

door; I'll bring your box by-and-by."

Ruth did as she was told, and shivered as she entered a big, grey stone kitchen, dirty and untidy. A few embers were still alight in the huge kitchen range, an overturned kettle lay on the fender, and a stream of water had spread itself over the stone floor.

"How miserable, and how different from my dear little kitchen at the Vicarage!" thought Ruth, and then she tried to put away the home-sick longing for her old surroundings which beset her. "I'll try to make it look better to-morrow," she said; "but I wonder where I ought to go to find any one?"

Footsteps were now heard, and a door flew open.

"Are you the new maid?" asked a voice. "How was it I didn't hear Abraham drive up? And I've been waiting and expecting you for so long. I'm so glad you have come; we want some tea; I tried to get it myself, but when I had filled the kettle, and was lifting it up to put on the fire, I dropped it, so the fire went out and we couldn't have tea. It always makes mother cross if she doesn't get her tea, so look out for squalls, and come along."

Ruth followed the voice, for she could only dimly discern the child's figure in the dark kitchen. They crossed a big hall, also of stone, and entered a large room, which might have been comfortable if it had been tidy; the remains of dinner still covered one end of the big table, and everywhere was confusion and untidiness. A lady sat buried in the depths of an old armchair near the fire, wrapped in a shawl, reading by the light of a candle placed on a little table near. "Here's the new servant, mother," said the little girl.

The lady turned. "I am glad you have come at last. How is it that you are so late? I am starving. That," waving her hand to the remains of food on the table, "is all

I have had for dinner, and I can get no tea; but no one cares how I suffer. What can you do. Can you cook?"

"Yes, ma'am; I can cook and do all kinds of housework. I will do my best to please you," answered Ruth.

"You all tell the same tale at first," answered Mrs. Atherfield. "Now get me some tea at once—do you hear?—at once; I am famishing."

"I'll come with you," said Stella; "you won't know your way."

Ruth was glad that the child accompanied her, and, with her guidance as to where to find fuel, the kitchen fire was soon kindled, the fallen kettle refilled, and placed on the fire. Then the dining-room table was cleared, the fire rearranged, and hearth swept, chairs picked up and put in their places, and the room generally straightened.

"Is there a lamp anywhere?" Ruth asked of Stella, for the latter was following her about plying her with questions, and evidently enjoying her company.

"Oh yes, lots; we've used them all till we can't use them again. You'll find one lying out on the garden path if you look. Dad threw it out of the window. Oh, how cross he was; and how he talked at it because it would smoke and smell! If you can make our lamps burn you will be clever, Ruth; none of the other servants could."

Upon examination Ruth found that, for the present at least, the lamps were beyond her powers. "They are all so dirty!" she exclaimed in disgust; "that is why they will not burn; but they are beautiful lamps. To-morrow I shall put some of them in order. Now I will find another candle to take in and put on the tea table."

"You can't do that," said Stella; "that is the last that mother's got in the dining-room. Oh, you'll get used to this sort of thing," she went on, noticing Ruth's look. "Sometimes we haven't got candles at all, and then