

**LATHEBY TOWERS.  
IN THREE  
VOLUMES. VOL. III**

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Latheby Towers. In Three Volumes. Vol. III by Alice Corkran

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**ALICE CORKRAN**

**LATHEBY TOWERS.  
IN THREE  
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# LATHEBY TOWERS.

A Novel.

BY

ALICE CORKRAN,

AUTHOR OF " BESSIE LANG."

" Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide:  
Towers and battlements it sees  
Boom'd high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some Beauty lies,  
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes."  
L'ALLEGRO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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1879.

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# CLARA SAVILLE

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## CHAPTER I.

“ Unlike are we, unlike, O princely heart!  
Unlike our uses and our destinies.  
Our ministering angels look surprise  
On one another, as they strike athwart  
Their wings in passing.”—*E. B. Brown*.

WITHOUT another word or look, Clara stole out of the room. She put on her hat, and making her way through the shrubbery, gained a side-gate, and got out into the open fields. She had not been farther than the grounds about the house since her mother's illness. She now walked rapidly, neither knowing nor caring whither her steps might lead her.

It was October. There was a touch like an echo of spring days through the mild air. A subtle scent of dead leaves, of garnered hay and ripe fruit that is the very breath of autumn, told all a year's hopes and their fulfilment. The fresh breeze rocked the branches of the thinning trees, and frolicked with the dropping foliage. As once in her childhood, Clara was conscious of the contrast between the jocund day and her bewilderment and suffering. At this feast of departing summer she wandered grieving and confused.

She did not dwell so much upon her mother's threat as upon the harsh disregard of all her feelings. To be heiress of the Towers was part of Clara's identity; it formed, perhaps, the most distinct consciousness of self she possessed; for round it gathered certain vague, mysterious, yet passionate convictions, that formed the under-



current of her life. In her wayward, determined, and practical nature, there was, to use a well-worn word, a vein of mysticism. Clara was convinced there was a fate attached to her holding the Towers; with all her subtleties she was single-minded. She had something of the contradictory natures of those who believe they have a mission, who can be cruel, unjust, brave, and inspired—saints and criminals together.

Clara walked blindly on. Tears were in her eyes but did not roll down her cheeks. The heat in her heart, as it were, dried them before they fell. She was not conscious of passing through the glen with the familiar paths, meandering ruddy-brown through the fresh moss and grass. She had no eyes for the grave poetry of autumn imprinted on the wide stretches of purple moorland; but she suddenly became aware that she had wandered to the foot of the hill where the

old mill stretched out its gaunt arms. With a thrill of surprise she found herself beside the hedge which skirted the field where she had met Cecil Latheby as a child. The carpet of tangled-grass and leaves, with the wild flowers springing up among them, was there; there was even still a trail of black-berry leaves, with fruit hanging glistening and black upon it. All around was the girdling blue of sea and distance. It was the same scene, the freshness and blitheness of the spring had passed into a mellower light over the sea and land. It was the same melody played in a graver key.

The moment Clara recognized the scene, she felt sure that she should meet Cecil. She looked over the hedge, and there, as she expected, she saw him walking with firm, slow steps, his hands clasped behind him, his head bent in thought.

She paused where she was, looking, and as she looked the turmoil in her heart ceased. The anger, perplexity, jealousy, dropped away. Cecil's presence had always this effect upon her. It acted like an anodyne. The glamour of the place fell over her and overcame her, and life seemed worth living once more for this proud, blind man, whom it might be given to her to help and solace.

A few tears rolled down her cheeks, and a little smile was on her lips, as leaving her post by the hedge, she softly opened the wooden gate left unlocked by the farmer to whom the field belonged, for Cecil to pass in and out. As her light footsteps fell on the grass, she watched him stop, and lift his head; and saw the listening look she knew so well strain his face, that grew pale as if with excess of listening as she came nearer.

"Mr. Latheby," she said, laying her hand on his sleeve. She felt his arm