



# Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

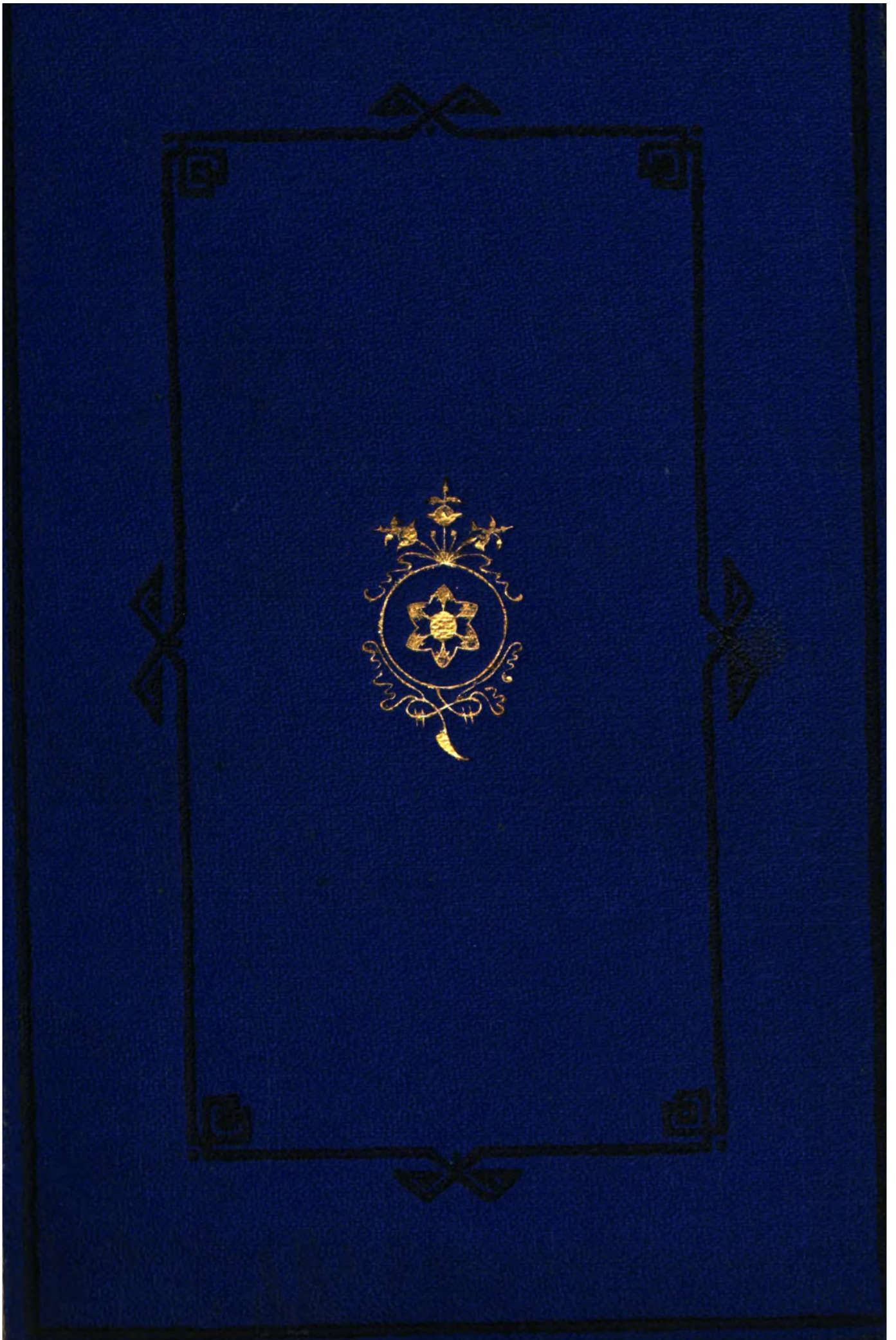
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



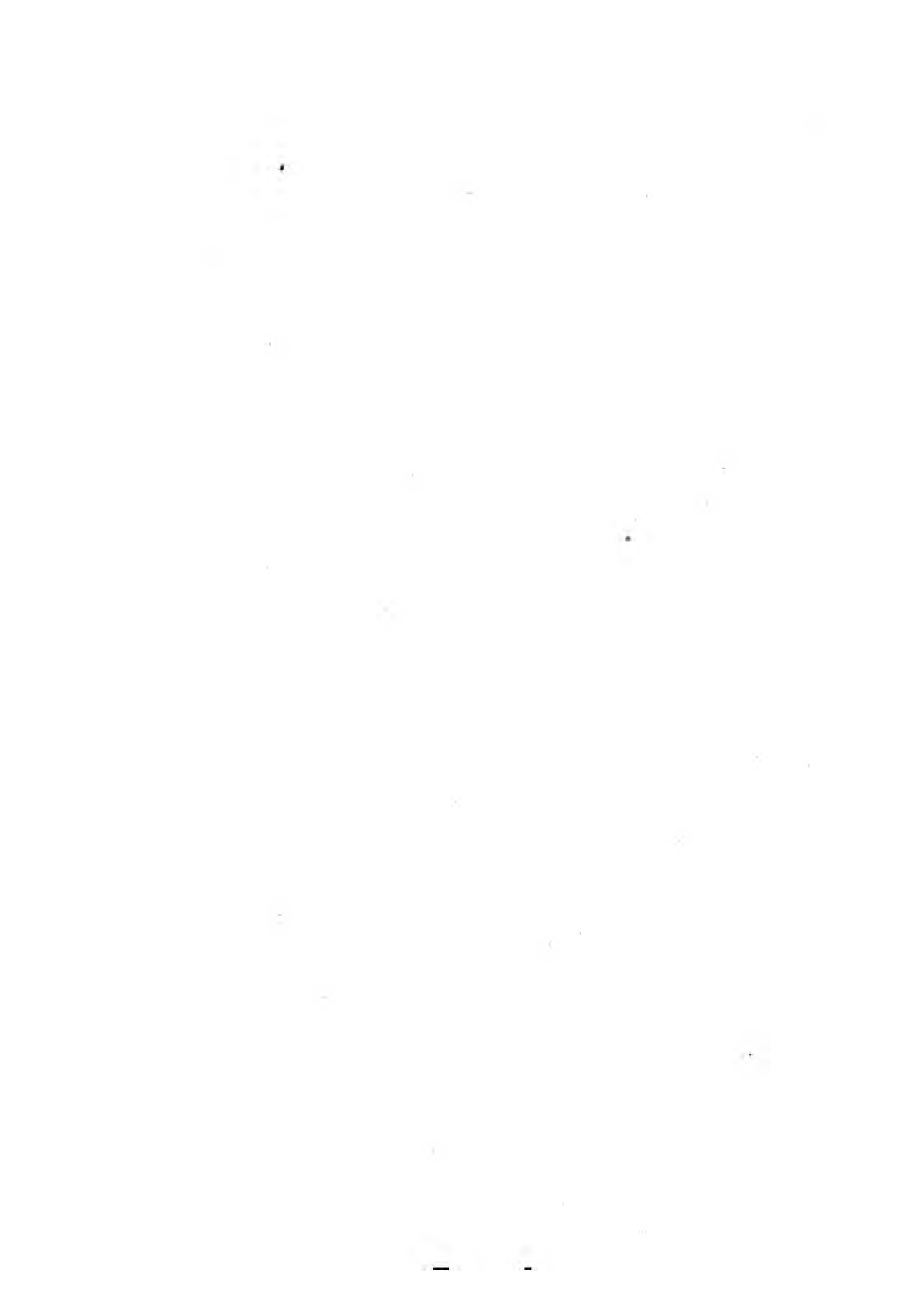
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.















# AGNES AND KATIE IN SERVICE.

A SEQUEL TO  
THE "JOY OF WELLDOING."

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
*"Annie the Shell Girl," "Granny Robin,"*  
*"Be kind to the Little Ones,"*  
&c. &c.



---

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION  
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

---

LONDON:  
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORIES:  
77 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS;  
4 ROYAL EXCHANGE; 48 PICCADILLY;  
AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

2537. f 9 5



**CLARENDON PRESS, OXFORD.**

**FOR THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.**

# AGNES AND KATIE IN SERVICE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

“HERE’S the new maid, Mrs. Pyke,” said Charlotte, the housemaid, opening the door of a small back room in Westaway Terrace, and showing in a young girl, who looked rather shy and scared.

“Ah! sit down, will you?” said Mrs. Pyke, the lady’s-maid, looking at the newcomer from head to foot in a way that made the bright colour mount to her face.

Mrs. Pyke was a tall thin person, with sharp features, and a worn expression of countenance, that gave an idea of past

6      *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

suffering of some kind. She had an abrupt way of speaking, which was natural to her, but which sounded harsh and unpleasing.

“What’s your name?” she began, as the housemaid left the room.

“Agnes Walton,” was the answer.

“What age?”

“Fifteen.”

“Been in service before?”

“No,” said Agnes.

“Got everything to learn, then. You’re under me, you know, and are to mind what I tell you; I’m very particular.”

Agnes began to think it might not be so very pleasant in service, after all, much as she had looked forward to it.

“You had better go and take off your things, and make yourself tidy now—I shall have more to say to you presently. The housemaid will show you where you are to sleep,” said Mrs. Pyke.

Agnes, glad to escape, did as she was told.

Charlotte helped her to carry up her box to the attic which they were to share.

Agnes sat down on the bed, and looked rather doleful.

“You’re a lucky girl, to be Miss Janet’s maid,” began Charlotte. “She’s a sweet young lady.”

“What shall I have to do?” asked Agnes, nervously. “It’s all so strange to me.”

“Oh, sit in the bed-room which is next to her sitting-room, and work, and answer her bell, and do whatever she wants. I wish I was you, I know! A nice easy life! All but Mrs. Pyke.”

“What do you mean?” asked Agnes.

“She’s such a crabbed old thing,” replied Charlotte; “never gives a body any peace. The last girl that came in your place left, because she would not put up with it.”

Agnes, who had been well brought up, felt that there was something wrong in Charlotte’s speaking in this way; but being



8      *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

younger, she thought it did not become her to say so. She was silent, and began to fold up her shawl, and smooth out her bonnet-strings.

Charlotte went on,—

“She’s always nagging: I never saw the like of it. There! just because the other day I was going in a hurry to take the letters into the parlour in my hand (I’d left the waiter downstairs, and couldn’t trouble to go for it) she darts at me, and says, so sharp, ‘Charlotte, whatever are you thinking of? Let me catch you taking a letter into the parlour in your fingers! Go and get the waiter, child!’ As if it was any business of hers! She’s always down upon one. I’ve no patience with that sort of interference, not I!”

“Perhaps she thought she might save you a scolding,” said Agnes.

“Not she! she’s not so kind as all that. Besides, missis never scolds. She’s

full of nothing but Miss Janet. So Mrs. Pyke takes it upon herself, you see. You stand up for your rights from the first, or you'll find she'll domineer over you finely."

Agnes made no answer. She thought of what Granny had once said to her, that servants who talk too freely of those set over them are not to be trusted. Charlotte knew what she did not tell Agnes, that it was her mistress's wish that Mrs. Pyke, who was an old and faithful servant, should teach the young servants of the house their duties, and see that their work was properly done, as her own time was fully occupied with her sick daughter.

Agnes began to busy herself with unpacking her box, and laying her things in a drawer, which Charlotte showed her. Charlotte stood by, examining her clothes, turning them over, and making remarks on their plainness, greatly to Agnes's annoyance.

“You don’t mean to say that this is your best!” she exclaimed, at last, as Agnes, untying a handkerchief, displayed her Sunday bonnet, a new white straw of a tidy close shape, neatly bound with a dark green ribbon and curtain, and a plain white cap inside. “Not a bit of flower or anything on it, you old dowdy!” and Charlotte laughed. “Just look at mine!” and she produced from a band-box under the bed a thing in shape somewhat like half a saucer, with a wreath of pink flowers round it, and two long bright pink strings a yard long.

“Is that *yours*?” asked Agnes, in astonishment. She had seen such articles in the shop windows. “Does mistress let you wear it?”

Charlotte laughed scornfully.

“I never asked her leave,” she answered. “I don’t see that it is any concern of hers; though I shouldn’t care for her to meet me in it, nor Mrs. Pyke neither; shouldn’t I get

a lecture! There, I must go; there's that everlasting door-bell. My patience, how it does keep on!"

She hastily put away her bonnet, and ran off, leaving Agnes to her own thoughts, which were not pleasant ones.

She was sure, from all she had learnt at home, that Charlotte was not a girl of high principle, and that she was not acting rightly in dressing in a way which she knew her mistress would disapprove,—on the sly, as it were; neither did she speak as a good and dutiful servant ought.

"Yet what can I say?" thought Agnes. "Miss Ellen and Granny both warned me against thinking myself better than others, or setting myself up, and finding out other people's faults. I'm rather apt to do that. I must just do *my* duty, and not be led away from it; then it will be all right, I suppose."

With this wise resolution she arranged her



clothes neatly in her drawer, and then put on a clean white apron, and one of the tidy little net caps which had been Miss Ellen's present to her, and which Charlotte had declared nothing would induce her to put on *her* head.

"You're wanted," said Charlotte, presently, looking in at the door, "in Mrs. Pyke's room."

Agnes went down somewhat nervously. Mrs. Pyke took a quick survey of her, as she came in, and appeared satisfied. She even smiled, as the little white cap with its neat edging caught her eye.

"Take this beef-tea in to Miss Janet," she said, pointing to the tray which was on the table. "Knock at the door before you go in, and remember always to do so when you go to a private room, but never when you enter the dining or sitting-room. Put it on the little table by Miss Janet's sofa, and don't speak to her unless she speaks to you ;

that's another thing you have got to recollect, that it doesn't become a servant to make remarks, or enter into conversation with ladies, unless invited to do so; and the girls now-a-days are so forward! That's why I speak of it to you; for in *my* day no servant-girl would have thought of doing such a thing." Agnes was sure *she* should not have thought of doing so, and felt a little hurt at being supposed to need such teaching. She took up the tray, and went to Miss Janet's room, and knocked. She felt that she blushed all over, as she rather awkwardly made room for the tray on the table, knowing that Miss Janet was looking at her.

"Well, Agnes," said Miss Janet, with a sweet smile, "are you glad to go to service?"

"Yes, miss," said Agnes, bashfully.

"I hope you will be happy here," said Miss Janet.

Agnes thought there could be small doubt

of that, with Miss Janet to wait on; if only Mrs. Pyke were not so awful.

“You will try to be a good girl, and mind all that Mrs. Pyke says,” continued Miss Janet. “You will find a kind friend in her, if you do your duty. Just raise me up a little, will you? That is it, thank you. Now poke the fire, please, and reach me that green book. That will do.”

Agnes was obliged to go. She felt as if she could gladly have stayed all day by the side of her sweet gentle-looking young mistress, waiting upon her. Mrs. Pyke gave her some directions, when she came back, as to her daily duties, and then giving her some needlework desired her to go and sit in Miss Janet’s bed-room, which was close to her sitting-room, that she might be within sound of her handbell. Agnes carried down her work, and seated herself at a small table in the window, in Miss Janet’s room. There, left to herself, she began to think

how strange it felt, to have so entirely changed her life in one day, to be among new people, with new occupations, yesterday scouring Granny's kitchen, playing with her little sister, and weeding the garden, and to-day sitting in Miss Janet's room, and answering her bell. She wondered how she should like her fellow-servants, and then pondered over what Charlotte had said of Mrs. Pyke, and how Miss Janet had told her she would find a friend in her. How could this be, if Mrs. Pyke were as disagreeable as Charlotte said she was? Miss Janet must know, surely. Was Charlotte untruthful, then? Miss Ellen had told Agnes that she would find new trials in service—trials of temper, of principle, trials in her fellow-servants, most likely; were they beginning already? How were they to be met? Agnes knew the answer to that question. She knew that there is but one way in which trial may safely be met, in the strength of

16     *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

God. She laid down her work for one moment, and in the familiar words of the Psalms lifted up her heart silently,—

“Let Thine Hand help me: for I have chosen Thy Commandments.”

## CHAPTER II.

“CHARLOTTE, what are you doing there? Come in directly!” exclaimed Mrs. Pyke, as she crossed the passage to go upstairs. Charlotte hastily whispered “to-morrow,” and then closed the street door, at which she had been standing for the last ten minutes, talking in a low voice to some one outside. “How often must I forbid your gossiping at the street door! Who were you talking to?”

“Only my cousin,” answered Charlotte sullenly.

“I believe you!” was the ironical reply. “There never was a housemaid yet who hadn’t a cousin always coming to see her. But cousin or not, there’s a time and a place for everything, and your mornings are not the time, nor the hall-door the place, for idle



chatter. 'Tis so disreputable to be standing gossiping at your master's door like that! No decent servant would do it. I wonder you're not ashamed!"

"As decent as you," muttered Charlotte, as she banged the door to, and flounced past Mrs. Pyke down the kitchen stairs. "I'll give warning, *that* I will! There's no standing such interference!"

"What's the matter, Charlotte?" asked Agnes, who was waiting in the kitchen for Miss Janet's luncheon.

"Matter, indeed!" cried Charlotte. "As if one couldn't speak a word to one's friends without being blown up for it? I'll go, I will! I won't stand it!" and she sat down on a chair, put her apron up to her face, and began to cry passionately.

"Hush, hush, Charlotte, there's a good girl," said the cook. "'Tis your own fault, for speaking to him at the front door; why didn't you tell him to come down the area?"

Then there'd have been no fuss, and you know he's always welcome."

"It'll be all safe to-morrow," she added. Agnes looked astonished. She knew it was a rule that no one was allowed in the kitchen without Mrs. Pyke's permission. Charlotte saw her, and gave the cook a look, to warn her not to say any more before Agnes. The cook poured out Miss Janet's beef-tea, and said, "There, take it up while it's hot," and Agnes went away with the tray.

"Will she tell?" asked cook, as soon as she was gone.

"No," answered Charlotte, "I don't think so. But she's been brought up so strictly she thinks everything wrong."

Agnes certainly had her own thoughts about the matter, as she went upstairs, but it would not have entered her head to carry tales of her fellow-servants to anyone. She wished Charlotte would not dislike Mrs. Pyke, and rebel against her, as she did.

The next evening, when Agnes came down to tea rather late (for she had been wanted by her mistress, as Mrs. Pyke was out,) she found a man sitting in the kitchen whom Charlotte introduced as her "cousin Robert," with a smile at cook, which Agnes did not see. Of course, it was no business of hers, she thought; perhaps the servants had had leave to have their friend in to tea. She sat very quiet, for the sort of silly talk and nonsense that went on between the three was quite new to her, and she did not like it; she felt shy. She finished her tea quickly, and was about to escape upstairs when Charlotte called her back, and said to her in a whisper outside the kitchen door,—

"Look here, don't make any remarks to Mrs. Pyke about Robert."

"Why not?" asked Agnes, who had no idea of doing anything of the kind.

"Because—because she's so queer, you know, and it wouldn't do."

“But why not?” persisted Agnes, beginning to feel that something was wrong.

“Never mind, she’d be sure to scold; only just promise, there’s no harm in that.”

Agnes did not feel so sure; what should she do? Miss Janet’s bell rang.

“Promise, there’s a good girl,” begged Charlotte, catching hold of her dress. “I’ll do anything for you if you will.”

Agnes pulled her dress away, and said,—

“Don’t keep me, Charlotte, I’m not a tell-tale, I should think you might have known that. Of course I shan’t tell, unless I’m asked, but if I am, I’m not going to tell a lie to serve anybody.”

Charlotte was obliged to be satisfied with this, and returned to the kitchen inwardly wondering how it was that she could not help looking up to Agnes, child as she was. She almost felt afraid of her, such was the influence of her upright and steady example.

That night, when they were undressing,

in the attic which they shared, they were unusually silent, and each full of her own thoughts. Charlotte was turning over in her mind the probable consequences of Agnes being questioned at any time by Mrs. Pyke, about what went on downstairs, and considering if it would be possible to secure her silence; and Agnes was pondering at that moment over the words,—“*A time to keep silence, and a time to speak,*” and wondering whether it would be good or right for her to say what she thought to Charlotte. She felt herself to be such a child, to be setting up to blame an older servant; and Charlotte would be nearly sure to take offence, and call it “preaching,” so that it would be of no use, after all. Yet how uncomfortable she felt, to think that underhand things were done, and she in a way a party to them! Now she remembered about Mrs. Pyke’s having been out for the afternoon, and thought it must have been a plan of Charlotte’s. The



thought disgusted her. Yes, she *would* speak, whether she gave offence or not. So she turned to Charlotte, and said,—

“Don’t be vexed, Charlotte, if I say something to you.”

“Vexed! no, why should I?” replied Charlotte, with a little uneasy laugh. “Preach away!”

“I don’t mean it for preaching,” said Agnes, the colour rising in her face, “only I feel as if I should like to speak of what’s in my mind, if you won’t be offended.”

“Stuff and nonsense! *offended*, indeed, by what such a chit as you might say!” exclaimed Charlotte.

“Well, then, I won’t say it, if that’s your mood,” said Agnes, a little hurt. “Never mind, it’s no matter,” and she went on undressing. Charlotte came over to her.

“Now,” she said, “you *shall* tell me, for you’re a good little thing, though you are so old-fashioned. What was this wonderful piece of wisdom, Granny?”



Agnes felt inclined to turn away in a huff from Charlotte's mocking manner, but she controlled herself, and answered,—

“Well, Charlotte, it is only to beg and entreat this of you,—that you would not do things downstairs which you don't like to be known upstairs, to Mrs. Pyke or to mistress.”

“What business is it of yours, I should like to know?” asked Charlotte, sharply.

“None at all,” replied Agnes; “only it makes me feel very uncomfortable, and as if I were bearing a part in what was wrong. How can you like to go on so, Charlotte? It would make me wretched.”

Charlotte was silent for a moment, and then answered sulkily,—“Well, it's all Mrs. Pyke's fault; she drives me to do things on the sly, by being always at me as she is. I know she has a spite against me, and I hate her, and that's the truth!”

“Hush!” said Agnes, “don't speak like

that. I'm sure she would give you leave to do anything that was right. But you make her angry by answering."

"And who wouldn't answer, I should like to know, if they were always being nagged at, as I am!" replied Charlotte. "If she'd let me be, I shouldn't do wrong things."

"It's *because* you do wrong things, that she can't let you be," said Agnes. "But there, it's not my place to find fault. Only I do wish so much, dear Charlotte," she added affectionately, "for your own sake, that you would give up doing what you feel to be wrong, It can't make you happy."

"Happy, no! what servant ever thinks of being happy? drudge, drudge, from the first thing in the morning to the last at night, till every limb aches, and every little bit of pleasure one might have, forbidden!" and Charlotte began to wipe her eyes with her apron, at the hard picture she had drawn. Agnes could not help smiling.

“Really, Charlotte,” she answered, “that is a dreadful thought! Only, you know, it is not *quite* a true one. It was only last Thursday that you had your afternoon out, five or six hours to go where you liked, and do what you liked. And you have that every third week. And I myself heard Mrs. Pyke tell you that you could ask your mother in to tea, when she came in to market on Saturdays. And as for working from morning to night, there’s different sorts of work, to be sure, for every one, whether servant or not—some’s more tiring than others, it’s true, but even ladies work, and hard too, sometimes. And I’ve heard Granny say that a good housemaid would get her house-work over and be able to sit down to a bit of needlework, or what not, of an afternoon; and this is no such hard place, but what you might do that.”

“I don’t know how it is, then, but I never can,” said Charlotte. “I’m always behind with my work; and then down comes

Mrs. Pyke upon me with her '*idle gossip,*' '*dawdling ways,*' and so on."

"And you don't think you deserve that," said Agnes, gravely. "O, I see."

"You're laughing at me, I do believe," exclaimed Charlotte. "It's too bad of you. Yes, you're so prim and so good, you don't get into any of my scrapes, so you can afford to be happy."

"Though I *do* have to work all day!" said Agnes, with a smile. "Ah, Charlotte, as dear Miss Ellen used to say, there's only *one* thing can make anybody happy—working for God."

Charlotte made no answer. Perhaps she did not know what this meant; or perhaps she did not like being taught by Agnes. She only gave a great yawn, and said presently, "Well, I'm tired; I shall get into bed."

And she did, and was soon snoring loudly, while Agnes lay awake, thinking she had given Charlotte very wise advice, and feeling just a little superior.

## CHAPTER III.

“MISS JANET’S gone out in the carriage, and her Ma, and Mrs. Pyke; so why can’t you come down and have a chat along with me and cook, instead of moping up here for ever and a day?”

Charlotte was the speaker. Agnes grew slightly red as she answered, “Mrs. Pyke told me I was to work here.”

“Of course, when Miss Janet’s in; but she didn’t mean you to stick here when she wasn’t. What a goose you are! Come along! I want to show you the trimming I’ve bought for my new gown; it’s so elegant, all covered with beads. Just come down for a minute.”

“I’d better not,” said Agnes, more boldly. “Mrs. Pyke said this must be finished before tea.”

“Mrs. Pyke! it’s always Mrs. Pyke!” exclaimed Charlotte. “I wouldn’t be under her thumb, as you are, from morning to night. You don’t know what it is to be independent. I can’t think how you can be so poor-spirited, not I!”

The expression “poor-spirited,” reminded Agnes of those words of her Divine Master, “Blessed are the *poor in spirit*,” and this recollection stilled the half-angry feeling which the first part of Charlotte’s speech had called up. She made no answer, but worked on industriously for a minute, and then said,—

“Don’t think me unkind, Charlotte, I’ll look at your trimming when I come down to tea, but I must finish this first.”

“I can’t wait, I’m going to give the trimming to my sister-in-law,” answered Charlotte. “She’s downstairs, waiting, and I wanted you to see her. She’s the most good-natured soul that ever lived, and she’s



30      *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

going to make my dress in the last fashion, with a train. She's brought a fashion-book for me and cook to see; it's most lovely!"

Agnes thought she should like to see the fashion-book, if it was so lovely: she had never seen one. But her liking could make no difference in her duty; she knew that. So she went on working.

"I shall go and fetch my trimming," said Charlotte; and off she went, and presently came back with a striped green-and-white camlet in one hand, and a bead trimming in the other.

"There, isn't that sweet?" she exclaimed, unrolling the dress on the bed, and festooning the gimp with her hands over it.

Agnes thought it was very pretty, but not suitable for a servant, though she did not say so. She felt uncomfortable at Charlotte's bringing it in there to show her. What if

Miss Janet should come in? It seemed taking such a liberty, and Mrs. Pyke had told her not to be gossiping with Charlotte in her young lady's room.

“Do take it away,” said Agnes. “Suppose Miss Janet should come in!”

“O, she's safe not to, for I must open the door first,” said Charlotte. “I'll tell you how I'm going to have the body made. A lot of little pleats at the top, edged with the gimp, you know, like this——what's that? hark!” She stood listening. “It's missis, I do believe, coming upstairs. Cook must have let them in. What shall I do!” She snatched up her finery, just as Mrs. Pyke opened the door for her mistress, who was helping Miss Janet in, tired and exhausted from her drive. Mrs. Pyke's face of severity made Charlotte escape as fast she could, unnoticed by her mistress, and Agnes, who rose directly they entered, was sent down for a hot-water tin for Miss Janet.

“My! weren’t we just caught!” exclaimed Charlotte in a low whisper to Agnes, as she passed her on the stairs. Mrs. Pyke was standing at the top and heard the words. Agnes had to wait on Miss Janet, who was tired and chilly, and wanted her tea; then she went down to her own tea, and afterwards had to see that Miss Janet’s room was all ready for her to go to bed, her fire lit, her night-lamp trimmed, the little table placed by her bed-side with the medicine on it, water-bottle and glass, and the salts. Then she had to be in attendance while Miss Janet’s mamma helped her to bed, to fold up her clothes, put everything in its place, and get what was required. After this, she had to put away Miss Janet’s things in her sitting-room,—her books and papers and work, fetch up her supper, bring in her handbell, take away her tray again, and remain within call until Mrs. Pyke came up, who slept in a little bed in a closet adjoining

Miss Janet's room. It therefore happened that Mrs. Pyke had no opportunity of speaking to Agnes about what she had seen that afternoon. Perhaps it was as well, she thought, as she undressed, for it gave her time to get over her annoyance, which was great, after all she had said to Agnes on the subject of encouraging Charlotte in Miss Janet's room. Agnes had been in her place now some weeks, and her conduct had pleased Mrs. Pyke in many ways, so that she felt vexed and disappointed to think that Agnes was underhand, and did not obey her when she was out of the way. If she did not, it would destroy the feeling of trust that Mrs. Pyke was beginning to have in her.

"Charlotte," said Mrs. Pyke the next morning, as she looked into the drawing-room where the housemaid was dusting, "what were you doing in Miss Janet's room yesterday, when I came in?"

"Only just stepped in for one minute as I

34      *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

came downstairs, to show Agnes my gown. She wanted so much to see it, and I was going to send it away, so I thought you wouldn't mind."

"You've no business in there at all, talking to Agnes. It's not the place for gossip, as I've told you before. When you've made the bed and done the room in the morning, you've no further call to be in there, unless you're sent. Once for all, do you understand?"

"I don't understand what you've got to do with it," muttered Charlotte, as she turned her back upon the lady's-maid, with a sullen air. Mrs. Pyke took no notice of these rude words, but left the room, and went to find Agnes, who was preparing Miss Janet's breakfast.

Agnes saw that a reproof was coming, and already looked guilty, though she was not so. Mrs. Pyke spoke gently to her, not in the sharp way in which she had addressed



Charlotte. "Agnes," she said, "I am surprised that you should encourage Charlotte to come and talk to you and show you her silly finery in Miss Janet's room when she is out, after what I said to you the other day. I am disappointed in you, child. Though you are but a child, you can still do *your* duty, if others don't do theirs."

Agnes' spirit rose high at these words. She encourage Charlotte! She was on the point of saying hotly that she had done nothing of the kind, that she had even begged Charlotte not to stay, when it suddenly flashed across her mind that one of the things Miss Ellen had most strongly urged her to try about when she went to service, was "not answering again."

It was a hard struggle for a minute, and Agnes' tears began to fall; but she conquered, and she was glad afterwards that she had, when Mrs. Pyke went on,—

"Charlotte says you wanted to see her



36     *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

dress, and perhaps it was natural, but it mustn't be done again, for any reason, remember. It is contrary to all that is proper, for servants to be entertaining themselves and standing gossiping about in their mistresses rooms. You are young and have much to learn, so there is more excuse for you, perhaps; but all I say is, it mustn't be again. I felt ashamed myself when I came in with mistress and Miss Janet yesterday."

Agnes made no answer, but her tears, tears of pride partly, were flowing fast. She saw plainly what Charlotte had said, in order to defend herself, and though she felt hurt at it, she was yet glad that she had not laid the blame on Charlotte, as Charlotte had evidently done on her. It was the true path to peace, though a hard one. Mrs. Pyke was well pleased at receiving no answer, or attempt at self-defence. In speaking to her mistress some time afterwards, about Agnes, she

referred to that instance, "the first," she said, "for years past, ma'am, in which I have given a reproof or even a piece of advice to a girl, without being answered. Girls in these days seem to think they can't do themselves justice without answering back again."

"They do themselves more justice by silence and meekness than any words can do for them," answered her mistress. "I am glad to hear what you say of Agnes, for I am anxious to keep her. Miss Janet likes her, and I think she seems likely to make a good servant in time."

"I do like her very much," said Miss Janet, who was present, lying on the sofa. "I think she is a girl of real principle. I so often see it in little things,—things of which she is not aware. You know, mother dear, that I could not help noticing when Mary Anne was here, how often my letters were meddled with, and more than once I found them put into the wrong envelopes,

and how I could not help feeling at last that she pried into them and into my desk, which I kept unlocked ; and then, again, how every little bit or drop which I left untouched on my tray used to disappear, so that cook thought my appetite had come back suddenly ; and fruit, in the same way, left on my table, went away by degrees. And many other little things I could name—listening at the doors, for instance, which we found out that Mary Anne did. Now, since Agnes came, I have noticed her, as I was led to think of it so often before, and I am quite certain that she never touches or meddles with anything she should not. And she is so particular in doing all she has to do,—so faithful in the smallest things. I am quite delighted with my little maid.”

“ I wish I could say the same of Charlotte,” said Mrs. Pyke. “ There is just as great a *want* of principle in her. But, poor girl, it is not so much her fault as it is with some : I

know her family, and she was badly brought up."

"You know I took her, Pyke," said her mistress, "partly from what you said about their being in such distress, and because you pitied her so, and seemed to have hopes of her; but if she does not improve, she must really go. I cannot keep an unprincipled servant in my house."

"I still hope that she may, ma'am," said Mrs. Pyke; "she comes of a rough lot, and will take some time to teach. But I don't mind the trouble, ma'am, if you will try her a little longer."

At this moment, Agnes, who had been sitting in the bed-room at work, having occasion to go downstairs to get a flat iron, opened the door on the staircase suddenly, and came face to face with Charlotte, who was standing close to the sitting-room door, her face crimson, her eyes full of tears.

40     *Agnes and Katie in Service.*

“What *is* the matter?” asked Agnes, astonished.

“Hush!” exclaimed Charlotte, angrily, and rushed away up to her room. There we will leave her.

## CHAPTER IV.

THAT night, for the first time since Agnes had gone to her place, she saw Charlotte kneel down for two or three minutes before she got into bed. Agnes, of course, always knelt and said her prayers morning and evening, as she had been used to do; and she thought it very strange that Charlotte never did so, and also that she never was to be seen in Church, though she made a point of going out on Sundays at service-time, when it was her turn. Often and often Agnes had been going to make some remark to Charlotte about her saying no prayers, and as often she had shrunk from doing so, from a feeling that it would seem as if she thought herself better than Charlotte. Agnes was right in this: her own quiet daily example was the



best reproof, and if she had found fault with Charlotte for neglecting her prayers, it would have made it harder for her to begin before Agnes, and so to own herself in the wrong. Unworthy though it is, this sort of pride often influences people, and prevents their doing what they know to be right. Charlotte felt glad that Agnes made no remark about it, for she had been almost ashamed to kneel down for the first time before her. Once done, it was easier afterwards. One night, some time after, Charlotte said abruptly to Agnes, as they were undressing,—

“I say, what prayers do you use?”

“‘Our Father,’” replied Agnes, “and some prayers out of a little book Miss Ellen gave me. Would you like to look at it?” and, without waiting for an answer, she took it out of her drawer. The name of it was “Short Prayers for those who are hindered.” Charlotte took it, and looked at some of the prayers.

“They seem nice and easy,” she said. “To tell the truth, I don’t know what to say when I kneel down; I only know ‘Our Father,’ and ‘Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.’”

“What’s that?” asked Agnes.

“It’s what mother taught us,” said Charlotte. “Don’t you know it?—

“‘Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,  
Bless the bed that I lie on.  
Four corners to my bed,  
Twelve angels round it spread:  
Two to head, and two to feet,  
Two to make my winding-sheet:  
Two to watch, and two to pray,  
And two to bear my soul away.  
And if I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.’”

Most of the children in our village used to say that for their prayers at night.”

“It’s very pretty,” said Agnes, “but it does not seem much like a prayer, except the last bit. You can use my book whenever you like, Charlotte.”

Charlotte looked pleased. “I think I should like,” she said.

Agnes could not help noticing that lately Charlotte had not spoken against Mrs. Pyke, as she had been almost daily in the habit of doing. She wondered why it was, and was more than ever convinced that Charlotte had taken what she called "a good turn," when on Sunday morning she saw her coming out of Church, for the first time since she came to her place.

"Aggie!" cried a voice behind her, as she got into the churchyard, and turning round, Agnes saw her younger sister.

"O, Katie, dear! I'm so glad to see you!" exclaimed Agnes.

"Do come a little way with me," said Katie. "I want to talk to you. I scarcely ever see you now, though you're so near."

"I can't, dear," said Agnes. "Miss Janet will be waiting for her dinner, and I must run home."

"Just a minute," said Katie; "missis has

been scolding me, and I think I shall give warning."

"Nonsense, Katie! How can you be so foolish! Granny would be very angry with you if you did. I must go, I really can't wait now; but if Mrs. Pyke will let me, I'll run down and see you this afternoon, and hear all about it."

The desired leave was easily obtained, for Agnes did not often ask to go out, and Mrs. Pyke knew that she could trust her, when she did. So at three o'clock Agnes set off for the Parsonage, where Katie was under-nurse. She was always allowed to go up into the nursery to see Katie, who was now alone, for the two elder children were gone with the nurse to the afternoon service, and the baby was with Mrs. Mayow.

Katie was sitting over the fire, looking rather sulky, a very unusual thing with her.

"Well," said Agnes, "what's it all about, Katie?"

“I’m not comfortable,” began Katie, in a discontented voice, “and why should I be put upon? Nurse makes a perfect slave of me: upstairs, downstairs, just as she pleases, and she’s so sharp upon me; just because I was talking to Maria in her room yesterday while she was dressing, and nurse happened to want some water for baby, she gave it me so, and ups and tells missis that I was an idle gossip, and missis was so angry! Maria says *she* wouldn’t put up with two mistresses, if she was me; and she thinks I don’t have enough wages for the work I do; as much as any housemaid, what with scrubbing and cleaning, and running up and down, to say nothing of making and mending. And I don’t see why I should be put upon, I don’t!” The angry tears began to come, and the flow of words stopped.

“Katie, dear,” said Agnes, “you’re not right. I’m sure you’re not right. You’ve been listening to a person who’s been trying

to make you discontented. I wonder you don't see that. You used to be as happy as you could be, before Maria came. Don't you let her lead you, Katie. If she puts you up to thinking that you are hardly treated, and overworked, and all that, she's not a good friend to you."

"She says she's going to better herself," said Katie, "and she wants me to do the same."

"It's very wrong of her, then," said Agnes. "Pray don't listen to her, Katie, and do go home to-morrow if you can, and talk to Granny about it. She can advise you better than I."

"Maria laughs at Granny," said Katie. "She calls her a prim old body, and says her ways are old-fashioned; and that she has the most ridiculous notions about servants."

"All you say makes me more sure that you're wrong in listening to her," said Agnes. "What! teach you to laugh at



dear Granny, who's been more than a mother to us! *That* must show you that she's not right. For shame, Katie!"

Katie did feel ashamed now. Until Agnes put it before her, she had not felt how bad it was of Maria to be setting her against Granny. She said,—

"Well, of course I didn't like her talking in that way, and I told her so, but she only laughed, and called me a little prig, and said I'd seen nothing of the world yet."

"I don't see what that has to do with Granny," said Agnes. "You ought to have more sense, Katie!" Katie certainly felt that she had been foolish.

"I don't care much about Maria, for herself," she said, "but she's always going on, and gets me to come up to her room, and keeps me talking if I go downstairs for anything. I often want to get away, and I can't, and then nurse scolds."

"Of course she does!" answered Agnes.

“As to can’t, of course you could, if you liked. If you just keep to yourself, as I do, you will never get wrong. You’ll find it much the best. Don’t go talking with Maria. It’s she who has made you unhappy. I can see it all. The reason why I have gone on so comfortably in my place is because I have kept out of all that sort of thing, and have gone on doing my duty quietly.”

“You are always good,” said Katie, as she kissed her sister.

Now, what Agnes said of herself was true enough, but it would have been better if some one else had said it of her. She was rather inclined to be conceited, and to consider herself a pattern, which marred the good in her very much. She took Katie’s praise quite willingly, and went home in a highly satisfied mood, which was a little ruffled when Mrs. Pyke told her before Charlotte that she ought to have been in sooner. She went upstairs in no very good

humour to take off her things, thinking as she went that Mrs. Pyke was unjust, and that she had not been out at all too long. She was so full of this thought that she forgot to put on her cap, and was met by Mrs. Pyke with a sharp "What are you thinking of, child, to come down like that!" which sent her up again so vexed, that she actually cried when she got into the room.

Everything seemed to go wrong that evening, somehow, with Agnes: she made a mistake about Miss Janet's medicine, and was reproved by Mrs. Pyke again, to her great vexation. It had long been her custom, when she went to her room at night, before saying her prayers, to pause a few minutes and think over her day, to see what faults there had been, and to make a resolution to amend them. To-night she felt unwilling to do this. Why? Because the fault of to-day was one which went deepest, and was most really humbling to own to herself.

## CHAPTER V.

“IT is such a warm bright day, Agnes, that I think I should like to have the donkey-chair, and go down on the beach,” said Miss Janet.

“Shall I order it for you, miss?” asked Agnes.

“Yes, to be here at twelve, please,” answered Miss Janet. “And you can come with me, Agnes.”

“Thank you, miss,” replied Agnes, her eyes brimming with delight. It was one of her greatest treats to go down to the beach with her young mistress. Miss Janet generally took a story-book, and had her chair drawn up in some quiet nook under the shelter of the high cliffs, where she would stay for an hour, while Agnes read aloud to

her, and the donkey-boy at a little distance made ducks and drakes in the water, or fished crabs out of the wet sand.

These quiet times were very pleasant, the stillness only broken by the cry of the sea-birds, or the splashing of the waves on the beach. Miss Janet chose some nice book, and, with her usual thoughtfulness, kept it for those times, that Agnes might not lose any of it. Agnes read aloud very nicely, thanks to Miss Ellen, who had taken much pains with her in that particular, knowing how great a comfort it often is to an invalid to have an attendant who is a good reader, and how painful it is, especially in listening to the Holy Scriptures or other sacred words, to hear h's dropped and put in wrong places, stops left out, and words badly pronounced or gabbled. Agnes had a sweet, low voice, and read clearly and simply. She had felt very shy when first she was asked to read aloud, but Miss Janet said kindly,—

“Do your best, Agnes; I do not expect you to read well.”

And then she had taken courage, and was surprised to find how soon all her nervousness had vanished; and now it was one of the things to which she most looked forward, that quiet reading on the beach with her young mistress.

On this day, however, when Agnes took up the book as usual to carry out, Miss Janet said,—

“I do not think I shall want that this morning,” and Agnes fancied that she did not feel well enough to listen, as was sometimes the case, when she would lie quite still on her chair without speaking, watching the restless ebb and flow of the water, and thinking perhaps of the far-off Land where “there shall be no more sea.”

At these times, Agnes sat by, as still as her young mistress, dreaming too, in her own way, under that mysterious influence



which every one has felt in presence of the sublime solitude of the sea—that indescribable soothing which seems to flow out of each successive wave, as it makes its last little sigh upon the sand.

Miss Janet had a favourite nook in a small inlet formed by two projecting rocks, quite retired from the rest of the beach. These rocks rose high on each side, and made a cool shelter in the small cove between them. At low water there was plenty of room to come round these rocks, which stretched far out towards the sea, and at high tide were almost covered.

In front of the cove, some way out, was a large low rock buried in seaweed, and abounding in little pools and crevices, rich in actiniæ, or sea-anemones, which Agnes used to collect for Miss Janet's aquarium. They had some very rare ones, and Agnes thought she was becoming quite learned about them, for Miss Janet had taught her

their names. She had a collection of shells and seaweeds, too, to which Agnes was delighted to contribute; and she was never more pleased than when she had found a new specimen to please her young mistress.

Sometimes little Miss Flo, Miss Janet's younger sister, used to come with her on the sands; and then Agnes had to look well after her, for she was the most mischievous little urchin that can be imagined, and was for ever jumping into pools and clambering in dangerous places; and she led Agnes "quite a life," as she said. Miss Flo being the only little one, and the pet, was somewhat spoilt, it is to be feared; but nobody liked to own to the fact. She was Mrs. Pyke's special care, but was hardly ever with her, as she spent most of her time with her mother and sister.

On this day, however, Miss Flo had gone to dine and spend the afternoon with the little Mayows; and Miss Janet was not

sorry, for she wanted to speak to Agnes, and here was a good opportunity. She was drawn as usual to her favourite corner under the rocks, and the donkey-boy, seeing that he was not wanted at present, betook himself to his ordinary pursuits at a little distance.

Miss Janet seemed to be graver than usual, and Agnes sat down on the sand beside her chair, silently.

Presently Miss Janet said, "Agnes, do you know that there is to be a Confirmation here soon?"

"No, miss," said Agnes.

Though she said no more, the quick colour that flushed up into her usually pale face showed that she was not indifferent to the news.

"Yes, the Rector told us of it yesterday. It is to be given out in church next Sunday. You will wish to be confirmed, Agnes, will you not?"

Agnes made no answer.

“Surely you do!” said Miss Janet, earnestly, looking down at Agnes for a reply.

It came slowly, and in a low tone, as if half ashamed.

“I should be so afraid.”

“Why afraid?” asked Miss Janet. “Afraid of what?”

“I can’t tell, miss,” said Agnes. “But there is something awful to me in—in that which comes after.”

“You mean in receiving for the first time the Holy Communion,” said Miss Janet.

“Yes,” answered Agnes, looking down on the sand.

“It is of course very solemn,” replied her young mistress. “It is the great turning-point, I suppose, in one’s life.” She paused. “Have you, then, ever thought much about it, Agnes?” she asked, gently.

Agnes’s low “Yes” would not have given the idea that she had, but Miss Janet knew her, and saw by her rising colour and quiet

manner that it was a matter of deep feeling to her.

It was, indeed; and if Agnes had dared to say what she had thought and felt about it, she would have found it a relief; but it was not her way. What she felt most, she kept to herself. Many a night she had lain awake thinking over and calling up fears of her unfitness to receive the Holy Communion, and of the responsibilities it involved; and she had made up her mind that she could not do it yet. For Agnes was a child thoughtful beyond her years and rank in life; and her early teaching had been such as to help this. Many an hour, as she sat alone at her needlework in Miss Janet's room, had she turned over in her mind what she should do when the next Confirmation came, for she knew Mr. Mayow would say that she ought to be confirmed, and perhaps send for her; and she wanted to put it off, for, as she said, she was afraid.

She had almost hoped they might have left Bayntown before that time; and now here it had come!

“Mr. Mayow came to see me yesterday, you know,” said Miss Janet; “and I was going to mention you, but thought I would just speak to you before I said anything to him on the subject. Then I shall send in your name, shall I? or would you like to go up to the Parsonage yourself? There are to be classes for girls every Thursday evening.”

“O no, miss, please!” said Agnes. “I—I can’t make up my mind about it yet.”

“It is quite time that you should,” said Miss Janet, gravely. “Will you fear it less a year hence, do you think?”

Agnes could not tell: all she felt was a wish to put off the responsibility to some distant time; and she said so.

“Will you be living a year hence?” was the next question. This startled Agnes; she had not thought of it before. She did not answer.



“*I* may not,” said her young mistress, solemnly, “and therefore I warn you, Agnes, now, while I am able to do it, that this fear of yours is a temptation of the Evil One, to keep you back from what is good. He knows your weak point, which is timidity, and tempts you accordingly. If it is an awful thing to receive ‘the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper,’ as you say in your Catechism, it is surely quite as awful to disobey our Lord’s express command, ‘*Do this.*’ How can you dare refuse when the opportunity is given you? It may not be offered you again.”

Agnes was awed by these earnest words, and tears filled her eyes.

“If I only could find courage!” she said.

“The best way will be for you to go to Mr. Mayow at once,” said Miss Janet. “I will write a note for you to take to him as soon as we go home. He will speak to you much better than I can, and lighten your mind.”

With a beating heart Agnes carried Miss Janet's note to the Parsonage that afternoon, hoping all the way there that she might find that the Rector was out. Katie happened to be in the kitchen when Agnes came in, and sprang at her with an eager—

“O, Aggie, what do you think? I'm going to be confirmed! I'm so glad, you can't think! Master says I am not too young, and Granny wishes it, and I'm sure I do, and of course we shall be confirmed together, you and I, and be dressed alike, and I am to attend the classes on Thursdays, and——”

“Don't deafen me!” said Agnes, kissing her. It struck her as very strange that Katie and she should feel so differently about this great event in their lives. Here was Katie all joy and hope: did she feel what she was going to do? Agnes thought not; but her judgment was wrong. Katie's was the joy of a simple, childlike heart, free from doubts and scruples; the

grace offered, she gladly and freely took, with the single intention of doing her best to please God as well as she knew how. Hers was a happier and healthier state of mind than her sister's; and yet, alas! in that hour came back Agnes's great temptation, and she thought herself far superior to Katie. But even her sense of superiority did not stand her in good stead when Katie came back from taking in the note, and said that Agnes was to go to the Rector's study. All her natural timidity came back, as she stood there blushing and trembling, and she found herself meekly saying,—

“Yes, sir,” when Mr. Mayow said she was to be a candidate, and to come to the class next Thursday evening. He did not ask her if she had any scruples, and she did not dare to speak of them; and yet, strange to say, as she walked homewards, they seemed to be all gone, and her heart was lightened, as Miss Janet had said it would be.

## CHAPTER VI.

WIDOW SALTER, or "Granny," as she was called by everyone who knew her, went to the Parsonage a day or two later, with a present of some fresh eggs for Mrs. Mayow. She met that lady at the gate.

"Well, Granny, and how are you?" said Mrs. Mayow.

"Nicely, thank you, ma'am," replied the old woman, curtsying. "I took the liberty of bringing up a few new-laid eggs for you and the master," and she lifted the corner of the clean cloth which covered the little basket she carried.

"Thank you very much, Granny," said Mrs. Mayow. "They will be quite a treat. I daresay you would like to see Katie. Go upstairs and have a cup of tea with nurse, she will be pleased to see you, I know."

“Thank you kindly, ma’am,” was the answer ; and Mrs. Mayow went on her way, while Granny went round to the back door. Katie had just come downstairs for the children’s milk, and was standing in the kitchen waiting for it, while the cook went to the dairy. Maria, as usual, was there chattering to Katie, instead of being about her work. Suddenly she exclaimed, as she saw a figure pass the window,—

“Old Granny, I declare, in that everlasting red cloak of hers ! And that bonnet, too ; it’s fifty years old, if it’s a day. Doesn’t she look an ancient ? It’s enough to kill anyone with laughing ! Now for a lecture, my dear !”

“Don’t, Maria !” said Katie, and almost snatching the jug out of the cook’s hands, she hastened out of the kitchen. She did not want to meet Granny before Maria. She almost wished Granny had not come to see her.

—

F





But as she was laying the nursery tea, while nurse sat by the fire with baby on her lap, there was a gentle tap at the door, and Granny's voice said,—

“May I come in?”

Katie was surprised, for Granny never came up to the nursery, nor would she now have done so, if Mrs. Mayow herself had not invited her. She was not one of those who think that because they have a friend or relation in service in a lady's house, they are therefore free to walk about it, as if it were their own. She had a great dislike to all such liberties, and Katie knew this, for she had often heard her Granny speak of it. She sprang forward to open the door, and threw her arms round the dear old red cloak. Just as she did so, she saw Maria coming up the stairs, with a satirical smile on her face. Katie got very red, and drew Granny quickly into the nursery and shut the door. It was pleasant to see how kindly and respectfully

the old woman was welcomed by nurse and the children. Little Gerty ran to pull her a chair by the fire, and Arthur stood by her stroking her hand, and saying, "My nice old Granny! I like you!" while nurse welcomed her cordially, telling Katie to be quick and make some toast for her visitor, and bustled about, and put an extra spoonful of tea into her tea-pot.

They had a very merry tea, and Granny amused the children by telling them some funny stories of her little Mary, the youngest of her three adopted children.

"Why did you not bring your Mary here to see us?" asked Gerty.

"She stays at home and keeps house when I am out," said Granny.

"What, such a wee as that! *I* shall keep house when Ma goes out, then!" shouted Arthur. They all laughed.

"She's a dear handy child," said Granny.  
"She helps me in all manner of ways: helps

to clean, and rub, and dust; weeds my garden for me, looks up my eggs, and is a good one already at her needle."

"What a wonderful child!" said Gerty; and they all laughed again.

So they were very merry, as I said; but when the children had gone down to dessert, while baby was being undressed, the talk became more serious, and at last came the question which Katie had been dreading, and which she knew would come, sooner or later.

"And how has Katie been getting on?" asked Granny.

"Why," answered nurse, slowly, "not as well as she did at first, I am sorry to say. Make haste and get the hot water for baby's bath, Katie, my dear."

Katie went down, feeling very uncomfortable. She knew Granny would hear all now, and not from her; and she should have a scolding, which she felt that she deserved. It was quite true what nurse said: she had

not been going on as well as at first, for some time past: it was all Maria's doing, she said to herself, as she went downstairs.

Maria was in the kitchen, warming herself by the fire.

"Well, how do Cross Patch and Old Goody Twoshoes get on together?" were her first words. "Just suit one another, I should think!"

"Cross Patch" was her name for nurse, who kept Maria at a distance, for she did not like her ways. *That* Katie did not so much mind, for she often thought nurse cross, when she had reason to find fault with her for slovenly or dawdling ways; but she could not hear Granny ridiculed, and called Old Goody Twoshoes, like that. So she said with an air, "What do you mean?"

"Oh! we're going to be highty-tighty, are we?" said Maria, in a mocking way. "There, go to its Granny, and be a good child!"



“I wish I was,” said Katie sadly. “If I’m not, it’s your fault.”

“Thank you for the compliment!” said Maria, in the same tone. “And how long have you thought that, may I ask? Since your Granny came up to tea in the nursery?”

“Don’t tease me!” said Katie angrily. She was nearly crying. If the hot water from the boiler would only have run a little faster!

“Mind it goes up and tells its Granny that it is naughty Maria who makes it not a good child,” the housemaid went on; “and be sure it lays all its faults on Maria’s shoulders, for they’re good broad ones, and can bear the weight of Granny’s displeasure!”

The can was full, and Katie turned the tap of the boiler, and went out of the kitchen. The boiling water that she carried up was scarcely more hot than the angry spirit which burned within her, as she made her way to the night



nursery and turned the contents of the can into the bath, which she had put ready by the fire. She heard nurse speaking earnestly in the next room, and felt sure it was about her. But Katie was not a mean girl, and it never entered her head to try and listen to what was said. She went in, and told nurse that the bath was ready, and nurse got up and said,—

“I must wish you good-night, Mrs. Salter, for I’ve my baby to put to bed. But Katie won’t be wanted yet, till the others come up, and she will be glad of a chat with you, so please make yourself comfortable, and don’t hurry away. Good-night.”

“Good-night, and thank you kindly,” said Granny, grasping nurse’s hand heartily; and nurse went. Katie, feeling a little confused and uncomfortable, bustled about, poking up the fire, putting on coals, and washing up the tea-things, while Granny sat almost silent by the fire.

“Well, my child, have you finished?” she asked, at last, when it seemed as if Katie had done everything that could be thought of to put the nursery to rights. “I’m glad to see you so busy at your work,” Granny went on, “but I want to speak to you before I go, so come here, dear, and you can finish up presently.”

Katie felt that there was no escape now. She came and stood by the high guard of the fire, by Granny’s side.

There was no scolding, as she had expected; the old woman spoke very gently,—

“I am sorry to hear that nurse is not as well pleased with you as she was at first: how is it, Katie, my dear?”

“What has she got to say against me, Granny?” asked Katie, looking straight into the fire.

“Well, nothing *against* you, child, for she is fond of you, I can see; but she is vexed at your taking up with the housemaid, of

whom she has no opinion, and at your staying downstairs to gossip, when she sends you for things; and also at a certain manner, which I have seen before in you, Katie, and know exactly what she means."

"What manner?" asked Katie, raising her chin in the air, and looking rather defiant.

"There, just the sort of manner you are putting on now! My Katie, it won't do, it won't do, if you are ever to learn to be a good servant. Trust me, child, no mistress will put up with airs from a servant."

"But then nurse is not my mistress, and that's just it, Granny," said Katie, speaking fast, and getting rather red.

"Katie!" exclaimed Granny in a voice of astonishment.

There was a pause, during which Katie looked somewhat ashamed of herself.

“Who said that to you?” asked Granny, in a stern voice.

“Why, of course she isn’t—Maria said so, and I was not hired to be the nurse’s servant,” said Katie, falteringly.

“And you believe everything that Maria says? Is Maria your pattern of a good and faithful servant?” asked Granny.

Katie could not say, yes. She did not answer.

“We will not talk of Maria’s faults, but of yours,” said Granny. “You *were* hired to be nurse’s maid: to wait upon her, and the children of which she has the care. She cannot leave them, and she sends you down-stairs to fetch what she wants for them. What business have you to stay idling in the kitchen? and why do you take up with Maria, when nurse has warned you to have as little as possible to do with her?”

“I can’t help it, and that’s the truth,” said Katie, doggedly. “She always gets hold of

me, when I go downstairs, and asks me about everything; I don't like it, and yet I can't shake her off."

"You could say, 'I can't stay,' or 'I must be about my work,' or something of that sort, if you liked, could you not?"

"Yes, and then she would laugh at me, as she does!" said Katie.

"Well, and what of that?" replied Granny.

"I don't like it," said Katie.

"Oh, then it comes to this, that you are afraid of being laughed at," said Granny.

"And so you are to do wrong, and perhaps lose your place and your character, and break Granny's heart into the bargain, for fear you should be laughed at? Is that it?"

"Oh, Granny, don't, please!" And Katie burst into a fit of passionate crying, and threw her arms round Granny's neck.

When she was calmed again, Granny said,

"I know my child wishes to do what is right."

“Yes, yes, I do,” cried Katie.

“More than ever, now that you are going to be confirmed,” said Granny, very seriously. “Now you must make certain fixed resolutions, and keep to them. *I* had to do that, when I went to service as a young girl, as young as you are. I was in just such a place as you are, too. I found that if I did what all my fellow-servants wished, I should be driven hither and thither, and be led to do wrong things very often; so I made up my mind to have nothing to say to them in the way of gossiping about what went on in the house or out of the house, and just to stick to my work, and do my duty. Of course I got laughed at, and teased, and all that sort of thing: everyone who tries to do his duty faithfully must expect that. But when the others saw that I took it good-naturedly, they left it off. ‘Let them laugh that win!’ I say. And you must make up your mind to be brave, child, and not care for being laughed



at, if you're doing what you know you ought to do. You must not be ashamed 'to fight manfully under Christ's banner,' if you are 'to be His faithful soldier and servant to your life's end.' ”

“I will try,” murmured Katie.

“Yes, and you must not only *try*, child, but you must *do* certain things, to show that you are trying. I mean, you must avoid those who lead you to do wrong; you must not gossip; and you must give your whole mind to your work. If you will do these three things, not forgetting to ask God's help,—without which you can do none of them,—I promise you that you will be happy. Now I must be going.”

“You dear Granny!” said Katie, kissing her; and then she helped on the red cloak, and tied on the black bonnet, and went with Granny downstairs. Maria's satirical smiles had no effect now, as Katie and Granny passed through the kitchen. Katie darted

back, after she was gone, and was half way up the stairs when she heard Maria calling her. She ran to the night nursery, and took refuge there, in turning down the little beds, and putting things ready for the children.

## CHAPTER VII.

AGNES came regularly to the Thursday evening classes, and Miss Janet helped her at home with the questions which the Rector gave her to answer. It was his custom, after his instruction, to give the girls a few questions, to which they had each to find answers, and on these was based the instruction of the following Thursday.

Agnes's answers were generally the best, and the Rector praised her one evening for them. It is to be feared that Agnes had a weakness for praise, of which he was only then for the first time made aware by the bright conscious flush that overspread her face. She was so pleased to be singled out from the rest, that she did not say that Miss Janet

had helped her, as she ought to have done : she took all the credit to herself.

Agnes generally went to the Sunday afternoon service, so as to be at home to attend to her young mistress in the evening, when Mrs. Pyke went to Church. When she came home, she had her tea, and then took up Miss Janet's. After this, when she had put everything ready in the bed-room, there was a quiet time of an hour or more for reading ; and if Mrs. Warde had gone to Church, which she did when her daughter was well enough for her to leave her, Miss Janet would have Agnes in to sit with her and to read with her. Since the Confirmation classes had begun, this hour had been given to talking over the instructions, and finding answers to the questions which Agnes brought home. Miss Janet took great interest in this. She was delighted that Agnes was going to be confirmed, and she set herself to do all that she could for her, and spent many

a half-hour in looking out texts, and reading books on the subject, and recalling all she had been taught herself, that she might be able the better to help Agnes.

Little Katie's kind mistress also helped her to find the answers to her questions, and, indeed, assisted her very much altogether in her preparation for Confirmation. For Katie, being younger, was not as well instructed as Agnes, and needed to be taught many things. She was humble, and willing to learn, and Mrs. Mayow was much pleased with her.

The children's sleeping hour in the middle of the day was now always spent by Katie in Mrs. Mayow's room, where she went to be taught by her kind mistress.

"What do you do in missis's room every day from twelve to one?" asked Maria, one afternoon of Katie, the week that the Confirmation classes had begun.

"I go to be taught," said Katie, who

had kept to herself much more lately, and therefore had not said anything to Maria on the subject that was uppermost in her mind.

“O, yes! it’s going to be confirmed, pretty dear, all for love of a white cap with satin bows, and a bishop in lawn sleeves! And so it is being taught how to be good, from twelve to one every day, is it?”

Katie’s face grew very red, and she did not answer. She had had one or two warnings from Mrs. Mayow on the subject of her quick temper, and she had earnestly resolved to try and keep it under. But Maria was in a teasing mood, and seemed determined to try Katie to the uttermost.

“I shall be quite afraid to speak to such a saint,” she went on. “Dear me! what will it be like when it has been confirmed? I’m glad I’ve never been.”

“You have never been confirmed!” exclaimed Katie, in a voice of horror and surprise.



“Well, I was never put in the way of it, and I am too old now, so there’s an end of it,” said Maria.

“*Are* you too old? · I did not know that,” replied Katie, opening her eyes wide.

“Yes, and I don’t see the good of it, neither,” returned Maria. “So there!”

Katie knew not what to reply to such a speech, and with a shocked “O, Maria!” she snatched up the nursery coal-box, which she had brought down to fill, and ran out with it.

The cook, who was an elderly woman, and a simple, good-hearted body, took up the word as Katie went out, and turned round from brightening her tins, to say,—

“Well, I were confirmed but last year, the week after my eight-and-fortieth birthday. I took into my head that I were too old, and would be a laughing-stock and what not; and yet when I came to go to see the Confirmation, for one of our young ladies

was to be confirmed, what did I see but an old woman of eighty year hobbling up with the help of a stick! Thinks I to myself, Well, no need for me to be ashamed unless it be for not doing as she does; and so when next time came round, I went in; and glad I am that I did. It has made me a deal more easy in my mind since, I can tell you; and if I was you, Maria, I would be confirmed now, while I had the chance to do it all comfortable."

This speech, unusually long for the quiet old cook, having been delivered, she returned to her tins and rubbed away at them as if her life depended on their being spotlessly bright within a given time. Maria, leaning back in a chair by the fire, drummed with her foot on the floor, and made no reply. By-and-by she started up and declared she must see about her ironing, for that it was getting late. So saying, she betook herself to the laundry, and Katie saw no more of

her till the evening, when she came down from the nursery for the children's bath water. Maria seemed cold and silent then; she was sitting in the kitchen at her tea, but she did not speak a word to Katie, at which the latter was secretly rejoiced, for she quite dreaded Maria's ridicule. Strangely enough, from that day Maria ceased to ridicule her; and Katie wondered more and more as day by day passed and nothing was said.

Still more astonished was she, on passing the study-door one evening, soon after, when the women's class was coming out, to see Maria pass out among them. She lived so much upstairs, that she knew little of what went on in the house, unless enlightened by Maria, who had been very silent of late. Katie thought she was offended with her, and was rather glad of it, for it left her more to herself, and she wanted to be quiet at this time. She was very much in earnest in her preparation for Confirmation, and was trying

to prepare for it in the best way, namely, by doing all her daily duties as well as she possibly could, and by examining herself carefully every night to see in what respect she had failed.

Her first feeling, on seeing Maria among the candidates for Confirmation, was one of joy; but she did not dare to make any remark on it. Maria seemed shy of Katie, too, and avoided her: it was from cook that Katie learned that Maria was going to be confirmed. It was not until the week before the Confirmation took place that anything passed between them on the subject; and then Maria and Katie were together in the kitchen, Katie cleaning the nursery kettle, and Maria rubbing up her silver.

“Well,” said Maria, rather awkwardly, “so you see I’ve changed my mind?”

“Yes,” replied Katie, “I’m so glad!”

“Glad, are you? why should you care?” asked Maria.

Katie made no reply.

“I am sorry I laughed at you, I’m sure,” said Maria, “I didn’t think enough about it then. But the truth was, I believe, I did not like the idea of a little thing like you setting up to be so much better than I was.”

“I am sure I did not set up to be better than you, Maria!” exclaimed Katie indignantly.

“Well, you know what I mean. I tell you, I never was in the way of these things before, except to hear them laughed at. So ’tis not to be wondered at that I was so ignorant.”

Maria, it may be observed, had her good point, as all persons have; and hers was a very good one: she was open to conviction, and was not ashamed to own it. Let us bear in mind, that because people are faulty, they are not altogether bad: they have their better side, and while we compare ourselves with them, to their disadvantage, their virtues



may far excel ours. For instance, we are very ready to talk of the "law of charity," of the want of it in others, while the Judge of all may see far more of it in those whom we blame than in ourselves. Maria had grave faults, it is true, but then she had been sadly neglected, first in her childhood, for her mother died when she was three years old, and then her first place in service as maid of all work was a bad one, where she was made a mere drudge, and taught nothing, and was finally dismissed in disgrace for not knowing what she had never learnt. However, being a quick-witted girl, she picked up a good deal, and her next place being that of third housemaid in a large house, where she got in through a cousin who was in service there, and where there were many servants, she had a good opportunity of improving herself. She did improve in her work; but it was not a good place for her in other respects. She learnt



much that was bad, and saw a great deal that was unprincipled, and heard good things scoffed at, and evil lightly spoken of. All this was very hurtful to a young girl, and especially to one who had not had any training to undo it. Maria's mistress was a gay lady, whose time was taken up in dress, and amusement, and in entertaining company, and who looked upon her servants as persons who were simply paid to do the work of her house, and to keep it in order,—household machines, in fact, which her housekeeper was to regulate, and with which she personally had nothing to do. Either she did not know, or she did not choose to think, that she had responsibilities connected with every one of them, while they were in her house; and that, as long as she was their mistress, she was, in as far as she neglected the care of their souls, answerable for the results of that neglect, and would have to give account of it at the Judgment-day. She never troubled

herself as to whether her servants had any religion or not, whether they ever went to Church or not, whether they had ever been baptized or confirmed, as long as the work of her household was performed to her satisfaction. Maria was there for weeks without ever going to Church at all, and then only went out of curiosity, to "hear a fine preacher," as she said. She used to hear all sorts of ignorant talking about religion in the servants' hall, and having had no teaching herself, she knew no better. Therefore it was not to be wondered at that she spoke as she did, on many subjects, in a way that shocked Katie and the good old cook at Mrs. Mayow's, who had both had the advantage of careful instruction.

Maria had left her last place in consequence of a quarrel with a fellow-servant, and had been at home and out of a situation for a long time, when Mrs. Mayow, who had known something of her before, took her

on trial, more from a wish to preserve her from the evils of idleness, than for any other reason, as she might have got a much better servant, if she had liked. But Mrs. Mayow was one of those mistresses who think it a duty and a privilege to help and teach their servants, and who will bear with their faults patiently, when they show themselves willing to be taught. She looked upon her servants as members of the family which God had entrusted to her charge, and cared for them accordingly. To her it was a real anxiety and grief if any one of them did wrong, and she would call the offender to her room, and speak kindly and gently to her, and show her her fault, in a way that the most stubborn heart could not resist. Though very particular as to the order and regularity of everything in her house, she was not above taking the trouble of showing her servants how to do things nicely; for, as she often said, servants, who have not had the

education of ladies, cannot be expected to do things as if they had, and need to be taught. For instance, when Maria came first to Mrs. Mayow's, she had no more idea how to properly dust and re-arrange the books and ornaments in the drawing-room than a cook might be supposed to have, for her business as third housemaid at Lady Darcy's had been to do all the rough work, cleaning grates, scrubbing rooms, and the like. So, of course, when on the first morning of Maria's career at the Rectory, Mrs. Mayow found a vase of flowers standing on a valuable album, and four books piled up in a heap, with a stereoscope on the top, on the centre table in the drawing-room, while the inkstand and blotting-book were stuck at two opposite ends of the writing-table, and the lamp, which ought to have been removed downstairs to be cleaned and trimmed, set in the middle, on a mat intended for the letter-weight, and sundry other ingenious contrivances of Maria's,—instead of

fuming and scolding, and saying, "O, this girl will never do! she is nothing of a servant!" Mrs. Mayow gently showed her her mistakes, and said, good-humouredly,—

"I suppose you have not had this kind of thing to do before. Well, we have all a great deal to learn, and I am always glad to teach those who are not above being taught; but you must try to remember what I tell you, for I do not like carelessness."

Maria was touched by her mistress's gentleness, and did try to do her work well, in order to please her, and this was another of Maria's good points. Let us always try to bear in mind, in our judgment of others, that there is a great deal for which to make allowance, of which we know little or nothing. We do not know what people's disadvantages have been, we know not the secret history of their lives, their troubles, their infirmities, their inward struggles. The young and impulsive are generally hard in their judg-

ments, because their view of life is narrow, and their knowledge of human nature small, and because they do not weigh all these things; they see one little bit or side of a character, and imagine they see all.

Thus it was in the case of both Agnes and Katie. Agnes had judged Charlotte to be altogether bad, and Katie had had much the same thoughts of Maria; and both girls were astonished when they saw gleams of a better nature in those of whom they had thought so ill.



## CHAPTER VIII.

“I AM much pleased with your little servant-maid, our Katie’s sister,” said Mr. Mayow, as he sat one afternoon by Miss Janet’s couch. “She is greatly superior in mind to her sister. I have been quite surprised at the way in which the questions I have given her have been answered.”

“O,” said Miss Janet, smiling, “we do them together, on Sunday evening, Agnes and I; I like helping her, for it brings back all my own Confirmation lessons, and I find it a help to myself.”

The Rector was silent. He remembered having praised Agnes for her answers the last time, and her having accepted the praise, without a word of her being helped by Miss

Janet. He did not wish to grieve the latter now, by speaking of what was, in his eyes, a very grave fault, and one which gave him the key to Agnes's character. After a little talk on other subjects, he rose and took his leave.

Agnes appeared at the class on Thursday night, as usual. Her answers to the questions given were better than those of anyone except Katie.

"Mistress helped me," said Katie with sparkling eyes, when Mr. Mayow said he was pleased with them. "I could not have found any of them, sir, without her."

The Rector glanced at Agnes. There was a deep flush on her cheek, but she did not speak. She had not courage to disclaim the praise, with a dozen other girls present, whose answers were all inferior, and some quite wrong, and with Katie, who looked up to her so.

The class was over, and the Rector rose, and stood by the mantelpiece, as the girls

one by one curtseyed, and said, "Good-night, sir."

"Stay a minute, Agnes Walton: I wish to speak to you," said the Rector. Agnes felt a little nervous, but yet flattered, at being singled out from the rest for notice. She stood apart, and waited till the others were gone, and wondered what was coming.

"Shut the door," said the Rector; and then he sat down, and Agnes stood by the table, opposite him. "Do you remember," he said, raising his eyes, and fixing them on her face, "my saying to you last Thursday evening at the class that I was much pleased with your answers to the questions I had given?"

"Yes, sir," replied Agnes. Her eyes were bent on the ground, and her face was crimson.

"Perhaps you did not understand that when I said so, I was under the impression that the answers were all your own?"

No answer.

"My child, if you *did*," said Mr. Mayow

gently, "you did wrongly to take the praise to yourself. That is what I wanted to say to you."

Agnes put her hands up to her face now, and big tears came dropping through her fingers. Her shame was the greatest punishment she could have had.

Mr. Mayow knew it was, and after a few solemn words to her on the danger of this secret sin, which, as he told her, had its root in vanity, he dismissed her, in a much more humble frame of mind than she had known for a long time. Katie met her in the kitchen and kissed her, wondering at her tearful face, but in the kindness of her heart abstaining from making any remark upon it.

Miss Janet, who was in bed by the time that Agnes returned, was, however, disturbed at the sight of her little maiden's red and swollen eyes, when Agnes brought in her milk, and asked her what was the matter?

This was the signal for a fresh outburst.

“I have been so wicked, Miss Janet,” sobbed Agnes, burying her face where she stood, at the foot of the bed, and bit by bit she told it all. Her young mistress was very much grieved, but she felt that it was the best thing that could have happened for Agnes. She did not add to the child’s burden now by reproaching her, but only said, “Put your trouble into your prayers to-night. Agnes, and tell it all to our dear Lord. He will forgive and help you.”

And Agnes did so.

The Sunday after, Agnes was reading some hymns to Miss Janet, and came upon the following lines:—

“When mortals praise thee, hide thine eyes,  
Nor in thy Master’s wrong  
Take to thyself His Crown and prize;  
Yet more in heart than tongue.

None holier than the desert priest,  
Beneath the eastern sky,  
Yet in God’s kingdom with the least,  
We read, he might not vie.

And ah! to him what tenfold woe,  
Who hides so well his sin,  
Through earth he seems a saint to go,  
Yet dies impure within.

Pray we our Lord, one pang to send  
Of deep remorseful fear,  
For every smile of partial friend ;  
Praise be our penance here!" \*

Agnes read the verses through with a heightened colour. No remark was made on them at the time; but when she had to go downstairs, she asked Miss Janet to lend her the book, and copied them out on a bit of paper which she kept, for years, in her little book of prayers.

This fall of Agnes' was, in the end, productive of lasting good to her character. It brought down her opinion of herself, and made her more watchful. As our own Bishop Wilson was wont to say,—

“A fault which humbles a man is sometimes of more use to him than a good action.”

\* “*Lyra Innocentium.*”



## CHAPTER IX.

THE day of the Confirmation at Bayntown was as bright a day as could be wished. The sun streamed in through the many-coloured panes of the little Church on the heads of the kneeling candidates, and shed a soft radiance on the scene, which to many of the lookers-on that day was one of the deepest interest.

Among these were Granny and her youngest adopted child, Mary. Their eyes rested often and most earnestly on the place, not far from the chancel, where Agnes and Katie knelt side by side. It was a happy day for Granny, and, though little Mary could not enter into all she felt, she was sure it must be something very delightful, and wished that she, too, were going to be confirmed with

her sisters, since it made Granny so glad. It was a striking and a solemn sight, when, after having all together with one voice renewed the vows of their baptism, the candidates one by one went up and knelt before the bishop, and he laid his hands upon each in turn. Many young hearts trembled as that moment came for them, and none more than Agnes and Katie, who followed each other closely, one pale as death, the other flushing deeply. Both, as they returned to their places, knelt and prayed with all their hearts that God would keep them His own children for ever, and that nothing might separate them from Him in life or death. Their confirmation was a great reality to them.

Not less so was it to Maria, who knelt behind them, with head bowed down, and tearful eyes. She knew now and realised that this was a blessing which might have been hers long ago, but for her own careless-

ness and indifference to religion. She had been shown by her kind master how she had neglected her duty to God, and how many years of service for Him she had lost and wasted ; and she, too, made a firm resolution from the bottom of her heart, to try to please Him better henceforward, and to be His faithful servant to her life's end.

There was another present who looked on with feelings somewhat akin to Maria's, especially when, in the touching address that followed, the bishop spoke of the sorrow in store for those who should fall away from the solemn obligations they had now taken afresh upon themselves. He warned them how, little by little, the world, the flesh, and the devil would seek to wean them from their newly-formed resolutions ; how, what might seem to them little sins, would grow upon them, if they were not constantly on their guard, and draw them away altogether from God and His love ; and how lukewarm-

ness and carelessness would creep in, and make them cold and indifferent. Then he went on to describe the *end* of those who thus went back from what they had known to be right.

Charlotte listened, wept, and trembled. She remembered the day of her confirmation well, and how she had then felt as if nothing should hinder her from leading a good life. It was just as if the bishop had described her own career, and how, little by little, she had fallen away, from carelessness and lukewarmness, and she said to herself, "O, if I could only be confirmed once more!"

"No, Charlotte, that opportunity has gone by and been misused; but there is time yet before you for amendment; make the most of it." So seemed a voice to sound in her ears, as she listened to the words of the good bishop. And perhaps to no soul that day, more than to hers, did his words carry the message of God's love for His frail and

erring children, and into no heart there present did his words penetrate more deeply.

The Confirmation was over, and the congregation dispersed. Charlotte, who had gone with Agnes, was obliged to return home alone, for Agnes and Katie had obtained leave to go and drink tea with Granny on the day of their Confirmation, and very pleased they were. She waited for them outside the Church, with Mary, and they all went together to the widow's cottage.

Mary seemed to be full of some great secret, which it was as much as she could do to keep to herself. Every now and then, when it was on the point of bursting forth, she would run on in front, and laugh, in such an amusing way, that Katie and Agnes, who were talking quietly and soberly, one each side of Granny, could not resist joining in her mirth, though they did not know the cause of it.

At length they reached the cottage, and

Mary darting forwards, drew the key of the door out of her pocket and got in first.

“The dear old place!” exclaimed Katie, rushing in after her.

What was her surprise, and that of Agnes too, to see the table laid out with a grand feast of cakes and fruit, and on their plates a little parcel directed to them with Granny’s love, which, on opening, they found to contain a Communion-book, nicely bound, for each!

They spent a very happy evening all together. They talked of the great event of the day, the Confirmation; and Granny told them about hers, and how she had to go in a waggon twenty miles, with a lot of others, to be confirmed.

“There were not so many of them in my young days,” she said, shaking her head. “Ah, no; it was a rare thing then, a Confirmation, and a deal we thought of it, I can tell you. Once in seven or eight years at the



oftenest, and then many had to go miles to it, as we had, living in an out-of-the-way place. I went with my dear sister Jenny, bless her! She was a proper one to be confirmed, she was,—a gentle, sweet soul, that never said a word to vex a living creature. Well, well, her soul pleased the Lord, and He took it to Himself,” and here Granny wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron. “Well, as I was saying, we went twenty miles or more in the waggon, and got to a fine large old church, the bells pealing, and lots of carriages driving up, and all like that. But the dear old bishop! He it was that lives in my mind to this day. He was such a reverend man, just what one could imagine an apostle, so venerable like, with white hair, and the face of a saint. And I remember one thing he said, it has stayed in my mind ever since. ‘We are told,’ he said, ‘that *all* things work together for good to them that love God; therefore even our very faults do this. They

humble us, and help us on our way, so to speak, if we are really in earnest. For they show us where our weakness lies, and where we must go for strength.' Those were good words."

"Write them in the end of my Communion-book for me, will you, Granny?" begged Katie.

"And mine, too," said Agnes.

Granny wrote them as she was asked, and years later those words, handed on from the good old bishop through one who had taken heed to his teaching, were a help to others, who had never even heard his name.

The following Sunday was one of still deeper interest to Granny, for on that day her two dear children, Agnes and Katie, were to make their first Communion. She went into Bayntown early, that she might receive it with them; and as she knelt between her adopted children, in the Church where they had been confirmed a few days before, she

breathed forth an earnest prayer that they might be "faithful unto death." She felt that it was scarcely probable she should be spared to them many years longer to watch over them, and to God she commended them, with full trust in His loving care. The joy of this one day she felt was a rich reward for all she had borne and done for them.

## CHAPTER X.

A SHORT time after the Confirmation, Miss Janet's doctor recommended her to return to her country home, as the mild weather had set in. Miss Janet was well pleased, for she loved the country, and her little sister, Flo, was in ecstasies at the prospect of going back to her garden, her rabbits, her chickens, and the future delights of the hay-field and summer picnics. She danced about the house in everybody's way, greatly hindering Mrs. Pyke's methodical packing, in which Agnes was taking lessons, and putting a little finger into every pie. She was the least bit spoilt, that is, if anything could spoil the sweet joyous spirit which was the life of the little household. No one liked to thwart her, and so she had her own small way in most things. Now, however, she was soon to

---

have a governess, who would discipline her and keep her in some order.

“Quite time she should,” said strict Mrs. Pyke to herself, when she found the little lady capering about, clad in Miss Janet’s white cambric dressing-gown, of which the frills had been newly goffered with great care. But no one could be angry with Miss Flo.

“My dear Pyke!” she cried, shaking herself out of her sister’s long garment, “I’ll goffer it all over again myself!”

“Miss Flo!” cried Pyke, as solemnly as she could, and then turned away to hide a smile. Of course Miss Flo saw it, and did not mind a bit; and this was how she came to be spoilt, in a sort of a way.

They were all very busy for some days; and then came the last evening at Bayntown. Agnes had leave to go and spend it with Granny, and many a parting word of good advice did she bestow on her dear child, whom she was not likely to see for long; neither of them knew how long.

“Why, this is worse than when you first went to service,” said Granny, “we thought it bad enough to part then! Well, my child, remember that your Granny’s prayers will go with you wherever you are, and that you have one object in life, one aim to keep steadily before you. Do earthly service for your Heavenly Master, truly and faithfully, with a single heart, and He will never leave you nor forsake you, my precious one!”

Tears filled the old woman’s eyes as she spoke; and Agnes sobbed aloud, and threw her arms round Granny’s neck.

“Dear Granny!” she cried, “I hope I shall never forget all you and others have taught me. I have so many kind friends, I am sure I ought to be good, and to get on.”

Little Mary clung round her, and would not let her go.

“O, Aggie,” she cried, “I shall never see you now.”



“I daresay mistress will let me come home for a few days, by-and-by,” said Agnes, kissing her, and unclasping her hands. “It will be a great treat, I know, when she does. I must go, indeed I must. I was to be back by nine, and it wants a quarter.”

Off Agnes ran, glad to hide her own tears. When she got back, there were sundry last things to be done, and her own packing as well, so she had little time to think of her feelings. She and Charlotte, with the luggage, were to go on to Camerton to get the house in readiness, and they started early the next morning. The journey by rail was a great delight to Agnes, who had never travelled at all before, except in a spring cart once or twice, when a neighbouring farmer had given her a lift into Bayntown. She felt a little sad at first, at passing the places long dear and familiar to her; but the new sights and rapid change of scenery soon took off her thoughts, and she looked out of the

window of the carriage with increasing interest, when Charlotte, sitting opposite, said,—

“There’s the village, and our church; and that’s my home, the little white house next the ‘public.’ Do you see?”

“And where is Camerton?” asked Agnes.

“O, you can’t see that yet,” said Charlotte. “It is about half a mile off, down there among the trees. It’s a beautiful place.”

Agnes saw it presently, peeping out among the trees, and very pretty she thought it, as she looked upon the gardens and lovely wooded slopes around the long rambling mansion, which was an old house with many rooms in it; some of them unused, Charlotte said. Agnes was so interested in her description that she did not see that the train had stopped at the little village station, where they were to get out. A cart was waiting for the luggage, which Agnes and Charlotte saw duly packed into it; and then they set off to walk together to Camerton.

The house had been left in charge of the lodge-keeper and her daughter Ruth, the latter a nice, well brought-up girl of seventeen, whose look Agnes fancied from the first. The cart was unloaded, and then Mrs. Bird proposed that they should have tea before they set to work, for which Charlotte and Agnes were quite ready after their journey.

“There’s plenty to be done,” said Mrs. Bird, “to get the house in order for tomorrow—what time does mistress come?”

“She is to be here at four,” answered Charlotte, “and Miss Janet’s room is the first thing to be attended to, she bid me say, as she will have to go to bed as soon as she gets here, most likely. That’s your business, Agnes.”

“I know,” replied Agnes.

“You’ll let me help you with it?” asked Ruth. “I dearly like to do anything for Miss Janet.”

“I should think so!” said Agnes. “She is the dearest young lady!”

“She used to teach me when I was going to be confirmed,” said Ruth, “I came up to her every Sunday for an hour.”

“Just like me!” answered Agnes. And from that moment Agnes and Ruth were fast friends. After tea was over, Ruth took Agnes over the house, and showed her Miss Janet’s pretty rooms. There were two which were called hers, a bedroom, and a sitting-room opening from it with folding doors. This room opened on the lawn by long French windows, and there was a latticed verandah in front, thick with passion-flower and roses. A wire-stand in the window had been filled already by Ruth with some of the choicest plants and ferns the gardener could give her; and there were pictures on the walls, and every comfort that could be devised in the room.

“How pretty it looks! Oh, what a lovely

place to live in!" exclaimed Agnes. "How glad Miss Janet must be to come home to it!"

"We must give the room a good sweeping and cleaning," said Ruth, "and take the holland covers off the couch and the chairs."

"And rub the windows, and dust the picture-frames, and all these pretty ornaments," said Agnes. "There is plenty to do," she added, "so let us begin at once. Where are the brushes and dusters?"

Ruth then took Agnes and showed her where all these things were kept, and they set to work busily, and gave their tongues plenty of exercise at the same time. Agnes told Ruth about her confirmation, and Katie's; and Ruth gave Agnes an account of hers, and of how kind Miss Janet had been.

"I wonder she did not take you for her maid, instead of me," said Agnes.

"I cannot leave mother," said Ruth, "she



has only me in the world. There were seven of us once."

"All gone but you?" asked Agnes.

"Yes, all," said Ruth, her eyes filling with tears, as she went on busily with her dusting. "The fever came among us and carried off six, in six weeks. We were not a week without a coffin in the house all that time."

"What a dreadful thing!" said Agnes. "Your poor mother!"

"You may well say so," replied Ruth; "I can hardly bear to speak of it; and what *she* endured, no one can know. One after another, they were taken from her; my dear father had died in that same year, a few months before, and then she thought no trouble could be greater than that, to be left with seven fatherless children."

"It would seem so," said Agnes.

"But when they came to be taken from her," Ruth went on, "ah! then she owned



that it was far sorer, and at last, she was so bowed down by grief, that she was like one stunned: it seemed as if she had come to that pass, that she could feel no more. I was the last to be taken ill—all were gone then; and how she did hang over me! I could never leave her, if it was ever so!”

“I should think not,” said Agnes. “Were you at the Lodge then?”

“O, no!” replied Ruth; “it was after all that trouble that Mrs. Ward, hearing that we were badly off, gave mother the care of the Lodge, which is enough to keep us both. It’s a dear little cosy home, too.”

“That little green-covered house, by the avenue gate?” asked Agnes.

“Yes,” said Ruth; “you must come down and see us when you can there, I am sure mother will be glad for you to come in sometimes.”

“Thank you,” said Agnes. She began to feel herself a personage of some importance.

Was Charlotte ever asked there, she wondered? She put the question presently.

“No,” answered Ruth, shortly, “mother’s particular.”

Quite enough for Agnes. Poor Agnes! Her first night at Camerton was one of the most entire self-satisfaction.

## CHAPTER XI.

ON the following day, Mrs. Ward and her daughter arrived at Camerton. Miss Janet, as her mother had feared, was much knocked up by the journey, and had to go to bed immediately on her arrival. Agnes was waiting for her in her rooms, quite proud of the beautiful order into which she and Ruth had brought them.

Everything looked as bright and fresh as could be—newly-gathered flowers in the vases on the tables and mantelpiece, a blazing fire in the bed-room, and a little table placed by the bed, with all that Miss Janet was likely to need on it.

“My dear old rooms! how pretty and nice they look!” exclaimed Miss Janet, as she entered. “Why, Agnes, you must have been

busy ! I suppose you had Ruth to help you."

" Yes, miss," replied Agnes, smiling.

" And you like her ? "

" Yes, miss, *very* much ! "

" I thought you would ; I wanted you to be friends," said her young mistress, smiling, " Ruth is such a nice, good girl. Now, Agnes, help me to bed at once, please, for I am very tired, and you can bring me my tea, and then go and help Pyke."

Charlotte, meantime, had been very busy with Mrs. Bird, putting the other rooms into order and unpacking. Not being very methodical in her ways, she had only just got the drawing and dining-rooms straight, and her mistress's bedroom. The house-keeper's room, which was Mrs. Pyke's special domain, was strewed and littered all over with packing-cloths, straw, paper, house-linen, and all kinds of things.

" Just like you, Charlotte ! " exclaimed

Mrs. Pyke, not a little put out at the sight of such disorder. "Now, why could you not fold up and put away each packing-cloth and cord as you undid it? You might have seen those things go in the bottom of the press there. And all this rubbish of paper, why did not you clear that away? It would not have taken you more than a minute. I hate such untidy ways! I can't turn round here! You will never make a good servant, as long as you live, if you do things in this sloppy way. Just look at my best damask there, on the floor! all tumbled and creased, not fit to be used! What's it doing there?"

Charlotte, who in former times would have replied rudely, "Well, I'm sure I can't help it!" or something of that sort, and gone off in the sulks, only answered,—

"I'm very sorry, Mrs. Pyke, really. I was getting out the sheets, and meant to put it back, and I meant to clear all this up, but I forgot, in the bustle."

Mrs. Pyke, softened by Charlotte's answer, replied,—

“ Well, child, of course you have been put about ; but what I want you to see is, that three minutes at the time would have tidied this room, and all this confusion comes from your want of order in doing things. Here is this table-cloth not fit to use, because you did not put it back in the box, or lay it on the table ; it is all dirty on this side, you see, where it has been on the floor. Just for want of a thought ! It is the same with everything you do—that is what I complain of, the want of *thought* in your work.”

“ Well, Mrs. Pyke, if I had your head, I might be different,” said Charlotte ; “ but I was never brought up to think, you see.”

“ All the more reason you should learn to think now,” replied Mrs. Pyke, “ and willing enough I am to teach you, if you will only try to improve yourself with a good will.”

Charlotte did not answer. She was touched



by Mrs. Pyke's unusual gentleness. She was finding out that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." She began rapidly to clear the room, and in a few minutes it was habitable again; the linen put away in the presses, and all the litter removed. Then she ran and fetched Mrs. Pyke's tea, briskly, and as the latter sat down to it, she thought,—

"I can't think whatever has come over Charlotte, that she did not answer back again! It does one's heart good to see a girl trying to cure herself of what is wrong in her."

Agnes did not know, and never would, what an insensible influence her own respectful and steady behaviour had upon Charlotte, and how, of late, the impression made upon her by the Confirmation was bringing forth its fruits. It was well for Agnes that she did not: it would have made her more self-satisfied than she was. This was *her* weak point: her trial did not lie in those things that tried Charlotte.

She was so happy at Camerton, in her work, and the care of her young mistress, she thought the world had never been brighter than it seemed to her there, at first. She said so in a letter which she wrote from there to her old friend and teacher, Miss Herbert, and added that she had not a single trial nor trouble, everyone was so kind to her, and that she was as happy as the day was long.

Miss Herbert's answer contained these words :—

“I am glad to hear that you are so happy, dear child; but I do not believe that you will go on without something to try you, nor do I wish it for you. That is not a safe life which is free from trial. All I say to you is, Be watchful; or you may be surprised by some temptation when you least look for it. ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.’”

And so it was. When Agnes least ex-

pected, she was overtaken in a fault, and was for a long time even in ignorance of it. It was one of the most blinding temptations to which anyone can be subject, namely, that of jealousy. It came upon her little by little, in the most subtle manner, unperceived; and even when she became aware of it, she would not own it to herself. This jealousy was about Ruth, who came up to see Miss Janet frequently, and was sometimes alone with her for an hour at a time. At first Agnes, who now sat in Mrs. Pyke's room at work when Miss Janet did not need her, did not notice it much, for she seldom knew when Ruth was there; but when, time after time, she passed Ruth on the stairs, or saw her waiting in the kitchen to go up to Miss Janet, she began to have a little feeling of annoyance, and was less cordial in her manner to Ruth than formerly. Then she would go back to her work with a feeling of discontent, for which she could not account,

and sit brooding over it in silence. What did Miss Janet want with Ruth so much? why did she pet her up and have her with her, doing things for her which Agnes very well could have done? For instance, one day Ruth came down with her apron full of snippings and dead leaves, from the plants in the flower-stand, saying that she had been trimming them for Miss Janet. "It is my special work, you know, Mrs. Pyke!" Ruth added, with a smiling face.

"Yes, my dear," answered Mrs. Pyke, absently. "There, where are you going to take them? No litter in my grate, please!"

"O no, I shouldn't dare to think of such a thing!" answered Ruth, with a mischievous smile at Agnes, which Agnes did not return.

"What's the matter with you, Agnes?" asked Ruth, giving her a playful tap.

"Nothing," replied Agnes, coldly.

"Well, I must run and put these in the

dust-bin, for Miss Janet wants me again," said Ruth.

"What do you do up there all the time?" asked Agnes.

"Ah, that's a secret!" answered Ruth laughing, and ran off.

This did not improve Agnes's temper. She felt quite vexed with Ruth for having secrets with Miss Janet. It irritated her, she could not tell why.

Next Sunday afternoon, Ruth came to Camerton to ask if Agnes might take a walk with her. Miss Janet allowed it, and it had been a Sunday treat to both girls for some time. They wandered through the Camerton woods and picked flowers there, and sat on the mossy stumps, and talked of all their little affairs one to the other; or they went down to the river, and strolled along its banks, and over the rustic bridge, and through the pretty lanes, for a change. Agnes had quite looked forward to these







walks, in the week, before; but somehow, she felt disinclined to go with Ruth on this particular Sunday, and said she did not feel very well, and was going to lie down quietly, upstairs. This was said partly to get rid of Ruth, who would otherwise have stayed and chatted with her during part of the afternoon.

“I am so sorry!” said Ruth, kindly kissing Agnes. “You go and lie down then, dear, and I hope you will be better. I wonder if I might see Miss Janet for a minute? Would you mind asking her, as you go up? I will wait on the stairs to know.”

“Miss Janet again!” said Agnes, angrily, to herself. “It’s always Miss Janet!”

Up she went, in no very amiable frame of mind; knocked at Miss Janet’s door, and asked, and saw Ruth go up and in, and close the door after her. Agnes went on to her own room, closed the door with a slam, and

throwing herself on her bed, gave way to a violent fit of crying.

In the midst of it, Miss Janet's bell rang. Up started Agnes, and wiping her eyes hurriedly, rushed to the glass, to see if they looked red. They looked very red indeed.

"How could I be so silly! what shall I do? I can't go down like this!" thought Agnes. She poured some cold water into a basin, and bathed her eyes. The bell rang again, and she had to run down. Ruth was gone, she saw, as she half opened the door.

"Come in," said Miss Janet. "I wanted you to read to me. Ruth offered to read, but I like my own little handmaiden's voice best. Why, Agnes!" she exclaimed, as she happened to lift her eyes to the face of the said handmaiden, "what is the matter?"

No answer. But those few kind words had unlocked the flood-gates again, and Agnes's ready tears were dropping fast on the ground.

“My dear child! what has happened?” asked Miss Janet, amazed.

It was some time before she could draw it all out, so deeply ashamed was Agnes of the unworthy feelings which she had been indulging towards Ruth. Miss Janet said, sadly and gravely,—

“Agnes, it is a very dangerous thing to entertain these beginnings of jealousy: you know not to what a pass they may bring you at last: to cruelty, false dealing, spite, ingratitude to God and man, slander, hatred,—nay, even murder has been the result of this passion, when yielded to without restraint. Remember, the first murder was caused by jealousy. And the most fearful part of this temptation is that it so blinds and deludes those who give way to it, that they are even led to imagine that they are doing perfectly right, while their actions are governed by it.”

Agnes still wept, and made no reply.

“I do hope you will be watchful, and try to conquer this unworthy feeling from the first,” continued Miss Janet, “or it will make you miserable, in the end. Your jealousy of Ruth is utterly groundless, like most jealousies. It is a thing for which you should deeply humble yourself, for it shows that there is a spirit of pride and self-seeking in you which must be quenched before you can hope to know true peace.”

Agnes, who was very sincere in her desires to do right, and to overcome her faults, penitently promised that she would no more allow herself in such wrong feelings.

“Now, to prove that you are in earnest,” said Miss Janet, “try and take the first opportunity that you can of showing kindness to Ruth, when she comes here again, will you?”

“Yes, miss,” replied Agnes, in a subdued tone. And she kept her word.

More than once, and more than twice,

after that, did this most subtle of temptations arise in Agnes's heart, but she was on the watch, and resolutely trampled it down, trying to overcome it by showing more kindness than usual to Ruth, whenever she felt that she was tempted to be unfriendly.



## CHAPTER XII.

AGNES and Katie wrote often to each other, when they were parted. Katie's letters were very bright and happy ones, full of funny stories about her dear little charges, and the only sorrowful note in them was, "I miss you so, Aggie!" which was repeated in nearly every one, either at the beginning or the end. The following is a letter which Agnes got from Katie after she had been about nine months at Camerton:—

"My dearest Agnes,—This comes hoping to find you well as it leaves me at present, thank God for it. But not all of us. Miss Babe, dear sweet-heart, has taken the fever,

very bad: and missis and nurse are up along with her in the nurseries, while Miss Gerty and Master Arty and I sleep and live in the back room of the dining-room. I have sole charge of them now. And it is a charge, but they are very good. What do you think Miss Gerty said to me yesterday? Nurse had gone to fetch the medicine, and missis had just run down to the study to speak to master, baby being asleep, and says I, 'There's the dear baby all alone up there!' If she didn't turn round on me as sharp as needles, and say with a face like a Judge, '*God* is with her. Did you forget that?' She's a dear little pet, and that's all about it. I hope none of us will get the fever; it is very much about. Granny came up last night: she's fidgetting over me, I know, lest I should take it. She wouldn't bring Mary, for fear. I do miss you so, Aggie! more than ever now, but it is just as well you are away. I am glad you find yourself so com-

fortable, and hope you will continue so. So no more at present from your loving sister KATIE. Write soon."

The baby at the Rectory recovered, but Katie's turn came next. She was taken ill the same morning that the baby was brought downstairs for the first time. She had been a most active and faithful little nurse to the two others during the baby's illness, and had been rather overworking herself. Granny came to know if she should take her home to nurse, as soon as she heard of it; but her mistress said,—

"No, she has taken the fever while caring for my children, and I will nurse her myself."

So nurse was sent downstairs, and Katie was taken up; and very tender nursing she had, between her kind mistress and Granny, who came every day to sit with her, and help all she could.

Katie had the fever very severely ; and for one of her young life and high spirits, it was a sore trial, first the suffering, and then the long weakness which followed. But she was wonderfully patient, and so grateful and thankful for all that was done for her, that Mrs. Mayow said it was a pleasure to nurse her, and became quite fond of her.

When Katie was better, and all danger of infection was over, she went home to the cottage with Granny for a little holiday, to Mary's great delight, who could not pet or make enough of her.

Mrs. Mayow took in a girl from the school for a short time, while Katie was away, to fill her place ; but she told Granny that she would not part with her own little nursemaid for a great deal, she was so good and steady ; which brought tears of joy into the old woman's eyes.

“And if it is not making too free to say

---

so, ma'am," she answered, "I have just the same account of my other dear child from Miss Ward. They are happy children to find such good places and such kind mistresses, both of them. Bless the Lord for it!"

"And you are a happy woman," replied Mrs. Mayow, "to have experienced in them the truth of those words, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

It is possible that we may some day hear further tidings of Agnes and Katie, when older, in their own peaceful cottage homes.

---

CLARENDON PRESS, OXFORD.

FOR THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

# PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

## Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

*Most of these Works may be had in ornamental bindings,  
with gilt edges, at a small extra charge.*

	Price
	<i>s. d.</i>
A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS. By James F. Cobb, Esq. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 6
ALONE AMONG THE ZULUS. Fcp. 8vo. bevelled boards, gilt edges . . . . .	2 6
ARCHIE GREY; or, Doing it Heartily. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 0
BATTLE WORTH FIGHTING, The, and other Stories. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	2 0
CARPENTER'S FAMILY, THE: a Sketch of Village Life. Crown 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	2 0
CHARLEY WATSON, the Drunkard's little Son . . . . .	1 6
COALS OF FIRE: A Tale of Indian Life. 18mo. cl. bds. . . . .	1 0
DIFFICULTY HILL, AND SOME LADS WHO CLIMBED IT. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 6
EARTH'S MANY VOICES. First and Second Series. With illustrations on toned paper. Royal 16mo. extra cloth, gilt edges, each . . . . .	2 0
The two series in one volume . . . . .	4 0
GISA, THE FOREST MAIDEN: a Story of the Third Century. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 6
GRANNIE'S WARDROBE; or, the Lost Key. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 0
GRETCHEN'S TROUBLES. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 0
HUGH WYNFORD; or, the Cousin's Revenge. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	2 0
"I FORGOT." 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 0
"IT ISN'T RIGHT;" or, Frank Johnson's Reasons. By Mrs. Joseph Lamb (Ruth Buck) . . . . .	1 6
LADS OF HEATHERWOOD, The. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 0
LINDA. By the Author of "Maude Grenville." Crown 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1 6
LIONEL'S REVENGE; or, the Young Royalists. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	2 6



	Price	
	s.	d.
MOTHERLESS LADS, The; or, George West and his Brother Tom. 18mo. cloth boards . . . . .	1	6
POOR LITTLE GASPARD'S DRUM: a Tale of the French Revolution. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1	6
RUPERT OF THE RHINE: the History of a Brave Princess. By Mary C. Bushe. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1	6
STORIES FOR EVERY SUNDAY IN THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. Fcp. 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	2	0
STORIES ON "MY DUTY TOWARDS GOD." Crown 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1	6
STORIES ON "MY DUTY TOWARDS MY NEIGHBOUR." Crown 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1	6
TOM NEAL AND SARAH HIS WIFE, THE EXPERIENCES OF. Crown 8vo. cloth boards . . . . .	1	6
TOY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN. In an Ornamental Cover. Demy 4to. each containing large coloured plates, with descriptive Letterpress in large type:—		
1.—PRETTY PICTURES OF PRETTY BIRDS . . . . .	1	0
2.—BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES AND OTHER PRETTY FLOWERS . . . . .	1	0
3.—THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH . . . . .	1	0
4.—THE HISTORY OF MOSES . . . . .	1	0
5.—THE PICTURE BOOK OF WILD ANIMALS . . . . .	1	0
6.—THE HISTORY OF DAVID . . . . .	1	0

---

**NEW COTTAGE WALL PRINTS,**  
PRINTED IN COLOURS,

*From Original Drawings by Eminent Artists.*

Size, 14 by 11 inches.

HAYFIELD.      STRAWYARD.      STORM.  
CORNFIELD.    TRAWLING BY NIGHT.    BIRD'S NEST.

Each 6d., in glazed frames 1s., in gilt frames 2s.

---

**Depositories:**

77 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS;  
4 ROYAL EXCHANGE; 48 PICCADILLY;  
AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.







