

**A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN
AND HIS FAMILY. IN
THREE VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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A country gentleman and his family. In three volumes. Vol. I by Mrs. Oliphant

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BY

MRS. OLIPHANT

AUTHOR OF "THE WIZARD'S SON," "HESTER," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.




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PLANO DE TRABALHO
ANEXO I



A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THEODORE WARRENDER was still at Oxford when his father died. He was a youth who had come up from his school with the highest hopes of what he was to do at the university. It had indeed been laid out for him by an admiring tutor with anticipations which were almost certainties: "If you will only work as well as you have done these last two years!" These years had been spent in the dignified ranks of Sixth Form, where he had done almost everything that boy can do. It was expected that the School would have had a holiday when he and Brunson went up for the scholarships in their chosen college, and everybody calculated on the "double event." Brunson got the scholarship in question, but Warrender failed, which at first astonished everybody, but was afterwards more than accounted for by the fact that his fine and fastidious mind had been carried away by the *Æschylus* paper, which he made into an ex-

haustive analysis of the famous trilogy, to the neglect of other less inviting subjects. His tutor was thus almost more proud of him for having failed than if he had succeeded, and Sixth Form in general accepted Brunson's success apologetically as that of an "all-round" man, whose triumph did not mean so much. But if there is any place where the finer scholarship ought to tell, it should be in Oxford, and his school tutor, as has been said, laid out for him a sort of little map of what he was to do. There were the Hertford and the Ireland scholarships, almost as a matter of course; a first in moderations, but that went without saying; at least one of the Vice-Chancellor's prizes—probably the Newdigate, or some other unconsidered trifle of the kind; another first class in Greats; a fellowship. "If you don't do more than this I will be disappointed in you," the school tutor said.

The college tutors received Warrender with suppressed enthusiasm, with that excitement which the acquisition of a man who is likely to distinguish himself (and his college) naturally calls forth. It was not long before they took his measure and decided that his school tutor was right. He had it in him to bring glory and honour to their doors. They surrounded him with that genial warmth of incubation which brings a future first class tenderly to the top of the lists. Young Warrender was flattered, his heart was

touched. He thought, with the credulity of youth, that the dons loved him for himself; that it was because of the attractions of his own noble nature that they vied with each other in breakfasting and dining him, in making him the companion of their refined and elevated pleasures. He thought, even, that the Rector—that name of fear—had at last found in himself the ideal which he had vainly sought in so many examples of lettered youth. He became vain, perhaps, but certainly a little self-willed, as was his nature, feeling himself to be on the top of the wave, and above those precautions for keeping himself there which had once seemed necessary. He did not, indeed, turn to any harm, for that was not in his nature; but feeling himself no longer a schoolboy, but a man, and the chosen friend of half the dons of his college, he turned aside with a fine contempt from the ordinary ways of fame-making, and betook himself to the pursuit of his own predilections in the way of learning. He had a fancy for out-of-the-way studies, for authors who don't pay, for eccentricities in literature; in short, for having his own way and reading what he chose. Signals of danger became gradually visible upon his path, and troubled consultations were held over him in the common room. "He is paying no attention to his books," remarked one; "he is reading at large whatever pleases him." Much was to be said for this principle,

but still, alas, these gentlemen were all agreed that it does not pay.

"If he does not mind, he will get nothing but a pass," the Rector said, bending his brows. The learned society shrank, as if a sentence of death had been pronounced.

"Oh no, not so bad as that!" they cried, with one voice.

"What do you call so bad as that? Is not a third worse than that? Is not a second quite as bad?" said the majestic presiding voice. "In the gulf there are no names mentioned. We are not credited with a mistake. It will be better, if he does not stick to his books, that he should drop."

Young Warrender's special tutor made frantic efforts to arrest this doom. He pointed out to the young man the evil of his ways. "In one sense all my sympathies are with you," he said; "but, my dear fellow, if you don't read your books you may be as learned as —, and as clear-sighted as —" (the historian, being unlearned, does not know what names were here inserted), "but you will never get to the head of the lists, where we have hoped to see you."

"What does it matter?" said Warrender, in boyish splendour. "The lists are merely symbols. You know

one's capabilities without that ; and, as for the opinion of the common mass, of what consequence is it to me ?”

A cold perspiration came out on the tutor's brow. “It is of great consequence to—the college,” he said. “My dear fellow, so long as we are merely mortal we can't despise symbols ; and the Rector has set his heart on having so many first classes. He doesn't like to be disappointed. Come, after it's all over you will have plenty of time to read as you like.”

“But why shouldn't I read as I like now?” said Warrender. He was very self-willed. He was apt to start off at a tangent if anybody interfered with him,—a youth full of fads and ways of his own, scorning the common path, caring nothing for results. And by what except by results is a college to be known and assert itself? The tutor whose hopes had been so high was in a state of depression for some time after. He even made an appeal to the school tutor, the enthusiast who had sent up this troublesome original with so many fine prognostications : who replied to the appeal, and descended one day upon the youth in his room, quite unexpectedly.

“Well, Theo, my fine fellow, how are you getting on? I hope you are keeping your eyes on the examination, and not neglecting your books.”

“I am delighted to see you, sir,” said the lad. “I was