

**BY BIRTH A LADY. A
TALE. IN THREE
VOLUMES. VOL. III**

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By birth a lady. A tale. In Three Volumes. Vol. III by George Manville Fenn

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GEORGE MANVILLE FENN

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VOLUMES. VOL. III**

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A Tale.

BY

GEORGE MANVILLE FENN,

AUTHOR OF 'MAD,' 'WEDS IN THE WAY,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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BY BIRTH A LADY.



CHAPTER I.

IN THE BALANCE.

As if to show him how long he had been heedlessly wandering through the streets, Charley found Sir Philip quietly seated at the hotel on his return; and though his father carefully forbore to make any reference to the past, Charley fancied that he could detect a sense of elation on the old gentleman's part — one which seemed to anger him more as his heart kept reproaching him for the evening's lapse.

But Sir Philip made not the slightest reference to the events of the evening, not

even remarking upon Laura's indisposition ; but there was an impressive way with which Sir Philip parted from his son that night, that Charley interpreted to mean satisfaction, and he frowned heavily as he sought his own room.

In spite of his troubled mind, without recourse to narcotics, the young man slept soundly and long, waking, though, with a strange heavy sense of oppression troubling him, as the thoughts of the past night's events came upon him slowly one by one, till he was half maddened, hating himself for the part he had played, or, rather, for his weakness.

Then he recalled Ella's quiet peaceful face as he saw her turn round to Max ; and he asked himself why he should consider himself as in any way bound to her who refused to hold him by any ties. Morally he knew that he was quite free, and that,