

**OLD MARGARET: A
NOVEL. IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOLUME I**

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Old Margaret: a novel. In two volumes. Volume I by Henry Kingsley

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HENRY KINGSLEY

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VOLUMES. VOLUME I**

OLD MARGARET.

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A Novel.

BY

HENRY KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "RAVENSHOE," "MADMOISELLE MATHILDE,"
"GEOFFREY HAMLIN," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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OLD MARGARET.

CHAPTER I.

AT five-and-forty, Van Kenning was a confirmed old bachelor. Wildways said that in fourteen or fifteen years he might marry his housekeeper and settle in life; but this was only looked on as a joke, even by the Duke himself.

“Van Kenning is not such an ass,” the Duke said. “He comes of a long-lived stock, and a money-getting stock, and a money-holding stock. He will never let a

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woman have the dipping of her hand into *his* pocket."

"Yet he is fond of a pretty face," said a smirking boy nobleman.

"Then he had better get your portrait painted by one of his friends, the artists," replied the Duke, "and get it done before you have spoilt it by fast living. I tell you that Van Kenning is a confirmed old bachelor, and that in twenty years you will look older than he does now, puppy."

The rest of the gentlemen present were seized with a somewhat troublesome cough. The Duke had evidently got out of bed the wrong side that morning.

"Van Kenning is worth half the grinning gabies in the kingdom," the Duke went on. "He is a wise man: he loves his friends, his pictures, his dinner, and the bow-window of his club. He is a happy old bachelor. I

wish to heaven *I* were; but that is past praying for."

It was so painfully true, that the French Ambassador, who happened to be present, showed the tact of his nation by saying that if this weather lasted, the hay would be got in nicely.

"You should know," said the Duke; "your people generally make hay while the sun shines. Will you dine down the river with me to-day, Count, and we will talk that matter over again; and I will catch Van Kenning. His views are very much fixed, he is a staunch freetrader, and knows more about wool than all the council together."

"He is strong for the trades unions, though," said the Frenchman. "Let us have him, however."

Meanwhile, the unconscious Van Kenning had finished his breakfast, and was prepar-

ing to spend his day. When he had shut his street door behind him, and stood in the bright June sunlight, looking up and down the street, he was the best dressed buck in the West-end of the town that day, the dandy Duke not excepted; and he knew it. Was any one looking at him? Not a creature but the policeman; and so he stepped off down the street towards his club, to hear the news.

There was nobody there but old Piffer, whom he hated. And old Piffer said that a glass of Schiedam gin with a small spoonful of honey in it was an excellent thing for the wind, and that he had just been having some of it himself. Van Kenning left the nasty old fellow in the bay window, and struck resolutely eastwards towards the trading and manufacturing parts of the town.