## THE VILLAGE ANGEL;

Or, Agatha's Recompense.

CHAPTER II-Continued. The child Agetha was a wonderful child, beautiful as an angel, with the same pure, bright face one sees in the pictures of the angels; a graceful head, covered with curls of pale gold, and eyes like "violets steeped in dew," shining always with pity and compassion almost divine. All the overflowing love and tenderness, the grand compassion, the loving pity that had filled her mother's heart had come to her, and with it her father's in stinct for helping and healing every creature who required it.

When she was a grave, sweet mite of seven or eight, the doctor talked to her about the little children who were ill; at that carly age the sweet, angelic disposition showed itself; she saved every little delicacy given to her for the little ones lying with aching head or injured limbs. It was lovely child, with her hair of pale gold, going into the cottages, her little hands laden with

answer was always the same :

"Only the doctor's daughter. And the doctors daughter had grown up the village angel; ever her beautiful name

seemed part of nerself. The old gray church, with its ivy-covered perch, built hundreds of years ago, had been dedicated to St. Agatha.
Who St. Agatha was the village people did
not know—they had never asked. On the great stained glass window at the eastern end of the church there was a picture of her, a bautiful, fair young maid, with a pure sweet face, and a halo round the hair of pile gold; she carried a palm branch in her hand: but what the palm branch meant they never understood.

The most curious thing was that Mrs. Brooke leved the old stated-glass window, with its rair young sain, and her seat in the church was exactly opposite o it. When the tiny fair face, she said to her husband, Let me call her Agatha," and he was willand the doctor's daughter, in some inexplicaassociated with the mysterious Agatha, whose and children blessed her.
sweet, saintly face shone on them every Sun Everyone scemed delighted in awarding sweet, saintly face shone on them every Sun-

day.

The strangest thing was the influence it had upon the child herself. She was the only named after the beautiful lady who carried the branch of palm in her hand. She esked about her, and the doctor told her that Saint deny God and worship idels, and for that hearts of the people, and who died rather reason the pagan judge had ordered her to be than deny God. The two faces ever in his reason the pagan judge had ordered her to be put to death, and the memory of her had mind were often one. live lin the hearts of the people ever since. Young, fair, delicate, fragile, beautiful, she had preferred the agonies of death to the denial of God.

There was a grand lesson in the old stained glass window for those who cared to read it. The little Agatha did care to read it, and the village people said, as she grew older, she resembled the old picture more and more.

the best there was; the doctor gave her Latin lessons and taught her the clements of science; the old organist at the church taught; her music. Nature had given her a voice sweet and clear as the carol of a bird; she sang as the birds sing, because her heart was

full of music, and she could not help it. So she grew up among them, fresh and fair as any white lily. The world -with its frolics, her who lived in the pure almosphere of goodness and charity.

How would the struggle between her and one like Sir Vane Carlyon end? It was more pitiful than the deadly fray between hawk and wounded love.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SAINT AND THE SINNER.
Sir Vane Carlyon had had the world at his feet from the time he lay in his cradle. was been in the purple, for his father died in Rome, of malaria, some three months before he was born, and his mother, a pious, gentle, refined indy, had devoted her life to her son. She had only one mistake—she had completely spoiled him; and he grew up handsome, selfish, fond of luxury, impatient of control, obstinate and proud. He had some good qualities; he loved his mother; he was generous even to a fault ; he could not see oppression or injustice to others; he never told a falsehood where truth could be ed with clover, the fields with buttercups and managed; he had grown up to consider that daises, until they looked like a sea of white the world was made for him. He was Sir and gold. Vane Carlyon, of Garswood; he owned Silverdale Abbey; Silverdale House, one of the fairest mansions in Belgravia, belonged to him ; he was a power in the land, for he owned some of the largest coul mines in England and drew a large revenue paradise of sight and sound, her eyes were from them. His charities were princely, dazed for a few minutes by the brightness of even as his revenue; his estates were the light. Then when the daze cleared away, well-managed; he was by no means a man of she saw standing before her the same pleasure, a follower of fashion; considering stranger. that he had been trained by the sweetest and best of mothers, he was wanting in reverence manner, then stood, hat in hand, his head and loyalty toward women. Perhaps it was as much the fault of those who pursued him as his own, for during many years he had "I had hoped to have the great pleasure of been the most eligible match in England, and hearing the organ to-day, but you have had been courted at such. Everything pos-sible, and even at times the impossible, had She and been done to win him, but in vain. He had and then he saw the capabilities of her face, broken the heart of more than one woman ; The smile brightened and beautified it, until, his own had never even been touched. He in his turn, his eyes were dazed. If one admired, made love, and rode away. No. frank, bright smile so transfigured her, what matter if he left an aching heart or a shadow-would love do? She looked half hesitatingly ed life behind him, that never troubled him at him.

There were one or two women who cursed the hour in which his handsome face had a will go back and play something for you."

smiled on them to their destruction. One or two sins were laid to his door that caused the than anything in the world: but I do not world to shrug its shoulders, and murmur like troubling you." some very apologetic sentences about wild |

oats.
"He would marry and settle some day," the matrons said to each other, and in the world, with Samson and Delilah, Manoah and meantime they must be indulgent to the Micah. This present world of gold and green faults of a fashionable sinner, whose income seemed unreal to me." could not be less than two hundred thousand "Yet it is the self pounds per annum. He was the prize of the day, but as yet he loved no one. His mother, Lady Carlyon, wished him to marry, but he dead."

Lady Carlyon, wished him to marry, but he had seen no woman, however fair, whom he felt inclined to call his wife.

In this discontented frame of mind he went to pay a promised visit to Lord Croft, of Whitecroft Abbey, a grand old house, some five miles distant from the village, and three miles from the pretty country town of Westbury. Lord and Lady Croft had frequently invited him, and in an evil

hour he went. one drawback in his eyes. Lady Croft was a left the plowing sunlight and the scented great lover of proprieties, and she liked all lime blossoms, and went back into the cool, her visitors to attend church on Sunday deep shadows of the old church. morning; there was no getting off comfortably with a cigar, no pretense of letters tion," said Agatha, "it will be much better his mind, more than ever like the saint on the availed, and Sir Vane found himself obliged for you to remain down here in the church, castern window, for she wore a pale blue to do as the others did. He had showed some and I will play for you."

hesitation and desire to get out of it, but He answered cheerfully, but a strange dishesitation and desire to get out of it, but He answered cheerfully, but a strange disher neck. When she saw him Lady Croft looked him straight in the face. appointment shot through his heart. She there, in her father's surgery, talking ou can please yourself," she said; did not care then for a tete-a-tete with him; ing quite at his ease, a sudden

a man has enjoyed himself and served himself all the week round, if he cannot give at least two hours on Sunday to the worship of his God, he is not worth much." Straight words that came to him like a

blow in the face. He went, and in his heart respected Lady Croft over afterward. He went, but it was and surroundings quite different to any he a fatal hour which took him to the beautiful had ever known before. old church of St. Agatha. Outwardly he was reverent enough, inwardly he was in search of something to amuse himself with. The rector who conducted the service,

the Reverend Francis Ruthven, was a gentleman from whom no one has ever yet gleamed the least amusement; his wife, who sat in the vicarage pew, kindly, fussy, busy Lady Ann, looking about her with keen eyes, noticed the langour of the handsome young baronet, and thought in her heart how she should like to wake him up. When he has reviewed all the people before him, he sees, in the distance, a beautithe prettiest sight in the world to see the ful window which attracts his wondering eyes. He does not know what it represents. but the colors are rich, harmonious, beauti | yet ? Should he go out from the church and ful. He knows that the window is a work "Who is that?" strangers asked, and the of art, and gradually his attention is drawn child almost, who had faith in all women, to the fair, pure face of the principal figure there—the face sni figure of a fair young saint, who carries a palm branch in her hand.

He looks at it stoudily for some minutes, thinking how beautiful it is, and if goodness made women so beautiful, what a sad pity they were not all good. His eyes wander on, and he sees, under

neath the window, a face and figure so like the one there that he is startled; a figure clad in soir gray kneels there, a slender figure, every line of which is grace; the face is fair, pure, bright as the face in the window, and the pale golden hair makes a halo round it He is startled for a minute, think ing alm at that the girl with the palm branch has descended, but another glance shows him this perfectly beautiful and exquisite face is living.

As a matter of course, at the earliest op the pretty baby-girl was placed in her arms, portunity he inquired after her, and heard and she saw the pale gold of her hair, and the pathetic little story of her mother's death-heard how the young mother had loved the old gray church, and had named ing. So that the very name was an addi- her baby-girl Agatha after the figure in the tional charm in the eyes of the simple people, stained glass window; he heard how she was called the "doctor's daughter," and how, as ble way, was to them part of the church, and she passed through the streets, men, women

praise to Agatha, and this made Vane the more anxious to know her. Her name pleased him; there was a musical ripple Agatha in the village, and she had been about it that caught his fancy. In his mind named after the beautiful lady who carried insensibly the two faces and the two stories became associated. When he thought of Agatha, the dector's daughter, he thought greatly that he laughed. Agatha had been one of those who refused to also of the Christian martyr who lived in the

The chance to speak to her came at last, when, on his road to the vicarage, he saw her trying vainly to lock the old church door. After he had spoken to her, after he had seen the liquid depths of her lustrous eyes, the exquisite leveliness of the fair young face, the sweetness of the lips, whose smile was sunlight, he made up his mind. He would stay and woo her. There would be a There was no great provision made for certain piquancy about woolng a saint education at Whitecroft, but Agatha received How it would end be did not know—did not care; it was the fancy of the moment. He never once said to himself-how will it

> CHAPTER IV. THE FIRST STEP.

end?

Agatha Brooke went on with her work that day. She performed precisely the same duties, she visited the same houses, its gaycties, its pleasures, its light loves, its she spoke to the same people, she talked to passions, its tragedies-was all unknown to to her tather over his ten; but all the time there was upon her the strange sensation of some novelty in her life. Something had quickened her julse; something had stirred the sweet calm of her nature-a thrill of new life, the first faint dawn of the human on a nature that had been all spiritual. The dark eyes, so full of admiration, had reached the heart that had as yet known nothing but the

spirit of peace.
She never thought of Thursdoy as an appointment; she never thought that he would be there; she did not think even of meeting him again. All that she was conscious of was the brightening of her life and everything

around her.
It was an old custom of hers to give every Thursday afternoon to the organ. This Thursday was a bright, beautiful day. The month of blossoms, "Morrie May," was in its prime, the hedges covered with hawthorn, the limetrees in lossom, the promise of the Blac and the gleam of the laburnum, the meadows fill-

The song of the birds, the cooing of the ring doves, the carol of the lark as it soured into the blue other, filled the sweet spring air ; and when Agatha Brooke stepped from the cool shade of the church porch into the

He bowed to her in the most respectful bent in almost lowly homage to her.
"I fear I am most unfortunate," he said.

She answered his bow with a bright smile,

"If you really wish to hear the organ,

"It will be a pleasure to me," she replied. "I have been in another world all the afternoon - the old Hebrow

"Yet it is the self-same, whereon grand

"There are plenty of Delilahs living," he said; and she looked at him with a grave reproach on her most beautiful face.

"I do not think so," she replied. "I do not believe that more than one ever existed." He langhed aloud; then stopped abruptly, when he saw the pain on her face.
"I henor such beautiful faith," he said.

But she did not quite understand even that. Delians were not in her line; and it was The visit was pleasant erough, with only natural to her to believe in everything. They

"If you want to hear the organ to perfec-

whereas he really cared nothing for the with music, and only wanted to be with her. He remained below in the dim, beautiful old church, his eyes riveted on the grand eastern window, listen-like to be light footstage words in the light footstage wor

ing to the light footsteps, wondering a little. touched a little, finding the circumstances

And there, through the cool shadows. floated to him sounds almost divinethe pleading cry of Delilah. "Hear me -but hear me-hear the voice of love." Ιt tears. What a grand old story it was; and the blind. this girl, who expressed Delilah's love and woe so perfectly, did not believe the type of woman existed in those days. Knowing what he had planned in his heart, that plaintive cry touched him. It should have been spare me!" not "hear!"

Something better and holier woke in his heart than had ever taken root there yet. Should he spare her, who had spared no one never look at the exquisite face-a girl, a and, perhaps, in all men. It was like tearing the bridient wings of a butterfly, or putting out the bright eyes of a little singing bird-there was a sense of cruelty about it. The world was so full of others, why should he seek this one, guarded by her own innocence? Was it possible that, standing under the light of an eastern window, listening to harmony such as he had seldom heard before, was it possible that in his heart there arose a half wish that he was a better man?

Then the harmony changed, and he knew the words that went to the beautifully pathetic air-" While I have eyes he wants no light." The music seemed torol! in waves through the dim aisles. Ab, there was indeed a world he had not reached, a world in which this girl lived.

"While I have eyes he wants no light," He repeated the words over and over again, and then the music stopped, the old Hebrew world faded away, the light footsteps were descending.

She was pale, and he saw that the little hands holding the great iron key trembled.
"Allow me to lock the door for you," he said, "that was your difficulty list week-a very happy difficulty. I remember I beard you say that you should be here on Thureday; and as I longed to hear the brantiful old organ, I thought I would come."

Then she looked up at him with innocent surprise in her most beautiful eyes.
"Did you come on purpose?" she asked.

s and times as far for the same pleasure," he said. "You are going across the fields, may

[go with you?" She was too much surprised to say "yes." or "no," but when she opened the white gate that led from the churchyard to the fields, he went with her. No sense of impropriety came to her-the ways of life at White-croft were tolerably free and casy; she did not anow what either propriety or etiquette required, for such a case had never happened in her experience before-a handsome, lordly young stranger offering to walk through the

fields with her. He had gained the first step, he thought to himself-permission to be with her, but ho was at a less what to say. To any one clee he would have paid extravagent compliments, made viciont love. This girl's modest, graceful calm awed him. While with her and near her he felt as though he were in a shrine, the sonetily of which he dared not descrate. Still, he must talk with her. "Why is this place called Whitecreft?"

he asked. She was quite at home with him then.
"Look round and see if you can guess,"

she replied.

He looked round but saw no reason. She laughed again.

"Your cyes are not educated for the country?" sho said; "do you not see all the blossoms, the hawthern, the white May, the cherry trees, pear trees, the whole village is a mass of lovely white bleon, and that is why it is Whitecroft, My road is down this lane, I

## CHAPTER V.

A MAIDEN'S SOUL AWARES.

Three weeks had passed since Agatha Brooke had played the grand music of Samson, thinking it the greatest treat she could offer. May had passed, and the beautiful month of June, with its flowers and foliage, was here.

Then came a lovely sunny day when Sir Vane stopped to ask himself if he had made much progress, for in spite of three weeks' wooing such as he had never undertaken before it was still quite uncertain whether he

should win or lose her. He had owned to himself frankly, and more than once, that if he had known none but such women as Agatha Brooke he should have been a different man. Not even in the presence of the best born and noblest ladies in the land had he felt more respect, more reverence than he did for this young girl who was as unconscious of all peril as the wild roses that grew on the hedges. He had woord her in the most chivalrous fashion. At first, all his meetings with her seemed quite accidental, but it was wonderful how frequent they were. He seemed always to have calls to make at Westbury. and took any amount of exertion in the green lanes and fields around Whitecroft. Then he was always so deferential, so full of homage and reverence; every meeting seemed so accidental that she had not the faintest suspicion. Every day life grew more sweet, the sunlight more golden; every day the faint dream grew deeper; every day she rose with new hope, new lightness, new beauty, and the vague happiness that filled her heart made her so beautiful that the village people looked at her in wonder. She would have recoiled with something like fear had any one said to her abruptly that she was beginning to love; to her innecent mind love was a far-off mystery. She never con-nected it with the dreamy delight that was changing and coloring the whole world for her. Then what Sir Vane considered a piece of

good fortune happened to him. He sprained a finger, and one fine morning he came riding into Westbury and drow his reins at the do tor's door. He sent in his card, with a message that he should be glad if the doctor would see him at once, as he had an engagement, and very soon they stood face to face-the handsome young aristocrat, who knew no law but his own will and pleasure, and the village doctor, kind, generous, absent-minded, and unsus-

picions The sprain was painful, and the docter, wanting something, as usual called for his daughter. She came in, looking, to his mind, more than ever like the saint on the dress, and her golden hair hung loosely on

"there is no compulsion; but I think when it was the music, and nothing more; sense of bewilderment seized her. In a few ashamed of myself for the way in which the

assistance over locking the church door."

And then, while the doctor attended to the finger, Sir Vane told him of the little adventure, and bow he had afterward enjoyed the music of the beautiful oratorio. His conscience almost smote him when he looked into the dreamy, absent face of the girl's father, for the doctor saw so little in was so perfectly rendered he could almost it, and thought so little of it, he paid but hear the voice, and the voice seemed full of vague attention. It was as easy as deceiving

> During the whole of the summer weeks that tragedy lasted, he never once thought of his daughter at the same time with the young stranger. He called daily for a fortnight over the injured finger. He was clever enough to get to know when the doctor would be from nome. He always waited for his return; so it came to pass that many hours of the beautiful summer days were spent by them in

> the shady, flowery cottage.
>
> The doctor had no suspicions. Agatha was a child to him; that she had grown fair and slender as a young palm tree did not occur to him, to whom she would always be a caill. Fortune at times seems to favor the designs of evil; it certainly favored Sir Vane. Any other girl would have foreseen the danger to herself.
>
> She lived on as unconscious of what

> was coming into her life as a dreaming child. She did not notice how, every day when he left her, he said something which plainly indicated when he would come again; and she, quite as unconsciously, was always there.

A great love is pitiful, it is so often wasted, so often lavished in vain. This girl's whole soul had gone from her, never to be her own again. Gradually her life became one long dream of him. She remembered every word he uttered, she could bring to her mind every expression of his face; wherever he stood became a place at once sacred to her; if he touched a book, a picture, or ornament, it men, but I do not quite trust him. Lady became a priceless treasure to her: Brandon told me some strange stories about when he threw away a withered him; I hope they are not true." lower she treasured it. It was love without stint, without measure, without limit or

it was. They had met each other one bright June morning in the beautiful old avenue of chestnuts that led to Croft Woods, accidentally on her part, intentionally on his-a beautiful morning, such as one often finds in England in the glory of summer prime. Some of the lowers of the chestnuts had fallen, and the eaves lay at their feet.

"How bright the sunshine is to-day," she said. "It must be a fancy of mine, but it seems quite a different color." His dark, handsome eyes devoured the fair,

boanty of the angelic face. Perhaps the difference comes from within, he said. "I have known times when the brightest sun held no light for me."

"That comes from trouble," she said, "Yes, or weariness, or ennui: that you see the light brighter proves-do you know what it proves?"

"No, I do not," she replied; "will you "It proves that new brightness has come into your life," he said.
She looked at him with such serious eyes.

"I do not think so," she said, calmly. "My life is just the same as it has always been."

His heart sank as he listened. Had all his persistent wooing been wasted—all his devo-tion been lavished in vain? Would this girl, with the pure soul and angel-face, see him pass out of her life forever, and make no the best love-making on her, and he had not stirred the sweet, sleeping soul. "Shall you be content to live here all your

life, doing what you are doing now?" he asked, seddenly.

The startled look in her eyes showed him

that she had not thought of the future. "I do not know," she said. "I am very happy—I could not be happier."
"Nould you not like to see something of the great world?" he asked. "Out he-

will say good afternoon," and with a graceful youd the green kills that surround White-bend of her fair head she disappeared. croft there lies a grand world, full of art, science, heauty and pleasure. This place is like the 'Happy Valley' of Rasselas—have you no wish to go beyond it?"

"I have never thought of it," she said. "It must seem strange to you, but my life has always been filled. I have so many to help, so much to do, that I have had no time to think of such things. I hardly realized that there was a world beyond the green hills there which I had never seen.'

"Do tell me," he said, bending forward cagerly—"are you mortal?—human? Have you ever known what it is to—to feel your heart beat one throb more quickly-to feel your pulse thrill-to feel even your own face grow warmer! Are you really a mortal, or are you, as I some-times half believe, the Agatha from the stained-glass window, came down to earth stained glass window, came down to earth is only seeking a little flirtation and a with nothing but scul and spirit. Which is

She laughed out merrily. "Indeed I am not St. Agatha. She has

girls; there is more of the angel than anyiron bars across her face, you know." "And you have iron bars across your soul," he interrupted. For the first time he saw that her beautiful face was crim yon, and her eyes fell-the first time there was the breaking of the long sleep, a stir of the tremulous, rosy dawn. "You are very much like that figure, Miss Brooke," he eaid.

And she laughed again, the merricst, happiest laugh he had ever heard. "I am very glad," she said. "I would sooner be like that than a figure in a fashion

book." "I should hardly have thought that you had ever seen one," he said. "I could not ing face, that Joan Mayberry, the think of you at the same time with fashion doctor's faithful old servant, grew impatient. and finery; you always come into my mind with the beautiful, picturesque surroundings of the church, or these lanes. I do not be-lieve you know what fashion is, Miss Brooke.

"I am not quite sure that I do," she said, "There is a beautiful world you ought

to know," he continued, that has nothing as frivolous as fashion—the world of art and science, and beauty. You are too much (I know you will forgive me, Miss Brooke), too much like an angel—nay, that I cannot be sure of—too much like a marble statue—as fair, as pure, as lifeless." "How can you say so?" she cried. "Why,

I am full of life!"
"I could say to you what the Queen Guinover said of less husband—'You want warmth and coloring." "That I do not!" she cried, almost indignantly, and taking his words quite liter-

ally. "I am never cold, and I have color enough for-" She paused for want of a simile. "For a wild rose," he suggested. "Yes, or any other rose," she said,

earnestly. "You do not understand," he said. "You want warmth of manner." 'I think not," she said. "I am often sweet, happy eyes, looked so unconscious of

"Ashamed, are you?" he said. Ah me

COUNTRY PRADICE .....

"Do you, Sir Vane—and why?"
The simple wonder of her question was beautiful to the man of the world. He whispered his answer, and in that whisper the dreaming soul awoke, never to sleep or dream again.

CHAPTER VI.

CONJECTURES AND SUSPICIONS.

band, "pray do not laugh at me, and think that I am always fancying evils, but I am not anxiously never changed—there was neither quite easy over Sir Vane." Lord Croft laughed.

"What is wrong, Emily," he asked. "I do not know—I cannot guess," she replied, frankly. "I have nothing but suspicion, and that I cught to be ashamed of; but I cannot believe he is going on all right. He spends so much time spoke elequently of Joan's opinion of nobleout of doors, and I am told he seldom goes men. out without a bouquet of flowers. Flowers in his hands mean mischief, I am sure."

ut without a bouquet of howers. Flowers in his hands mean mischief, I am sure."

"They are very innocent messengers," said its lordship, who was always amused with its wife's scruples and fears.

"Deceitful, I mean, Miss Agetha; and what I should like to know is this—If a his lordship, who was always amused with his wife's scruples and fears.

Lady Croft continued, anxiously:
"Have you heard anything about him? Are there any rumors in the neighborhood. or what is more to the point, are there any pretty girls? You know he will get into asked Agatha. mischief.

reity great and restrict think you misjudge him this time, at east," said Lord Croft. "There are no nice but looking very wise to make up for it. "According to that," she said, "a king would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be the most wicked of men, and a "would be most wicked of men, and "would be most wicked of men, and "would be most wicked of men, and "would be men least," said Lord Croft. girls visiting in our neighborhood; at least, none that we knew of.

They never thought of the doctor's daughter, the girl whom everyone called the both had seen her, but in both their minds she was set apart from the rest of the world by the beautiful charity of her life.

"He is staying so much longer than he intended," continued Lady Croft. "You know I like him; I think he is one of the handsomest and most courteous of

"Stories about people never are true," said is lerdship, calmly. "Do not trouble about his lordship, calmly. bounds; and yet she knew nothing of what it Emily; I should know if anything was

wrong."
"I should like to know where those flowers go," said her ladyship, plaintively. Afterward she knew.

Another conversation took place that same day. The rector, Doctor Ruthven, had gone to his garden, where every day he reviewed his standard roses and carnations; his wife, Lady Anne, followed him.
"Francis," she said, "I am not quite happy

in my mind this morning."

She was a good-hearted, generous, kindly weman, with broad views and sympathies busy, rather fassy and effusive, but genuine to the very core of her heart. Doctor Ruthven was so well accustomed to her little eccentricities, that nothing she said ever surprised or ruffled him.

"Francis," she repeated, in a louder tone of voice, "do you hear what I say?" "I beg pardon, my dear," said the rector "This is the rose I took such pains to in-

graft, and I am afraid it is dying. What is the matter—your mind, did you say?"
"Yes," replied her ladyship, "I said my mind. I am not quite casy or happy in my mind, and I want to speak to you about it. I went into Whitecroft yesterday, and passing the end of the great cathedral avenue, I saw-what do you think I

saw, Francis?" "Only Heaven knows, my love," said the rector, piously and patiently.

"A sight," she continued, "that made me very anxious; Agatha Brooke, looking

sign? He had lavished, as he considered, fair and angelic, as she always does, in earnest convertation with Sir Vano Carlyon. though anxious not quite to overwhelm him. "Oh, Francis," cried Lady Anne, "when will you give more attention to such matters?

handsome young fellow with the dark eyes; of course I remember him. That reminds me that he has called here two or three times, and we have been from home, must ask the whole Abbey party to dinner. Why was he with Agatha Brooke?"

"That is what I want to find out," said Ludy Croft. "Agatha, to my mind, is the sweetest and most beautiful girl I ever knew, and the best. She is as simple and innocent as the daises that grow in the field; she has no mother, and her father, good manes he is, never comes out of the clouds. I feel that I am in some way responsible for the beautiful, motherless girl. Francis, I am quite sure, from the way in which he looked

at her, that he was making love to her." "Making love to her!" repeated the rector. "My dear Anne, it is impossible."
"My dear Francis, it is true," she replied. "Now, what does it meen? He cannot think of marrying her, and if he is only seeking a little flightning and a her life must not be shadowed by a light like that. Agatha Brooke is different to most

thing else about her. Do you think I had better speak to her?' "I should do it very cautiously, Anne. There may be nothing at all in it, and you may suggest ideas that would otherwise

never have occurred to her. "I will be careful enough," said her ladyship, "but I shall certainly do it. What a sad thing it is when a girl loses her mother !"

Another little event happened that same day. Sir Vane could not tear himself away. He walked home as far as the cottage gate, where he stood so long and looked so lovingly at the exquisite droop-

What was this handsome man-looking, as she thought, like a young prince-talking to her young mistress about? Surely this was the same man who had called so often, and Joan's eves were suddenly opened.

"What have we all been thinking about?" she said to herself. "Great heavens! what is master doing?" For Joan, who in early life had been disap-pointed by a faithless butcher, believed that all men were like ravenous wolves, and that one should come near this household treasure was not to be thought of.

"The mischief is done," thought Joan to herself, with a deep groan, as she watched Agatha enter the house, the lovely face blushing with the sweet shame of her love, the eyes down-dropped, the red lips parted in a

tender, dreamy smile.
"That is just how I looked when John left me," she said to herself. "She does not know where she is going, that is quite sure, she who has never had another thought except for the church and the poor. I must tell her, she has no mother of her own."

Yet, when an hour afterward she went into the pretty sitting room under the pretense of talking about the gathering of fruit, she was quite at a loss how to begin. The girl before her, with her fair, pure face, and

anything like flirtation, the old servant was at a loss. It was like warning an angel against earth.

What is it, Joan ?" asked Agatha, finding that the old servant stood still with an ex pression of great uncertainty on her face, What is it?"

"I want to ask you, honey, who it was talking to you at the gate?"
"This morning, do you mean?" asked

Agaths.
Yes, this morning, and he stood there so have gate nost himself," long he might have been a gate-post himself, replied Joan.

But she was relieved even before the an swer came; the face into which she gazed so flush nor smile, as Agatha answered: "That gentleman is one of my father's

patients-he is Sir Vane Carlyon, the only nobleman on our books, Joan." "A nobleman, is he, honey? Ah, take care, take care. Men are bad enough—but noblemen——" and the upraised hands

"Bad! How do you mean, Joan?" asked

butcher can be so deceitful what might a nobleman be ?"

"But, Joan, do you think a man's crimes, or sins, or follies rise with his position?

"There is something in that, dear," said angel of the poor; both had heard of her, Joan. "But you take care, Miss Agatha; do not believe a word he says-and ask him what he means-and do not let him speak to you.'

After which contradictory directions, Joan looked very triumphant, but decidedly vague. "What must I take care of, Joan?" asked

Agatha, gently. "Why must I never believe Sir Vane?" Joan replied, with a mournful gesture, "I always look upon non as wolves, Miss Agatha, seeking the lumbs; ah, you may laugh, honey, but it is true-you are a lamb-and a precious one, too; take care how they seek

"No one seeks me, Jean," she replied, laughing merrily at the idea. She did not know that she loved this young man with all her heart, and that he

had been seeking her all these weeks past. CHAPTER VII.

WARNING VOICES.

Agatha Brooke steed by the open window in the pretty sitting-room rending a note. It puzzied her greatly-Lady note. It Anne Ruthven wanted to speak to her, and would be glad to see her that day, if the could, Agatha decided upon going at once; the vicarage was not far distant from the doctor's pretty home. In a short time she found herself with Lady Anne, who received her with her usual kindness and fuss.

"My dear," she said, "I cent for you because I want to speak to you on a very important little matter. Will you come into the garden with me? I do not wish anyone to know what I am saying, and no one can ever be sure in four walls, for walls have ears."

Wondering from what this great desire of scorecy arose, Agatha followed Lady Anne, and walked with her down a broad path that was shaded with fruit trees, and bordered by

weet, old-fashioned flowers.
"You have no mother, my dear," began her ladvshin: "therefore I have sent for "And who, my dear, is Sir Vane Carlyon?" you to talk to you myself. Now, tell me asked the rector, for his wife had paused, as quite frankly who was that gentleman talk you to talk to you myself. Now, tell me ing to you in the lane the other merning, and what was he talking about?"

"He is Sir Vane Carlyon, one of my You must remember having met Sir Vano father's patients, and we were talking about two or three times sately at Croft Abbey."

"What!" cried out the rector, "that An expression of great relief came over

Lady Ann's face.
"That is it," she said. "I could not imagine how you came to know him so well." But Agatha was too truthful to let an eyasion pass. She told Lady Anne all about the church door and the music ; and the rector's wife, who knew something of the world, declared to herself that he had purposely injured his finger-there could not be the least

doubt of it. He was most certainly seeking the girl, although she was entirely unconscious of it. Lady Anne felt that she must interfere, she must speak out. Yet, like Joan, she was awed by the girl's pure, sweet face and child

like inuocence.
"My dear," she said, slowly, "it is a sad pity that your mother is not living just now. "Why just now more than at any other

time?" asked Agatha. "Because you need her more, But I will say for her what I believe she would have said-you must be careful; you should not talk to gentlemen; above all, to one who is a

perfect stranger." "He has been very kind to me," said Agatha, "and he has taught me a great deal that I did not know." Lady Anne looked up quickly; there was

nothing but bright, fair innocence in that exquisite face. A handsome young man is not the best teacher you can have, Agatha. What has he

taught you?" "A great deal, Lady Anne. I knew so little. "You know enough, my dear, to make your life of use to others, and to get to

heaven." "I know more of heaven now," she answered, with unconscious warmth. "An earthly heaven, I fear," said the elder lady; but the girl by her side did not even know what an earthly heaven was. She saw that Agatha had not the faintest suspicion of

what she meant. She went on, gravely : "It is always unpleasant to open the eyes of an innocent girl to the evil ways of the world, but I must warn you, Agatha. This young man is evidently one of a class you have never met, with lax notions, in all probability, of right and wrong, and caring only about amusing himself. Let me tell you how such young men do enjoy themselves. They come to a quiet, out-of-theway spot like this, and finding no other mischief ready to hand, they amuse themselves cy flirting with the nicest girl they can find, and then leave her to break her heart. They think no more of such things than a mower does of cutting the grass. The girl may be warned, but she never listens to the warning. She may be cautioned, but she always thinks herself wiser than others. She gives away her heart and her love; they amuse the young man very much for a few weeks; then he goes away and forgets her name. I have known many instances of it-forgets even her name." The beautiful face has grown pale,

and there is a shadow of fear in her violet eyes; yet she speaks out bravely what she

( To be continued. )

thinks.