

what those promises are. Will you do so?"

Small fear as to that! Curiosity was motive sufficient, and a forest of ready hands was instantly lifted.

"And afterwards will not some of you, who already bear the mark of CHRIST upon your foreheads, want to join the Confirmation classes with Furniss and Beresford and the others?" she went on. "Confirmation is just like the second part of Baptism, and gives—oh, more blessings than I can tell you, now! GOD the HOLY GHOST comes down upon you and lives in you. Your bodies become His temple, and He will remain with you so long as you try to live as He would have you and to keep alive the flame of love to Him. Fancy these bodies of ours the temples of God!"

There was a pause, such as often came in the midst of those "talks." Palfreyman, the most daring of all the rough audience, broke it.

"I'd ate it," he said honestly. "Thee'rd be no fun then. On'ey church-going and sich soart, ef GOD wor aboot wi' un arl th' while."

"HE is that already, Jim. Do you suppose HE waits to see after you until you go and look round to find HIM?"

And thus, once more, she sought to instil into their minds some idea of the great MASTER, to Whom, whether they would or not, they belonged, and so to induce them to become in body and soul the willing instruments of His good pleasure.

O'Hara, accompanied by a tall, rather angular-looking woman of perhaps forty, was standing upon the doorstep as Mary approached the vicarage, his hand upon the bell. Mrs. Jaxon was in time to admit the couple with her own latchkey.

"I always like coffee after my night-school," she explained to the person whom Michael introduced simply with a "Sure it's hersel', ma'am." "Perhaps you will both come and have some too?"

It was ready, according to previous arrangement, in the dining-room; and as she poured out the hot coffee, Mrs. Jaxon tried to draw her guests into some freedom of conversation. But to-night even Michael's tongue seemed tied; and as to the woman, she could hardly be made to utter a word. All observation had therefore to be of the superficial order, notwithstanding which Mary was favourably impressed.

"You have no children, I think?" Mary remarked to her at last. "Would you like, Mrs. Brown" (she had found out her name by this time), "to come up and see my babies? They are asleep, you know."

The hard face lighted up.

"I 'ood that," she said. And as they went upstairs together, she added, "I've allus loved th' little uns."

Ivy and May lay, with rosy faces and even breathing, in their cots, looking pictures of innocent childhood. Their mother gazed down at them with a world of love in her eyes.

"Arn't they sweet?" she whispered. "Oh, I do so pray that the dear Lord will always keep them as pure and unspotted from the world in soul and body as they are now!"

Mrs. Brown put out one finger and touched little May's white arm as it rested on the quilt. Then she turned and looked at Mary, a very frank, straightforward expression in her eyes.

"O' coorse, I knaws aboot O'Hara bringing me here," she said. "And I wanted to tell yow, Mrs. Jaxon, I'm main and sorry fur 'is bairns. 'E's not oop t' mooch. Still I'd tak' 'im and do the best I could joost fur them. And may 'appin I might manage 'im too."

After which breaking through of reserve Mary's first idea deepened. Before they rejoined O'Hara she felt tolerably certain that if anybody were fitted for the difficult post he had to offer it was certainly this strong, self-reliant, north-countrywoman. And when, ten minutes later, as she was bidding the odd pair farewell, Michael gave his chosen a nudge, as a hint to hasten her departure and leave him behind, Mrs. Jaxon's advice was ready.

"If she accepts you, Michael, you'll be a lucky man," she told him. Thereby sending him away in a state of great contentment.

Nothing fresh arising to postpone the Baptism, it was in the course of the next evening that Mrs. Jaxon experienced one of the deepest joys of her life. She stood with the lads whom she had been enabled to lead thither, beside the font, gave the Christian names of each to her husband, and watched the glittering drops of water descend and the cross traced upon six young brows thus marked with Christ's sign. Her heart was very full as she walked home with Walter afterwards.

(To be continued.)