

**LADY-BIRD. A TALE,
IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. III**

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Lady-bird. A tale, in three volumes, Vol. III by Georgiana Fullerton

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GEORGIANA FULLERTON

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LADY-BIRD.

A FABLE.

☞ The Author of this work gives notice that she reserves to herself the right of translating it.

L A D Y - B I R D .

A T A L E .

BY

LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON.

AUTHOR OF "ELLEN MIDDLETON," &c.

"With caution judge of possibility;
Things thought unlikely, even impossible,
Experience often shows us to be true."

SPARKS-PHASE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

1852.

LONDON
GLADSTONE AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEHALL.

LADY-BIRD.

CHAPTER I.

"Joy for the freed one, she might not stay
When the crown had fallen from her life away;
She might not linger, a weary thing,
A dove with no home for its broken wing,
Thrown on the harshness of alien skies
That know not its own land's melodies,
From the long heart withering early gone;
Her task is done."

MRS. HEMANS.

"There stands a spectre in your hall;
The guilt of blood is at your door;
You changed a wholesome heart to gall;
You held your course without remorse."

TENNYSON.

A DAY came on which Mrs. Lifford felt herself still weaker than usual. She sent for Mr. Erving, the priest of Stonehouseleigh, and he stayed with her some time. Afterwards she asked to see her husband. Gertrude was sitting

in the dressing-room when he went in. She could hear their voices, though the door was closed. A word here and there reached her ear. Once she heard her mother exclaim, "No, it is not possible,—say you did not do so." Another time, "I tell you, Henry, that you have done wrong, very wrong. You do not know what you have done." Then there was a low moaning like the cry of physical pain, or of an intense inward suffering. An instant afterwards the door was thrown open, and Mr. Lifford, with a face as pale as death, said, "Gertrude, go to your mother,—she is dying." He rang the bell with violence, and rushed down stairs.

When Gertrude saw her mother's face she felt at once it was no vain alarm. He was not likely to have been startled too soon. Mrs. Lifford was gasping for breath, and could only hold out her arms to her child. She spoke only two words during the few minutes that life was trembling on the verge of death. Once she looked up to

Heaven, as she pressed Gertrude's head closer to her breast, and murmured the word "Father;" and then in her ear she whispered "Try——" More she could not utter, but gazed into her eyes for a moment with an unutterable expression of tenderness, fear, and supplication,—and then she died. That heart which had throbbcd so long ceased to beat, and the spirit returned to the God who had given, tried, and exalted it, in the fiery furnace of suffering.

When Mr. Lifford returned to that room, followed by others, he stood an instant at the door, and a cold shudder passed through his frame. His daughter turned her face for one second towards him, pointed to the form of her whom she still held in her arms, and in a tone of unnatural calmness uttered the word, "Dead." She did not add, but in that dreadful moment her eyes said, "You have killed her!" With a wild and piercing cry she turned from him, and, as he slowly approached she stretched out her arm behind her, as if