

**DELAMERE: A
NOVEL. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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Delamere: a novel. In three volumes, vol. I by G. Curzon

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G. CURZON

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VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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DE L A M E R E.

A NOVEL.

BY

G. CURZON,

AUTHOR OF "THE VIOLINIST OF THE QUARTIER LATIN."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1886.

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DELAMERE.



CHAPTER I.

THE tourist travelling through Daleshire cannot fail to be struck with the picturesque position of Delamere, the seat of the De Ruthvyns. The castle, a rambling and irregular pile of architecture, is situated on an eminence overlooking the fertile valley of the Iser, and is bordered on three sides by lofty hills. It has been untenanted for many years, and even the modern portion is now beginning to show signs of decay. A stranger

walking through the solitudes of its noble park, or wandering through the deserted gardens, is apt to speculate upon the strange caprice of its owners in abandoning a home so rich in natural beauties, and which, from the antiquity of the original castle, must have been in their possession for centuries. A spiral staircase leads to the roof of one of the turrets, and the ascent is rewarded by an enchanting view of the surrounding scenery. The deer park, studded with gigantic oaks and beeches, stretches to an immense extent on one side; while, on the other, the ground slopes suddenly towards a picturesque valley, watered by the Iser; and all round, in their ever-varying beauty, rise the wooded declivities and purple peaks, presenting a landscape that might charm a Turner.

A sultry evening in June, '58, when Delamere was the favourite abode of its owners, the members of the family then residing at the castle were assembled near an open window in the large drawing-room. The aged man in the armchair, whose white hair strongly contrasted with his dark brows and drooping moustache, was General de Ruthvyn. His second son, Randolph, was standing beside him, reading, for the benefit of those present, a closely written letter upon foreign paper, which had come by that evening's post. At a little distance from the general, with his arms folded upon the back of a chair, and his chin resting upon his hands, was seated a young man, who, though only a guest, could scarcely be accounted a stranger, as he was step-brother to Randolph's wife. He was German by parentage, but had

been brought up and educated in England. The appearance of Bernard Waldstein was not in his favour. His forehead was low and receding; his prominent eyes were light in colour, and had a cunning expression; while his curling hair and beard were unmistakably red. In the latter respect, he was a contrast to his brother-in-law, who had a sallow complexion, and whose dark hair was cropped as closely as a Puritan's. Randolph's wife stood a little apart, and was sorting different shades of silk at a work-table. She was the only child of Lord Leith, a Scotch peer, whose rent-roll was much shorter than his pedigree. There was nothing Scotch, however, about the physiognomy of Evelyn de Ruthvyn; nor did she in the least resemble her step-brother, Bernard. Her features were Grecian in outline, her eyes and hair