

**CYRIL
ASHLEY: A TALE**

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Cyril Ashley: A Tale by A. L. O. E.

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A. L. O. E.

**CYRIL
ASHLEY: A TALE**

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CYRIL ASHLEY.

A TALE.

By

A. L. O. E.

Author of "The Shepherd of Bethlehem," "Rescued from Egypt,"
&c. &c.



LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1872.



“**T**IME rolls his ceaseless course.” Great changes have his waves brought to the Authoress of this little volume since she penned the last lines of “Claudia.” The eyes of those who were wont most gladly to welcome each new work from her pen, are closed in their last long sleep; a stranger possesses her childhood’s home; her own conscious failing in mental energy makes her feel that her sun is gently sloping towards the west, and that she may soon have to lay aside for ever the work in which she specially delighted. It is likely that this may be the last time that A. L. O. E., as writer of a volume, may be permitted to bring her pitcher from the well-spring in which she so often has dipped it: the vessel is a weak earthen one, and the rope by which it was let down seems to be half worn away.

Others will soon take A. L. O. E.'s place by the spring.

There is something of sadness in the words "the last time," where the occupation which may have to be resigned has been counted a privilege and a joy. But A. L. O. E.'s prevailing feeling is that of deep thankfulness that she has been permitted to be for so long, in her humble way, a drawer of water for the flock of her Lord. Deeper would be that thankfulness, could she know that she had indeed helped some of His lambs on a heavenward way, by guiding them to the Good Shepherd. In His mercy and merits she rests all her own hopes of a blissful eternity hereafter, where the redeemed will serve without imperfection, weakness, or weariness; and rest not day or night, praising Him in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.





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CYRIL ASHLEY.

CHAPTER I.

AWAITING AN ARRIVAL.

“**I**F Cyril comes here thinking to play the lord and master over us all, he'll find that he has been counting without his hosts,” exclaimed Theodore, tossing down the cards with which he had just won a game from his sister Rhoda ; a game during the course of which there had been more of talk than of play.

“What I expect is, that Cyril will set himself up as preacher and parson,” said Rhoda, a round, rosy-faced girl of thirteen, with features freckled by sun and air, and a luxuriant mass of light hair, which had evidently made little acquaintance with brush or comb. “Don't you remember,” she continued, drumming on the table as she spoke, “how Cyril pulled us up sharp—long, long ago—for getting

out the ponies, and having a little steeplechase of our own across the fields on a Sunday, instead of sitting bolt upright like himself in the hot square pew?"

"Remember it? I should think so!" cried Theodore. "And how Cyril got poor mamma to send me away from the table without my dinner because I chanced to bounce out with an oath which I had learned from the groom! I was but a little chap then—it was my eighth birth-day, I think—and because Cyril chanced to have nine years the start of me, he must take it into his head that 'twas his business to row me, and keep me in order; just as if I'd be slavie to him or to any one else. If I were king of the land, I'd abolish elder brothers," laughed the boy.

"Only the sober and sensible ones," said Rhoda.

"Cyril had everything his own way," observed Theodore, "while poor, dear mamma was alive."

"Yes," rejoined his sister; "she was so fond of him, and so proud of him—her only son by her first marriage. But every one thought a great deal of Cyril. One Ashley counted for as much as all we five Burtons put together."

"Master Cyril was the nonpareil and golden pippen at Mudimote Lodge," laughed Theodore, "and his five half brothers and sisters counted but