

**'ST. AUBYN'S LADDIE'
AND THE LITTLE
WOULD-BE SOLDIER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649711895

'St. Aubyn's Laddie' and the Little Would-Be Soldier by E. C. Phillips

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E. C. PHILLIPS

**'ST. AUBYN'S LADDIE'
AND THE LITTLE
WOULD-BE SOLDIER**

Frontpiece.



ALAN AND CYRIL.

'ST. AUBYN'S LADDIE,

AND

THE LITTLE WOULD-BE SOLDIER.

BY

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GRIFFITH AND FARRAN,

SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERRY AND HARRIS,

WEST CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON.

E. P. DUTTON & CO., NEW YORK.

1882.

251. 3. 5000

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TO MY NEPHEW
ALICK IRVING JACKSON,
IN FOND MEMORY.



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'ST. AUBYN'S LADDIE.'

CHAPTER I.

ALAN AND HIS MOTHER.



'We have had *such* a lovely walk, Mother darling,' little Alan Godfrey whispered, one day, as he gently pushed open the door of his mother's bedroom and peeped into it; but then seeing that she was quite awake, he changed his tactics, and running in and kissing her, repeated in a much louder voice:

'such a splendid walk; and Nell and I have put our money together and bought—oh! but I forgot, Mother,' he went on, 'it's a secret, and I wasn't to tell you; but you don't know, do you, because I don't want you to know?'

'I know nothing about it, Alan,' replied

his mother, brushing, as she spoke, some of her boy's thick hair from off his flushed forehead.

'And you don't know who it's for either, Mother, do you? Try and guess.'

'For you?'

'No.'

'For Father?'

'No.'

'For Nell?'

'No; it isn't any of *our* birthdays soon, you know. Try to guess again.'

'For me?'

'Oh, Mother, why did you guess? I wish you hadn't,' then said Alan, in a really disappointed tone of voice; 'but you couldn't guess what it is, could you?'

'That I am sure I could not,' she replied; 'but it is quite certain to be something very pretty and useful, if you and Nell have chosen it together.'

'Yes, we did,' said Alan; 'and you haven't got one, so it will be useful, won't it?'

'I should think very.'

'And Mother,' said the strange little boy, who simply seemed as though he could not keep a secret, however much he might wish to do so, 'the other day you were saying that you would like to have one very much.'

Mrs. Godfrey considered.

'Don't try to remember, Mother; oh, please don't,' Alan began again as he gave his mother another kiss, therewith, as it were, to kiss away her remembrance of what he wished forgotten. 'Is your birthday to-morrow?'

'No; not till to-morrow week.'