

**GRACE DERMOTT;
OR, HOW TO LIGHTEN
HEAVY BURDENS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649159307

Grace Dermott; or, How to lighten heavy burdens by Anonymous

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ANONYMOUS

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"Once when Phoebe was standing before the glass, arranging a flower among her dark curls—" p. 71.

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HOW TO LIGHTEN HEAVY BURDENS.



PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

No. 126 CHESTNUT STREET.

NEW YORK: No. 107 NASSAU ST.—BOSTON: No. 7 CORNHILL.

LOUISVILLE: No. 128 FOURTH ST.

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GRACE DERMOTT.

CHAPTER I.

“ONLY two more hours, and aunt Alice will be here!” exclaimed Phebe Harrington, attentively examining, for the twentieth time, the little French clock which stood upon the chimney-piece, and never went at all the faster for all her impatience. “Only two more hours! I am so glad; for I do love her dearly.”

“Every one loves Alice Vernon,” said her mother, gently, “and I do not know why; unless it is for the old reason, that she loves and is kind to everybody.”

“Does aunt Alice love cross, ugly people?” asked little Willie, with an arch look, which made his sisters smile, and called up an angry flush on the pale cheek of his cousin, Grace Dermott.

“Yes, I suppose so. At any rate she will be kind to them.”

"You hear that, Grace," said the provoking boy.

"It is nothing to me," replied his cousin, rather sharply. "I do not want any one to love me."

"I should think not," replied Phebe: "by the way in which you behave. It would indeed be expecting an impossibility."

"I know it," replied Grace, "and have long since ceased to expect it, or to care about it."

"Hush, hush! We must have no quarrelling to-day," interposed Mrs. Harrington. "Willie, I have told you repeatedly not to tease your cousin. How very silly, Grace, to mind what such a child says."

"I do not mind," replied Grace, doggedly; for she was just then in one of her very worst humours. "It is all the same to me what any one says or thinks."

"Grace," said her aunt, "you had better go to your own room until tea-time. Poor thing!" added she, as the door closed; "I have no heart to reprove her. And now, children, remember, once for all, that I will not have her provoked."

"Really, mother," said her eldest daughter Caroline, "there is no speaking before Grace, of late. She takes every thing to herself,

whether we mean it or not, and her temper is unbearable."

"I do not think that she is very well to-day," said Mrs. Harrington; "and Grace never complains, you know. I must talk to Doctor Greenfield about her."

"An hour and a half!" exclaimed Phebe, returning once more to the little French clock. "How slowly the time passes!"

"It always does to the impatient," replied her mother. "I would advise you to get some employment."

Phebe brought her work, still looking up between every stitch, and throwing it down at the sound of every approaching carriage; while her sister Caroline, although possessing more self-control, was scarcely less impatient.

At an upper window, with her burning brow pressed against the glass to cool it, stood Grace Dermott: not that she cared about this new aunt Alice, whom she had never seen, but from a restless feeling of curiosity. She saw the carriage drive up; she heard the joyful welcome of her young cousins; she beheld, in imagination, the affectionate embraces given and received, and felt like an outcast and a stranger: while the consciousness how much her own evil temper had contributed to that alienation in-

creased her trouble. It grew dark, and Grace felt cold and desolate. Presently, Phebe came to summon her to tea.

"I wonder that you thought of me," said Grace, turning away, that her cousin might not see she had been weeping. "I concluded that you would all have been too much taken up with your new aunt."

"Why, to confess the truth, Grace, we had forgotten you, until she inquired after you; for you know she is your aunt as well as mine."

Grace did not reply; but she lingered a moment behind her cousin, to smooth her hair, and arrange her dress as well as she could in the dim mirror. And then turning away with a sigh, murmured hopelessly, "What does it signify?" and went down stairs with a sullen and defying look. She heard Caroline say, "Here comes Grace!" and it sounded to her morbid sensibility like a mockery.

Mias Vernon drew her towards her, and kissed her affectionately. She was the first person who had kissed Grace Dermott since her mother died!

"How cold your hands are, my dear child," said she, still retaining them in both of hers.

"Yes,—there is no fire up-stairs."

"And what made you sit there all alone?"