

THREE TALES FOR AN IDLE HOUR

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Three Tales for an Idle Hour by Cecelia Anne Jones

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CECELIA ANNE JONES

**THREE TALES FOR
AN IDLE HOUR**

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FOR AN

IDLE HOUR

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE SUNBEAM," "GERTRUDE DACRE,"
"HOW RACHAEL LEE FOUND THE CHRISTMAS GIFT,"
"TWO BAPTISMS," &c.

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TO
E. A., & F. DICKSON,
THESE TALES ARE DEDICATED
BY
THEIR VERY SINCERE FRIEND,
C. A. J.

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32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

CONTENTS.

	Page.
LIONEL HARCOURT	1
PETER BARRETT'S LODGER	63
MARY SINCLAIR, AN OLD MAN'S STORY ...	105



LIONEL HARCOURT.

CHAPTER I.

THE snow was on the ground, the bright clear stars shone in the wintry sky, shedding their soft, subdued light upon the white clad-earth, the chill north wind moaned and howled, and ever and anon through its dismal wail, sounds of joy, and mirth, and revelry fell on the ear, sweet village bells broke into glad chimes, and cheerful fires burned in homes to which warmth and light were ordinarily strangers; for it was Christmas Eve, a day which we have always regarded from our earliest childhood as almost as good as Christmas Day itself, a time for school prizes, and family gatherings, and blindman's buff, and snap-dragon, a season too which brings many a sad memory to those amongst us, who, think of the vacant chairs around the fire-side of home, of the loving words of greeting spoken by those whose voices are now hushed for ever in this world. Truly it is a mingled feeling of joy and sorrow which old Christmas brings us, but there is one joy which should be ever present.