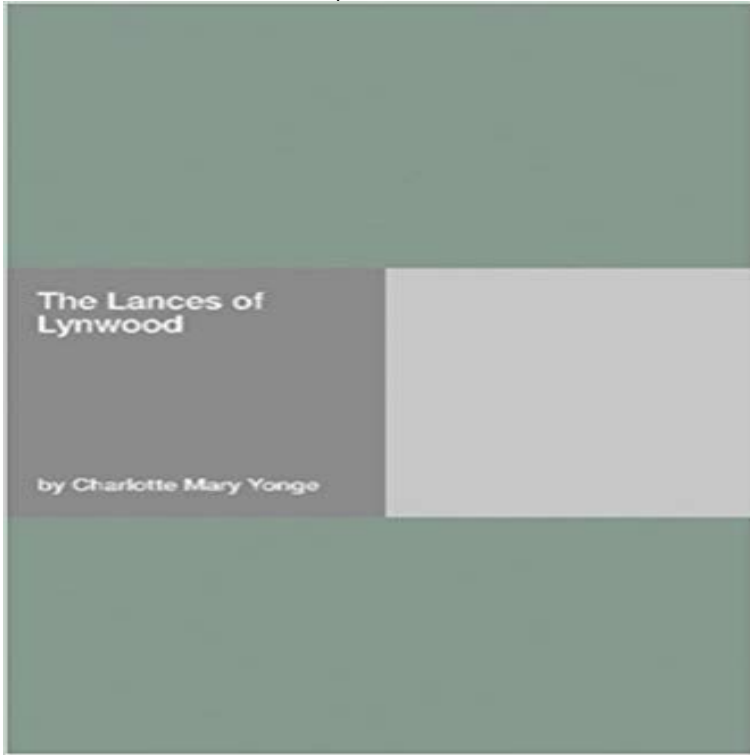


# The Lances of Lynwood



Seldom had the interior of this island presented a more peaceful and prosperous aspect than in the reign of Edward III, when the more turbulent spirits among his subjects had found occupation in his foreign wars, and his wise government had established at home a degree of plenty, tranquility, and security, such as had probably never before been experienced in England. Castle and cottage, church and convent, alike showed the prosperity and safety of the inhabitants, at once by the profuseness of embellishment in those newly erected, and by the neglect of the jealous precautions required in former days of confusion and misrule. Thus it was with the village of Lynwood, where, among the cottages and farmhouses occupying a fertile valley in Somersetshire, arose the ancient Keep, built of gray stone, and strongly fortified; but the defenses were kept up rather as appendages of the owners rank, than as requisite for his protection. It is well that they were; for the days of peace were at their end, and the hour of the lances was at hand.

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