

**COLLECTION OF BRITISH AUTHORS.  
TAUCHNITZ EDITION. VOL. 2054. A  
LAODICEAN; OR, THE CASTLE OF THE  
DE STANCYS: A STORY OF TODAY.  
IN TWO VOLUMES. - VOL. II**

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**THOMAS HARDY**

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A LAODICEAN BY THOMAS HARDY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

A LAODICEAN;  
OR,  
THE CASTLE OF THE DE STANCYS.  
A STORY OF TO-DAY.

BY  
THOMAS HARDY,  
AUTHOR OF "FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

LEIPZIG  
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1882.

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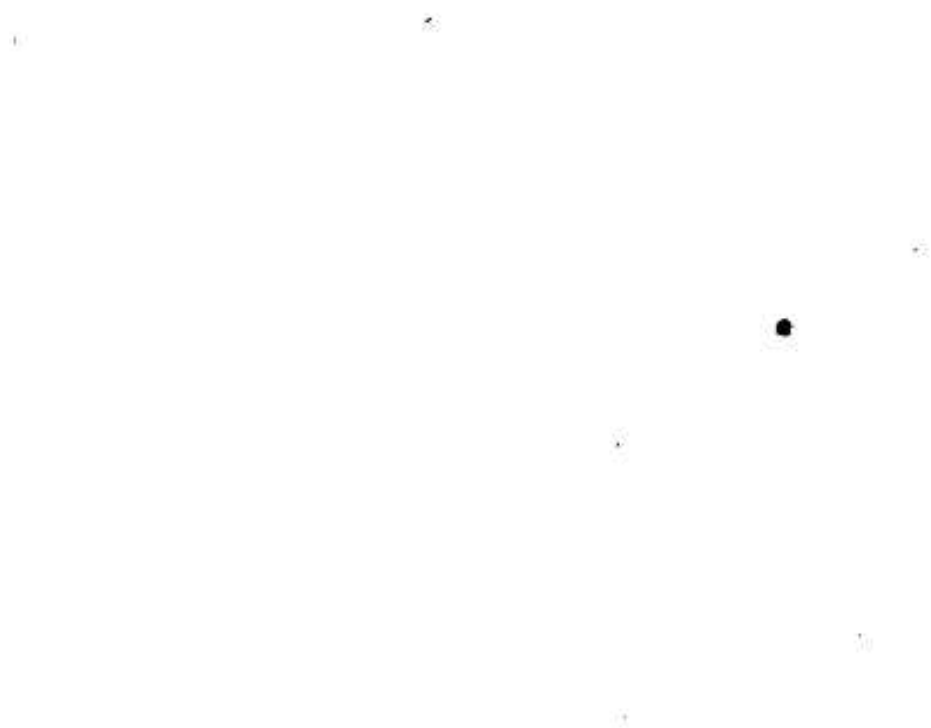


A LAODICEAN;  
OR,  
THE CASTLE OF THE STANCYS.

BOOK THE THIRD.  
DE STANCY.  
(CONTINUED.)



Figure



## CHAPTER VI.

A quick arrested expression in her two sapphirine eyes, accompanied by a little, a very little, blush which loitered long, was all the outward disturbance that the sight of her lover caused. The habit of self-repression at any new emotional impact was instinctive with her always. Somerset could not say more than a word; he looked his intense solicitude, and Paula spoke.

She declared that this was an unexpected pleasure. Had he arranged to come on the tenth as she wished? How strange that they should meet thus!—and yet not strange—the world was so small.

Somerset said that he was coming on the very day she mentioned—that the appointment gave him infinite gratification, which was quite within the truth.

“Come into this shop with me,” said Paula, with good-humoured authoritativeness.

They entered the shop and talked on while she made a small purchase. But not a word did Paula say of her sudden errand to town.

“I am having an exciting morning,” she said. “I am going from here to catch the one-o’clock train to Markton.”

“It is important that you get there this afternoon, I suppose?”

"Yes. You know why?"

"Not at all."

"The Hunt Ball. It was fixed for the sixth, and this is the sixth. I thought they might have asked you."

"No," said Somerset, a trifle gloomily. "No, I am not asked. But it is a great task for you—a long journey and a ball all in one day."

"Yes: Charlotte said that. But I don't mind it."

"You are glad you are going. Are you glad?" he said softly.

Her air confessed more than her words. "I am not so very glad that I am going to the Hunt Ball," she replied confidentially.

"Thanks for that," said he.

She lifted her eyes to his for a moment. Her manner had suddenly become so nearly the counterpart of that in the tea-house that to suspect any deterioration of affection in her was no longer generous. It was only as if a thin layer of recent events had overlaid her memories of him, until his presence swept them away.

Somerset looked up, and finding the shopman to be still some way off, he added, "When will you assure me of something in return for what I assured you that evening in the rain?"

"Not before you have built the castle. My aunt does not know about it yet, nor anybody."

"I ought to tell her."

"No, not yet. I don't wish it."

"Then everything stands as usual?"

She lightly nodded.

"That is, I may love you: but you still will not say you love me."