

**A
MOTHER'S TRIAL**

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A Mother's Trial by Emily Charlotte M. Ponsonby

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EMILY CHARLOTTE M. PONSONBY

**A
MOTHER'S TRIAL**



THE COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

A MOTHER'S TRIAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE," "THE YOUNG LORD,"

"THE TWO BROTHERS," ETC.



"For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore, also, I have sent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall belong to the Lord."

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1859.

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A MOTHER'S TRIAL.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

ABOUT thirty years ago, I made some excursions throughout the rural districts of England, for the purpose of studying the architecture of the parish churches. It was at a time when attention, which too long had slept, was beginning to be excited on the question of architecture in general, and

the rules of Gothic building to be reduced to something of a science. I belonged to a society which considered the question with interest, and my tour was made in compliance with its request.

My visits to the parish churches usually took place on Sundays, for the purpose of satisfying at the same time a curiosity which also possessed me regarding the average intellect and cultivation of the clergy of England. I have sometimes heard as many as five discourses in one day — not, I fear, always to my profit; but in the days of which I speak, that consideration was not the first that presented itself to my mind.

One Sunday morning I set forth

early from a little town where I had slept, trusting, as usual, to chance to direct my steps. I was soon invited from the track I was pursuing by the sound of a "church-going bell." It was a still, clear morning, and sound travelled far, and I was forced to cross several meadows and a rough bit of heath, and finally to climb a short but steep hill before I discovered the object of my search. It was suddenly, as I set my foot on the summit of the hill, that I found myself in one of the loveliest of the many lovely nooks and corners of old England.

I am not fond of descriptions; they usually leave the reader as much in the dark as to what he is to see as

if he had not read them; but I must try and describe this spot. It was peculiar. On the summit of the hill or bank I had climbed was a flat piece of table-land, on which the church was built. Almost immediately the land sloped again into a ravine, then sloped upwards to a precisely similar table-land on the opposite side.

On this opposite summit stood the parsonage, surrounded with large trees, except towards the south, that is, towards the church. It was the prettiest, sunniest, most picturesque parsonage I ever had seen. The slope beneath the parsonage was laid out in terrace gardens on a very small scale. The slope beneath the church was the