

**AVE MARIA; OR,  
CATESBY'S STORY, A  
STORY FOR CHILDREN**

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Ave Maria; or, Gatesby's Story, A Story For Children by Francis Drew

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**FRANCIS DREW**

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# A V E M A R I A ;

OR,

Catesby's Story.

*A STORY FOR CHILDREN.*

BY

REV. FRANCIS DREW.



R. WASHBOURNE,  
18 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.  
1882.

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To  
OUR MOST SWEET MOTHER,  
OUR GREAT LADY,  
*Mary, the Mother of Jesus,*  
WITH ALL LOVE AND ALL THANKSGIVING.

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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1. OREMUS.
  2. DOMINUS VOBISCUM.
  3. PATER NOSTER.
  4. PER JESUM CHRISTUM.
  5. VENI CREATOR.
  6. CREDO.
  7. AVE MARIA.
  8. ORA PRO NOBIS.
  9. CORPUS CHRISTI.
  10. DEI GENITRIX.
  11. REQUIEM.
  12. MISERERE.
  13. DEO GRATIAS.
  14. ANGELUS DOMINI.
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R. WASHBOURNE, 18 PATERNOSTER ROW,  
LONDON.



AVE MARIA;  
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CHAPTER I.

**L**ITTLE Lord Catesby felt very lonely when his tutor left him.\*

For two years the young man and the child had been together, and by little and little they had grown very fond of each other.

Justin had been very good to the boy, and in his odd, unaffectionate manner, Catesby had shown that he liked his tutor.

Not only had these two been, as I said, almost continually together during two whole years, but they had been together alone: strangers were rarely seen at Hilgrave, and the rest of the household did not come across their path much. You remember that it con-

\* Though each of the little Books of St. Nicholas is complete in itself this one is to some extent a sequel to 'Credo.'



sisted only of Catesby's grandfather and grandmother, invalids and childless mourners who seldom left their own rooms, and whose world was peopled mostly with the dead.

To the boy and his young tutor that life seemed very desolate and dreary that was lived, in the faded rooms of the west wing, by the old man and his wife—as indeed it was. Even the sunlight in the spring evenings seemed to fall sadly on those deserted rooms, silent now, which had echoed in the old days to children's shouts and merry laughter; and when in winter-time the rains fell from low-brooding clouds on the walks and flower-plots of the parterre without those western windows, it was as though they were softly weeping, joining their lamentation to the sorrowful sighings of that lonely pair.

Do not think, my dear children, that the old country gentleman and his wife were dark and gloomy-minded grumblers against the great will of God. It was not so—with holy patience and meekness they bore what He had laid upon them, and knew that it was best; but it was a very bitter sorrow that had come to them in the late winter of their life, and they had no longer the strength and vigour of youth which can shake off its sorrows and begin life all anew, which can plant fresh flowers in place of those that have been rooted up, and walk manfully onward, sure of many a joy to come, for all some gladness has been *quenched and lost*.

It is very bitter to young children to lose their fellows, and more bitter to lose those who gave them life ; but oh, indeed it is most sad when those who looked to have had their eyes closed by the children they have brought into God's world are left behind without them, when the old live on, and the young are cut away in the midst of happy days—that is most sad of all. And so it was with them. Son and daughter both were gone, and nothing was left of either but the little boy, himself desolate and alone, that the daughter had left behind.

So it was that from that western wing, silent and faded, there fell upon the house a shadow and a sense of chill ; but in a little while the boy and the young man had grown used to it, and in a manner forgot the other life that was being lived there ; so that they read or walked, rode, skated or shot rabbits, without much practical remembrance of any other occupants of the Manor ; and thus, now Justin was gone, and he was left alone, Catesby felt desolate enough. As the dog-cart in which he had taken Mr. Cholmely to Marlsford Station carried him homeward all alone, he sat silent and sad, gazing out dreamily across the waste.

It was such an afternoon as when Justin had come to Hilgrave. A little bitter wind was plaining in the woods, and teased the small, chill lakes that cowered down in the hollows of the waste ; there their reedy fringes rustled and made weird whisperings, mysterious and low.

Down on the horizon banks of sullen clouds reared themselves up, trying to shut out even that dun sky. On naked oak-boughs sat the birds, sad, voiceless, and chill at heart, wondering why the spring should lag so long. St. Valentine's Day was past, but they kept dreary honeymoon; and the deer upon the waste lay huddled close for warmth and cheer, limping heedlessly away when roused by sounds of carriage-wheels upon the road.

Before night the wind would be wild and high, but yet it would not rain. Yonder clouds, like sullen, sorrowing eyes, hopeless and careless, would not weep, would not pour their burden to the ground.

And now they were at home. The solemn footman was more solemn than was his wont, and Catesby refused rather impatiently his offer of tea in the library at once.

'No; in an hour or so will be quite soon enough; and I shall be in the schoolroom. Will you bring it there?'

'Very good, my lord,' replied the solemn one, who, behind his solemnity and his dull, white face, had no small affection for the boy, and was very sorry for him to-day, left as he was alone.

'My lord will miss him sadly, I doubt,' he had remarked to Mrs. Bunce, on the expression of her own regret at Mr. Cholmely's going.

'Poor thing, he will indeed!' the house-keeper had answered, with large compassion. '*It'll be a good thing when he goes to school;*