

Kate's Religion.

BY SUSAN H. WIXON.

KATE, a bright, intelligent girl of fifteen, after three weeks of "seriousness," had made a public profession of religion. At the time of which I write she had just returned from an afternoon prayer meeting in a particularly holy frame of mind, and felt that she was about as good a Christian girl as you could find anywhere about.

After tea her mother requested her to wash the dishes, a work that Kate looked upon with disdain, and just at this time it did not at all accord with her devout spirit.

"Dishes! Wash the dishes! Me!" she said, in a tone of contempt.

"Certainly," said her mother. "I am very tired, and you have had a good deal of leisure of late. It will assist me somewhat if you will attend to the dishes while I prepare the bread for rising."

Kate, I am sorry to say, had an infirmity of temper not easily controlled, and though it did not break out at this particular time, it announced its presence by a low and significant mutter, a defiant toss and twirl of her head and stamping of her two small feet. The expression of her face was not angelic as she poured the dish-water. She went through the process of washing and wiping the dishes in silence, and as she was carrying them to the pantry, the cat being in her path, she gave the innocent animal a kick that sent him to the other side of the room, and her hands slipping, down went three cups, the same number of saucers and all the plates ker smash.

"Bang!" said Rosa Hopkins, entering at that moment, and espying the catastrophe she whistled a long, low whistle.

Rosa was what is called a "worldly-minded" person, good-natured and obliging, but with one great fault; as her mother declared, she would whistle. Rosa said it was natural for her to whistle, that like the boy in school, "it whistled itself!"

Kate could not produce the shadow of a whistle, and had no admiration for the accomplishment in Rosa.

"What's up?" inquired Rosa.

Kate picked up the broken crockery, but did not deign to answer the question. Instead, she remarked, as she had often done before,

"Whistling girls and crowing hens
Always come to some bad end."

"Now, Kate," said Rosa, "you can't scare me with any such old gossip as that. I say and maintain that

'Whistling girls and hens that crow
Take their comfort as they go.'

"There may not be much elegance about the couplet, but there is a truth about it that cannot be

gainsaid or denied. However, to pass to something else, I called to see if you would like to go to the spelling match tonight at the Town Hall and see me bear off the prize of the champion speller. Will you go?"

"No, I thank you; our regular evening meeting is tonight, and if I go anywhere I shall go there."

"Very well, then I'll go down and get Louise Arundel to go. Let me have a drink of water first, though. As Rip Van Winkle says in the play, 'Here's to your good health, you and your fam'lies. May you live long and prosper!' Good evening to you."

"Good evening, Rosa; hope you'll have a pleasant time tonight. Come again soon, do, when you can stay longer."

As the door closed on Rosa Hopkins, Kate said, "There, I'm glad that hateful, good-for-nothing whistling girl has gone. I hope she will not come here again very soon!"

"Why, Kate!" said her mother, "I am surprised at your want of truthfulness. To talk thus, after inviting Rosa to call again so cordially. I hope my child is not learning to be a hypocrite."

"Guess if I am," said Kate, spitefully, "I shall not be obliged to go far from home to take a lesson!"

Her mother made no reply to this rude speech, and Kate, feeling very uncomfortable, thought she would go up to her room and pray for a better heart. As she knelt beside her bed and lifted her voice in prayer for a better state of mind and feeling, a sweet hush seemed to fall upon her, but in the midst of her prayer her mother called to her and said, "Kate, my dear, if you are not particularly engaged, I wish you would help me a little with the sewing, that is, if you have not decided to go out this evening. Here are a couple of sheets that must be turned, and if you will do that, while I do the mending for the week, we shall get along nicely."

Now, of all things Kate disliked to "turn sheets," but her mother was an economical woman, and when the sheets were worn in the center, she always turned them in order to get the greatest possible amount of wear out of them.

"There," said Kate, jumping to her feet, it's always so! I can't so much as pray in peace now, but I must be disturbed at my devotions"; and she screamed at the top of her voice, "I'm going to the meeting. So, there!"

And she went to meeting and spoke, it was said, "Oh! so beautifully, that all hearts were melted who listened to her."

Two or three days afterward she had engaged to go out and solicit subscriptions for the Young Men's Christian Association in aid of a prospective fair; but the weather

was cloudy and forboding, and just as she was about to start out the rain began to fall quite heavily.

"Look at that now!" said she. "It's real mean to rain when I want to go out," and jerking off her hat she threw it across the room, and commenced stamping about in ungovernable rage.

"What's the matter now?" inquired Rosa Hopkins, who came running in to get out of the rain, her face radiant with health and exercise.

"Oh! I'm mad, and don't know who to be mad at!" said Kate.

Rosa gave one of her prolonged whistles.

"If you are disappointed in not going out on account of the rain, I guess you'll have to be mad at the elements, if that will do you any good; but you need not think they will care, for they won't—they just sweep right on unmindful of our smiles of satisfaction or frowns of anger. But where were you going? For anything important? If so, put on your waterproof and rubbers and go on."

"I was going out on a religious enterprise," said Kate.

"Never mind, then, that can probably wait," said Rosa. "Now, Kate," she continued, "just you look here, and let me tell you something confidentially. Your religion isn't worth two cents! When you have learned to control that abominable temper of yours properly you'll begin to get religion, and not before."

"Don't talk to me, Rosa Hopkins! You'd better be trying to save your soul!" was Kate's rejoinder.

"Soul! How do you know I have one? How does anybody know he has one? What is it like? These are pertinent questions, that I, for one, should like to have answered. To have a thing implies a separate entity, if I may so speak, that can be described, located, bounded, dissected, its use shown, as the heart, liver, organs of hearing, seeing; the hand, its mechanism, and so on. You are like a good many others, Kate, who talk volubly about something they know nothing whatever about. Now, what on earth is the use of talking and fretting about a matter of which we know absolutely nothing? Look at this lovely rose, analyze its sweet fragrance and tell me whence it came and whither it goeth. I tell you, when we have learned what there is to know in this world, and especially whether we have a soul or not, then will be time enough to talk of saving the soul. How do you know but I may be like an Undine, soulless? or, if I possess such an appendage, or it possesses me, from what am I to save it? Pray tell me."

"One of these days you'll die!" said Kate, solemnly.

"Shouldn't wonder! 'All flesh is

grass,' and I do not think that mine is any exception. Please tell me something new. You'll die, too, I suppose. In fact, all of us are dying already."

"Wh-at!" said Kate, with staring eyeballs.

"Why, see here, my Christian friend, you jammed your thumb and have lost the nail. That nail was a part of your living body, and it is dead and gone, is it not? Did you want to save the horrid black thing? You know, in school, when we went through with our physiology, we learned that particles of our bodies are constantly passing off and being replaced by new atoms. I suppose our faculties are just as surely being renewed as our bodies. Somehow, I can't think of them as existing separately from our bodies, or our bodies existing without them. If you knew I was going to a house where there was danger of my taking the smallpox, you wouldn't tell me to keep away and save my soul, would you? But you would advise me to keep out of danger and save my body. I don't know much about souls, myself, never having seen one, but there is considerable to know about these tangible bodies of ours."

"But you ought to follow the 'Divine Law,'" said Kate, seriously.

"Goodness gracious, Kate! What do you know, or anybody else, about Divine Laws? You've got the greatest mess of nonsense in your head! You talk about Divine Law, and you get as mad as fire at everything that does not suit. I may not be very bright, but I frankly and honestly confess that I cannot comprehend anything but natural law. When I get to be divine, whatever that may be, perhaps I shall understand what you mean by Divine Law."

"You ought to try and fit yourself for another world, Rosa."

"Another world? Dear, dear! It is as much as I, you, or anybody else can do to get in trim for this world. I did not fit myself for this one, and I don't think there is any need to make special preparations for any other world, particularly as we cannot know what will be required of us if we ever find ourselves there. I cannot conceive of what I might have to do in another world any more than I knew beforehand what I should have to do in this world. Now, Kate, confidentially, between you and Rosa Hopkins and the gate-post, what does any living being know, actually know, about the climate, business, occupation, people, and so forth and so on, of any other hemisphere or sphere than this little globe on which we stay? The astronomers tell us a little about the worlds overhead, but they don't say we shall go there to live by and by. It seems to me, Kate, that if we live properly in