

**LEFT TO TAKE CARE
OF THEMSELVES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649516292

Left to Take Care of Themselves by A. R.

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

A. R.

**LEFT TO TAKE CARE
OF THEMSELVES**

LEFT TO TAKE CARE OF
THEMSELVES.

By A. R.,

AUTHOR OF 'DOTS AND CWINNIE,' ETC.

Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?"

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

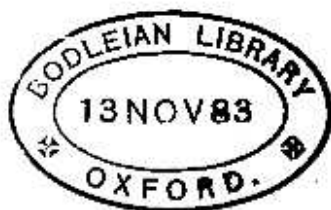
LONDON:

T. WOOLMER, 2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD, E.C.;
AND 66, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1883.

251. 9. 9:4.

MORRISON AND C^o, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.





CONTENTS.

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. MAGGIE AND BENNIE | 7 |
| II. A TEMPTATION | 17 |
| III. SUPPER AND DREAMLAND | 26 |
| IV. A GLIMPSE OF BRIGHTNESS | 32 |
| V. WILLIE'S STORY | 55 |
| VI. A HARD FIGHT | 84 |
| VII. A DISAPPEARANCE | 107 |
| VIII. 'AND JESUS CALLED A LITTLE CHILD UNTO HIM' | 117 |
| IX. A NEW COUNTRY | 126 |



LEFT TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

—o—

CHAPTER I.

MAGGIE AND BENNIE.

A DISMAL November evening in London,—the sort of night when fashionable West End streets and squares look inexpressibly dreary; when the brilliantly-lighted shops in Oxford Street and Regent Street fail to arrest the attention of the passers-by, who, hastening on with dripping umbrellas, care only to get as quickly as possible under shelter; and when even the streets and courts in the crowded East End are comparatively quiet and deserted, most of their usual frequenters man-

8 LEFT TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

aging to creep away into some hole or cellar, which, wretched and filthy though it be, is at least a refuge from the cold and rain.

In a narrow street in one of the lowest and most wretched of the many such neighbourhoods, a street lying not a hundred miles from Commercial Road, two children, crouching on a doorstep, find partial protection from the wet. Seen dimly by the aid of a gas-lamp that flickered feebly through the foggy atmosphere, they look only like two little bundles of dirty rags. But just now the tramp of a policeman's measured tread is heard approaching, and they start up in terror, listening anxiously, to assure themselves which way he is coming. As they stand for a moment peering through the fog, undecided in which direction to run, the light falls upon them, and reveals the thin spare figure of a boy about ten, and the smaller one of a little girl, a child of four or five, who clings tightly to his tattered jacket, looking up in his face with

frightened eyes,—two as miserable little shivering mites as ever sunlight or lamp-light shone upon.

'Come on, Maggie, this way, quick!' whispers the boy. 'Perlice is a-coming yonder. We mun be off.'

'Oh, Bennie, I is so tired,' wails a feeble, weary little voice, as the child clings closer to her protector. 'Let's tell perlice as we ain't a-doing nuffing wrong, only resting, and we is so tired and wet, and perhaps he'll let us be.'

'No, no, Maggie!' is the terrified answer; 'he'll say as we've done something. Come on!' and, grasping tightly the child's tiny hand, he turned sharply down a dark alley. 'Jem said, if perlice caught us, they'd put us in a dark hole, and most like take you right away somewheres, so as I'd never find you no more.'

Upon hearing this, Maggie no longer resisted, but, making a great effort, trotted on by the boy's side, up one dark court and down another, at a rate that almost surprised