

**A DEVOTEE: AN  
EPISODE IN THE LIFE  
OF A BUTTERFLY**

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**MARY CHOLMONDELEY**

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## A DEVOTEE

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An Episode in the Life of a Butterfly

BY

MARY CHOLMONDELEY

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'DIANA TEMPEST,' 'SIR CHARLES DANVERS,' AND 'THE  
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To  
FLORIE,  
UPON WHOSE KIND STRONG HAND  
I HAVE SO OFTEN LEANT.

'That day is sure,  
Though not perhaps this week, nor month, nor year,  
When your great love shall clean forgotten be,  
And my poor tenderness shall yet endure.'

WILFRID S. BLUNT.



# A DEVOTE E.

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## CHAPTER I.

'Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.'

TENNYSON.

THE cathedral was crammed. The tall slender arches seemed to spring out of a vast sea of human heads. The orchestra and chorus had gradually merged into one person : one shout of praise, one voice of prayer, one wail of terror. The *Elijah* was in mid-career, sailing like a man-of-war upon the rushing waves of music.

And presently there was a hush, and out of the hush a winged voice arose, as a lark rises out of a meadow, singing as it rises :

‘O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart’s desire.’

The lark dropped into its nest again. The music swept thundering upon its way, and a large tear fell unnoticed from a young girl’s eyes on to the bare slim hand which held her score. The score quivered ; the slender willowy figure quivered in its setting of palest violet and white draperies threaded with silver. Only a French-woman could have dared to translate a child’s posy of pale blue and white violets, tied with a silver string, into a gown ; but Sibyl Carruthers’ dressmaker was an artist in her way, and took an artist’s

license, and the half-mourning which she had designed for the great heiress was in colouring what a bereaved butterfly might have worn.

Miss Carruthers was called beautiful. Perhaps she was beautiful for an heiress, but she was certainly not, in reality, any prettier than many hundreds of dowerless girls who had never been considered more than good-looking.

Her delicate features were too irregular, in spite of their obvious high breeding; her figure was too slight; her complexion was too faintly tinted for regular beauty. But she had something of the evanescent charm of a four-petalled dog-rose newly blown—exquisite, ethereal, but as if it might fall in a moment. This aspect of fragility was heightened by what women noticed about her first, namely, her gossamer