

**THE HILDREN OF  
THE HAPEL. A TALE**

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The hildren of the hapel. A Tale by Mary Charlotte J. Leith

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**MARY CHARLOTTE J. LEITH**

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# The Children of the Chapel.

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK DENNIS."

"Lo! who must holde the candle, but he that burns map?  
Owell, agins that I am chosen this pageant for to playe,  
Rise at byt, for out it shall eury light by this waye  
How he, poore sylve beges, alyke much mee."

John Webster.

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## THE CHILDREN OF THE CHAPEL.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE RIDE.

IT was a fine spring morning in the year 1559. The air was clear and mild, and the rays of the sun, though he had yet some hours to travel before reaching his midday height, were already gaining power; nor did they shine less brightly three hundred years ago than now, upon the tall budding trees, the green meadows, and the calm river at the outskirts of the old country town of Ferryton.

Beside a gate opening upon one of those meadows was standing a young boy, whose dress and air, though not showy, betokened him to be the child of parents well off in the world. His little cap, with its drooping feather, shaded a handsome, ruddy face, the complexion somewhat tanned by country air and sunshine, with small, straight features, lustrous hazel eyes, and soft, brown hair. His satchel hung carelessly from his arm as he stood leaning against the rail, idly watching the proceedings of a fisherman who was angling in the



river at a little distance. I say idly, for the fact was, he ought to have been on his way to school then, and he had been standing there for at least ten minutes loitering. Idleness was Arthur Savile's great fault; not lazy, but heedless idleness; an idleness which made any kind of application, anything like work that did not fall in with his present fancy, distasteful to him. His father often spoke gravely to him about it, telling him that he was old enough now to correct himself of the fault, for he was ten years old; old enough to go about his tasks because it was his duty to do so, even if he did not like it at the moment. He had scolded him and punished him too, and Arthur had taken both scolding and punishment in very good part, but had never yet thought seriously of setting himself to watch against his besetting failing.

So now he stood there, though he knew quite well that he should be late for school, wishing that he were the angler who was amusing himself, with no lessons to learn, and thinking in his own mind how hard it was that he should be obliged to spend the whole of that bright spring morning shut up with his books. Not but that if any one had set Arthur to fish for an hour he would not have grown heartily tired of the occupation long before the time was up; but just then he would, or fancied he would, have liked anything better than what happened to be his present duty; it did not signify that the pursuit he was watching was not particularly enlivening, at least he was putting off the evil moment of beginning his distasteful tasks.

His patience and that of the angler were rewarded at last. There was a bite; and Arthur had the satisfaction of seeing the man land his shining, slippery victim. After which he bethought himself that it was really time to be proceeding on his way, if he wished to avoid public disgrace at school,

so he swung his satchel over his shoulder, pushed his cap straight on his head, and set off at a brisk pace, singing as he went the burden of an old hunting carol.

He had not gone far before he heard the sound of a horse's feet behind him. He turned, and saw a horseman approaching, but continued his way again unheeding, while the steady amble of the horse kept pace for a while with his own hasty steps.

At length the rider checked his steed a little, at the same time exclaiming, "A good morning to you, young sir; whither away so fast?"

Arthur looked up at the speaker. He was a man of about thirty, spare and strongly made, with dark hair, a fresh complexion, keen grey eyes, and a face of which the naturally sharp expression was heightened by the short, pointed beard. Something there might be a little severe in the eyes and mouth, but both were smiling now, and Arthur, as he gazed up at him, thought he looked very good-natured. From his dress Arthur took him for a gentleman of some rank; his horse, a sturdy animal, appeared fresh and cool, as if having but lately left its stable.

"I'm going to school," was Arthur's frank answer to the stranger's question.

"To school are you, my lad? and where?"

"In Ferryton, sir."

"And what is your name?"

"Arthur Savile."

"You were singing when I overtook you," continued the horseman, who seemed disposed to prolong the conversation, "what was your song?"

"Oh, just an old carol."

"Suppose you sing it to me; I have much liking for an old song, and it will enliven my journey."

"Sir, excuse me," said Arthur, "but I may not linger. I shall be late for school now."

"'Tisn't far to your school, is it?"

"A few paces down Ferryton High Street."

"Then we'll make a bargain," said the stranger pulling up his horse, "if you will sing me one verse of your song, I will give you a lift behind me into Ferryton. What say you?"

Arthur's face brightened. He was as fond of fun as any boy in that century or this, and the temptation of a ride was a great one. It would make up his lost time too, and was very easily obtained; for Arthur was not a shy boy, he was very fond of singing, and the strange gentleman looked so merry and kind. Arthur had a feeling somehow in his heart, however, that this was not doing quite as he should; but he did not listen to it: as his manner was, he only thought of present gratification. So without considering whether his father would like him to be talking and riding with a complete stranger, he stopped, hesitated for a moment, and then began in a sweet, clear, silvery treble, the following carol,

"As I came by a green forest side  
I met with a forester that bade me abide,  
With hey go bet, hey go bet, hey go bow,  
We shall have sport and game enow.

"Underneath a tree I did me set,  
And with a great hart anon I met!  
I bade let slip, and said hey go bet,  
With hey go bet, hey go bet bow,  
We shall have sport and game enow."

Here Arthur paused for a moment, and glancing up, caught the eye of his listener fixed upon him in grave attention; his features had assumed their natural expression, and it was one of such sternness that the boy felt almost afraid.