

**CHARLIE CLEMENT;
OR, THE
BOY FRIEND**

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Charlie Clement; Or, the Boy Friend by Sarah Schoonmaker Baker (Aunt Friendly)

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SARAH SCHOONMAKER BAKER (AUNT FRIENDLY)

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Charlie's Fall.

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OR,

THE BOY FRIEND.



Augusta admiring her new clothes.

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CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. AN ICY MORNING	1
II. A BOYISH VISITOR	10
III. A STEP NEARER	17
IV. OLD KATY BROWN	26
V. POOR FUN	43
VI. GOOD SEED	53
VII. HOMELESS	64
VIII. A FALL	71
XI. THE CONFIRMATION	81
X. ANNIE'S WORK	84
XI. ANNIE'S VISIT	90
XII. A BLACK SHADOW	100
XIII. PURER AIR	107
XIV. CONCLUSION	113

CHARLIE CLEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

AN ICY MORNING.

ICE ! ice ! everywhere ! Ice on the ground, ice on the trees, ice on the fences—the very houses coated with ice ! So it was at Meedville, one Sunday morning in December, yet the church-bell rang out as cheerily as if it were the merry month of May, and the gate to the churchyard was thrown as wide open as if the broad walk were not one sheet of treacherous ice, promising a downfall to any who dared to venture upon it. A heavy mist was in the air, and there was a continual rattling sound, as the trees dropped morsels of their frozen coating, when their branches waved in the wind.

Would anybody venture out on such a day? The sexton seemed to think so, for he pulled the bell-rope as if he was sure that he was accomplishing a good end.

At Meedville there were some churchgoers who never stayed at home for wind or weather, and Mrs. Berridge and her family were among them. The good lady herself, and her two daughters, would as soon have thought of putting out their own eyes as neglecting the sound of that well-known bell. In their seats they were sure to be when the minister entered the chancel; that is, their bodies were sure to be there, wherever else their minds might chance to be wandering.

On this particular morning they had a stranger with them; not one of the tall, dignified men, or the fashionably-dressed ladies who occasionally appeared there, but a lad in his grey roundabout—a boy, evidently not more than fourteen years of age.