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BY

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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MADONNA MARY.

CHAPTER I.

MAJOR OCHTERLONY had been very fidgety after the coming in of the mail. He was very often so, as all his friends were aware, and nobody so much as Mary, his wife, who was herself, on ordinary occasions, of an admirable composure. But the arrival of the mail, which is so welcome an event at an Indian station, and which generally affected the Major very mildly, had produced a singular impression upon him on this special occasion. He was not a man who possessed a large correspondence in his own person; he had reached middle life, and had nobody particular belonging to him, except his wife and his little children, who were as yet too young to have been sent "home;" and consequently there was nobody to receive letters from, except a few married brothers and sisters, who don't count, as everybody knows. That kind of formally affectionate correspondence is not generally exciting, and even Major Ochterlony supported it with composure. But as for the mail which arrived on the 15th of April, 1838, its effect was different. He went out and in so often, that Mary got very little good of her letters, which were from her young sister and her old aunt, and were naturally overflowing with all kinds