

**ELSIE'S CHOICE.
A STORY**

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Elsie's Choice. A Story by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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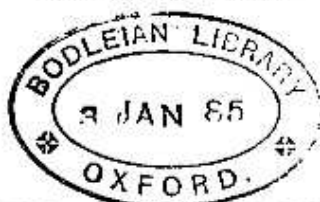
"Cordie lay perfectly still on Elsie's lap, purring loudly." *Page 6.*

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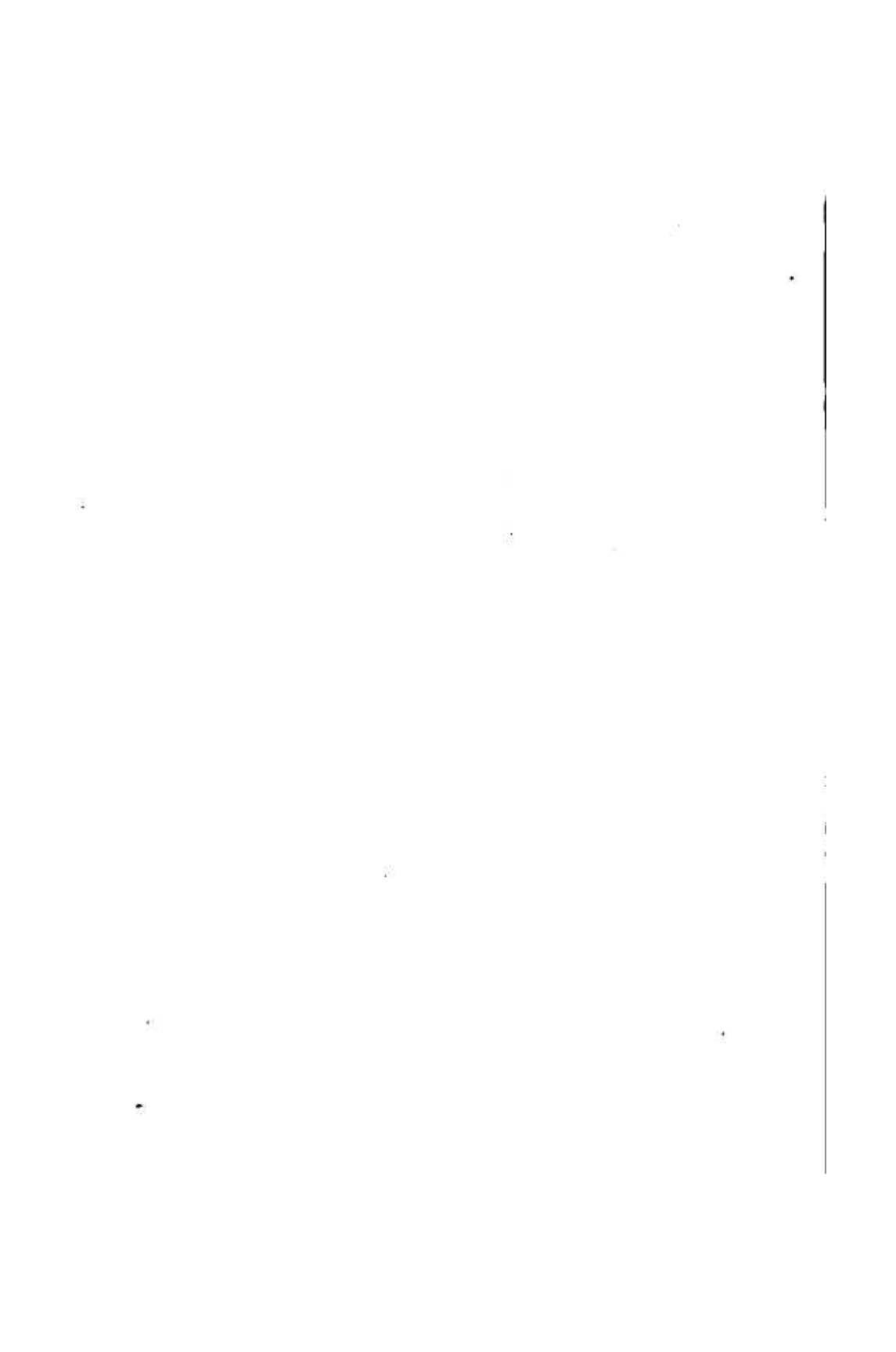
BY THE
AUTHOR OF "MAY'S GARDEN."

With Eight Illustrations.



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ELSIE'S CHOICE.

CHAPTER I.

ELSIE'S HOME.

"YOU can go away now, and mind you have your German more perfectly learnt. Idleness in a girl of your age is quite inexcusable."

"Oh, aunt! I do try to do my best, but it is so difficult; I wish I might give it up."

"Certainly not. I don't want you to grow up an ignorant woman, to be a disgrace to me. Leave the room, and attend to what I say."

There was a suppressed sob, and Elsie left the room, and as soon as she was out of hearing she flew up the old oak staircase, higher and higher, until she reached a large room, with queer little windows and a roof all shapes. Then she threw herself on an old couch and wept bitterly.

"Oh! if she would only speak kindly to me, and not in that hard, cold voice, I should not mind so much," she muttered, and then she cried again, until she had spent herself. Then the weary face lay gazing vacantly at the wall, as if there was no hope or pleasure in life. The room was a most curious place, long and narrow, with three small old-fashioned windows at equal distances down one side. The door was at one end, and partly hidden by a large piece of roof, which came down by one of the windows. There was a small modern fireplace at the other end, with a fire burning brightly; and at one side of it an old arm-chair, propped up with a stool, as it had lost a leg and required a crutch. A little way from the fire there was an oak table, black with age, on which books and copybooks were lying in wild confusion. Under this table, and reaching to the fireplace, there was a piece of faded Turkey carpet, so that, notwithstanding its odd appearance, the room had an air of comfort about it. On the hearth, too, a great fat puss was purring happily, with a little French poodle nestling up close; and in one of the windows a canary was singing, and in the other a parrot sat sedately in a handsome cage.