

SEDGEMOOR; OR, HOME LESSONS

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Sedgemoor; Or, Home Lessons by Mrs. Manners

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MRS. MANNERS

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HOME LESSONS**



Sedgemoor Home Circle.

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PREFACE.

THIS little volume originated in the remembrance of the pleasure and improvement derived from the "Biographical Alphabet," as it was often played in our dear home-circle at the South. It afforded recreation to those familiar with History and Biography, and was the means of interesting the young people in these studies.

It occurred to me that I might confer a favour upon other home-circles by describing to them one of our happiest amusements in the long winter evenings.

C. H. B. R.

12-20-44-Willard Thorp, Friend, N.Y.

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CHAPTER I

“MATTHIAS, you will ask papa to come here at once, when you go back to the dining-room. Please say that we have waited a long time, and—and—oh, just tell him *I* am getting very impatient to know what he has decided upon. Just say my very words, that’s a good Matthias.”

“Yes, Missy Alice,” said the old man, as he drew the curtains still closer before the large windows of the library at Sedgemoor. “In a moment, Missy Alice; Master never came here these ten years till I was all ready for him;” and he carefully turned up the large Carcel burners in the centre of the room, and replenished the cheerful wood-fire.

“And say, Matthias, that we all want him; don’t we, Miss Emily? don’t we, Maude? that we want him and Mr. Carey. Come, Arthur and

Herbert, you will find plenty of time to get acquainted with each other; come here now, and let us all get acquainted."

The wilful and charming little Alice Clayton seated herself by Miss Emily Donne, and beckoned to her brother and their cousin Arthur Eastbrook to occupy the sofa near her. Arthur and Maude were almost strangers at Sedgemoor, where Alice had lived all her short bright life of ten years. They were cousins of the young people, wards of Mr. Clayton; and, for the future, established at Sedgemoor with Mr. Clayton's young friend Carey for a tutor to the boys, and Maude's good friend and former teacher, the elegant and accomplished Emily Donne as governess.

The gloom which had enveloped the world for Mr. Clayton, since the death of his fair young wife in Alice's babyhood, was fast disappearing in the genial circle which now met in the library at nightfall. He had a keener zest in his enjoyment of Herbert's fine spirit, and Alice's pretty ways, now that both were much more frequently called forth by companionship with others of like tastes and pursuits.

The two gentlemen obeyed Alice's summons to the library, with some deliberation. Mr. Clayton had been telling Mr. Carey what course he had pursued with his son; and with how much reluctance he had admitted the necessity of intrusting him to other hands and heads than his own.

"I lose my chief pleasure in so doing, but my

children will be the gainers. Not only yourselves,—you and Miss Donne,—but Arthur and Maude can do much more for my young people than I can, now. Still I would not give up all intellectual association with them. Let us go to the library, and I will explain to Miss Emily, also, my proposed occupation for our long evenings.”

As the two gentlemen entered the room, Alice skipped from the low ottoman by Miss Donne, to claim her accustomed seat on her father’s knee. Maude was only too happy to secure the vacant place by her friend.

“Did you hear last evening what Mr. Clayton and Mr. Carey were talking about, Miss Emily, when we were getting ready to leave the room at ten o’clock? I believe they are talking about the same thing now. Yes, those ‘evening lessons’—what does it mean?”

“Let us listen and find out, as it seems to concern us, my dear Maude.”

So their conversation ceased, and the only speakers in the room were the two gentlemen.

“My plan, if you will approve and aid me, Mr. Carey, will be to select some topic for investigation through the day, and for discussion every other evening. There is surely no need for the young people to study at night, and there is no reason why they should not be instructed as well as amused.”

“I see no objection to such a course, as I remarked last evening, Sir. I am quite ready to co-