

**BREAD UPON THE  
WATERS: A  
GOVERNESS'S LIFE**

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Bread Upon the Waters: A Governess's Life by Dinah Mulock Craik

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**DINAH MULOCK CRAIK**

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WATERS: A  
GOVERNESS'S LIFE**



Bread upon the Waters;

GOVERNESS'S LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"OLIVE," "THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY,"

"ALICE LEARMONT," &c.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days."

London:

PRINTED FOR THE

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32, BUCKVILLE STREET.

1852.

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INSCRIBED TO  
A WOMAN,  
THE DAILY RECORD OF WHOSE LIFE  
RESEMBLES THAT OF HIM,  
WHOSE DIVINE STEPS SHE FOLLOWS,—  
“WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD.”

## BREAD UPON THE WATERS.

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### PART I.

It is to-day ten months since my mother died, and my father has told me that he is about to bring home another wife!—Another mistress of the household, another Mrs. Lyne, usurping *her* place, *her* name! How shall I ever bear it!

I do not think I share the usual prejudice against step-mothers. I know perfectly well, no daughter, even if grown up, can be to her father the comfort that a wife is; and many men, loving their first wives ever so dearly, have in time married again. My dear mother during her long illness several times hinted this to me, accidentally as it were, yet with meaning. But, in one sense, the parallel did not hold; for she was *not* "loved dearly;"—never, alas! since the first

sunny year of her marriage, wherein I was born, and she, out of her deep happiness, called me *Felicia*.

I knew, I felt, that my father would marry again. These two months I have been trying to reason myself, ay, and my little brothers too, into some preparation for what must come in time. I even thought that we might learn to love his wife,—I and the two poor little fellows to whom the name of “father” has always been a name of fear—that is, if she were a good woman. But—*that woman!*

That woman, with the paint scarce wiped off her face, to come and lay her head on the sacred pillow where my mother died!—That woman, whose name has been for years the town’s talk, to bear the name which, sorrowful as her life was, my pure mother bore unsullied to her grave! It is hard, very hard!—nay, it is horrible!

Yet there is no alternative; they are already married—my father told me so. He has given me the choice, to prepare to welcome her here, or to go out myself into the wide cruel world—



I think I would, except for those little ones, my brothers, to whom, since our mother died, I have tried to be mother and sister both. For their sakes I must have patience.

All day I have tried to exercise what, young and inexperienced as I am, my mother always said I had,—a clear judgment, a power of subduing weak womanly emotions and prejudices, and seeing only *the right*. I think I see it now.

My father is perfectly free to marry, and to marry whom he pleases; no daughter can or ought to stand in the way of that. But oh!—if his wife had only been a good woman, nay, even an honest, respectable woman! His very house-keeper would have been preferable to ———.

No; I will be just and merciful, as my poor mother was ever, to all sinners. This woman may not be so bad as the world paints her; for the world is very cruel, and a beautiful public singer must often be maligned. Even granting those things which cannot be contradicted, I have heard that kindness and generosity have ere now lingered even in the heart of a Magdalen.

I will not leave my home and my brothers,  
nor—

\* \* \* \* \*

I was obliged to break off, and go down to our friend Mr. Redwood. I wonder if he saw that any thing was wrong with me, that I could not sing when he asked me. I wonder, too, does he know of what will happen in our family? and what will he think of it? Will he come here as usual, and will his mother?—To think of the Honourable Mrs. Redwood visiting the woman my father has chosen for his second wife! Impossible!

Oh! I wish, I wish I could have told him—Mr. Redwood, I mean. But how could I, a mere girl, and he so young a man? Besides, I had no right; for he is still but a friend, or rather acquaintance. Only—sometimes—He said he was coming again next Wednesday; and I until this minute have forgotten that that is the very day my father told me they would come home,—he and—Mrs. Lyne; for I must teach myself that dreaded word.

Ah me! ah, my poor little brothers! ah, my

dear mother, my *own* mother, who knows not what we suffer, and to whom no suffering can ever come more!—For that, amidst all my weeping, I look up, and thank God!

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They have come home, and I have seen my step-mother for the first time. She was very sweet and gracious, both to me and to the boys; and she is, oh! such a handsome woman! Dressed for the evening, she did not look above thirty. What a contrast to my poor sick mother, worn out before her time! But I must not suffer myself to dwell on these things.

Mrs. Lyne entered the house with an easy grace, all smiles. She said it was a pretty house. I had taken pains to have all in order for her; for I wished to please my father, if I could. After the house, she took notice of us, shook hands with me and Henry, and would have kissed dear little Aleck, but he pouted and refused. She only laughed, and said "he was a pretty fellow nevertheless."