

**VIOLET; OR, THE DANSEUSE:
A PORTRAITURE OF HUMAN
PASSIONS AND CHARACTER,
IN TWO VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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Violet; or, The danseuse: a portaiture of human passions and character, in two volumes, Vol. I
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MARIAN DORA MALET

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A PORTRAITURE

OF

HUMAN PASSIONS AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HENRY COLBURN,

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1836.

V I O L E T.

CHAPTER I.

"A creature not too bright or good,
For human nature's daily food,
Made up of charms and simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

WORDSWORTH.

"WHERE is Violet?" inquired Mr. Woodville of his wife; "Lætitia, my dear, where is Violet?"

"Gone to change her shoes," answered Mrs. Woodville. "Dupas is coming. By the bye, we must ask him to dine with us soon, for he really takes great pains with Violet."

"Whenever you like, my dear. I have never determined what I mean to do with little Violet, but, I am glad she is growing up so handsome, and she is such a graceful darling! She

ought to marry a lord, at least, ought my little Violet."

"Well, if she is handsome, Violet may thank her mother for it," rejoined Mrs. Woodville, "though I didn't marry a lord, for all that; so Violet may do no better either, and it is as well not to fill her head with nonsense: no good can come of it, and she won't mind her studies."

"Now, Mr. Woodville, do you mean to call for me to-night in your cab, or am I to come home with Madlle. Laure? and where am I to have supper?"

"The Ballet, you know, as well as I do, never was or is over before one o'clock on Tuesday night: how then can I fetch you home at ten from Covent Garden?"

"Very well; but where do you mean to have supper, Charles?"

"Why, I have asked Gianini and Madame Clot, and the Norrises, to come to us to-night. We must have some Champagne, and I have desired Véry to send us a quart of white soup, and some *cotillettes aux petits poix*; then there is the cold ham, and you can get some of the partridges broiled that the Duke sent us the other day: and do see, Mrs. Woodville, that for once there is good bread-sauce at ——"

M. Dupas was announced by a very young-looking gentleman, wearing an attempt at a livery,—and M. Dupas made his appearance. He was an old man, wearing a well-made wig; his clothes fitted him to a nicety, and everything in his externals even betrayed a justifiable desire to please; his countenance was lively and shrewd, and his manners aristocratic. M. Dupas spoke English wonderfully for a foreigner, and only now and then made use of expressions at variance with his meaning. He even then avoided much awkwardness by *ne se doutant pas* of his correctness, and no one ventured to amend his “Prose.”

“I am most happy to see you, Mrs. Woodville; Mr. Woodville, you are too good,” said M. Dupas, as he advanced a chair; “I am most entirely delighted to see you,—how is *la Petite*? I hope her slight touch of catarrh is quite at an end? Ah! *la voici*,” continued the old man, while his face brightened at the entrance of his young pupil, of whom he was very fond.

“Did you find the shoes, Violet, love?” inquired Mrs. Woodville.

“I hope you have been enabled completely to master the little difficulty of the grand battement of the left foot,” observed M. Dupas; “three

hours' steady attention every day would remove so very slight a difficulty. Now let us see,—very well,—begin with the exercises for the body first—*allons, commençons.*"

Mr. Woodville earned his subsistence by playing on the violoncello; luckily for him, he played uncommonly well, and he was luckier still in having his talent appreciated and well remunerated. He easily obtained engagements at one or other of the great theatres, and generally formed one of the orchestra at the King's Theatre.

In his line of life Woodville would have been rich, but, like many professional men, he was extravagant and, to his credit be it said, generous,—so that, though never very poor, he was only rich sometimes. His chief object, his delight, was—his only child—Violet.

Mrs. Woodville had been a beauty, and was still in tolerable preservation. She was very much like most other women,—having the coquetry, the caprice, the silliness and acuteness, agreeableness and weak-mindedness, common to the generality of her sex,—judging, at least, from all those with whom I happen to have been acquainted.

She was an actress, of rather a first class, and

personated ladies, and confidantes, (those that gave advice,) and did speaking queens remarkably well; on the whole, Mrs. Woodville was much looked up to by the managers, for she was never vulgar, the thing most difficult to avoid on the English stage. Her pronunciation and her gestures never made the nerves of better bred people quiver with annoyance, or harrowed up their minds with disgust. She was always well-dressed.—In short, on or off the stage, Mrs. Woodville was a very tolerable fine lady.

And now to talk of Violet, one of the prettiest creatures that ever was seen.

It may be as well to say, by way of parenthesis, that her real name was *Violante*,—at least, such was the name by which her mother had her christened. But her father thought it much too long, and said it was better to call her *Violet*.

With no reason that a special Providence should interfere;—without a governess—an angel that I know of,—or even a master in chancery, to look after her education, it should follow that Violet must needs have her ideas tinged, and her understanding improved, as it might be, by the class of people with whom she lived. She was, besides, not a little spoiled both by her parents and by *M. Dupas*.

In the estimation of these persons, the young lady's education had been immensely attended to, and Violet was really very accomplished, more thoroughly so perhaps than many damsels of greater pretensions, because her friends were fonder and prouder of her in proportion as her progress flattered their self-love. Violet seemed to know this by instinct, and the consciousness increased her desire to play, to sing, to speak French and Italian,—and to dance *en artiste*.

Her early education had been received in a French convent, and she had at this period returned home for good, about a year, and was now devoting a large portion of her time to achieve the ambitious views of M. Dupas, who fully intended her to become a first-rate operadancer. His own early days had worn away in that profession, but, having somehow grown wealthy, he now only gave lessons to the rising generation in a few great families, whose society, he said, he thought it worth his while to cultivate,—and devoted his leisure hours *con amore* to foster the talent of Violet Woodville.

The Woodvilles and M. Dupas were old friends, and, having no child of his own, theirs had become his pet, more or less, from the day of her birth. Since her return from France he