

**ORA PRO NOBIS; OR,  
TRISTRAM'S FRIENDS. A  
STORY FOR CHILDREN**

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Ora Pro Nobis; Or, Tristram's Friends. A Story for Children by Francis Drew

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**FRANCIS DREW**

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*A Story for Children.*

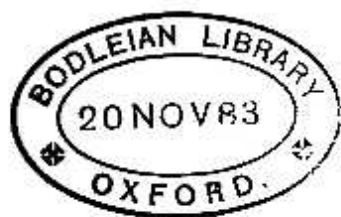
BY

REV. FRANCIS DREW.



R. WASHBOURNE,  
18 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.  
1883.

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TO  
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AND THE  
HONOUR OF ALL MY HOLY PATRONS,  
IN THANKSGIVING AND HOPE.

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# ORA PRO NOBIS;

OR,

TRISTRAM'S FRIENDS.

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## CHAPTER I.

It was midwinter forty years ago.

All day long the storm had been rising, and they said it would be wild weather far along the coast. The sun had risen watery and pale, and after trying to shine feebly for an hour or two was quenched in the banks of sea-fog that came rolling in to land. Even then there was a strong chill breeze that swept in gusts along the shore, and, turning inland, rushed up the village street, clattering the loose shutters of the fishermen's cottages and making the signboard of the old inn creak and groan as it swayed to and fro on its rusty bar.

No one cared to stir abroad, and the fishing boats were drawn high up on the shingle of the little bay, and their nets were spread out in the wind to dry.

In the cottages they piled upon the fire great logs of driftwood — salvage of past wrecks — broken bits of mast and decking. And the fishermen sat beside them on the rough hearths

smoking and mending nets or lines, with their sons, chatting and talking over famous storms in years gone by—storms such as they prophesied this would be to-night. Many, too, as the day wore on, strolled up the empty street and turned into the old tavern I have spoken of, where they joined the gradually widening circle around its hospitable hearth, and listened or said their say while their mates told of the shipwrecks that had been within their ken—aye, and in their fathers' and grandfathers' time—upon that wild and dangerous coast. It was cosy enough in there, where the logs blazed and crackled, and the pans and kettles simmered in the heat, while out of doors the wind tore up in sudden sobs and gusts, and the sea-fog was driven on before it. The very creaking and groaning of the rickety signboard sounded comfortable to those within, and helped to make them more at ease.

It was an odd sign for an inn, too, for, faded and weather-worn as it was, one could still see that the dim figure, blistered with summer sun and cracked with winter frost, was meant to represent some monk or anchorite, though what he was about, or in what scene the artist had located him, one could no longer tell. This was St. Meloc, and for three hundred years—and, for all I know, twice as long—this had been St. Meloc's Inn.

Everything in the bay was St. Meloc's, beginning with the bay itself. The grim black headland, shutting in the little harbour to the east, was called St. Meloc's Point, and the church—a queer quaint nave without choir or aisle, built of rubble, and dating from Saxon times—was dedi-

cated to the saint. This last stood at the bottom of the village street close to the sea, which at great tides had often risen up to the wall whereby its tiny churchyard was shut in. But neither church nor yard had ever been flooded by any storm or tide; and beside the former there rose up—a hundred feet and more—a straight wall of granite rock that sheltered it from many a wild eastern gale. This was St. Meloc's wall, and on its flat top—some hundred yards across—stood the rectory, a long, low building of grey stone, more like a monastery than a private house; and also a belfry that was called St. Meloc's Tower. The church below had neither spire nor tower, and the bells were never rung for service, but only when there was a dreadful storm at sea.

At the west end of the church the outer wall looked raw, and clean, and no ivy or creeping plant would grow there; and the tower itself likewise, on one side and up to a certain height—which was that of the church roof—was just as raw-looking, and free from moss, or lichen, or weather-stain. It was as though church and tower had stood together and had been broken asunder—as the fisher-folk believed they had.

Who was St. Meloc?\*

You shall hear in time. Meanwhile I want to tell you who the rector of St. Meloc's was. I have told you how his home stood, lonely and bleak, high up on St. Meloc's wall, where the sea-fogs drove in from the tumbling waste of waters that lay desolate far beneath; all around its lichen-rusted walls the winds moaned and whistled, and the jackdaws in the belfry chattered and blustered in their gusty home.

\* The legend of the saint given later is purely fictive.