

**THE EARLY CALLED, THE  
STOIC, AND THE LANSBYS  
OF LANSBY HALL**

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The Early Called, the Stoic, and the Lansbys of Lansby Hall by Caroline Bowles Southey & Jane Kinderly Stanford

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**CAROLINE BOWLES SOUTHEY & JANE KINDERLY STANFORD**

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No 1

THE

EARLY CALLED,  
*Brother, Caroline Ann (Stewart)*

THE STOIC,  
*Stanford, Jane Kibben*

AND

THE LANSBYS OF LANSBY HALL.

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PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA, AND BLANCHARD.

1836.

THE EARLY CALLED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

CHAPTERS ON CHURCHYARDS.

1861  
May 25  
P. H.

B

## CHAPTER I.

"Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,  
And stars to set; but all—  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, Oh Death!"

MRS. HERMAN.

FOUR years ago, towards the close of the last winter of my sojourn in Italy, I became acquainted at Naples with an English family, consisting of three persons, an elderly widow lady, and her orphan nephew and niece—the children of an only sister, bequeathed on the death of their parents, while still infants, to their aunt's guardianship.

Mrs. Arden's childless widowhood had been fondly devoted to the trust so sacredly confided, and the orphans committed to her care became to her as her own children, and repaid her maternal tenderness with the fulness of filial love, and the promise in mind and person of a beautiful maturity. Lovely and alike they were in mind and person those youthful creatures, when I first saw them, a few weeks after their arrival at Naples; and, but for my knowledge of the cause that had brought them thither, little should I have suspected any fatal indications in the transparent complexion, and bright bloom of the sister's cheek, and in the liquid lustre of her soft blue eye. But so it was.

The seal of death was there ; and although on the first symptoms of disease Mrs. Arden had hurried with her darling to a softer climate, little hope had been held out to her that the change would lead to permanent recovery, for the seeds of the insidious malady had been a part of the orphans' inheritance derived to them from both parents, who had fallen its victims within two years of each other. The children had also inherited the marked and peculiar character of beauty which had distinguished their deceased mother—that fearful beauty—so touching ! so unearthly ! and yet, like roses on a sepulchre, masking decay and death. With what unspeakable tenderness—what unremitting care, had their maternal guardian watched over the infancy and childhood of those two beautiful creatures, so endeared tenfold by their orphan state, and by the circumstances which made their hold on life so far more precarious than is even the common tenure of mortality.

“ They were such little angels ! ” she once said to me, when speaking of their bygone years—“ when they knelt before me, side by side, with their little hands joined together, and their sweet eyes lifted up so reverently, and both young voices mingling into one silver sound, as they said their evening prayer ! Oh, I have looked at them till my eyes were dim with tears, and I felt as if I *must* resign them—as if they had but to spread their wings, and finish in Heaven the last strains of their concluding hymn ! ”

Poor Mrs. Arden ! It was thus she poured out to



me the fulness of her heart but a few evenings before the partial fulfilment of that sad and tender foreboding in the death of her sweet niece. Unavailing was the balmy breath of the sweet south—unavailing the physician's skill, and the solicitude of devoted affection! The youngest of the orphan pair—the fair Ann Ross—died, and was buried in the land of the stranger; and when I looked at the young Herbert, in his deep mourning for her to whom his heart had clung with more than a brother's love, with whose life his life had been bound up by such ties as the peculiar circumstances of their orphan state could only have entwined—when I gazed on the youthful mourner's tall and slender form—the feminine delicacy of his complexion—the varying colour of his cheek—and the sickly whiteness of his long thin fingers, so strongly contrasted by the black sleeve, my heart was wrung by a painful conviction that on him also the Death Angel had set the awful seal—that he too was doomed to pass away in the first flower of his youth, and to be laid in his sister's grave, before the young cypresses that he had planted with his own hand, round the marble urn on which her name was inscribed, should spread their tender fibres in the consecrated mould, and put forth their earliest shoots.

I was mistaken, however. The young man's days were not so nearly numbered. Life was strong within him, and disease had made as yet no serious progress in a constitution, the delicate organization of which had but evinced its sympathy with the acute sensibilities of a

moral frame of still finer workmanship. Herbert Ross felt and believed, when he laid his only sister in that untimely grave, that his young life, henceforth companionless and joyless, was a boon, the continuance of which was little to be desired at the hands of that mysterious Providence, whose decree had then apparently gone forth against himself, the lonely one and last of his doomed race. But the grief of youth, poignant, and passionate, and bitter as it is, eats not into the heart like the sorrows of later life, and the yet unbroken spirit will struggle into light and gladness, in spite of the remorseful tenderness, which deems it even sinful to take comfort. And life, prolonged life, was still a precious boon to Herbert Ross, for the youth's mind was full of ardent and aspiring day-dreams—the sunny brightness of which had been overshadowed for a time only by the calamity which had befallen him. Not towards worldly honours, or worldly wealth, or any of the vain glories of this world were directed the aspirations of that young fervent mind—not more deeply imbued with sensibility, than with the religious feeling which controls and sanctifies what is otherwise too apt to degenerate into amiable weakness.

By the desire of his maternal guardian, more than seconded by his own free will and choice, Herbert had been early destined for the ministry of the gospel; and though Mrs. Arden had been deterred from sending him to a public school, by the early delicacy of his constitution, he had been carefully prepared by private tuition for the great duties he was at a proper age

to take upon himself; and the time was now come when (if his return to England was permitted) he was to enter on the course of university studies.

Yet a few months the aunt and the nephew lingered on in the land of "the olive and the myrtle," till the apparently complete re-establishment of the young man's health warranted their return to England. Then taking their last farewell of the dear kindred dust left to moulder among that of strangers—(who but those who have felt can appreciate the bitterness of that final parting?)—they embarked, and sailed away for ever from the classic shores of Italy, about the time that I also quitted Naples, in pursuance of a long projected plan of continued travel, over far distant countries.

At Constantinople, where I made some stay, and received letters from England, one among them (not the least welcome of the many) conveyed to me the gratifying intelligence, that after a prosperous voyage, during which the health of her nephew had continued to improve, Mrs. Arden had arrived with him at their country residence in Warwickshire, and shortly afterwards had had the satisfaction of seeing him comfortably installed, under the most advantageous circumstances, in his college rooms, at Cambridge.

No stipulation of regular correspondence had been entered into between Mrs. Arden and myself, and any such would indeed have been of impossible observance, during the continued wanderings of my next three years, so that I wholly lost sight of my