





"'Lady Lisle!' He lifted his hat."—P. 3.

[Front.

# LADY LISLE

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET"

*Exc., Exc., Exc.*



"It's you I want, body and soul!"—P. 333.

LONDON  
WARD, LOCK, & TYLER, WARWICK HOUSE  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

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# LADY LISLE

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," "AURORA FLOYD,"

ETC. ETC. ETC.

*Mary Elizabeth (Braddon) Maxwell*

REVISED EDITION.



LONDON

WARD, LOCK, AND TYLER

WARWICK HOUSE, PATERNOSTER ROW

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# LADY LISLE



## CHAPTER I.

AFTER EIGHT YEARS.

THE red glory of an autumn sunset blazed upon the dark patches of furze and the trembling fringes of purple heather that crowned the ridgy summit of a hill in the county of Sussex.

Far away there mingled with the low, complaining voice of the September wind the long wailings of the distant ocean. Up and down, up and down, upon a narrow pathway, that wound along the brow of this great hill, paced a lady, dressed in widow's weeds—a lady who never took her eyes from the crimson horizon and the long purple line of the distant sea. A boy, of about seven years of age, ran backwards and forwards amongst the furze-bushes, stopping now and then to gather the yellow blossoms, which, five minutes afterwards, he threw away and trampled under his feet.

The smoke from two or three cottage-chimneys at the foot of this hill only broke the utter solitude of the barren landscape; but in the winding road, which skirted the hill-side, a low phaeton, with a pair of impatient cream-



coloured ponies, stood, waiting for its occupants. This carriage had waited for upwards of an hour, and the groom was tired of driving slowly up and down, listening to the whirr of the partridges, and the report of some sportsman's fowling-piece far away upon the downs.

"When are you going home, mamma?" the boy said presently, running to his mother's side.

"Very soon."

"I am so tired."

"My poor Rupert!" murmured the lady tenderly. She laid her hand caressingly upon the boy's shoulder, but never took her eyes from the fading sunlight over the darkening line of the distant sea;—"Dr. Parsons says you must have exercise, Rupert," she added presently; "that's why I bring you up here. Run about, run about, my darling."

"I hate running about alone. Play with me, mamma. Play at horses."

The lady sighed heavily, and, drawing her great shawl closer round her, prepared to comply with the boy's request. She was tall and slender, very fragile and delicate in appearance. Her complexion was dazzlingly fair, her eyes large and blue, lovely in colour, but perhaps rather wanting in expression. She had a small, straight nose; a rosy little mouth which did not promise much decision of character; and long, loose floating curls of the palest flaxen hair. She would have been a beautiful doll, but she was not a beautiful woman. She drew her rich mourning shawl closely round her, knotted the ends at the back of her waist, and, giving them to her son, began to run up and down the mountain ridge; the boy shouting to her, with a feeble treble voice.

This he called playing at horses.