diamond, second master at the Whitford Grammar School; and she thought, too, that the difference was all to

her son's advantage. Mr. Diamond was a grave-looking young man, with a spare, strong figure, and a face which, in repose, was neither handsome nor ugly. His clean-shaven chin and upper lip were firmly cut, and he had a pair of keen grey eyes. But such as it was, it was a face which most persons who saw it often, fell into a habit of watching. It raised an indefinite expectation. You were instinctively aware of something latent beneath its habitual expression of seriousness and reserve. What the "something" might be, was variously guessed at according to the temperament of the observer.

"Then there is another reason why I wished to consult you," pursued Mrs. Errington. "I have a great opinion of your judgment, from what Algy tells me. I assure you Algy thinks an immense deal of your talents, Mr. Diamond. You must not think I flatter you."

"No," replied Mr. Diamond, very quietly, "I do not think you flatter me."

"And therefore I have told you the state of the case quite openly. And I would not have you hesitate to give your advice, from any fear of disagreeing with my opinion."

Mr. Diamond leaned his elbow on the table, and his face on his hand, which he held so as to hide his mouth—an habitual posture with him—and looked gravely at Mrs. Errington.

"I trust," continued the lady, "that I am superior to the weakness of requiring blind acquiescence from people."

Mrs. Errington spoke in a mellow, measured voice, and had a soft smiling cast of countenance. Both these were frequently contradicted in a startling manner by the words she uttered: for, in truth, the worthy lady's soul and body were no more like each other than a peach-stone is like a peach. Her velvety softness was not affected, but it was merely external, and the real woman was nothing less than tender. Sensitive persons did not fare very well with Mrs. Errington; who, withal, had the reputation of being an exceedingly good-natured woman.

"If you think my advice worth having——" said Mr. Diamond.

"I do really. Now pray don't be shy of speaking out!" interrupted the lady, reassuringly.

"I must tell you that I think your cousin's offer is much too good to be refused, and opens a prospect which many young men would envy."

"You advise us to accept it?"

"Yes."

"Why, then, Mr. Diamond, I don't believe you understand Algy one bit better than the doctor does!" exclaimed Mrs. Errington, leaning back in her chair, and folding her large white hands together in a resigned manner.