

place! It was just what dear mother always said of me. Everything suited me at first, but I hadn't learnt yet to persevere.

And at last, in a temper, because I'd been found fault with, I gave warning; though I knew I should never have such a good safe place again. I made up my mind to write to a young woman I knew that was gone to a large town where the girls got high wages and a deal of freedom. Sunday afternoon came, and I stayed in to write my letter.

The letter paper was in the little box at the bottom of the one where I kept my clothes and in looking for it I came upon a long, narrow little parcel.

I knew what it was, and for a minute I was tempted to hurry it out of sight, or burn it without opening it. But I forced myself to undo the paper, and sat looking at the little thing, and thinking about poor mother, till the time was gone by and there was no writing that afternoon.

I didn't say to myself that I would give up writing altogether; but all that day and the next mother's words were never out of my head: and at last I put down my pride and got one of the other servants to find out whether my mistress would let me stay if I begged pardon.

She did, God bless her!—and it was long enough before I thought again of leaving her. And the little broom went to the bottom of my box again, with a new set of thoughts and feelings clinging round it.

It was a long while before the broom was needed to sweep out my heart again: though every time I caught sight of the paper it was wrapped in, it brought back thoughts that helped what was good in me.

But I am one of those that take a long time to learn; and I was needing a sharp lesson—even after I left service a long while, and was the mother of children.

It was the old story! At first nothing was ever so delightful as keeping a house; and no one was ever such a good wife as I was going to be!

And then, when I might have begun to flag a bit, came the first baby; and I set

my heart on being a model mother, as well as a model wife!

I wasn't afraid of trouble,—*that* was never one of my faults, and while the babies kept coming, one after the other, in pretty quick succession, everybody said I managed wonderfully.

But there were four children, and the youngest was four years old; and then there came a sort of quiet time with us. And then I began to grow tired of it all, and to think it very dull to be always slaving and toiling and trying to do my best.

I didn't know *what* I wanted; for what should a woman do with a husband and children like mine, but make them comfortable? And what could she do away from them?

But the work seemed very wearisome; always the same and never any end to it; getting through the washing and the baking and the mending one week, just ready to begin again washing and baking and mending the next!

I called myself a religious woman; for I went to church on a Sunday whenever it was convenient, and read my Bible at times. But I hadn't yet learnt to do my work to the Lord and not to man, and I didn't know that nothing else would ever make it seem worth doing again.

So I dawdled and idled, and got slovenly and slipshod and careless, doing less and less every day, and laying the blame on being out of sorts, or on the weather, or on my husband and the children.

He was wonderfully patient with me at first—my husband—and took it for granted that things must be wrong just now, and that they'd mend in a while. But by-and-by, as I got more and more careless and indifferent, he spoke sharply to me more than once. But *that* was never the way to do any good with me, and I only sulked and thought myself injured, and never tried to do better.

Everything had got into such a mess at last that I really hardly knew where to begin to put things straight; and living always in a mess and a muddle was bad for my temper and for everyone else's. And