

**CLARA MORISON: A TALE  
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
DURING THE GOLD FEVER.  
IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever. In Two Volumes. Vol. II by  
Catherine Helen Spence

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**CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE**

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A TALE

OF

SOUTH AUSTRALIA DURING THE  
GOLD FEVER

IN TWO VOLUMES

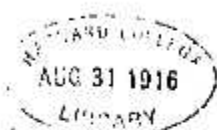
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OF  
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# CLARA MORISON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CLARA LOOKS AT ADELAIDE MORE PLEASANTLY THAN BEFORE.

IF Clara appeared somewhat nervous and distraught when she went to her new home, her cousins attributed her agitation to her recent parting with a kind mistress, and to her being thrown among strangers. They exerted themselves to please her, and certainly even a lovelorn damsel could not but feel somewhat comforted by intercourse with three new minds, all genuine and kind. Margaret's *elbows* were of infinite service to Clara; for an occasional knock from one of them reminded her that there were other opinions in the world besides Reginald's, and other people who were worth studying and thinking about. The carpet was faded and the piano old, but the hearts in that little cottage were warm, and the minds unwarped by prejudice or ostentation; and Clara felt that if she had not gone through so much, and braved the world's estimation by accepting of a servant's place, she would not have been so much loved and honoured by Margaret, or so much sympathized with by Annie.

Margaret asked her what she could do, and was quite pleased at her list of accomplishments. An Edinburgh girl who could neither play, nor draw, nor pretend to do either, was a delightful novelty. She wanted to go on with Latin during her brother's absence, and Clara knew just about as much as herself, and would spur her on. Annie expressed a strong desire to learn short-hand, that she might write long letters to George on small sheets of paper, which nobody could read if they chanced to fall into wrong

hands (a most likely thing at the diggings' post-office); but, after all, George could not read it himself, unless he had been taught, and it would be labour lost; but Margaret had an idea that if by labour the art could be acquired while Gilbert was away, she should like to surprise him by her skill when he returned. Gilbert had often thought of learning some system of stenography, but was deterred by hearing that the task was equal to the acquirement of at least three languages.

'Dickens calls it 'savage stenography,' and quite appals me about it,' observed Margaret.

'My system is the phonetic, and is beautifully simple,' said Clara. 'I took lessons when it was fashionable, and my father wished me to learn it thoroughly for many reasons; particularly for taking notes from books and sermons. His health was so bad for the last two years of his life, that he rarely went to church; and I used to take down the sermons I heard, and read them when I came home. Our clergyman was a man of great and varied talents, and it gives me great pleasure now to read over my notes, and recollect how eloquently they were delivered.'

'Can you read them after years have passed?' asked Margaret; 'for I have often heard that reporters find difficulty in deciphering their own notes.'

'I can read mine quite easily now,' said Clara. 'I will read you a sermon or two some day soon, and you will see how simple it is. At first I felt very much flurried from trying to keep pace with the preacher; but as our pew was curtained round, and no one knew I was taking notes, I soon overcame that nervousness.'

'Don't you keep your journal in short-hand? It must be delightful to write what nobody else can read,' said Annie.

'I shed many tears over my secret correspondence with myself,' answered Clara; 'and I mean to give it up henceforward, for I think it hurts the mind to be always looking into itself.'