

**THE DECEASED WIFE'S
SISTER, AND MY
BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOUR. IN
THREE VOLUMES. VOL. III**

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The deceased wife's sister, and My beautiful neighbour. In Three Volumes. Vol. III by William Clark Russell

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WILLIAM CLARK RUSSELL

**THE DECEASED WIFE'S
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BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOUR. IN
THREE VOLUMES. VOL. III**

THE
DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER,
AND
MY BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOUR.

By William Lloyd Garrison

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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MY
BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOUR.

CHAPTER I.

I FOUND Martelli to be more useful to me than I could have expected. He had called himself practical, and he was practical. He was used to the punctilious regularity of schools, to the difficult inattention of pupils; and the habits these experiences had engendered well qualified him in one sense for the post I had offered. In one sense I say: by which I mean my need of an influence to direct my studies and keep

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me to them. But in him I missed what I had sought, and would have taken in preference, could I have found. Sympathies he had in abundance, but they were commonplace. He shone indeed; but rather with the borrowed light of letters than the luminous atmosphere of imagination. He could not comprehend me, though he would never appear puzzled. He would miss a delicate implication. In taste he was a sensualist, esteeming the full-blooded, florid, and passionate conceptions of art above her chaste aerial hints and tender moonlit beauties. Yet he was a good and sound scholar. His knowledge of Greek and Latin was singularly exact. He was deeply read in modern literature; and his surprising memory enabled him to display to the utmost advantage the various and carefully stored treasures of his mind. But though his erudition might have enabled him to have edited with accuracy the most

obscure work in the whole range of ancient literature, his imagination would not have yielded him five lines of poetry.

When together in the library, he would often extort a smile from me by the recollection he excited of my school days. Brisk in his movements, energetic in his actions, pungent and austere in his resolute directions, he recalled to me a French tutor, whom, of all my early tutors, I most hated for his severity. But the task connd, the subject discussed, the book closed, his manner would change; he would be ceremoniously courteous, with almost a hint of obsequiousness in his behaviour, as though he wished me to understand that his sturdy discharge of his duty did not prevent him from appreciating the difference of position between us.

I should have benefited more from his counsels had my thoughts been less pre-

occupied with the subject which was hardly ever absent from my mind.

But I found it impossible wholly to surrender my attention to my tasks. Memory persistently reverted to the strange and beautiful apparition that had startled me in my midnight saunter. Every day, nay, every hour, was increasing my desire to know her. Yet I could hit upon no means of introduction. To have hung about her house, to have loitered near her garden, even had the absence of my companion rendered such a device practicable, would have been unwise; since, if now from no apparent cause she shunned intrusion or inspection, greater would be her efforts to maintain her privacy when she discovered a stranger sought to violate it.

One thing I could not hide from myself—I was in love with her. I am well aware that under the circumstances the feeling was most absurd; but I could not help it. The

memory of her beauty took shape before me at all hours, in all moods. And my love was illustrated and confirmed by my wish to meet, to know, to speak with her.

Martelli noticed my abstraction. More than once I had remarked his dusky eyes glowing on me with a gaze of interrogative inspection. But he carefully repressed his curiosity. No observation ever escaped him to hint his perception of inattentive moods.

Once, meeting his eyes, it occurred to me to take him into my confidence.

"The Italians," I mused, "are famous for their handling of love matters. They at least bear the reputation of being subtle and secret in such adventures. They wind into the most tortuous intrigues like a snake through the intricacies of a forest. Why not tell him my story? A young man in love with