

**LANETON
PARSONAGE:
A TALE**

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Laneton Parsonage: A Tale by Elizabeth Missing Sewell & W. Sewell

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ELIZABETH MISSING SEWELL & W. SEWELL

**LANETON
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Not in A 720

LANETON PARSONAGE. ?

A TALE.

Sewell (Disjointed)
BY THE AUTHOR OF "AMY HERBERT,"
"GERTRUDE," ETC.

EDITED BY

THE REV. W. SEWELL, B. D

FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

v. 1.

Oh! say not, dream not, heavenly notes
To childish ears are vain,—
That the young mind at random floats,
And cannot reach the strain.

Dim or unheard the words may fall,
And yet the heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind.

The Christian Year.

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LANETON PARSONAGE.

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CHAPTER I.

"MAMMA," said little Madeline Clifford, as she looked up from the work which she had been industriously hemming for nearly a quarter of an hour, "I want very much to ask you a question."

"Well, my love, what is it? why should you be afraid?"

"Because perhaps you will think it is curious, and would rather not answer."

"I can but say no! if I think it wrong."

"Oh! it is not wrong, I am sure; but sometimes you tell us not to trouble ourselves about other persons' concerns; and what I wish to know has nothing really to do with me, or with any of us."

Mrs. Clifford smiled: "Shall I tell you, Madeline," she said, "what you are going to ask?"

"You can't mamma; how should you know? you cannot look at my thoughts."

"But I can guess them, which sometimes does as well. What made you listen so much to what Mrs. Mortimer and I were saying just now?"

"Oh then, mamma, you do know: but I did not understand when I did listen; because I could not make out what Mrs. Mortimer meant, when she said that Lady

Catharine Hyde was going to adopt Alice Lennox. What is adopting?"

"Taking her to be her own child; and having her taught, and clothed, and fed, as a mother would."

"And will she love her?" inquired Madeline: "I should not care for all the eating and drinking in the world if no one loved me."

"I have no doubt Lady Catharine will," replied Mrs. Clifford; "because she is a very kind-hearted person; and Alice is most fortunate in having found such a friend, now that she has lost her mother."

"Lady Catharine was very fond of Mrs. Lennox, was she not, mamma?" asked Madeline.

"Yes, my dear, very; and she promised, when Mrs. Lennox was dying, that Alice should live with her, and be to her as her own little girl: and the fact of her keeping her word so strictly in the one case, is a reason for believing she will do so in the other."

"Will Alice like it?" said Madeline, quickly.

"I don't know, my dear; and she is too sorrowful now for any one to judge."

"But, mamma, will she be Alice Lennox still?"

Mrs. Clifford could not help smiling: "Yes, my love; why should she not?"

"But if she is Lady Catharine Hyde's child, how can she be?"

"She will not be hers really, but only what is called adopted."

"And so her name will not alter," said Madeline.

"Persons' names do alter though, sometimes, mamma: yours was Beresford once."

"Yes! that was my surname; I changed it when I was married; but my other name—my Christian name—I kept, and must keep always."

"Mary, you mean," said Madeline; "is that your best name?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Clifford: "Beresford is the name I had when I was born into the world, of human parents; but Mary was the name given me when I was baptized, and made a child of God. The one you see I have lost, but the other I keep."

"And Madeline is my best name then; but I don't remember that it is, when I am called."

"I am afraid we are all apt to forget," replied her mother: "and though a great many persons have never been baptized, and yet are called by two names, that is no reason why we should think nothing of our Christian name, and of the occasions on which they were given to us."

Madeline waited for an instant; and then said, "So Alice will be Alice always; and yet she will seem different when she lives at the Manor."

"She will belong to a new family," said Mrs. Clifford: "and if Lady Catharine were to wish it very much, she might by-and-by take the name of Hyde, besides Lennox; though I do not think this is likely. Surnames can be altered; Christian names cannot. But you must not ask me any more questions, my dear child: I have told you all I know; and I am going out."

Madeline looked as if she would willingly have kept her mamma a few moments longer; but Mrs. Clifford was gone almost before she had time to determine upon what was next to be said; and Madeline's only resource was to sit with her work in her lap, and her head resting upon her hand, while she thought upon what her mamma had said, and the sudden change which had occurred in the life of her young companion.

Madeline's meditations, however, did not last very long. They were interrupted by the sound of a child's voice pro-

nouncing her name ; and a stranger on hearing the tone in which it was repeated, would probably have started with surprise ; for the voice seemed Madeline's own. And still more on turning to look at the little girl, who walked slowly into the room with a book in her hand, upon which her eyes were bent while she moved, it might almost have been supposed that two Madelines, alike in every look and feature, were present. There was the same fair complexion, the same light glossy hair, the same blue eye, the same height and size. It was, to all appearance, Madeline's second self. And if Madeline had been asked, she would have said that her twin sister, her darling Ruth, was indeed her second self ; that what one liked the other liked ; what one wished for the other desired too ; that they had never been separated for a single day—scarcely even for an hour ; that they had learned the same lessons from one book ; that they had played, and walked, and slept together, day after day, and night after night ; and that without Ruth she could not imagine it possible to be happy for a moment. Ruth would have said the same : yet the two sisters were not really alike ; and even in their manner and appearance, it was possible for a person who observed them carefully to discover many differences.

Madeline's voice was clear and merry ; she ran about the house singing and laughing, as if her heart was too full of happiness to allow her a moment's rest. Ruth laughed and sung also ; but her laugh was low and her songs were quiet ; and she was most frequently seen walking along the passage or up the staircase, reading as she went, in the same way as she was doing when she just now came into the room. There was joyousness in Madeline's glance, and her mouth seemed formed only for smiles ; but Ruth's clear blue eye was thoughtful ; and when she joined in Madeline's laugh, she was the first to become

serious again, and to remember a lesson, or a piece of work, or something they had been told to do, but which they were likely to forget.

In temper they were still more different. Madeline was hasty and thoughtless, quickly put out of humor, but as quickly recovering herself. She never hesitated to confess a fault when she had committed it; but perhaps the next minute the confession was forgotten and the offence repeated.

Ruth was said to be shy; and many persons thought her gentle and humble; for she blushed when she was reproved, never made excuses, and always bore punishment without complaining; but her mamma sometimes grieved to find, that after her little girl had done wrong, she kept away from her; and that instead of throwing her arms around her neck, as Madeline always did, and begging for forgiveness, she sat silent, reading, or working, or learning her lessons; and now and then allowed hours to pass without expressing any sorrow.

Still, on the whole, Ruth was careful and attentive, and it was but seldom that Mrs. Clifford had occasion to correct her, and perhaps it was from this cause that the evil in her disposition was not so easily perceived as in Madeline's. Ruth Clifford was shy, and liked to keep to herself, and not to be obliged to go into the drawing-room to speak to strangers, and she was heartily ashamed whenever she had done wrong. But it was not because she was humble that the color rushed to her cheek when she was reproved, but because in truth she was very proud. As soon as she began to understand the difference between right and wrong, Ruth learned to think herself much better than Madeline. The servants scolded Madeline for being hasty, but they praised her because she was gentle. They complained of Madeline's thought-

lessness, but they declared that Ruth scarcely ever required to be reminded of the same thing twice. As they grew older, Madeline used to forget her lessons, but it seldom happened that Ruth was not perfect in hers; and Madeline herself, when in disgrace, would frequently cry, and wish she was half as good as her sister. Scarcely any one guessed the great defect in Ruth's character to be want of humility, except her papa and mamma; for pride is one of those very serious faults which are often but little perceived, and therefore the more difficult to correct.

But though Madeline and Ruth Clifford, like other little girls of their age, had many faults which it required time and care to overcome, on the whole they were good children, whom every one felt inclined to love. True and open, generally speaking, in all that they did, good-natured and generous, and anxious to please their parents, no one could live with them, without being interested in them.

Mr. Clifford was a clergyman; he was not rich, and he had a large parish to attend to, a number of poor people to see every day, and many duties to make him anxious and sometimes sad; but he was a man whose first wish and endeavor was to obey God, and therefore, whatever trouble he might meet with, he had a peaceful, contented mind; and when the labors of the day were over, and he could enjoy a walk or a conversation with his wife or with his children, he often said with a sincere heart that the blessings of his earthly lot were such as to overwhelm him with the sense of God's bounty. And certainly his home was placed in a scene where the beauty of nature alone must have given him enjoyment.

The parsonage of Laneton was situated at the farthest end of a little village about half a mile from the seacoast.