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CURATE'S HOME; PP. 1-95**

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THE CURATE'S HOME BY AGNES GIBERNE.

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CURATE'S HOME.

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LEIPZIG  
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1882

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CUR:

TO THE  
BELOVED MEMORY OF HELEN,

THESE PAGES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE  
TO THE SECOND (LONDON) EDITION.

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THE question has been frequently asked me, whether the picture contained in the following pages is one of pure fancy, or whether it is copied in any degree from real life. On the publication of a second edition, I feel bound to give a plain answer to this question. The picture is no mere fancy sketch. The privations, great and small, endured by the Lyster family, are matters not of imagination, but of simple fact.

Instances might be multiplied in support of this assertion. This, however, I feel to be unnecessary. Particulars may be easily obtained by those who desire to know more. I would merely mention that, from well-established statistics, it is found that there are no less than five thousand curates, in the Church of England and Wales, with incomes under eighty pounds per annum; and five thousand beneficed clergymen, with incomes under one hundred and fifty pounds per

annum. In a large proportion of these cases, there is little or no private property.

Few, after this, will assert that the picture is an impossible or an exaggerated one. I can only say that it might, with perfect truth, have been drawn in far darker and more gloomy colours.

MANCHESTER  
OF NEW YORK.

## THE CURATE'S HOME.

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### CHAPTER I.

"Seam and gusset and band,  
Band and gusset and seam."

T. HOOD.

"Oh, 'tis hard, 'tis hard to be working,  
The whole of the live-long day."

MANCHESTER SONG.

"ELSIE, will you pass me the black cotton? Mamma, I think the basket has scarcely ever before been so full as it is this week."

The speaker was a pretty girl of about eighteen. It was a hot July day, and the rays of the sun beat warmly in upon the parlour of the Rev. Frederick Lyster's house. The room was a very small one, and shabbily furnished. The worn faded carpet barely sufficed to cover the floor, and was mended and patched in every direction. The chairs were of cane, and the cushioned seats were covered with a chintz which had once rejoiced in a bright rose-bud pattern; but all colour, beyond a faint pervading pinkish hue, varied here and there by a feeble tinge of green, had been long since washed out. The coarse dark wintry cur-