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YOUNG LOVE

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YOUNG LOVE

A NOVEL

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE

AUTHORESS OF "THE WIDOW MARRIED," "THE BARNABYS
IN AMERICA," "ONE FAULT."



PARIS

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1845

YOUNG LOVE.



CHAPTER I.

“DANS le pays des aveugles, les borgnes sont rois.” Happy is the man who, wishing to live and die in the aromatic odour of country greatness, yet possessing but a moderate estate, has his acres situated in a neighbourhood where there is no dukery.

Colonel William Henry Dermont, of THE MOUNT, was a happy man; for in this very essential particular he was blest beyond the common lot of English country gentlemen, having neither duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron, baronet, nay, not even a knight, within many miles of him; and with a snug, well-wooded little estate, producing at easy rents very little less than four thousand a year, he knew himself to be, by far, the greatest man in the neighbourhood, and that, too, without having to do battle for the pre-eminence either at assizes, sessions, or rail-road meetings.

The Mount was situated in a parish called Stoke, but respecting the name of the county I shall be silent—for how many might I not offend by naming any county; with a statement annexed, setting forth that there was a part of it where, for many miles, there was not such a thing as a nobleman’s seat to be seen!

The Mount, however, was a very nice, comfortable, pretty place, with plenty of wood and water around it, and built moreover, with every suitable accommodation for a family possessed of such a revenue as I have mentioned, but without any out-of-the-common-way extravagances in stables, dog-kennels, and pineries, demanding every day of the year greater expenditure than it is at all times convenient to make. The soil was kindly, and grateful for the care bestowed upon it, producing good returns of corn and butter, fruit and flowers. What could any reasonable man or woman wish for more?

I do not believe that either Colonel Dermont or his wife did wish for any thing more. They were, indeed, of that happily-born class of people, who are inclined to think that every thing they possess is a good deal better than any thing of the same kind possessed by any body else. This is certainly a most desirable temperament, as far as relates to the parties who possess it; but it may occasionally be found a little fatiguing to the spirits of others, as it causes their conversation to be rather too much in the same key. But in no other respect could the most envious individuals of their acquaintance find any reason to complain of this happy peculiarity. In no degree could they be reasonably considered as unusually stiff or stately in their demeanour, or in any way overbearing or morose in their conscious superiority. The very worst that could be said of them was, that they were fully aware of their many advantages over the majority of their fellow-creatures and that they enjoyed, with a good deal of relish, the happiness of believing that they held rather an elevated place in creation. It must be a very ill-tempered being who could find fault with this.

They had been married, at the time my narrative begins, rather more than six years, and had scarcely ever had any dispute whatever, much less any disagreement which could deserve the name of a quarrel. This proves, beyond all possibility of doubt, that they were both good-tempered people—and so, indeed, they were; but besides being good-tempered, they really did think wonderfully alike upon all subjects, so that; to say the truth, it would have been by no means easy for them to have found any thing to quarrel about.

They had but one child; luckily, however, this was a boy, and certainly, without exaggeration, one of the finest that ever was born. He was exceedingly handsome, and very intelligent; and although at times a little headstrong and whimsical, which his nurse thought might probably be owing to his being rather more indulged than other children, he had a generous and affectionate temper, which most people seemed to think atoned for his naughtiness.

But what was of even greater consequence than either his beauty, his intelligence, or his good temper, he was very strong and healthy, so that there was no danger that the Mount and its appurtenances should pass away from the race. Perhaps, though they never did appear to think themselves unfortunate in any thing, and, in fact, never spoke upon this particular subject at all, they might have been as well pleased had heaven given them two or three more children, for Mrs. Dermont had a pretty little fortune of fifteen thousand pounds, which was settled upon “younger children,” and the not having any younger