# TWO STORIES: MARY MANSFIELD AND NOTHING TO DO

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Two Stories: Mary Mansfield and Nothing to Do by M. H.

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### M.H.

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Mary Mansfield]

[Frontispiece.

## MARY MANSFIELD

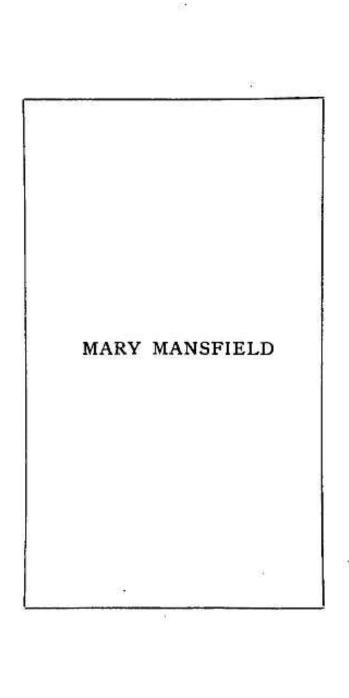
AND

## NOTHING TO DO

TWO STORIES BY
M. H.

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
27, PATERNOSTER ROW

1897



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## CHAPTER I.

\*Tis not for man to trifle: life is brief,
And sin is here.

On age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.

'Redeeming the time.'—EPH. v. 16.

and the grey shades of night were beginning to gather round. The song of the

We have no time to sport away the hours; All must be sornest in a world like ours.

Ir was the close of a July day. The sun,
which had shone for hours with more than
usual brightness, had sunk at last; the rosy
blush, which, ere sinking, it had sent over
the almost cloudless sky, had disappeared,

birds was hushed—only a gentle twitter was .
heard ere they settled themselves to sleep;
whilst in the fields the cattle were lying in
groups, many under the shade of the leafy
trees, composing themselves to rest. The
dew was falling, refreshing the parched
ground and the drooping flowers, after the
day of burning heat.

A strange quiet pervaded the whole of nature, and influenced every living thing—even the two young girls who sat at the open window of a small room in the Manorhouse of Ludley, in one of the midland counties of England. They had sat for some time at that window, having, as the younger of the two termed it, 'a good talk,' and yet enjoying the sights and sounds of nature around them.

They were not sisters, not even relations, only friends. A stranger would have guessed their ages to be anything from six-

teen to twenty; and certainly, if asked, at first sight, to say which was the prettier of the two, would at once have pointed to the fair girl with the regular features, the bright complexion, and the sunny ringlets-Mary Mansfield, the sister of the proprietor of Ludley Manor-house. And yet there were many who, on a closer inspection, would have said that the intelligent countenance, and thoughtful, dark eyes of Eva Campbell, pleased them better than the more beautiful face of her friend. Both were just returned from school, and were entering on their home duties; childhood and girlhood lay behind them; school days were done, and life and its realities were before them. They talked of these things as they sat. Mary had rattled on about the life she would have to lead, the calls to make, the parties to go to, the places to visit, the rides to take. Eva listened quietly, as her