

**HOW DO I KNOW?
WALKS AND TALKS
WITH UNCLE MERTON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649607884

How Do I Know? Walks and Talks with Uncle Merton by Anonymous

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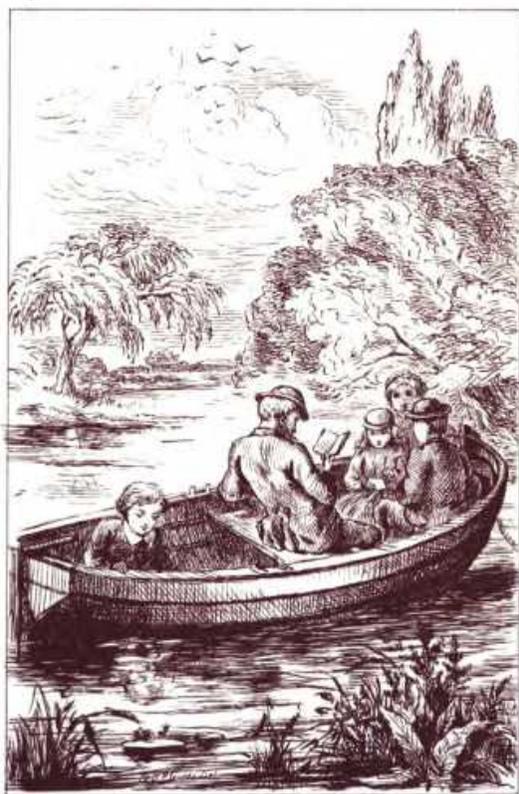
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ANONYMOUS

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HOW DO I KNOW?

WALKS AND TALKS WITH UNCLE MERTON.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "WHAT MAKES ME GROW?" ETC.

(50)

With Coloured Illustrations.



SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, 54, FLEET STREET,
LONDON, MDCCCLXIX.

250. c. 212.



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HOW DO I KNOW?



CHAPTER I.

THE HOLIDAY.

"OH, uncle! aren't you glad that spring has come?" gasped Agnes Sunderland, as she emerged from under some bushes, and ran up to Mr. Merton's side. "I am, *very*," she added. "Only—only,—I am so out of breath with running, that I can hardly speak. Oh! I wish you had been all over that hill with me. It was so splendid up there!"

"So splendid! Why, Aggy, how quickly you change your mind! It is only just six weeks since you called that poor hill the dullest, coldest place in the world, beside giving it a variety of other unkind names. I am afraid you are as freakish as these wild locks of yours, that were so prim and steady-going not long since, and are now flying hither and thither, as if they wanted to part company from your head altogether.

Ah! when your Aunt May was a little nine-year-old, she had no such long streamers, but nice smooth hair, cut short round her head. No doubt that accounts for her not being subject to such wild fancies as this young niece of hers."

"Oh, uncle! uncle! what a tease you are!" cried the merry-hearted little maiden. "I'm quite afraid of you."

And off she set again at full speed up the road, until she overtook her two brothers, Archer and Teddy, who were some way in front. But the mischievous uncle, by rapid walking, soon overtook the young ones, and, apparently, rather before he was wanted, for Archer was busily engaged in disentangling one of his little sister's long flaxen ringlets from the feather of her hat, over which the wind had blown it, and had not quite finished his work.

Agnes was the only girl in the family, and, therefore, a great pet with all her brothers, but especially with Archer, who was four years her senior, and to whom she had always been accustomed to run for help in any difficulty, even from her babyhood.

As their uncle came up, Agnes laughingly whispered something into Archer's ear, on which he threw his arm over her shoulder, and placed himself between her and their uncle, as if he suspected some evil designs on these same curls, of which he was particularly proud.

There was a peculiar twinkle in Mr. Merton's eye