

ing and clothing. My servants will see to that, and the housemaid, who is a kind girl, is quite looking forward to carrying the infant to church. Will you be its godmother?"

The question came out rather suddenly. I did not say "Yes" directly; it seemed a serious responsibility.

"They are travelling hawkers, I may never see the child again," I said slowly. (I myself was only on a visit at the Rectory.)

"Well?"

"I could not look after the child. And the family have a bad reputation, you say?"

"Yes, that is so. But, all the more, ought we not to make an effort to save this little one?"

"How could I? What could I do for her, if I never saw the infant again after to-night?"

"You could pray for her," said the Rector very quietly.

And then he walked away.

Presently I heard a little stir downstairs, and gathered that the baby had come. They say that no woman can resist the attraction of a baby. I went to find it.

It was a tiny feeble thing that was being tenderly washed and dressed by the housekeeper, kindly Jane looking on and helping. When it was arrayed in a fair white robe which once had belonged to "master," its little serious face was almost fair to look upon. But I thought I saw the shadow of death upon it, and it seemed that my responsibility would not last long.

I went to church that evening and stood godmother to little "Agnes" Wilson; and after service Jane brought her to me for a last look before she carried her outside to the mother, who had lingered about the churchyard, unwilling to come into God's house.

There was a sort of reverence for holy things, it seemed, in this very reluctance of the poor woman to pass the threshold of the church. She was leading a bad life even then, and she knew it, but could not make up her mind to relinquish it.

Next day, on asking a question about the hawkers, I heard that the hovel was empty, and that they had all gone away, rather more suddenly than people expected.

Perhaps they did not care to be too closely watched.

Baby Agnes had gone too—not as she came, a wretched, sin-stained infant, but rich in her heritage as a child of God, a sworn servant of the Most High.

We do not know how God works in the souls of His servants, what great things obedience to His commands, participation in His Sacraments, may bring of blessing to Christian people; but I must own to a sort of alarmed feeling when I thought of the many dangers and temptations which would beset the path of this child of God, and I resolved to pray continually that she might overcome them in the power of the Baptismal grace she had just received.

I wrote her name down, "Agnes Wilson," on the list of those for whom I was bound to offer daily prayer, and that seemed the end of all things that concerned my connection with the hawker's baby.

"I could pray for her," the Rector had said, and I would do so.

I went home soon after that day, back to my work, and for nine years, night and morning, I put up a petition for "little Agnes." She might be in Paradise truly; my prayer that she might be kept from the sin and smirch of the world might not be needed, but all the same I prayed on.

One Sunday, in June 1879, I was once again asked to be godmother to a poor baby. A little child born in the workhouse I was in the habit of visiting. The workhouse! What visions of discomfort its name calls up! But this workhouse was not an uncomfortable place. It was situated on high ground in one of the pleasantest spots on the Downs. Thanks to the generosity of two priests, it had a beautiful church. This church answered several purposes; it was the workhouse and cemetery chapel, and also the church of the people who lived on the Downs—shepherds and cowherds, whose cottages were scattered over the whole region at great distances apart. The master

and mistress of the workhouse were homely, kindly people; they always welcomed the visits of the clergy and lady visitors, and did all in their power to keep the children, who were of necessity in the workhouse, apart from evil influences. A good schoolmistress lived in the house, and altogether this workhouse on the Downs was a favored spot.

To return to my story. The baby was christened Violet, and after the service I had some talk with the master of the workhouse as to the best means of seeing that the child was carefully brought up. In the course of conversation he remarked, "By-the-by, Miss C——, there is a child in the house who says you are her godmother. She came here a few days ago with her mother. She seems a nice little girl, small for her age, though nine she says she is."

"What is her name?" I asked, curiously.

"Agnes Wilson!" The child for whom I had prayed so long.

I asked to see her. She was brought in, smiling, and evidently looking on me as a friend. Throughout all her degradation the mother had preserved the memory of that baptism in the Down church, and had constantly reminded Agnes of it, coupling my name with it. Agnes was not to forget her godmother.

There was still something infantine and sweet in the child's little pale face, yet I could only gather that she had been reared in the midst of wickedness; her sisters had turned out wild, bad girls, her brothers bore bad characters—could Agnes have been preserved unsullied?

Yet the workhouse master and matron declared she was a good child—quiet, gentle, willing to learn. Was it a miracle?

Yes, in so far as we live in the midst of miracles, the miracle of the power of prayer and of Sacramental grace.

Surely, surely, without presumption, I might think that the daily and nightly prayer for little Agnes had been in some degree a shield and safeguard to the child.

Agnes stayed two years in the workhouse school and was then removed to an industrial school, under the charge of Sisters.

From thence she went to service. Here she is doing well, pleasing her mistress, and looking forward some day (when he and she have saved something towards furnishing) to a home of her own with a hard-working young baker, who has found out Agnes' worth.

Agnes' mother is dead—has been dead some time, but the end of her story is hopeful. Her child proved the means of winning over the poor woman to repentance and a better life. Agnes was able to comfort and care for her on her death-bed, and, dying, Mrs. Wilson blessed God for the gift of so pure and loving a child. She blessed me too, the lady that consented to be her child's godmother and prayed for her so long.

Surely this story may encourage us to persevere in prayer for those who are placed in great danger and temptation, for it is not the Will of our heavenly Father that one of His little ones should perish.

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

I was talking, a few weeks ago, with a clergyman at the West who said he returned to his father's house in Boston, and his brother, a son in the family, came in intoxicated; and he said when the intoxicated son had retired, "Mother, how do you stand this?"

"Oh!" she said, "I have stood this a good while; but it don't worry me now. I found it was worrying me to death, and I put the whole case in God's hands, and said, 'O God! I cannot endure this any longer; take care of my son, reform him, bless him, save him,' and there I left the whole thing with God, and I shall never worry again."

"The next day," said the clergyman, who was talking to me in regard to it, "I met my brother, and I said, 'John, you are in an awful position.' 'How so?' said he. 'Why, mother has told me that she has left you with God; she doesn't pray for you any more.' 'Is that so? Well, I can never contend with the Lord; I shall never drink again.'"

He never did drink again. He went to the far West; and at a banquet in St. Louis given to him, a lawyer just come to the city, there were many guests, and there was much wine poured, and they insisted that this reformed lawyer should take his glass of wine; and they insisted until it became a great embarrassment as they said to him:—"Ah, you don't seem to have any regard for us, and you have no sympathy with our hilarities."

Then the man lifted the glass and said:—"Gentlemen, there was in Boston some years ago a man who, though he had a beautiful wife and two children, fell away from his integrity and went down into the ditch of drunkenness. He was reformed by the grace of God and the prayers of his mother, and he stands before you to-night. I am that man. If I drink this glass I shall go back to my old habits and perish. I am not strong enough to endure it. Shall I drink it? If you say so, I will."

A man sitting next, lifted a knife and with one stroke broke off the bottom of the glass; and all the men at the table shouted, "Don't drink! don't drink!"

Oh! that man was a hero. He had been going through a battle year after year; that was a great crisis. What a struggle! There are a great many men in peril; and when you are hard in your criticisms about men's inconsistency you do not know what a battle they have to fight—a battle compared with which Austerlitz and Gettysburg and Waterloo were child's play.—*Friends' Review*

WOMEN'S SPHERE IN MISSION WORK.

In a paper upon "Woman's Part in the Missionary Work of the Church," read by Mrs. Schereschewsky at a conference of Churchwomen held in Philadelphia, we find the following suggestions:

"It is plain that as yet this missionary idea has taken a very feeble hold, both upon our church and our churchwomen."

"1. First of all we have lacked those angel-messengers which must precede all work; if we would expect God's richest blessings upon it. Our laity, both men and women, have failed to pray for our work among the heathen. How can we know this? Because of the results. Had mighty, prevailing prayer been offered up on behalf of our church work in heathen lands, instead of hundreds of converts we should have had thousands, yea, millions. Instead of missionaries, men and women, sent out at long intervals, and missionary work oft-times begun only to come to an untimely end for want of means and workers, we should have had band upon band of devoted and apostolic laborers going out to our foreign fields, and enterprises begun and carried on to a glorious consummation."

"Do you ask again how this can be known? Because the God of all truth and our Saviour Jesus Christ has promised: 'us that if we so pray, He will so grant us these blessings. But we cannot expect that these blessings will attend cold, perfunctory, mechanical prayer. They have been promised only to mighty, prevailing prayer. Would it not be well that praying guilds should be organized by our churchwomen, whose office it should be to meet together and offer up such prayers unto the head of the Church for the work so expressly committed by our Lord to the keeping of His church?"

"2. Let our churchwomen do all that lies in their power to acquire a more intimate personal knowledge of our missionaries in the field, and with this personal knowledge will come a better acquaintance with the work which each missionary has in hand, and with this acquaintance, that love and sympathy that will brighten the page of every letter from these workers."

"3. Would it not be wise for our churchwomen to hold, now and again, informal meetings, such as parlor meetings or the old-fashioned monthly missionary meeting, to promote the knowledge so much needed? These meetings, while already somewhat in use here and elsewhere, need to be greatly increased, and can be made, beyond a doubt, an efficient means to enlighten us upon a subject upon which 'thick darkness' prevails among our church people."