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URSULA BY ELIZABETH SEWELL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Come away: for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell;  
But in a city glorious,  
A great and distant city, have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.

TENNYSON

# URSULA.

A TALE OF COUNTRY LIFE.

BY

ELIZABETH SEWELL,

AUTHOR OF "AMY HERBERT."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1858.

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## U R S U L A.

VOL. I.

## CHAPTER I.

It is pleasant to remember the events of years gone by. I shall try to recollect those of my own life. I may not be able to put down everything regularly, but some things that have happened cannot be forgotten, and these will help me to others. Mrs. Weir was very kind in teaching me as she did when I was a girl. I suppose she never thought of the use I should put my learning to; and perhaps, after all, it may not be of use. I took little heed to advice which was given me when I was young, and so, perhaps, no heed will be given to me when I tell of my mistakes and difficulties. But time goes on fast, and I would fain, if I could, act up now to what Mrs. Weir used to say, in her gentle way: "Ursula, my child, we must do good in our generation." God knows, I have done little enough in mine. I may not always have fallen short wilfully, but there is not much comfort in such a thought when one sees what has been neglected, except as regards oneself and the hope of forgiveness. Anyhow, I can but strive to make up for it, and the thought of having striven may be a comfort when I come to die.

I must begin at the beginning, the time which I can first remember. That was when we all lived at Sandcombe — my father, and mother, and William, and Roger, and I; — but I don't know much of those days. The farm must have been very different then from what it is now, and people's ways of going on must have been different too. I remember my

mother always wore a cotton or stuff gown, with a coloured handkerchief folded over her neck, and used to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and help about all kinds of things which we should leave to the maids, and I can quite well recollect going out with her to see the cows milked, and her teaching one of the dairy-maids how to churn the butter; but almost everything else is gone from me, for I have known Sandcombe since, and so the notions I have of it are confused. My father and mother died when I was about six years old. My father was taken first; he had been failing a long time: he caught a cold from being over-heated at harvest, and never recovered it, and my poor mother took a fever soon after, and was ill for a month, and then she went too. It was a great grief to me, though I could not understand it properly. My mother was a very good woman, and taught me in the best way she could; but she had never had much learning, and was always busy, and so I had been left a good deal to my own ways, and was spoilt and very headstrong. The only person who could manage me properly was my brother Roger, and I don't know how he did it, for he was never quick with me as William was, but somehow I loved him more than any one else from the time I was a baby. They used to say, that when I was in arms, if I cried, they always gave me to Roger to be quieted; and I suppose the same feeling grew up with me afterwards: yet in those days I could not have known properly what there was to love in him, and there were some things about him which might naturally have frightened me. He was a very tall, large-made man, quite noted all round the country for his strength, — the best rider and cricketer to be found for miles. He had a power of work which was quite wonderful; up in the morning with the labourers, and later to bed than any of us, and never seeming to want sleep as others did. His manner, though kind, was rough, and his voice was rather harsh. He spoke out his mind plainly when called upon, but at other times he was much given to silence. These things were not likely to win a child's heart; but there is something, I am sure, which God gives to such little ones