
The Minor Canon

Fitzgerald Gerald Beresford

Title: The Minor Canon

Author: Fitzgerald Gerald Beresford

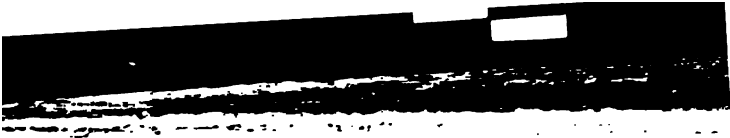
This is an exact replica of a book. The book reprint was manually improved by a team of professionals, as opposed to automatic/OCR processes used by some companies. However, the book may still have imperfections such as missing pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were a part of the original text. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections which can not be improved, and hope you will enjoy reading this book.











THE MINOR CANON

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

In Crown 8vo, Handsome Cloth, Gilt, Price 6s.

**A FLEETING SHOW
AN ODD CAREER
THE FATAL PHIAL
BEYOND THESE DREAMS
THE STIGMA**

DIGBY, LONG & CO., PUBLISHERS



THE MINOR CANON

BY

G. BERESFORD FITZGERALD, F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

"BEYOND THESE DREAMS," "A FLEETING SHOW,"

"THE STIGMA," "AN ODD CAREER," ETC.

"There is an earnest longing
In those who onward gaze,
Looking with weary patience
Towards the coming days.

There is a deeper longing,
More sad, more strong, more keen,
Those know it who look backward,
And yearn for what has been."

London

DIGBY, LONG & CO.

18 Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, E.C.

1900



[REDACTED]

10/10/10

10/10/10



THE MINOR CANON

CHAPTER I

THE winter in England had set in very late in the New Year, but it had arrived at last with unmistakable vigour and icy tenacity. Twenty degrees of frost had been registered in that county which, from its fenlands and Hollandish canals, always heralds, with cruel precision, the pastime of the rich and the shivering endurance of the poor.

In Lincolnshire skating was at its zenith, and, while hunting men from the Midlands went sulkily back to club life in London, the young and healthy who had no stables full of horses, traversed the lakes and shot across the meres.

In Kensal town, this cruel evening, the snow was noiselessly falling in huge, remorse-

less flakes, until the narrow pavement was almost hidden from sight. The roofs of the houses were already mere masses of dazzling snow, lighted up by the great flaring lights of the butchers' shops on a Saturday night, in which the crowd of snow-clad women sought for the odds and ends which were to mark for them the Christianity of the day of resurrection.

All of them looked tired and worn, and wet and cold. Some of them looked furious, like wild beasts at war with all the world, and seeking quarrels in the high Cockney accent. Some of them looked near the end, on whom pain and squalor and disease had set their ineffaceable marks. The struggle to exist brought them out on the streets on this snowy, bitter night in February; but it was easy to see the neighbouring cemetery would be a welcome haven of rest; the peaceful sleep they had long forgotten, the absence of hourly care, and hopeless poverty, the ended ache, in the heart of those who had known better days, as to the why and the wherefore.

The night was such a terrible one that the streets soon became deserted. The public-houses and the gin-palaces were no doubt crowded, as the sound of music, the harp and the violin, made manifest, even on these bridal-clad roads and pavements. Later on, the drunkards and the revellers would issue out, the snow would soon be contaminated, and another sunless morning rise on a part of London, which, containing much poverty, is nevertheless included, for the most part, under the satisfactory heading of respectability.

Hurrying round a corner from the main street came a tall woman whose form, clad though it was in garments of the shabbiest and least substantial pattern, yet seemed, even in her walk and lithe, almost graceful, figure, to speak eloquently of a departed past. She had a parcel in her hand, and her face was almost hidden in the woollen "wrap" drawn round her mouth. She looked, as to age, about twenty, but the London years are hard to reckon in the poor and she might have been much