

COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS
TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 2584.

GUILDEROY, BY OUIDA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

GUILDEROY

BY

OUIDA,

AUTHOR OF

'UNDER TWO FLAGS," "SIGNA," "A HOUSE PARTY," ETC.

COPYRIGHT EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1889.

G U I L D E R O Y.

CHAPTER I.

THE essay on Friendship had been finished, and had found its way into print in a famous review, though its writer declared it a mere spurious and worthless offspring of the Lysis. Guilderoy had on more than one occasion amused himself with casting his thoughts on paper, and the world assured him that he might attain eminence in letters if he cared to do so. But he considered this flattery; and, even had it been true, he would have considered it far too much trouble to obey its suggestion.

Aubrey read the essay when it appeared, and approved of it.

"Only allow me to say, my dear Evelyn," he observed one summer day at Ladysrood, when they were alone on the terrace, "that it is odd that any man who has such admirable theories as yours, should go so utterly against them in practice as you do. I know no living person who is so little heedful of the feelings of others, or so little constant in his own feelings, as yourself. Pray forgive me the remark. I am no doubt

leaving good manners outside the temple of intimacy in presuming to make it."

"You are quite welcome to make it, and no doubt it is true enough," said Guilderoy, who nevertheless was not pleased. "I see how things ought to be; I do not pretend to make them what they ought. I do not think that I am a false friend, as you imply!"

"I do not think you are a friend at all," said Aubrey. "You do not care about men's friendship, and with women you have, if you remark them at all, something much warmer than friendship. But what I meant to convey is that, despite your admirable knowledge of the sensitiveness of the human soul, and of what is due to it in intimacy, you entirely neglect observance of those duties."

"What do you mean?" said Guilderoy, a little annoyed.

"What I say," replied Aubrey. "You know the duties of a sympathetic friend, but I fear you never fulfil them."

"We are not bound to put our theories into practice. If we were, authors would be a race apart; the missing link between man and the angels."

"Yes, I suppose no writer ever did, except Socrates, and he got poisoned for his consistency."

"And he was not a writer, by your leave, my dear scholar; only a teacher."

"True; but really, Evelyn, your theories are so charming that you should attempt to carry them out in your own life, and perhaps you would be the happier for doing so; egotism is tempting, but it is not always so happy as it looks."

"I am not more of an egotist than most men," said Guilderoy, moved to a certain irritation. Aubrey raised his eyebrows.

"In what way am I?" asked Guilderoy, with petulance. "Pray let us speak as if we were at the bottom of her well with Truth."

"With all my heart, but Truth, like most ladies, will probably move us to quarrel about her."

"Oh, no; pray continue."

"Well, have you ever lived for anybody, except yourself, in your life?"

"For a little while I did," said Guilderoy honestly; and he sighed, for he was thinking of the first period of his love for Beatrice Soria.

"Oh, no, you did not even then," said Aubrey, who knew what the sigh and the answer meant. "It was all self-indulgence, almost all love is; at least when it is victorious."

"How can you divorce self, and the passions?"

"Not easily, I admit."

Aubrey was silent a moment, then he said suddenly:

"Will you allow me to ask you one thing? Do you think your wife is happy?"

Guilderoy's face flushed slightly.

"She is not a happy disposition," he said evasively. "The world does not amuse her. Then she has lost two children; and she has very over-wrought expectations."

"Of you?"

"Of me, of human nature, of life in general. Because her father has the virtues of a saint and a solitary,