DELAMERE: A NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES, VOL. III

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Delamere: a novel, in three volumes, Vol. III by G. Curzon

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G. CURZON

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DELAMERE.

A Nobel.

BY

G. CURZON,

AUTHOR OF "THE VIOLINIST OF THE QUARTIER LATIN."

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

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DELAMERE.

CHAPTER I.

While Colonel Stamer was bidding adieu to Fleurette, and Bernard, in thorough disgust at the failure of his plan, was trying to while away his time at the Hotel de Russie, Evelyn was leading a quiet, uneventful life at Monkhurst. Though a much less pretentious home than Delamere, it was preferable to her for many reasons, and, with the exception of a few weeks spent in the Highlands with Raymond during the last Easter

recess, she had lived uninterruptedly there for the last four years. It was her own special property, left her by her father, and not only was endeared to her by memories of the past, but she could breathe the air of heaven there unburdened by the thought that she was an Her only difficulty was to interloper. invent some good excuse to Raymond for persistently absenting herself from a place of which he was justly proud, and which he naturally looked upon as his own. Being of a studious turn, he appreciated Evelyn's love for retirement, and was quite as much averse to society as she was. Before his first year at Oxford had come to a close he had distinguished himself as a classical scholar, and, if his own tastes were consulted, he would have shut himself within the walls of Monkhurst instead of roaming through the

Trosachs with his mother. But she explained to him that she needed the change, and that she would not go without him, so he gave in at once. He had improved very much in his appearance, and was a fair average height, having grown rapidly within the last year. He had a sallow complexion, like his father; but his strongly marked eyebrows and thoughtful eyes gave character and individuality to his face, and went far to redeem any irregularity of feature.

He and Evelyn were inseparable during the fortnight. The change of air and scene, and the companionship of her son, had a cheering effect upon her, and brought a glow of health to her cheeks. In spite of the misfortunes which had attended her, she had preserved her good looks and youthful appearance to a wonderful degree, and few who looked at her and

Raymond would have believed that they were mother and son. Fleurette, as a matter of course, was the constant topic of conversation. Evelyn showed an almost morbid interest in her, and if Raymond's own admiration for his fascinating cousin were less decided, he might have been jealous of the undue share she seemed to possess of his mother's thoughts. It would not have been surprising, either, if from the spirit of contrariety he had become careless about an engagement which was so obviously pressed upon him. His love for Fleurette, however, was sincere, and his character too decided to be swayed by Evelyn had no reason to suppose that her son would refuse to gratify her on the all-important point of his marriage, yet she saw very plainly that for the present his mind was wholly

occupied with his success at college. looked upon his marriage with Fleurette as a settled thing, but it was for the future. Meantime, she was fast approaching womanhood; while he, although nearly two years older, could only be considered a lad. Evelyn, being fully alive to this fact, and fearing that Raymond would have a host of rivals the moment Fleurette returned to England, resolved that she should spend the last year of her school life entirely on the Continent. In .. Belgium she was safe, as the only person she ever mentioned in her letters was an elderly maiden lady. In a letter which Evelyn received some weeks ago from Madame de Lange, she heard that Fleurette was again staying with Miss Bouverie, but she had no reason to suppose that this visit would differ in any respect from the preceding ones, which