

**MADLINE
CLIFFORD'S
SCHOOL LIFE**

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Madeline Clifford's School Life by Mary Meeke

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MARY MEEKE

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BY

MARY MEKE,

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CHAPTER I.

"BOTHER!" said Madeline Clifford, as, with her nose flattened against the window-pane, she watched the steady down-pour of rain, which made her dread that a day's pleasure, long looked forward to, must be given up.

It was, indeed, a dreary prospect on which the little girl gazed.

It was a June morning, and in fine weather the view from the parlour window of Morleigh Cottage was a very pretty one.

A sloping lawn went down to the sea-shore, from which it was only separated by a hedge, and when the sea was calm, and little boats with white sails flitted over its tranquil bosom, Madeline, who was full of poetry and sentiment, would clap her hands with joy, and assure her mamma "that, in her opinion, there was no place like Morleigh, and that to live where there was no sea view would be intolerable."

On the day, however, to which we particularly allude, Madeline's pet view was enveloped in mist. The clouds were heavy, the trees dripping, and the pretty standard roses bowed their heads, as the moisture and fitful gusts of wind played sad havoc with their brilliant blossoms.

"I do believe," exclaimed Madeline, "that the rain is falling on purpose to vex me; if we had not been going to the wood to-day the sun would certainly have shone, as it has done for so many weeks."

"Madeline," said a gentle voice behind her, "do you forget that the continual sunshine has lasted so long that rain has been much wanted, and was even prayed for in church last Sunday?"

"Yes, mamma, I know; the country people say they will have a short crop of hay if rain should stay away much longer; and Barrett, the gardener, told me yesterday that a few days' rain, even if it did knock his roses about a little, would do a mint of good to the flowers and shrubs; but still I wish it had not rained just now; it is very hard."

"Ah! my love, we must not always think of ourselves. We may hope for many a bright summer's morning which will suit our expedition to the wood; and besides, these little disappointments are often sent for a good purpose, to teach us how to bear the many trials and crosses which

are sure to occur even to those whose path in life is steeped in sunshine."

"That is what you always say, and I suppose you are right; but, indeed, I do feel disappointed." And Madeline wiped away a tear as she spoke.

"I do not blame you for that," said her mother; "but try to forget the expedition we had planned, and let us get over our lessons early, and who knows but that we may get a little stroll in the afternoon."

Mrs. Clifford's patience was sadly tried that morning. Madeline did her best to fix her attention, but her mind appeared a perfect chaos. When a sum was done, and handed to her mother, German declensions figured half-way down the slate, and when, hoping at all events to secure the latter being accurately said, Mrs. Clifford asked her to repeat them, she began vehemently to construe, or rather misconstrue, the verb "avoir." The music lesson was, if possible, a greater failure, and, as might be expected, Madeline wound up with a violent fit of crying, and Mrs. Clifford told her that whether the fine weather returned or not, the visit to the wood must be put off for a month, by which time she trusted her little girl would know better how to bear a disappointment.

Madeline sighed, but did not dream of remonstrating, for her heart accused her of having