



Anne Brontë
Agnes Grey

edition : **divibib**

Through all our troubles, I never but once heard my mother complain of our want of money. As summer was coming on she observed to Mary and me, 'What a desirable thing it would be for your papa to spend a few weeks at a watering-place. I am convinced the sea-air and the change of scene would be of incalculable service to him. But then, you see, there's no money,' she added, with a sigh. We both wished exceedingly that the thing might be done, and lamented greatly that it could not. 'Well, well!' said she, 'it's no use complaining. Possibly something might be done to further the project after all. Mary, you are a beautiful drawer. What do you say to doing a few more pictures in your best style, and getting them framed, with the water-coloured drawings you have already

done, and trying to dispose of them to some liberal picture-dealer, who has the sense to discern their merits?’

‘Mamma, I should be delighted if you think they *could* be sold; and for anything worth while.’

‘It’s worth while trying, however, my dear: do you procure the drawings, and I’ll endeavour to find a purchaser.’

‘I wish *I* could do something,’ said I.

‘You, Agnes! well, who knows? You draw pretty well, too: if you choose some simple piece for your subject, I daresay you will be able to produce something we shall all be proud to exhibit.’

‘But I have another scheme in my head, mamma, and have had long, only I did not like to mention it.’

‘Indeed! pray tell us what it is.’

‘I should like to be a governess.’

My mother uttered an exclamation of surprise, and laughed. My sister dropped her work in astonishment, exclaiming, ‘*You* a governess, Agnes! What can you be dreaming of?’

‘Well! I don’t see anything so *very* extraordinary in it. I do not pretend to be able to instruct great girls; but surely I could teach little ones: and I should like it so much: I am so fond of children. Do let me, mamma!’

‘But, my love, you have not learned to take care of *yourself* yet: and young children require more judgment and experience to manage than elder ones.’

‘But, mamma, I am above eighteen, and quite able to take care of myself, and others too. You do not know half the wisdom and prudence I possess, because I have never been tried.’

‘Only think,’ said Mary, ‘what would you do in a house full of strangers, without me or mamma to speak and act for you—with a parcel of children, besides yourself, to attend to; and no one to look to for advice? You would not even know what clothes to put on.’

‘You think, because I always do as you bid

me, I have no judgment of my own: but only try me—that is all I ask—and you shall see what I can do.’

At that moment my father entered and the subject of our discussion was explained to him.

‘What, my little Agnes a governess!’ cried he, and, in spite of his dejection, he laughed at the idea.

‘Yes, papa, don’t *you* say anything against it: I should like it so much; and I am sure I could manage delightfully.’

‘But, my darling, we could not spare you.’ And a tear glistened in his eye as he added—‘No, no! afflicted as we are, surely we are not brought to that pass yet.’