

**CHRISTMAS AT
SUNBERRY DALE: A
STORY FOR THE YOUNG**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649525560

Christmas at Sunberry Dale: A Story for the Young by W. B. B.

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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STORY FOR THE YOUNG**



"Before Mr. Melville could look round, two or three snowballs were thrown at him."—Page 67.

CHRISTMAS AT HUNFERRY DALE.

CHRISTMAS
AT
SUNBERRY DALE :

A Story for the Young.

BY

W. B. B.,

AUTHOR OF "FAITHFUL TO JESUS," "JOE HINGLTON'S
WINNING TREE," "CLARA DOWNING'S DREAM," ETC.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
1870.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. SUNBERRY DALE	4
II. VISITORS	14
III. CHRISTMAS EVE	22
IV. CHRISTMAS DAY	38
V. MR. MELVILLE'S SERMON	47
VI. SNOW-BALLING	64
VII. AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL	73
VIII. A QUIET MORNING	85
IX. TABLEAUX VIVANTS	95
X. THE SKATING PARTY	108
XI. THE STORY-BOX	116
XII. AN ADVENTURE WITH JOCK	131
XIII. UNDER THE ELMS	141
XIV. DEPARTURES	150
XV. A SEQUEL	158

0

34

45

8

•

25

2

21

41

11

CHRISTMAS AT SUNBERRY DALE.

CHAPTER I.

SUNBERRY DALE.

SUNBERRY DALE is the name of a country house and grounds in one of the most beautiful of the western counties of England. I have seen many of the most lovely spots in our country, but none fairer nor richer than this.

Sunberry Dale is about a mile from the quaint old town of Chesterton, and the house, standing in a dell and well surrounded by trees, is not seen until you come almost upon it. I do not know whether I can describe the house to you, but I will try. It is a long old-fashioned house of three stories, each window of the third story being set in

a high pointed gable. A rustic gabled porch stands out from the centre of the house, and over this porch and around the lower windows of the house the white clematis and the sweet honeysuckle twine and twist their branches until the windows themselves and the roof of the porch are almost hidden. Above these, and reaching nearly to the points of the gables, are trained some of the finest pear-trees I ever saw. A large oval lawn spreads itself before the house, having for its central ornament an antique stone sun-dial, now almost hidden by luxuriant lichens. The carriage drive passes round the lawn and skirts a deep fossé, which divides the lawn from a well-stocked orchard; beyond which stand the fine old woods of Leyoak Park. The house is approached from the town of Chesterton by a wide well kept gravelled road, bordered for a long distance by greensward and neatly trimmed hedges; whilst on the one side the clear waters of a little brook are hasting with many an eddying ripple on their way to join a distant river. As you draw near to the house the drive passes through a fine avenue

of lime-trees, through whose branches you catch many a glimpse of the stately Norman tower of Chesterton Church, and of the slopes of the not distant Wolcote hills.

I have seen Sunberry Dale at all seasons of the year; when the limes were without a single leaf, and the cold wind whistled through their bare branches and danced round the house, making the old gables shake, and then shrieking and howling in its roomy chimneys. I have seen it, too, when the limes began to put on their summer dress, and the warm sunshine made the birds that flittered amongst their branches sing their sweetest songs; when the old garden grew gay with bright coloured flowers, and the old house grew young again in its robes of clematis and woodbine. I have seen it, too, when the trees wore their robes of autumn brown, and when almost every puff of wind caused some of them to fall shivering to the ground, and they piled themselves up in brown heaps beneath the branches where all the summer long they had danced and laughed in the sunshine. Many a time I have walked amongst them and enjoyed the rustling noise