

JOANNA OF NAPLES

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Joanna of Naples by Louisa J. Hall

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LOUISA J. HALL

**JOANNA
OF NAPLES**

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JOANNA OF NAPLES,

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

“MIRIAM.”

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TO

HER FATHER

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

The Author.

INTRODUCTION.

THE author of the following Tale deems some apology due to the public, for offering them so slight a production, founded on a subject so fertile in materials; for Joanna the First of Naples, the high-minded and ill-fated prototype of Mary Stuart, bloomed and perished at an epoch in the world's history, which can scarcely be exceeded in interest by any given period. It presents a theme worthy of the departed Scott, or the living James.

Some years since, the writer perused Mrs. Jameson's *Lives of Female Sovereigns* with great pleasure, and the impression was a lasting one, — particularly so with regard to the biography of Joanna. She was led by it to examine all the records of that celebrated Queen, to which she had access. When afterwards deprived of her customary occupations, for two or three years, by partial blindness, one of her chief resources against the weariness of

forced idleness was in exercises of the Memory and Invention. She sometimes entertained herself with weaving fictions and planning little works, destined never to come forth from the chambers of her brain; and amid the visionary processions which moved through her darkened apartment, many a time did the majestic figure of the Neapolitan Queen sweep sadly by, the heroine of the unwritten romance. As a memorial of those hours, when the faculties mercifully bestowed on every human mind asserted their power to charm away physical evil, she has, the last summer, committed some of their fruits to paper, and the task has again beguiled a few weeks of ill health. Want of eyesight has prevented her indulging in researches that might have graced her pages with antiquarian lore; but she trusts she has avoided any serious anachronisms. Her narrative is not a work of pure fiction, as most of the leading characters and principal events are historical; and she has endeavored to take no unwarrantable liberties with facts, as recorded by writers, who believed Joanna innocent of the crimes charged upon her by her enemies.

For a time, the author contemplated *attempting* a Tragedy, on the subject which is now presented in a less ambitious form; but a strong consciousness of the high nature of the

undertaking and of the difficulties to be encountered by any one, who proposes to conform to the rules laid down by the established canons of criticism, deterred her from so hazardous an enterprise.

In the following Tale, she has remembered a wish often expressed in her hearing by judicious mothers; she has endeavored to discard the machinery usually employed in works of fiction; and to bring strong passions and affections into play, without the coöperation of that, on which the main interest of a romantic story commonly depends. She respectfully waits the decision of the Public, as to the degree of interest excited for a heroine, whose fears and trials are not interwoven with a love-tale. Her little work is published in the hope, that, if it win the approbation of her young readers, they may be lured by it to the fountains of history, ever pouring forth bright streams of pleasure and instruction. As the current comes gliding down from the urns of dim antiquity, it brings us awful truths, that deserve contemplation, — the insufficiency of human greatness, — the dangers of a blinding prosperity, — the terrible retribution, which so often overtakes guilt, even on this side of the grave.