

**AGATHA
AND AGNES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649394685

Agatha and Agnes by Anonymous

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ANONYMOUS

**AGATHA
AND AGNES**

AGATHA AND AGNES.

Palmer

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle."—1 Cor. xiv. 8.—*Motto of the "Tracts for the Times."*



LONDON:
G. J. PALMER, 32, LITTLE QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.
1868.

250. t. 389.

AGATHA AND AGNES.



CHAPTER I.

So should Thy champions, ere the strife,
By holy hands o'ershadowed kneel,
So, fearless for their charmed life,
Bear, to the end, Thy Spirit's seal.

And oft as sin and sorrow tire,
The hallowed hour do Thou renew,
When beckoned up the awful choir
By pastoral hands, toward Thee we drew.

For ever on our souls be trac'd
That blessing dear, that dove-like hand,
A sheltering rock in memory's waste,
O'ershadowing all the weary land.

KEBLE.

Two girls are seated under a spreading tree in the garden of a convent in Paris, where they are at school. Both are English, but one is a member of the English Church, the other of the Roman. Tomorrow the elder of the two, Agatha, is to leave the walls of the convent and return to England, to a new and untried home, to live with an uncle and aunt whom she has not seen since she was quite a little child. She had early been left an orphan, and after

the death of her parents had lived with a sister of her mother's, but this aunt, who was to Agatha as a loving mother, died when her niece was between thirteen and fourteen years of age. Agatha had always been a thoughtful and grave child, wise beyond her years; and this disposition had been turned to good account by her kind relative, so it came to pass that, before that loving and gentle aunt was taken away, her teaching and example had had an influence on Agatha's character which time had failed to efface. It was always Mrs. De Grey's wish and prayer that she might live until her niece and godchild was confirmed, and though weak and at times suffering much, her desire was fulfilled. The remembrance of her confirmation was always one of delight and holy joy to Agatha, and one which often cheered and helped her when she was inclined to despond—that day, when kneeling before the Holy Altar clothed in pure white, the symbol of the pure in heart, the Bishop's hands were laid on her, and the great Gift thus given to her to strengthen her for the strife. As she knelt there, how earnest were the prayers offered for her by her god-mother and by the holy man her spiritual father, the priest of the church in which the confirmation was held. And must not the scene have raised the thoughts of all present to the "Heavenly Jerusalem" which the Beloved Disciple saw! The church itself was one of England's old country churches, and all that loving care and munificence could do had been done to restore it to its ancient beauty and glory. And

beautiful indeed was the chancel into which the sun now streamed in subdued rays through the storied windows, as if veiling its brightness before those lights on the altar typifying the "Light of the World," and reminding all of the holy Incarnation. Yes! hardened indeed must have been the heart which remained unmoved that day while the clouds of incense, typical of the prayers of the saints, veiled the white-vested altar, and while the voices of all those who had now been sealed with the Holy Spirit rose in praise and thanksgiving. Well Agatha remembered each circumstance of that day, and the apostolic counsel and benediction given. Well did she recall how he who had been her spiritual guide from her very childhood, who before she had received the sacrament of Confirmation had absolved her from her sins, met her with words of blessing and encouragement, giving her a new book of devotions for the Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice, at which for the future she might not only assist as heretofore, but of which she might actually partake for the "strengthening and refreshing of her soul."

But now, after this digression, let us return to the convent garden where Agatha Aylward and Agnes De Grey are still seated hand in hand. This hour is very sad for both of them, because strong is the tie of affection that binds them. Agatha is now nineteen and Agnes three years younger, and as they differ in appearance so do they in character. Agatha, tall, slight, dark hair, fair pale complexion, dark grey eyes full of expression, strongly-marked features, but withal

a sweet calm expression. Agnes, rather smaller, very slight, and such a head and face as one might well take for a model for the picture of an angel. Golden hair, soft blue eyes, a delicate complexion, eyebrows and eyelashes dark, and a perfectly-shaped head; fitting indeed was the name Agnes for her, and hearing her name and seeing her face one could scarcely help thinking of the virgin martyr whose name she bore. And in addition to beauty and delicacy of feature and colouring, the expression of her face was uncommon, and such as might well befit a saint. A wrapt, earnest look as of one dwelling in a higher world of heavenly thoughts was the most striking peculiarity of her child-like face—child-like, and yet with wisdom in it. Agnes's greatest wish was to remain in the peaceful convent all her life, and to be a Sister of Charity. Such was also her mother's cherished desire for her darling. The convent had been Agnes's chief home as long as she could remember. Her father, Colonel De Grey, having an appointment first in India and then in America, he and his wife had made up their minds to leave their only two children in Europe; their eldest, a boy older by some years than his sister, at school in England, their little Agnes in charge of an old and valued friend of Mrs. De Grey's, a Sister in the convent where our scene is laid. From time to time they had come to Europe and had their children with them, and great was Mrs. De Grey's delight to discover that life in the convent was her little Agnes's ideal of happiness. Then very suddenly came the

knowledge that her boy Hugo was bent upon entering the priesthood, and that in no uncertain way, but with a firmly fixed determination. This was a blow to Colonel De Grey, who, although a good and loyal Churchman, could not at first bear the thought of losing his only son, for of course so far as companionship went he would in such a case be lost to him.

Never did Mrs. De Grey venture to talk to her husband now of her wish ever since her little girl had been born that she should embrace the religious life. Since Hugo had declared his resolution to seek the priesthood the mother had ceased to touch upon the subject; before that she and her husband had often talked of their pearl and the little "*vouée au blanc*," but now silence on both sides was maintained, for the idea of giving up his other child also, even to the holiest life, was painful to Colonel De Grey.

Agatha's aunt was a relative of Colonel De Grey's, and in girlhood she and his wife had been much together, and the friendship had never been given up. Colonel and Mrs. De Grey were in England at the time of the death of Agatha's aunt, and when by her side at the very last Mrs. De Grey promised to take Agatha to Paris to the convent school where her little Agnes was a boarder.

Years have passed since then, and Agatha's uncle, her guardian, is coming to Paris, and she is to return with him to England. The loss of Agatha is to Agnes a sore and grievous trial, and in Agatha's inmost heart is the fervent wish that she also might never have