

**THE OLD PINCUSHION,  
OR, AUNT CLOTILDA'S  
GUESTS**

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The old pincushion, or, Aunt Clotilda's guests by Mrs. Molesworth

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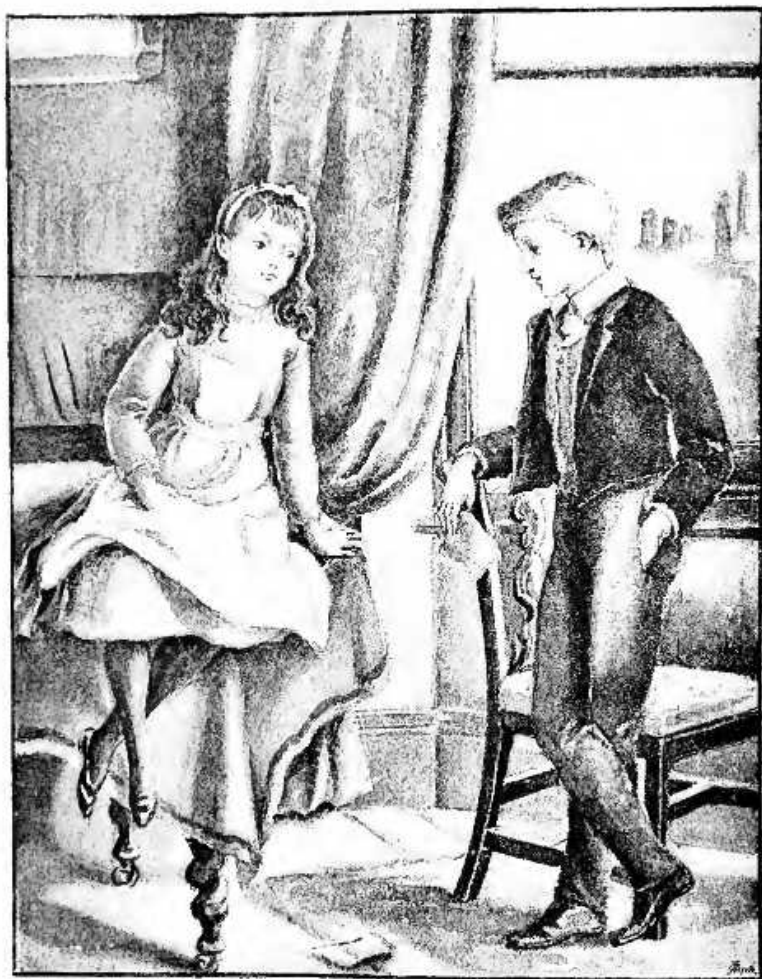
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**MRS. MOLESWORTH**

**THE OLD PINCUSHION,  
OR, AUNT CLOTILDA'S  
GUESTS**





'I DON'T BELIEVE YOU CARE ONE BIT.'—(PAGE 9.)

THE  
OLD PINCUSHION

OR

*AUNT CLOTILDA'S GUESTS*

BY

MRS. MOLESWORTH

AUTHOR OF 'CARROTS,' 'THE PALACE IN THE GARDEN,' ETC.

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TO  
THREE DEAR  
THOUGH UNKNOWN  
LITTLE FRIENDS  
BERTHA  
HILDA  
LESLEY

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC

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# THE OLD PINCUSHION.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE LETTER WITH BAD NEWS.



O, Kathie, I don't believe you care one bit; I really don't,' said Neville reproachfully.

Kathie was seated as she loved to be—on the edge of a rather high table. Her skirts were short and her legs were long; from her present elevation she could swing the latter about delightfully. She gave them an extra energetic fling before she replied to her brother, and then, trying her best to look concerned and distressed, and only succeeding in giving to her funny little face an expression of comical demureness, she turned to Neville,—

'I do care. You haven't any right to say I don't. If I didn't care for myself, I'd care because you do, and because *they* do. I'm not a—a—unnatural monster. I'd cry if it

was my way, but you know it isn't; and a good thing too. A nice life I'd have had *here*, with great contempt, 'if I'd been a crying child like little Philippa Harley. She's tired everybody out. But what's more, I do care for myself too. I've been looking forward to them coming home, and nice proper holidays, like other children. Yes, indeed, I should just think I had.'

'Holidays only!' Neville repeated. 'It would have been much better than holidays—for you, any way. They wouldn't have left you here. I'd have stayed at school, I suppose—boys must; but I don't mind school. I'd like it very well if I had a home besides.'

Kathie did not seem to have noticed his last words. A new expression had come into her face, as she repeated softly to herself, 'They wouldn't have left me here. I never thought of that.'

'You'll begin to care really now, I suppose,' said her brother, rather bitterly. 'I didn't think you were so selfish.'

The little girl faced about at that.

'I'm not selfish—at least, if selfish means only caring about oneself and not about other people. I don't pretend not to care about myself *too*. I'm one of the people in the world as well as being myself. I should care for myself. But I care for others too. I'm sorry for you, and for *them*, though not as sorry as for you, because I know you and I don't know them. That's natural. I can't pretend to