

INDUSTRY AND HONESTY.

BY S. E. KEITH.

A few years ago, I was spending some weeks in a farmer's family on the Connecticut river. It was a charming home, and I looked on the routine of their daily life almost with envy; it was so peaceful, so free from the vexations and wearing cares that belong to city life. It was a life of labor, though; for the farmer and three sons went out early in the morning to their farm work, and the wife and daughters—there were two fair haired, nice looking girls of fifteen and seventeen—were up before the sun to get the early breakfast, and keep their feet till after dinner, doing all their own work even to the washing and ironing. Put how tidy and how full of sweet, pure air that kitchen was, with its open door and two large windows letting in the cool west wind! How fresh and pretty the girls looked in their calico dresses, and neat aprons!

They used sometimes to say, "Don't come out here, Miss Keith, we were all in the suds this morning, and you aren't used to such things;" Such things? No, Indeed! I was used to a kitchen—for I boarded in the city, and had no control over that department, of course—where the floor was greasy, and the stove greasier yet, where the dishes lay tumbled about on dirty tables half the forenoon, with the remnants of meat and potatoes, egg shells and fish skins, or whatever else had appertained to the morning meal, mixed in with the china and silver spoons, and where one had to tuck up her skirts to avoid dipping them into slop pails, and refrain from breathing for fear of inhaling—well, sometimes far enough from the scent of sweet-briars and day lilies which came in at the farm house windows; and where Biddy's freckled face, streaming locks, and arms akimbo, conveyed a strong impression that the "cleanin' up," when it did come might not be of the most thorough order. Why, in comparison, that table, white as soap and sand could make it, with the breakfast dishes nicely arranged in orderly piles or rows, while the pretty Ellen stood before it with her fair, rounded arms bare, and her hands well formed, but bearing the marks of honorable la-

bor, never disagreeable to the eye of any simple man or woman, were plunged into a dish of hot suds, from which they speedily lifted plate after plate to be dipped into another pan of clean hot water, and then drained, and wiped on a sweet, fresh towel, by those skilful fingers, was really lovely to look upon; and the whole room, while the morning glories trained on strings looking in at the windows, and the nicely swept floor, and the pans of skimmed milk standing on another table, waiting for their turn to be emptied, washed and wiped, and then set out in sparkling rows in the blazing sun; with the pleasant face of the mother, who was doing up butter in the pantry, now and then looking into it, and Julia's quick merry song floating in snatches—Julia was making beds and sweeping—was to me far more charming with all its healthful, cheery influences, than many a splendidly furnished drawing room into which I had been taken. Not but that I like handsome drawing-rooms, and the people I meet in them if the rooms are tasteful, and the people intelligent and good, as they often are, but there was a charm of a different kind about this well ordered kitchen, none the less delightful and inspiring. How often I have wished I could make our farmers' daughters feel that they are pleasing when thus seen occupied in their daily work: far more so, it may be, than when, their work done, they have dressed themselves in what they regard more becoming garments, and seated themselves a little stiffly in the best room, only open to visitors, and therefore inspiring a little constraint and awkwardness. Yes, each is pleasing in her own way: the modest, tidy young city girl, exempt from the same kind of labor, but giving her heart and time to some useful occupation, both conscious that they were made to be of service in the world, and to live good and holy lives, with the great Father above always watching and approving when they do faithfully the duty of the hour in the condition of life in which he has placed them.

I think Mrs. Bernard had always good and wise ideas, and had trained her