

THE BROKEN VASE.

(CHAPTER II.—Continued.)

The day came on which the operation was to be performed. The oculist did not attempt to disguise from the friends of Agnes that it might result in disease, or even death, instead of sight—the blessing so eagerly longed for, and each bade a tearful good-bye to the afflicted child.

Mrs. Weston held her in such a fervent embrace, while her tears fell hot and fast, that Agnes could never after have doubted her love, and Mr. Weston was too affected to speak. But when it came to Charlie's turn to kiss his little cousin, he astonished and alarmed them all by a series of incoherent shrieks, amid which the words, "I did it! I did it!" were alone discernible.

When he grew a little calmer he said, "I broke the vase, Agnes," and then stood up as if to receive sentence.

"I know you did," she answered, meekly, "and I felt so sorry for you."

"Sorry for me!" reiterated Charlie, in amazement: "why, I wasn't punished."

"Oh yes, you were, Charlie," she said, "you know you were never so happy after: and God had seen it all, and you couldn't forget that."

Charlie's parents stood by, grieved and surprised; but Charlie himself felt better now that all knew it, and he parted from Agnes happier than he had been for a long time.

"How did it happen?" asked Mr. Weston, when they were alone.

"I was going to frighten her as she came in that night, and held my arms out, and knocked the vase down just as she got there, and I thought you would not mind so much if Agnes did it."

"It was a mean, cowardly act," said Mr. Weston, sternly. And Charlie felt that it was.

Little Agnes did not die, nor, I am sorry to say, did she recover the entire use of her sight. For a long time a glimmer of light was all that was granted to her; but after years of patient waiting and suffering she could see to read or sew for a few minutes at a time; could discern the flowers and grass and blue skies, and was satisfied, knowing full well the gift denied her, in its fulness, would be hers in that land where no night cometh and darkness is not.

Charlie was very kind to his cousin after that, and it seemed as if they were all drawn nearer to each other, for Mrs. Weston could not forget that Charlie had let Agnes suffer for his fault. He never alluded to it in any way after that day on which he confessed it, except once, when he said, "I wondered how you felt, Agnes, when you stayed all that evening alone in your room, and what you were doing to pass the time away."

"I was praying for you," she answered, simply.—*M. R. L., in Mother's Friend.*



REMARKABLE ANSWER TO PRAYER.

I am going to tell you an interesting story of a little boy, one of a family of six children, whose parents were not rich, but honest and respectable. They lived in a large manufacturing town in the north of England.

One morning (now half a century since), this little boy, then about eight years of age, was entrusted by his mother with five shillings to take to the mill to buy a stone of flour.

The careful mother tied up the money in the corner of the bag which was to hold the flour; and with a kindly pat on the shoulder, and a charge to be quickly back again, the little boy left the house, and was soon threading his way through the busy throng and along the dirty streets of that smoky town.

On arriving at the mill, he took his place among many others who were there on a similar errand. He had to wait full half an hour before his turn came to be served. It was a mill that

Whatever must he do? His mother would want the flour.

At that time money was very scarce, and bread was very dear. There was not free trade in corn, and such prosperous trade as there is now; how could the poor boy venture to return to his mother to tell her of his loss?

Greatly troubled, he withdrew a little from the crowd, some of whom pitied him in his distress; and the thought came into his mind, "God can do everything; He can help me to find my money; I will pray to Him." So there and then did this little boy very earnestly lift up his heart in secret prayer to his Father in Heaven,—"Heavenly Father, please help me to find my money!"

None around knew what was going on—not one of that crowd of people thought how near God was to the heart of that little child—but he put up his prayer in simple faith, and God heard it. But *we must do our best* as well as pray, so our little boy soon resolved that he would go back the way he had come, and look carefully for the lost money, still breathing the prayer all the way. Alas! little hope of finding it on that road, where, since he came, hundreds must have passed. However, he must try, and find it if possible; so there he goes again into the streets, with his head bent, examining every step of the way, still breathing the earnest prayer that God would be pleased to help him to find his money. The way he had come was over a bridge—the busiest thoroughfare, perhaps, of that busy town.

As he was just passing on to the bridge, still intently looking this side and on that, lo! there, on the black ground, he sees a bright shilling, and then another, and another, until he picked up the whole of the five silver shillings he had lost! Was he not astonished? His breast heaved with thankfulness to his Heavenly Father. We have heard him say, since then, that whilst almost overcome thus to find the whole of his money in that unlikely situation, his young heart was powerfully impressed at the time with the belief that it had been, as it seemed, miraculously preserved and restored to him in answer to prayer. I need not tell you how joyfully, and with what a thankful heart, he returned to the mill and obtained the flour; and though he had been thus much longer away than usual, his mother, on learning the cause and the providential interposi-

had a monopoly of the trade in town, called a "soke-mill." When his turn arrived, he presented his bag, and told the man his mother had tied the money up in the corner.

The man opened out the bag, shook it, but, alas! no money.

"There's no money in it!" said the man, tossing back the bag.

Think what was the dismay of the little boy thus so unexpectedly to find that all his money was gone—gone he could not imagine where, or how!