

**LOVERS AND  
THINKERS: A NOVEL**

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Lovers and thinkers: a novel by Hewes Gordon

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**HEWES GORDON**

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# LOVERS AND THINKERS.

A *Nobel*.

BY

HEWES GORDON.

"And hail once more to the banner of battle unrolled!  
Though many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crushed in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreaked on a giant liar;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine on the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire."

TENNYSON'S MAUD.



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## LOVERS AND THINKERS.

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### CHAPTER I.

NEW YORK, our Commercial Metropolis. That is, the centre of activity, wealth, amusement,—of sloth, indigence, misery,—the great symbol of the country's daily life. Boston may be its Athens, the seat of intelligence and culture; this is its Rome, the vast arena of concentrated effort and practical skill. The aim of the average American, but especially of the New-Yorker, is riches, material success. Pick out any one, of a morning, from its thousands rushing down town, and ask him why he thus tears along; his answer, if he shall stop long enough to give it faithfully, will be, "Money, money: what do we live for?"

Stella Maign was a child of this city, though not of its spirit and circumstances. Her father was, perhaps, one of its "representative men." He was a merchant, doing an extensive and prosperous business, when she, his only daughter, was born. He was a man of the

world, — still more, a man of New York. He was active and enterprising, and believed in precisely the qualities which he himself possessed. All others he undervalued. He had accumulated considerable property, and was called rich. Respecting and applauding business qualifications, these, combined with wealth, made, in his eyes, a man of men, — one to be sought and honored. Thinkers, scholars, men of ideas, held but a corner of his esteem. They were well enough, he thought; they contributed aliment to the leisure of the rich; they afforded him amusement: but they were always poor fellows, of little account in the world. Here we have his estimate of the world: he meant Wall street, Broadway, and the fine houses up town, of which his own was one of the best, and in the midst of the best.

Mrs. Maign, his wife, had been, when young, a somewhat aspiring and superior maiden; but, without decided force of character, she had settled down, soon after her marriage, quite to the level of the circle around her. Now she presided over her husband's mansion as he thought a woman of means and fashion should do. Costly pictures were hung on its walls; statues dignified the appropriate niches. The parties given in it were among the gayest of the season. And outside, was the lady's carriage, with driver and footman in waiting, whenever she desired to take the air. Mr. and Mrs. Maign scanned their establishment with proud satisfaction. "I have come to think with you, Mr. M.," she said, "that it would be quite impossible for one who really *is anybody*, to do without the like."

This mutual thought very naturally entered into their



plan of education for their daughter, and into their determination regarding her future career. At fourteen years of age, after fitting studies near home, she was sent away to be placed in the well-known seminary of Madam de Villier, at Ironton. Here it was supposed she could receive as thorough and accomplished an education as any young lady of wealth and superior prospects would require. Graduated from such an institution, her father deemed she would be fitted to adorn any man's drawing-room as well as the good Mrs. Maign had herself done, and in exactly the same way.

Stella's conduct, during the three years she was in charge of Madam de Villier, was satisfactory to parents and teachers. She was a keen, appreciative scholar, a healthful, cheerful, dignified person, with whom but little fault of any kind was found. Though spirited, and occasionally wilful if opposed when she regarded herself in the right, she seldom broke over, or evaded, the prescribed limits of restraint, which, at a school like Madame de Villier's, were necessarily rather strict. She was allowed to leave the seminary only once a week, to visit some friend known to her parents, or for shopping, unless, indeed, when in company with forty or fifty others, she took a morning or evening walk for exercise. The latter practice she did not at first wholly enjoy. It seemed very strange scarcely ever to appear in the street except as one of a long double file of young ladies — maiden soldiers of culture.

And the line was not always viewed by spectators as martial and imposing. Now and then an imaginative urchin was evidently reminded by it of a flock of sheep, and would apostrophize it with the bleating cry by

which those innocent and pretty creatures seem wont to express their ordinary emotions.

On one occasion, largely in sport, though with much pretended vexation, Stella caught hold of a child who was thus shouting near her, and shook him completely beyond any further display of his wit or wits, — a feat which was a palpable breach of decorum, but which caused much merriment in the street. She looked up and saw the eyes of a handsome, stately youth fixed upon hers, and fairly dancing with mirth. She broke into a ringing laugh, blushed to her temples, and hastened back to her place in the ranks, without looking back. The stripling regarded her admiringly for a moment, and murmuring, "What a dear Amazon to be sure," he too passed on.

The incident was simple enough to have been unremembered and unrecorded. But it appears they were to meet again, and to one of them it was to be rather singularly recalled.

Stella's education was, at the end of the appointed time, called finished. She left Madame de Villier's seminary, one of the most accomplished of its scholars, as well as one of the fairest and most attractive. She had been placed there to study; and though extraordinary application was not the most prominent of her good qualities, she had attended faithfully to all her allotted tasks.

She had, at this period, a passion for the beautiful, which distinguished her in all matters of taste, and was remarked by every one about her. But it penetrated deeper than their glances, unconsciously, even to herself, underlying her success in particular studies. She

did not know, for instance, why she learned French without effort — almost intuitively. It was much more difficult to many of her classmates, who in other branches were her equals. It was the same with music, in which she at last excelled both scholars and teachers. But French is the high-bred language of courtly elegance. In it, if one cannot cry, it is said: "*il n'étoit plus le maître de verser des larmes.*"\* It is the mother tongue of formal taste, as Italian is that of harmonious witchery. Music again, as far as it goes — and that certainly is far — is the most beautiful of all vehicles of expression. Roses and the choicest flowers, may in their way and sphere compare with it. What else can?

When Stella returned home to New York, it was — to be married. Yes, that was the goal of her youthful destiny, as her father had settled it. She must be married and located. It must be well done too. This he had figured. It was a most important business transaction, in which he must not fail to do himself credit.

Did he not love his only daughter? Certainly he did. He would have affirmed it as strenuously as any man. Only he supposed that he knew her best interests a great deal better than she did. He did not believe in "overmuch sentiment;" in any "undue weight of love." Taste should have its proper influence, to be sure. But affection had never taken an all-engrossing hold upon him: why should other people go crazy about it?

\* Madame de Staël's dubious hero "Oswald" (in "Corinne") will be remembered as "no longer the master of shedding tears."