

FICTION

Martha Finley

Ella Clinton

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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"She suddenly perceived a dog at her dinner-basket." p. 13.

ELLA CLINTON,

OR

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM.

BY

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ELLA CLINTON
OR
"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM."

CHAPTER I.

"ELLA, you are the most provoking child that ever was born. You can never let a thing alone, but must have your fingers in everything. You've no more idea of neatness than old Tabby; no, nor half so much. You come in from school, and bonnet goes here, and book there. It's no use to talk to you, and one might run after you all day, and then couldn't keep the house to rights. I declare, you're enough to try the patience of Job!" So saying, Aunt Prudence set herself energetically to work, to put to rights the work-basket which poor Ella had most unfortunately disarranged. "I should like to know," she continued, "what children were ever made for. I'm sure they're nothing but bother and trouble, from week's end to week's end."

Poor Ella darted up stairs to her own room, and throwing herself upon the bed, burst into a fit of passionate weeping.

"I hate Aunt Prudence! I hate her, so I do! She's always scolding and slapping me. I wish *she* was dead instead of mother. O mother, mother! why, O why, did you die and leave me? I can't be good without you. I do try to be good, but Aunt Prudence always makes me naughty. I can't help hating her when she's so cross. O mother, mother! come back, come back!"

Poor little Ella was an orphan; though she could remember a time when she had had a kind father and mother who loved her dearly, and tried to teach her to do what was right; but her father had been lost at sea, and her mother, who had never seemed well after she had heard of the loss of the vessel, had now been lying for nearly a year in the graveyard of the little town where Aunt Prudence and Ella lived. Ella was naturally a very warm-hearted, affectionate child, but careless, thoughtless and meddlesome; faults which, to Aunt Prudence, with her precise ways and strict notions of propriety and neatness, seemed most inexcusable. She really loved the desolate child who had been left to her care, but she had her own way of showing it. She was careful to provide the little girl with all that she considered necessary for her comfort, and, as she said, took a great deal of pains to teach her habits of neatness and order; but Ella, even more than most children, needed "line upon line, and precept upon precept," and her aunt's patience was apt to be soon exhausted. Ella's mother had always taken a great deal of pains to correct her faults, but she was very patient; always talked with her about the folly and wickedness of her behaviour, and tried to make her see the reasonableness of her requirements; and when she punished her, she did it in such a way as to convince the child that it was done for her good, and not because her mother was in a passion. But now, when Ella tore her frock, meddled with what did not belong to her, or what she had been told not to touch, left her things lying about the room, or did anything else that was naughty, Aunt Prudence would scold her in loud, angry tones, calling her "the most provoking, troublesome child that ever was born," or perhaps box her ears, and send her out of the room. When her mother punished her, Ella had always felt sorry for her faults, and determined to try to do better, but Aunt Prudence's angry, impatient way was apt to rouse her naturally quick temper, and sometimes she flew into a passion, which only served to convince her aunt that she really was a very wicked child.

Then when Ella, her passion over, would come full of penitence to her aunt's side, to put her arms round her neck, as she used to do to her mother, and say how sorry she was, aunt Prudence would push her from her, saying, "Go away, Ella, I don't want such a wicked little girl near me. You're the most ungrateful child that ever I saw. If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have a roof to cover your head, nor a bite of victuals to put in your mouth, nor a rag to your back; for your father didn't leave you a dollar, and yet whenever I try to do my duty, and make a good girl of you, you fly into a most dreadful passion. No, just go away out of my sight; I don't want any kisses from such a wicked child!"

Sometimes such treatment would cause a second fit of rage, and sometimes it sent her to her mother's grave, to throw herself upon it and weep as though her heart would break.

We left Ella, this afternoon, crying by herself in her own little room. At first they were all angry tears; but, though a quick-tempered child, her passion never lasted very long. She had been accustomed to go to her mother with all her little troubles, and very bitterly did she feel the loss of that dear friend, when in need of sympathy and kindness. Her present trouble made her long for her mother, and then as her angry feelings subsided, she began to think of that mother's reproofs and instructions. How often had she warned her of the great wickedness of indulging her temper, and entreated her to try to govern it! How often she had talked to her of the kindness of her aunt in taking her, a poor, friendless, penniless child into her house, and providing for her, and of the duty of obeying and trying to please her! Ella could not feel that her aunt was very kind, for she was always scolding and punishing her, but still her conscience told her she had done very wrong, and that she ought to obey and love her aunt, and as she thought of all this, she wept tears of real penitence, and made many resolutions to behave better in future.

"I will tell aunt Prudence I am sorry, and will try never to be so naughty again; just as I used to tell mamma, my own dear mamma," said she to herself.

"Ella!" called out the shrill, sharp voice of her aunt from the foot of the stairs, "Ella, come down here this *minute*, and get your supper. What in the world are you staying up there all this time in the cold for? To catch a cold, and give me

the trouble of nursing you through a spell of sickness, I suppose."

Ella rose and went down into the dining room with the full intention of acknowledging her faults, and asking forgiveness; but aunt Prudence looked so cold and stern, that when she tried to speak, the words seemed to stick in her throat. The meal passed off in almost total silence, and Ella was glad when it was over. Her aunt spoke to her but once, and then it was to scold her for spilling her tea.

Ella cried herself to sleep that night thinking of her mother, and her first thought, on waking next morning, was that she was going to be very good all day, and not make aunt Prudence scold her once. But alas, poor child! she forgot to pray for help to keep her good resolutions. It was late when she waked, and she dressed in great haste lest she should not be ready for breakfast, for which her aunt would certainly have punished her. She said her prayers, it is true, for she had been too well taught to think of omitting them altogether, but she hurried through them with very little thought of what she was saying, so that she really did not pray at all, for "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth," and he will not hear nor answer the prayer which comes from the lips only.

Children, if you wish to be kept from sin, to be enabled to perform the duties of the day in a proper manner, never dare to begin it without sincere prayer to God for his assistance; and Oh! wherever you are, at home, at school, in the street, at your studies, or at your play, remember that the eye of God is upon you, that he notices all your words and actions, and that you will have to give an account to him for all that you do and say, and for the manner in which you perform every duty.

Breakfast over, Ella prepared for school. Taking her satchel of books, and her dinner basket,—for the school was at some distance, and she usually carried her dinner in cold weather,—and bidding her aunt good morning, she set off.

It was the district school which Ella attended, and it was usually taught by a man in the winter and a lady in the summer. Mr. Burton was the name of the present teacher. He was not remarkable for patience, and was sometimes very severe. The school was nearly a quarter of a mile from Ella's home. She walked along briskly enough, until she had gone rather more than half way, but then having reached a pond where the children of the village were in the habit of skating and sliding in their play-hours, she said to herself, "It was only half-past eight when I started; I'm sure I might take time to slide a little while. To be sure Mr. Burton says we must never stop to play by the way, but then I shall only stay a very few minutes, and if I get to school in time, it won't make any difference; so I'll just lay my books and my dinner down on this snow bank, and have a real good slide all by myself."

Time flies very rapidly when children are playing, and while the rest of Mr. Burton's pupils were entering the school-house in answer to the bell, Ella was taking just one more and one more slide across the pond. She was on the side opposite to the one where she had left her books, when she suddenly perceived a dog at her dinner basket. She made all the haste she could, but he was too quick for her, and was off with the contents of the basket before she reached the place. She chased him for a long distance, for she felt quite unwilling to lose her dinner, but at length he was quite out of sight, and she gave it up in despair. All out of breath with running, she returned to the spot where she had left her books, and picking them up, hurried on to school, for she now began to be quite frightened at the thought that it must be long past school time, and thinking to shorten her walk by going across a field, she climbed the fence, but in doing so caught her dress and tore a long slit which she must stop to pin up, and that took her much longer than it would have done to go by the road. She had at last almost reached the school-house, when she was met by two of the scholars who were going for water.

"Has school commenced, girls?" asked Ella.

"Yes! nearly an hour ago, I should think," said Sally Barnes. "How on earth did you come to be so late? You'll catch it, I can tell you; for the master's got the headache this morning, and he's as cross as a bear."

Ella burst into tears. "Oh!" said she, "I just stopped a few minutes to play on the ice, and then a dog ran away with my dinner, and I had to run after him. O dear! what shall I do? I wish I had come straight to school."

"Never mind, Ellie," said Mary Young, who was a very kind-hearted girl, and felt sorry to see her cry, "you can just tell him that your aunt sent you on an errand, and you couldn't get back any sooner."

"But that would be telling a lie, Mary, and I could never do that," replied Ella, for with all her faults she was a perfectly truthful child. "My mother always told me it was a dreadful sin to say what was not true, and when she was dying she told me never, never to tell a lie. Oh no, I wouldn't tell him that to keep him from killing me."

"Oh, let her alone, Mary," said Sally, "if she fancies a whipping, I'm sure she's welcome to it for all I care. But come along or we'll catch it too."

"You had better take my advice, Ellie," said Mary, turning to go.

Ella hung up her bonnet and cloak in the hall, entered the school room, and went to her seat as softly as possible, in hope that the teacher would not notice her. Vain hope!

"Ella Clinton!" he called out in his sternest tones, "come here to me." Trembling with fear she obeyed. "Do you know what time it is, miss?" said he, looking at his watch. "Ten minutes to ten; nearly an hour past school time. Where have you been?"

Poor Ella caught at the desk for support. The room was so still that the ticking of the watch could be distinctly heard.

All were waiting in breathless silence for her answer.

"Speak!" thundered the master, "where have you been?"

"I stopped to slide a little on the ice, and"--

"You did, did you? I'll teach you to do that again. Hold out your hand here. I'll make an example of you. You needn't think you'll escape a flogging because you're a girl," and taking hold of her little tender hand, he brought his heavy ruler down upon it again and again, until the palm was all blistered, and then sent her to her seat without one word of commendation for having told the truth.

"I say, Jim," whispered one boy to another, "that's what folks get for telling the truth."

"What are you whispering about there, sir?" called out the teacher.

"I wasn't whispering; I was just saying, the lesson over to myself."

"Well, sir, keep your eyes on the book when you move your lips, or I shall flog you for whispering."

"I'm not going to be such a fool as to tell on myself just to get a licking," muttered the boy, with his eyes fixed on the book.

Poor Ella! everything seemed to go wrong with her that day. So much time had been lost, and her mind was so taken up with her troubles, that it seemed impossible to learn her lessons, and she failed in every one; for which she was of course punished. She lost her place, and was in disgrace all day. She would have been without her dinner also, if some of her kind-hearted schoolmates had not shared with her. Oh, how long the day seemed! but it was over at last; school was dismissed, and Ella walked slowly and sadly homeward, dreading the moment when aunt Prudence should learn the sad accident which had befallen her dress. She was considering, as she walked along, what would be her wisest course of action, and remembering that her mother had often told her, if she would come and inform her immediately of an accident, without any attempt at concealment or deception, she would not punish her; she thought she would try that plan with her aunt. For once, Ella remembered to put her hood and cloak, her satchel and dinner-basket, in their places. She then entered the sitting-room, where Miss Prudence sat in her easy-chair beside the fire, stitching away industriously as usual. She looked up from her work as Ella opened the door, and exclaimed:--

"Why, Ella Clinton! where have you been, and what have you been about, to get that great, long slit in your dress? Come here to me this instant, and tell me how you tore it."

"I was just climbing a fence, aunt Prudence," sobbed the child, "and it caught and tore."

"Climbing a fence! and what were you doing that for, I'd like to know? Do you think I'm made of money, and have nothing to do with it but to spend it in buying dresses for you to tear up this way? You haven't worn that dress three weeks, and just look at it now; nearly ruined. You're always climbing fences and trees. A perfect tom-boy you are, besides being the most careless, troublesome, ungrateful child I ever laid my eyes on. But I'll see if I can't put a stop to it. You shall just sit down here, and darn that yourself, and do it well too, and not a mouthful of victuals shall you have until it's done; and you deserve a good switching before you go to bed. Now just stop your crying, for I'll not have it."

It was very late before Ella got her supper that night, for darning was a new business to her, the rent was a very long one, aunt Prudence very particular, and she herself, after all the labours and troubles of the day, very weary, and fingers and eyes ached sadly, long before the task was accomplished.

"It's no use to try to be good," sobbed the poor child to herself, as she wet her pillow with her tears. "I did mean to be good to-day, but the more I try, the more I can't. Oh, mother, mother, I can't be good without you! I wish I was dead too, and I do believe aunt Prudence wishes I was. I don't believe she loves me at all, for she never kisses me, nor calls me her dear little girl, like you used to, and she's always scolding me, and calling me bad and troublesome."

Ella did not stop to play on the way, next morning, but went directly to school; nor did she climb fences or trees again for some time, but still she was almost always in disgrace, and continually getting punished, both at home and at school, for there was scarcely a day that she did not fail in one or more of her lessons, or forget or lose something; either her book, pen, pencil or ink.

At last Mr. Burton called upon her aunt to complain of her carelessness and indolence. "I can't help it, Mr. Burton," said aunt Prudence; "I've tried as hard as ever anybody could, to make her orderly and industrious, but I can't do it. She's a very bad child I know, but I can't help it. I'm sure I've done my duty. There's never a day passes over my head,

that I don't give her a scolding or may be a whipping, but it don't seem to do a bit of good; indeed I believe she grows worse instead of better. She's enough to try the patience of Job, as I often tell her, and such an awful temper as she has got! you never saw any thing like it. I used to think she was a tolerably good child while her mother was living, but there's no doing any thing with her lately. The more I scold and punish her, the worse she seems to grow: I don't see that she'll ever be good for any thing, but there's one comfort, I've done my duty by her."

It was very true; Ella *was* growing worse and worse. She made many resolutions to do better, but try as hard as she might, aunt Prudence never seemed to notice it; never gave her a word of praise or encouragement, and always found something to scold her for, and so the poor child grew discouraged, and gave up trying. "It's no use to try to be good, and please aunt Prudence," she would say to herself, "for she always scolds me just the same. Mother used to smile, and tell me she was glad to see me trying to do right, and then it seemed easier, but aunt Prudence never does, and I won't try to *please* her any more."

One morning Ella reached the school room unusually early; it still wanted nearly an hour to school time, and there were but two other scholars present. A few moments had been spent in talking together, when Ella, who had been walking about, looking into the desks, suddenly exclaimed, "Why Mr. Burton has left his desk unlocked! O girls, let's play school! I'll be teacher and have you for my scholars."

The others assented. I have told you that one of Ella's faults was a habit of meddling with other people's things.

She now proceeded to take out Mr. Burton's inkstand, copper-plate copies, ruler, &c., and place them on the outside of the desk.

"Oh! Ella!" exclaimed Rachel Frost, "aren't you afraid to touch Mr. Burton's things? Why he'll whip you like everything if he finds it out."

"Oh, but he won't know it, Rachel, for I'll put them all back before he comes, and I know you and Louisa won't tell."

"No, of course we won't; but you'd better take care, or he may come in and catch you."

"No danger," said Ella, "he never comes more than ten minutes before school time." And secure in this confidence, she went on playing teacher until in bringing down the ruler upon the desk, in imitation of Mr. Burton when he would call out "Silence!" to the scholars, she accidentally hit the inkstand.

The glass was shattered by the blow, and in an instant the black streams were running over the desk, and the copies.

Poor Ella was terribly frightened. "Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?" she exclaimed, bursting into tears. "Oh! I wish I hadn't been meddling."

Her schoolmates were very sorry for her, and did all they could to help and comfort her, but the mischief could not be undone.

They wiped up the ink, as well as they could, and replaced the ruler and the copies in the desk. When all this had been done, Louisa said, "Now come, girls, let's go off somewhere till school time, and Mr. Burton will never know who did it. He'll may be think it was Jonas Hand, because, you know, he always makes the fires and sweeps the room."

"But I don't want him to think it was Jonas," said Ella, "it wouldn't be right for me to let Jonas be punished for what I did."

"But," said Rachel, "I don't believe he will punish Jonas, because he'll tell him he didn't do it, and there's no need for Mr. Burton ever to know *who* did it. The door is always left unlocked in the morning, and it might have been somebody who doesn't belong to the school at all. So come along, Ellie, for if you are found here you'll be suspected, and you'll not deny it I know, and I can't bear to see you whipped."

Ella yielded, for she trembled with fright at the thought of Mr. Burton's wrath, when he should discover the mischief she had done. They walked away a short distance to a place, where they were out of sight, but not out of hearing of the bell, and there they remained until they heard it ring for school. Then hurrying in, along with the others, they seated themselves and tried to look as though nothing had happened. Ella took out her book and seemed to be unusually intent upon her lesson; but though her eyes were fixed upon the page, the words conveyed no meaning to her mind; so much were her thoughts taken up with the events of the morning.

"Attention!" said Mr. Burton in a voice which made every scholar start; "some one has been at my desk meddling with its contents; a thing which I have positively forbidden and shall severely punish. Can any of you tell me who it was?"

"It wasn't me;" and "It wasn't me;" "I don't know anything about it;" "I just now came in," answered one and another.

"Silence!" exclaimed the teacher angrily, bringing his ruler down on the desk with a loud crack. "I didn't ask who didn't do it, but who *did*. Jonas Hand, come forward here, sir, and you Mary Young, and Sallie Barnes, and Henry Harris. You were the only scholars here when I came, and it must be that you know who did this mischief." They tremblingly

obeyed, but each and all protested their own innocence, and their utter ignorance of the author of the mischief.

"I say it *must* have been *one* of you," said Mr. Burton, "and the sooner you confess, the better it will be for you. Which of you did it?" There was no reply. Mr. Burton was growing pale with passion. "Tell me instantly," said he, "which of you it was, or I shall let you know that I'm not to be trifled with. Which of you got here first?"

"We all came about the same time," said Mary Young, "Jonas and Harry had just reached the gate, as Sallie and I came round the fence corner, and I think the mischief must have been done before that, sir, for I'm sure it wasn't done afterwards."

"You needn't expect me to believe that," said Mr. Burton; "I know very well it was one of you four, and you've just entered into a conspiracy to shield the guilty one; but I'll fix you. You shall tell me instantly which of you did it, or I'll give every one of you such a flogging as you never had before. Now I'll give you just three minutes to make up your minds;" he added, taking out his watch.

The room was still as death, save the tick, ticking of the watch, and an occasional sob from Sallie Barnes, who had covered her face with her apron, and was crying heartily. Mary Young stood with her head erect, her cheeks burning, and her eyes flashing with indignation. Jonas looked frightened and despairing, Harry indignant and defiant. Meantime a fierce struggle was going on in Ella's breast. Should she sit by and see others punished for what was her fault alone? or should she expose herself to certain and severe chastisement by confessing her guilt? It was a hard choice. Her whole frame trembled with the violence of her emotions. One instant she was ready to start up and confess her fault; the next, she trembled at the thought of the punishment which would be sure to follow.

"The three minutes are up," said Mr. Burton, taking up his ruler, and catching Jonas by the arm; "what have you to say for yourselves now?"

"I didn't do it, sir, indeed I didn't; don't whip me," gasped poor Jonas.

"Who did then, you scoundrel?" exclaimed the teacher, at the same time striking him with all his force, "who did it? answer me that."

Ella could bear no more; she sprang from her seat, and the next instant she was beside the angry man, saying, "Don't! Oh! don't whip him, Mr. Burton, I did it."

"You did it, did you?" he exclaimed, as, pushing Jonas aside, he caught hold of her, and shook her violently. "Yes, I might have known it was you, the most meddlesome, troublesome scholar in the school; but I'll teach you how to meddle with *my* things!"

"Oh! I'll never do it again; indeed, *indeed* I won't," said Ella.

"No, I think you won't," sneered the angry man, "for I'll give you such a dressing, as you won't want again in a hurry."

Never, in all her life, had Ella had such a terrible whipping. It was several weeks before she entirely recovered from its effects. Aunt Prudence was very angry indeed, when she heard an account of the matter.

"Nobody," she said, "should abuse her brother's child so. She was bad, she knew, but that was no reason why she should be half killed. She would sue Mr. Burton for damages, and make him pay well for it, and Ella should never go another step to that school while he taught it. She wasn't going to have her murdered, just for spilling a little ink. Mr. Burton isn't fit to teach!" she continued; "a man that can't govern his temper better than that, and treat children like human beings, instead of like brutes, isn't fit to have the control of them. For my part, if I could have my way, he should be sent to the State's prison; it would only be too good for him. And you, Ella, you're the most foolish child that ever was seen! Why on earth couldn't you let the man's things alone? and when you had done the mischief, why need you go and tell on yourself? You'd a great deal better have let those great boys and girls take the whipping, for they were a great deal better able to bear it, and besides, it would have been divided amongst the four of them."

"But, aunt Prudence, it wouldn't have been right to let them be punished for what *I* did; and besides, poor Jonas gets so many beatings at home from his drunken father, and Mary Young is always so kind to me. Oh! I couldn't *bear* to see them whipped for what was my fault!"

"Nonsense, child!" said aunt Prudence; but she turned her back to Ella and wiped her eyes, and she was kinder to the poor, motherless child that evening, than she had ever been before. She actually put her arms around her, and kissed her.

"O aunt Prudence!" exclaimed Ella, her face beaming with delight, "I could almost thank Mr. Burton for whipping me so hard; it makes you so kind."

"You're thankful for very small favours then, I think," said aunt Prudence, getting up and going to the other side of the room to set a chair in its place.



CHAPTER II.

SPRING had come with its soft, warm breezes, the grass was springing up fresh and green, the trees were putting forth their leaves, the woods were full of violets and anemones, and the little birds, while busy building their nests, were filling the air with their happy songs of praise. The winter term of school was over; Mr. Burton had left, and the children had holidays for a few weeks, until it should be time for the summer school to commence. Ella rejoiced in the return of spring. She had been confined to the house for several weeks, until both she and her aunt were heartily tired of it, but now she was quite well again, and able to run about, and keenly did she enjoy the privilege of rambling through the woods in search of wild flowers, or working in the little spot of ground which her aunt had given her in the corner of the garden, digging up the soft earth and planting roots and flower seeds; and in these employments she was, to her great delight, allowed to spend most of her time, because, as aunt Prudence said, "She was glad to get her out of the house, for there was no such thing as keeping it to rights when she was in it."

"Why, Ellie child, what are you doing there?"

It was Mary Young who spoke. She had been taking a walk, and on her way home passed through the graveyard, that being her shortest route, and in so doing she had come suddenly and unexpectedly upon Ella, who was seated upon the ground, with a trowel in her hand and a small basket beside her. Ella, looking up and showing a face all wet with tears, answered:

"Planting violets on mother's grave."

"And watering them with your tears, you poor little thing," said Mary, sitting down and putting her arms around the child. "Ellie dear, I wish for your sake, that your mother was alive; that aunt Prudence of yours isn't very kind to you, is she?"

"No, not like mother was. O Mary, I do want to see my mother so bad," sobbed the poor child, laying her head on Mary's shoulder, "and aunt Prudence says I never will if I don't be good, and I can't be good without mother. Somehow, I'm almost always bad now-a-days."

"Why, Ellie, I don't think you're so very bad. I'm sure you don't tell lies like some children I know. You always speak the truth, even when you know that you'll be punished. I know you used to play and whisper in school sometimes, and blot your copy-book, or spill ink on your copy, or lose your books or pencil, or forget to bring them to school, and I know Mr. Burton used to get very angry, and scold and whip you, and to be sure it was naughty, but I don't think it was so *very* wicked; not half so bad, I'm sure, as telling lies."

"But, Mary, you told me to tell a lie one day when I came late to school; what made you do that, if you think it is so wicked?"

"Oh, because I didn't like to have you get whipped; I knew Mr. Burton would whip you so hard, and besides, I thought it wasn't a very bad story, because it wouldn't do any body any harm--only save you from a beating."

"Yes; but I remember my mother told me never, never to tell a lie; that it was very wicked, even if it didn't do any body any harm. But those are not all the naughty things I do, Mary; I'm always forgetting not to meddle, and always leaving my things about, and then when aunt Prudence scolds me, and boxes my ears, I get so angry, I feel as if I could almost kill her."

"O my! Ellie! that is very wicked; I didn't think you were so bad as that."

"Yes, I know it's very wicked, for I remember how mother used to talk to me about governing my temper, and that she said, when I got so angry, it was the same as being a murderer; but I can't help it; when aunt Prudence gets so mad, it always makes me mad too."

"Well, now, I wonder if it isn't just as wicked for her, as it is for you," said Mary.

"Oh, but she's grown up, you know; and I'm only a little girl."

"Well what of that? The Bible doesn't say big people may get angry, but little people mus'n't do it."

"No," said Ella, "I never heard that it did, and I know my mamma didn't get angry like aunt Prudence, but I never thought about it being wicked for her. But, O Mary, I wish I had somebody to help me to be good!"

"I would like to help you if I could, Ellie, but I'm just as bad as you are," said Mary. "I've heard people talking about getting good by praying, but I never tried it, so I can't tell you how it would do, but perhaps Miss Layton can when she comes."

"Miss Layton! who is she?" asked Ella.

"Haven't you heard about her? she's the new teacher, and they say she's very pious and good."

"Is she? when is she to come, Mary?"

"Week after next. Aren't you going to school, Ellie?"

"Yes, aunt Prudence says she is tired enough of having me about, and I shall go as soon as ever school begins again. I hope Miss Layton won't be as cross as Mr. Burton was; don't you, Mary?"

"Yes I do, and I know one thing, if she is as cross, she can't be very pious, for the Bible says people ought to be kind and patient, and it says, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' so I'm sure if they don't try to govern their tempers, they can't be Christians."

"Aunt Prudence is kind about some things, Mary," said Ella, going on with her work, "she gave me a corner of her garden for my own, and she lets me work in it a great deal, and gives me all the seeds I want, and she lets me come here whenever I please, though she does think it is very foolish, and she gave me that rose bush to plant at mother's feet, and sent Jake, our gardener, to plant that willow tree. There I have planted all my violets, and I must go now, for it's almost tea time, and aunt Prudence won't like it if I'm late. Won't you call for me on the first school day, Mary? I don't like to go alone."

"Yes; good bye, Ellie."

"Good bye, Mary."

Ella looked forward to the commencement of school with mingled feelings. She thought a great deal of what Mary Young had said about Miss Layton, and wondered if she were anything like her mamma, and if she would really help her to be good. She sometimes felt as if she could hardly wait for the time to come, that she might satisfy herself on these points; and sometimes she wished vacation was longer--it was so much pleasanter to work in her garden, or wander about in the woods and fields gathering spring flowers, than to be shut up in the school room, and obliged to learn lessons.

The long looked for day had come at last. Nine o'clock was the hour, but Mary and Ella set off for the school room a little after eight, that they might be sure to be in season. It was a lovely morning and they enjoyed their walk very much. Though it was still quite early when they reached the school-house, they found it already half-filled with girls and boys, some seated on the benches, others collected in little groups here and there, talking in whispers to each other, while many a curious glance was sent across the room to the teacher's desk, where sat a pleasant-looking young lady, with a blank book before her, in which she was writing down the children's names.

"Come let's give her our names," said Mary, pulling Ella forwards as she spoke.

"You are scholars, I suppose," said Miss Layton, looking kindly at them; "what are your names?"

"Mine is Mary Young, and this is Ella Clinton."

The teacher wrote their names in the book, and then asked where their parents lived. Mary told her where hers resided, and then said, "Ellie has no parents, but lives with her aunt, Miss Prudence Clinton, in the same street that we live in."

"So you are an orphan, my poor child!" said Miss Layton, drawing the little girl to her, and kissing her cheek, "I know how to pity you, for I am one also; but we have a kind heavenly Father, Ellie, who, if we put our trust in him, will never leave nor forsake us."

Ella's heart was full; no one had ever spoken so kindly to her since her mother's death, and she longed to throw her arms around the lady's neck, and ask her to love her, and teach her to be good; but she was a rather timid child, and afraid to venture. She turned hastily away, and walked to her seat, where she laid her head on her desk, to hide the tears that *would* come, she hardly knew why.

When Miss Layton had written down all the names, she rung the bell, and the children took their seats. She waited a moment, until the slight bustle attending the movement was over, and all were quiet; she then said, "I wish you all to give me your attention; I have a few words to say to you before we begin our school. Dear children, we have met together this morning, for the first time as teacher and scholars; most of your faces I have never seen before; but we expect to spend some months in each other's society, and it is very desirable that we should begin and carry on our intercourse in a manner that will make it both pleasant and profitable to us all. But for any community of people to be able to live pleasantly together, it is necessary for them to have some form of government. There must be a head; some one to direct and control, or there will be endless quarrelling and confusion. Now, in a school, that place is naturally and properly filled by the teacher. Your parents, my dear children, have sent you here to be under my care; it will be my duty to direct your studies, and do all that I can for your mental and moral improvement, to treat you with kindness and forbearance, and to require of you only such things as are just and reasonable. It will be your duty to obey me, to be kindly affectioned one toward another, and to improve your time by steady industry. In short, it will be the duty of each

of us, to be 'diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' God, my dear children, has given to each of us a work to do, and he will take notice of, and one day call us to account for, the manner in which we perform our allotted tasks. If we are God's children, we will strive to serve and please him; and if we strive to do our duty because we wish to please him, we are really and truly engaged in his service. The more you know, my dear children, the more good you will be able to do in this world; now is the time for you to gain knowledge, and that is the work which God has given you to do; and the work he has given me, is to do all in my power to assist you in gaining that knowledge, which is to prepare you for future usefulness. I do not wish you to attend to your studies, as many children do, from fear of punishment, but from love to God and an earnest desire to please him; and I can assure you that if you act from that motive, you will find a great deal of pleasure in the performance of your duties."

Miss Layton now read a few rules, saying that she should expect them to be strictly observed. She then told the scholars to take out their Testaments to read, but not expecting to have any call for them, they had not brought them; and finding that to be the case, she read a few verses herself, sung a hymn, and then requested the children to rise and stand a few moments while she offered a short but fervent prayer for the blessing of God upon their labours. She next proceeded to class them, and give them their lessons for the day. Everything that the teacher did, was done quietly, without noise or bustle, and it seemed natural for the children to be quiet too, and to most of them the hours of school passed quickly and pleasantly away.

"Don't you like her, Mary?" said Ella to Mary Young, as they walked home together that afternoon.

"Very much so far, Ellie, but people don't always show what they are the first day."

"Well, I don't believe she'll ever be as cross as Mr. Burton," said Ella.

"I hope not, I'm sure," replied Mary.

Ella was very anxious to secure the esteem and friendship of her new teacher, and for a week or two learned her lessons so well, and observed all the rules of the school so carefully, that it seemed as if she had really overcome her bad habits of carelessness and inattention; but alas! it was not so. Miss Layton required her scholars to learn their lessons at home. They might look them over in school, but that was all. School hours were to be spent principally in writing, ciphering, and reciting.

The first week, Ella was very careful to learn her lessons perfectly before she went out to play, or to work in her garden; but one bright, warm afternoon in the latter part of the second week, she found it so much pleasanter out of doors, than in the house, that she determined to take a walk first, intending to get her lessons afterwards. Her walk took more time than she expected, and she found some wild flowers, which she admired so much that she dug them up and carried them home to plant them in her garden, saying to herself that it would not take long, and she would still have time for her lessons; but she was surprised in the midst of her employment, by a call to supper, and then a play mate came in to spend the evening and stayed until Ella's bedtime, and as she knew it would be worse than useless to attempt to persuade aunt Prudence to allow her to sit up any longer, she went to bed, with the determination to rise early and learn her lessons in the morning. But when morning came, she found her bed so comfortable that she slept on until she had barely time to dress for breakfast; then after breakfast her aunt sent her on an errand, and it was school time before she could look at her books.

Ella was very much alarmed, for Miss Layton required very perfect recitations, and expected her scholars to be very punctual in their attendance. She hurried off to school, got there barely in time, and then discovered that she had left her spelling book and geography at home. Then her slate pencil was missing. She was sure she had either put it in her pocket, or laid it in the corner of the desk, the night before, but in vain she lifted everything in the desk and turned her pocket inside out. The missing pencil was nowhere to be found.

The spelling class was called. Ella missed the first word that came to her, then the second. "Ella," said Miss Layton, "how many times did you go over your lesson?"

Ella hung her head and made no answer.

Miss Layton repeated her question.

"I didn't learn it at all," replied Ella, in a low voice.

"Then go to your seat," said her teacher, "and never come to me to recite a lesson that has not been learned, and remember that at the next recitation you take your place at the foot of the class."

Ella obeyed, feeling very much ashamed. The geography class was called next, but, remembering what had been told her, she sat still in her seat.

"Ella," said Miss Layton, "why do you not come to your class?" "I haven't learned the lesson, Miss Layton," said Ella.

Miss Layton said nothing further at the time, but looked very much displeased. It was now the hour for ciphering; all

the other girls took out their slates and pencils, and were soon busily engaged. Ella alone sat idle. Mary Young handed her a pencil, but just then Miss Layton came up and asked, "Why are you not at work, Ella?"

"I've lost my slate pencil, ma'am."

"She can take this one of mine," said Mary Young; "I've got two."

"No," said Miss Layton, "that is against the rules; I allow no borrowing nor lending. As Ella has been so careless as to lose her pencil, she must sit idle while the rest are at work, and Ella, you must remain in after school, and tell me how it happens that you have so strangely failed in your lessons to-day."

Ella burst into tears. She felt very much ashamed, and very uncomfortable sitting there doing nothing while all the rest were busily employed. Sallie Barnes, who had borne a great dislike to Ella, ever since the affair of the broken inkstand, when she came so near being punished for her fault, was sitting opposite, and presently when Miss Layton was not looking that way, she began pointing her fingers at Ella, and shaming her. Ella was crying and Sallie mimicked her. Ella began to grow very angry. Sallie continued her teasing until at last, in a transport of rage, Ella picked up a book and dashed it across at her tormentor. She missed her aim and the book fell on the floor. Miss Layton saw it fall, but did not see who threw it.

Rising from her seat, she crossed the room, and asked, "Who threw that book?"

"Ella Clinton," said Sallie Barnes; "she threw it at me."

"Did you, Ella?"

"Yes, ma'am; and I'll throw another at her, if she doesn't quit pointing at me and mocking me," said Ella, passionately.

"Ella," said her teacher, sternly, "you are showing a very wicked temper. Go and sit down on that bench near my desk; and you, Sallie, tell me what you were doing to her."

"I didn't do anything," replied Sallie.

"Take care, Sallie; are you sure you are speaking the exact truth?" said Miss Layton.

"I didn't touch her, nor say a word to her," said Sallie.

"Sallie, answer me immediately and properly. You certainly did do something to Ella; what was it?"

"I was only shaming her a little, because she sat there crying just like a great baby."

"You did very wrong, indeed," said Miss Layton.

"I'm sure I didn't hurt her," said Sallie, sullenly.

"Yes, you did, Sallie," replied her teacher, "you hurt her feelings: and that is often harder to bear than bodily pain. I shall punish you by making you stand out on the floor fifteen minutes."

School had seldom seemed so long to Ella, and yet she was almost sorry to hear Miss Layton say, "School is dismissed;" so much did she dread being left alone with her justly offended teacher. Miss Layton sat at her desk, reading, until the other scholars had all gone, and she was left alone with Ella; then, closing her book, she called the little girl to her.

"Ella," said she, taking her hand and drawing her close to her side, "you have had very good lessons, and behaved very well all the time that I have been your teacher, until to-day. Now, tell me, my child, how it happens that to-day you have behaved so badly, and recited so poorly."

Miss Layton spoke very kindly, and Ella felt encouraged to open her heart to her, and tell her the whole truth; how she had put off learning her lessons, first for one thing, then for another, until there was no time to do it, and then, in her haste to get to school in season, had forgotten her books.

"I am glad, Ella," said Miss Layton, when the child had finished her story, "that you have told me the truth, instead of trying to contrive false excuses. I can forgive anything sooner than falsehood, for that is so very wicked. But you have been guilty of several very serious faults, Ella. Your first wrong step was preferring pleasure to duty. There is an old saying which I think is very true, 'Procrastination is the thief of time.'"

"What does procrastination mean, Miss Layton?" asked Ella, "I don't think I know exactly."

"It means deferring, delaying, or putting off until another time what ought to be done now. When we have a duty to perform, we should always attend to that first, and take our pleasure afterwards. But your worst fault to-day, Ella, was getting into such a dreadful passion. Don't you know, my dear child, that the Bible tells us that, when we indulge in angry passions, we break the sixth commandment, which says, 'Thou shalt not kill?'"

"Yes, ma'am, I know that; my mother used to tell me so, and I often think I never will get angry again, but I can't help it,

when anybody teases me."

"No, Ella, if you trust in your own strength, you certainly cannot; but, my dear child, if you ask help of God, he will enable you to do it. I am afraid that you forgot to ask God this morning, to keep you from sin through the day, and if so, it is no wonder that you have behaved so wickedly."

"I did say my prayers this morning, Miss Layton," said Ella; "mamma told me I must always do it, and I always do."

"Ah, but, my child, did you really pray? did you think of the meaning of the words you were saying, and really desire what you were asking for? did you pray with your heart, or was it with your lips only?"

Ella hung her head. "I was in a hurry," she said in a low tone, "and said them very fast, for fear I wouldn't be ready for breakfast."

"Oh Ella, were you not afraid to approach the great God in that irreverent manner?" said Miss Layton. "Did you forget that, 'God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth?' It is mocking the great God, when you repeat a form of prayer with your lips, while you are not praying in your heart, and that is a dreadful sin. The Bible tells us: 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and you, Ella, have shown by your actions this day, that you are a child of wrath, even as others; that you have a very wicked heart--a heart at enmity with God; and, Ella, unless your heart becomes changed, you can never be fit to dwell with him; you would not be happy in his presence--in the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold sin, and cannot look upon iniquity--even if allowed to go where he is; and every moment that you remain as you are, you are in danger of losing your immortal soul. O Ella, pray earnestly to God, to give you a new heart, for he alone can do it."

Ella was crying very bitterly. "O Miss Layton," said she, "will you ask God to forgive me, and to give me a new heart, and help me to pray right?"

"I will, my dear child," replied her teacher, and kneeling down, with her arm around the weeping child, she offered a short but earnest prayer, asking her heavenly Father to forgive the sins of that day and of all their lives, asking him to give the child a new heart--a heart hating sin and loving holiness, and to teach her to love prayer, and to pray aright.





"O, Miss Layton! You are more like my mamma, than anybody else." p. 59.

They rose from their knees, and Ella, throwing her arms around her teacher's neck, exclaimed, "O Miss Layton, you are more like my mamma than anybody else; nobody has ever prayed for me since she died, and I have so wanted somebody to help me to be good. You will help me now, won't you, dear Miss Layton?"

"I will do all I can, Ella," replied her teacher, returning the embrace, "but, my dear child, no one but God can really help you to be good. Promise me that you will every day ask him to help you."

"I will," said Ella, "and I will try to pray with my heart. But, Miss Layton, aunt Prudence says it is no use for such a wicked child as I am to pray; she says God won't hear me, and I would have stopped, but I remembered mother told me always to pray, and I thought she knew best."

"Your mother was right, Ella," said Miss Layton, "for unless you pray, you will certainly never grow any better. Jesus said, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' But come, my dear, it is getting late; you may put on your bonnet now, and get your books together, and we will go home."

"I'm glad you go my way, Miss Layton, so I don't have to go alone," said Ella.

"Don't you like to walk alone, Ella?"

"No, ma'am, I always want somebody to talk to."

Miss Layton locked the school-house door, and taking Ella's hand they walked slowly homewards.

"How long is it since your mother died, Ella?" asked Miss Layton.

"A whole year, Miss Layton. Oh it seems such a long, long while, and I do want to see her so much!"

"Your mother must have been a very good woman, I think, Ella."

"O yes, Miss Layton, she was so, *very* good! I never saw her do any thing wrong; but when I used to tell her so sometimes, she always said, no, she was not good, she was a miserable sinner."

"And she was quite right, Ella, for the best of mortals are in the sight of God but vile, polluted sinners. The Bible tells us 'they have all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no not one.' But I trust your mother was a true Christian: one who loved God, and tried to serve him. She seems to have taken a great deal of pains with you, and I hope you remember her instructions. I hope you are a good girl at home, Ella."

Ella was wiping away her tears. She never could talk much of her mother without crying. "No, Miss Layton," said she, "aunt Prudence says I am the worst child she ever saw, and I know I'm very naughty; but it's no use to try to be good, for I can't do it. I used to be good when my mother was living, but I can't be good without her to help me."

"Ah, Ella, that is quite a mistake. Your mother could not make you good, if she were here, for she could have no power to change your heart, and make you hate the evil, and love the good. God alone can do that, and though your mother has been taken away from you, he is ever living, and ever present, and if you ask him for help--ask with your heart, and for Jesus' sake--he will hear and help you."

"But, Miss Layton, I *was* a pretty good girl when my mother was alive; even aunt Prudence says so."

"That may be so, but I think it was only because you had not so many temptations to do wrong. Your mother probably knew better how to manage you, and keep you out of the way of temptation, than your aunt does; but you had the same wicked heart then that you have now, and if you behaved well only because you had no temptation to do otherwise, you were not *really* any better than you are now. God looks not merely at the outward conduct, but at the *heart*, at the *motives*, and unless you do right from a desire to serve and honour him, he can see nothing good in you. Ask him, my dear child, to give you right feelings, and right motives, and to help you to perform every duty from an earnest desire to please him."

CHAPTER III.

"You are waiting for me, are you, Ellie?" said Miss Layton, as she locked the school-room door, and turning to go, saw the little girl standing near, while her young companions were nearly all already out of sight.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Ella; "I would rather walk with you, if you will let me."

"Certainly, my dear child; I am always pleased to have your company. You have done well to-day, my dear little girl; your lessons were well recited, and your behaviour has been all that I could wish; and indeed, I might say almost as much of all the days since your bad day, which was nearly three weeks ago. I am very glad to be able to praise you."

Ella coloured with delight. "I have remembered what you said, Miss Layton," said she, "and as soon as I get home, I always take my books, and go away up stairs, where I can be quite alone, and study hard, until I am sure that I know my lessons perfectly, and it doesn't take nearly so long as I thought it would, and I have plenty of time to play afterwards. And I do think it is the best plan, Miss Layton; for sometimes we have company come in, in the evenings, and then I'm always so glad that my lessons are all done and out of the way."

"Yes, my dear, you will find, all through life, that it always is best to attend immediately to any duty you have to perform; you will never have cause to regret it. Duty first and pleasure after, is a very good motto for both children and grown up people."

"And I remember what you said about praying with my heart," said Ella, "and when I kneel down to say my prayers, I say the words slowly, and try to think of the meaning, and to really want what I ask for; and so I find it easy to be good, and now I think I have found out how, and that I shall be good always."

"Ah, my child," replied her teacher, "beware of self confidence. The Bible says, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' I don't like to hear you talk of it being *easy* to be good, for I fear if you think it so easy, you will trust in your own strength, and forget to ask help of God, and then you will be *sure* to fall. Remember how sure Peter was, that he would never deny his Master, and yet how soon he committed that very sin."

"When we begin to trust in our own strength, God often leaves us to ourselves, and suffers us to fall, that we may learn that our own strength is perfect weakness. The Bible tells us that 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' and so true is this of the unrenewed heart, that we find it has naturally no love for what is good and holy, but, on the contrary, a constant inclination to that which is evil; so much so, that we cannot of ourselves resist any temptation to sin, or even so much as think a good thought; we are prone to do evil, and averse to what is good; our goodness is as the morning cloud and the early dew which vanisheth away. Our only safety, Ella, is in remembering our own weakness, and crying with David, 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.' You know Paul says, 'When I am weak, then am I strong,' no doubt meaning, when I feel my own weakness and look to God for strength, he strengthens me."

"Miss Layton," said Ella, "it is a great deal easier to be good at school than at home; for you praise me when I am good, and seem pleased to see me trying to do right, but aunt Prudence never does. She says people don't deserve to be praised for doing their duty, and no matter how hard I try to please her, she always finds something to scold me for."

"I think your aunt is partly right and partly wrong," said Miss Layton. "It certainly is true, in one sense, that people don't deserve praise for doing only what it is their duty to do, but none of us would have many blessings if we received only what we deserve, and I think it is right and best to give praise because it encourages people in trying to do well. But, Ella, though it is quite right that you should desire to please your aunt, and your undoubted duty to do so, for she stands to you in the place of your parents, whom God has commanded you to honour, yet your highest motive should ever be to please God; and, though your aunt may not notice your efforts, you may rest assured that not one of your struggles to conquer your temper, or overcome your habits of carelessness and indolence, remains unnoticed by him."

"Well, Miss Layton, I haven't been in a real passion for more than two weeks, and I'm nearly sure I never will get into such a fit of rage, as aunt Prudence calls it, again."

"Ah, Ella, don't be too confident," replied her teacher.

"Oh I'm *sure* I won't, Miss Layton. I can't help getting a *little* angry sometimes, but I'm certain almost that I never will get so *dreadfully* angry as I used to, for I know it is so ugly, and so wicked."

Miss Layton shook her head doubtfully. "Time will show, Ella. Bad habits are not so easily got rid of. But good bye, child," she added, stooping and kissing the little girl's cheek, "you know you have to turn off here."

"Good bye, Miss Layton," said Ella, "I mean to have real good lessons to-morrow."

"Oh, Ella, how pretty your flowers are! won't you give me one?" exclaimed a little girl who overtook Ella just as she was passing down the lane which bounded that part of her aunt's grounds where her own little garden was situated. Ella

was naturally a very generous child.

"Yes, a good many more than one, Lucy," said she, "if you will wait till I can get round to them, for you know the gate is round on the other side."

"Oh, I'm in a dreadful hurry, Ellie," replied Lucy, "Mother told me not to stop a minute, and I'm all out of breath with running. Can't you climb the fence?"

"Well, if you're in such a *very* great hurry I suppose I must for once, though aunt Prudence wouldn't like it very much; but then she always scolds me, and I guess she might about as well scold for one thing as another," said Ella, and as she spoke, she threw her satchel of books over, and then climbed the fence. In a moment she was on the other side, and had gathered a handful of flowers and reached them through the fence to Lucy, who still stood on the outside. Lucy ran on, and Ella picked up her satchel and walked into the house.

Now it happened that Miss Prudence was in an unusually bad humour. Everything had seemed to go wrong with her that day. A neighbour's boy had left the garden gate open, and before it was noticed some pigs had got in and destroyed a great many of her choicest vegetables and flowers, and while she and Sallie, her maid, were engaged in chasing them out, the cakes in the oven had nearly burnt to a cinder; and, to crown all, Sallie, flurried by the scolding of her mistress, had let fall and broken a much valued dish of old-fashioned china. In consequence of these various mishaps Miss Prudence was in one of her very *worst* humours, which is saying a good deal, as she was not at any time remarkably sweet-tempered.

"Your dress torn again, miss!" she exclaimed, the instant she caught sight of her niece. "You've been climbing fences again, hey?"

"I didn't know it was torn," said Ella, looking down. "Where, aunt Prudence? I don't see it."

"There! what do you call that?" said Miss Prudence, fiercely, taking hold of the skirt of Ella's dress, and showing a small slit torn in one of the breadths.

"Oh, that is only a *little* hole, aunt Prudence," said Ella.

"A *little* hole? Yes, but I'd like to know if you aren't *always* tearing your clothes, and if you'd torn it all the way round, it would have been all the same to you."

Ella's temper was rising, more from the tone than the words her aunt had used, "I ain't *always* tearing my clothes," said she, angrily, "you *know* I haven't torn one for a good while, and it's ever so long since I climbed a fence till to-day."

"How dare you contradict me, you impertinent little hussy!" said aunt Prudence, catching hold of her and shaking her violently, and boxing her ears, then pushing her from her with such violence as to throw her down.

"You're just the crossest woman in the world," exclaimed Ella,--now thoroughly roused as soon as she recovered her breath sufficiently to speak, "I don't care if I *do* tear my clothes! I don't care if I tear them all to pieces, and I shan't try to please you any more, for you're just as cross as you can be; you're always scolding me, and never praise me a bit when I try just as hard as I can to please you."

"Just walk right up stairs, and don't let me hear another word out of your mouth, or see your face again to-day," said aunt Prudence; "if I served you right I'd give you a good switching, and may be I'll do it yet; but just walk straight up stairs, and stay there; for not a mouthful of supper shall you have to-night."

"I won't!" said Ella, "I ain't going to be shut up in that hot room all the afternoon. I'll stay out of doors," and she ran out as she spoke.

"We'll soon see that," said aunt Prudence, "we'll soon see who's mistress," catching her by the arm and dragging her into the house. Ella resisted with all the strength of passion; but in vain; her aunt proved the stronger, and after a desperate battle succeeded in forcing her up stairs and into her own room, where she shut her in, and locked the door upon her, and then, putting the key in her pocket, walked down stairs; while Ella, mad with rage, assailed the door with a shower of kicks and blows, in the vain attempt to regain her liberty, at the same time screaming at the top of her voice.

At length, completely exhausted by her own violence, she desisted, and sitting down on the floor, she laid her head on a chair, and cried herself to sleep.

When Ella waked, the moon was shining in at the window, everything about the house was perfectly still, and feeling frightened at the silence, and chilly from the night wind, which had been blowing on her, she crept into bed without undressing, and soon fell asleep again.

It was long past her usual rising hour, when she waked again with a confused feeling that something was wrong. She lay quiet a moment, trying to collect her thoughts. Suddenly, she remembered her lessons; she had not looked at them. Instantly springing from the bed, she hastily washed her face, combed her hair, and smoothed her rumpled dress as well

as she could, and then tried the door. It was fast; she was still a prisoner, and her satchel of books had been left in the hall below. What should she do? she tried the door again and again; she called aunt Prudence as loud as she could, but there was no answer, and sitting down on the floor, she cried bitterly.

In about half an hour, aunt Prudence came, and unlocking the door, ordered her niece to walk down stairs and eat her breakfast, which command Ella very gladly obeyed, as she was very hungry; but, troubled about her lessons, she hurried through her meal as fast as possible, and as soon as she had finished, requested permission of her aunt to leave the table, and get her books.

"No," replied Miss Prudence, sharply, "how often must I tell that it is very bad manners to leave the table until every one has finished? Just sit still and behave yourself; you'll not gain anything from me by that vulgar habit you have of eating so fast."

It was almost more than Ella could bear, to have to sit there and watch her aunt, who seemed to eat more slowly than she had ever known her to do before, when she knew that she had scarcely time to learn her lessons before the hour for school. At last, aunt Prudence pushed back her chair, and rose from the table; Ella rose too, and hurried into the hall to get her books.

"Come back here!" called out aunt Prudence. "What are you going to do?"

"I was just going to get my books, to learn my lessons."

"You'll do no such thing, till you've mended that dress. Get your thimble, and sit down here alongside of me, and darn it. If you will tear your clothes, I'm determined you shall mend them; and mind and do it well, or I'll make you pick every stitch of it out, and do it over."

Poor Ella was in despair. "O aunt Prudence," said she, bursting into tears, "I won't know my lessons, and Miss Layton will be so angry. Mayn't I learn them now, and mend my dress when I come home from school? Oh, do *please* let me."

"No; I tell you, you shall mend it *just now*. I don't care if Miss Layton *is* angry. I only hope she'll give you a right good whipping, for if you had behaved yourself last night, you might have had plenty of time to learn your lessons."

Ella wiped away her tears, and commenced her work, for she knew that crying was of no use, and would only hinder her from doing her work quickly and well. She took a great deal of pains, and was very careful not to make a single long stitch, and at last it was done, and very nicely too, she thought, but when she showed it to her aunt, she was told that it was puckered a little, and must all come out again.

"I can't do it a bit better, and I won't," said Ella, throwing the dress on the floor.

"You shall," said her aunt. "Pick up that dress this minute, and do as I bid you."

Ella neither moved to obey, nor answered a word.

"Sallie," called out Miss Prudence to the servant girl, who was in the next room washing up the breakfast dishes, "bring me a switch, till I make this child mind me."

"Yes, ma'am," replied Sallie; and the next minute she appeared at the door with a switch, which she had just cut from the willow tree in the yard.

"Pick up that dress," said Miss Prudence again, flourishing the switch. Ella stood still, mute and obstinate. Aunt Prudence seized her by the arm, and laid the switch over her shoulders with all her strength. Ella bore it without a word.

"Now, will you mind me?" again inquired her aunt, pausing for breath.

"No!" said Ella.

"You'll not go one step to school till you do," said her aunt.

"I don't care; I don't want to go, when I don't know my lessons."

"Then you *shall* go! Just take your bonnet, and start this minute. I'll make you do something I bid you," said her aunt.

Ella obeyed, only too glad to get rid of doing her work over again; though she had spoken truly in saying that she did not care to go to school without knowing her lessons.

"The most high-tempered, obstinate child that ever breathed," said aunt Prudence, turning away from the window, where she had been standing to watch Ella out of the gate.

"Now," said Ella, talking to herself, as she had a habit of doing, as she walked slowly along: "I can't get to school in time, and I'll be sure to get a bad mark for attendance anyhow, so I may just as well walk a little slower, and get my spelling lesson as I go along."

Ella had a very retentive memory, and was quite a good speller for a child of her age, and as the lesson happened to be

an easy one, she had learned it quite perfectly by the time she had reached the school-house door. The opening exercises were quite over when Ella entered the room. Miss Layton looked up as she came in, and motioned to her to come to her.

"How has it happened that you are so late this morning, my child?" said she.

"I couldn't help it, Miss Layton; aunt Prudence made me stay to mend my dress."

"That is a sufficient excuse," replied her teacher, "I am very glad, Ella, that I can always believe what you say."

"I couldn't have got here quite in time, Miss Layton," said Ella, "but I might have come a little sooner if I hadn't walked slowly, so as to learn my spelling lesson on the way."

Miss Layton looked surprised, but made no remark, as it was now time to call a class. Ella recited her spelling lesson perfectly, but made several mistakes in her geography, which would indeed have been a total failure, as she had not looked at her lesson, if it had not been the day for reviewing that study, so that the lesson was one which she had learned only a short time before, and had not entirely forgotten. Grammar was the lesson she dreaded most, as she had only lately commenced the study, and often found it difficult to understand and commit it to memory. But that was not to be recited until after recess, and she determined to spend her playtime in studying it.

Accordingly when the bell tapped for recess, she took her book in her hand and slipped away to a corner of the playground where, concealed by some bushes, she thought she might remain unnoticed by her companions. But Ella was a favourite with most of her school-fellows, and it was not long ere she was missed, and "Where's Ella?" "Where's Ella?" "Didn't she come out?" "Do you know where she went to?" were the questions which passed from mouth to mouth amongst a group of girls who were preparing to commence a game of romps.

"What's the matter? what are you all talking about?" asked Sallie Barnes, coming up to them.

"We're going to play 'Chickeny-craney-crow,' and we want Ella to be the old witch, but we can't find her; do you know where she is?"

"Yes," said Sallie, "I saw her go behind those bushes. Come along girls, and let's see what she's about. Some mischief, I'll be bound."

Half a dozen girls started at once on a full run across the playground to the spot pointed out by Sallie.

"Why, Ellie, what *are* you doing here? why don't you come and play?" exclaimed Kate Townley pushing aside the bushes. "We want you this minute."

"I'm learning my grammar," replied Ella, without looking up from her book, "so don't talk to me, please, for I'm in a great hurry, because it comes right away after recess, you know."

"Getting your lesson! getting it *now*, when it's almost time to say it! I wonder if this is the pattern good girl, that always learns her lessons just as soon as she gets home, and never allows herself a bit of play till she knows them perfectly!" said Sallie, in a mocking tone.

"I do *almost* always, Sallie, but I didn't last night, and so please go away, and let me learn it now."

"Oh ho, now I remember this pattern girl missed quite a number of questions in her geography, and if it had been that naughty girl Sallie Barnes, she would have been kept in. Ah, it's a fine thing to be a favourite, a very nice thing to be the teacher's pet!"

"It's no such thing," said Ella, angrily, "you know very well that Miss Layton doesn't pet me; she treats us all alike."

"You're right, Ellie, so she does, at least according to the way we behave," said Mary Young.

"What a shame of you to talk so, Sallie! you know Ellie didn't miss more than two, and Miss Layton doesn't keep us in for that much," said Kate.

"Well *I* say she missed three or four," said Sallie, "and I'll be bound she'll miss more than that in the grammar, for I happen to know that it's pretty hard, and she'll be kept after school for that; and then I hope Miss Layton will give her as good a whipping as she did once before."

"She didn't; she never struck me in her life," said Ella.

"I know better; she did," said Sallie.

"That's a lie, and you know it is," said Ella, growing very angry.

"So I suppose you'll go and tell *dear* Miss Layton, that Sallie Barnes has been telling lies about you."

"No, I'll *not*," said Ella. "You know I won't, or you wouldn't dare to talk so. I don't tell lies nor tales either; I would not stoop to do anything so mean and wicked."

"So you mean to say I'm mean and wicked, a liar and a tell-tale! Never mind, miss, I'll pay you for your impudence, one of these days."

"I don't think your stories hang together very well, Sallie," said Mary Young. "First you say Miss Layton pets Ella, and then you say she whipped her for what I know she wouldn't whip any other scholar for."

Sallie was saved the necessity of replying, for at that instant the bell rang, and all hastened to the house.

"You have all recited very well excepting Ella," said Miss Layton, as she dismissed the grammar class to their seats. "Ella, you must learn this lesson over and recite it to me after school is dismissed."

"Ah, ha! I told you so!" whispered Sallie in Ella's ear.

Ella answered only with an angry look--it was against the rules to speak, but Sallie did not care for that, for though she would have been very ready to tell of Ella, she knew that Ella was much too honourable to tell tales of her. As soon as the others had all gone, Ella took her book to Miss Layton, and this time she recited her lesson quite perfectly.

"You know it very well, now," said her teacher, handing the book back to her. "What is it, my dear?" she asked, seeing the child hesitate. "Had you something to say to me? Don't be afraid to tell me all that is in your heart. If you are in trouble, perhaps I can help you, and if you have done wrong, I will not judge you harshly," she added, drawing the little girl towards her.

Ella threw her arms round her teacher's neck, and hiding her face on her shoulder, burst into tears. Miss Layton stroked her hair, and talked soothingly to her. Her heart yearned over the little motherless child, who had no one to love her.

"O Miss Layton, I can never, never be good. It's no use to try," sobbed the poor child.

"What new difficulty have you found, my darling? you told me it was very easy last night."

"I'm afraid you will hate me, Miss Layton, if I tell you how wicked I have been last night and this morning."

"Hate you, my child! far from it. I will love you the better for acknowledging your faults. Tell me all about it, and perhaps I may be able to help you to do better."

Ella related all the occurrences of that morning and the previous evening, without attempting any palliation of her own conduct.

"I am very sorry, indeed, to hear all this, Ella," said Miss Layton. "You have really been very naughty. In the first place, you ought not to have climbed the fence; that was very wrong, because you knew that your aunt had forbidden it."

"But Lucy wanted the flowers, and couldn't wait for me to go round to the gate. What could I do, Miss Layton?"

"It would have been much better to let Lucy go without the flowers than to disobey your aunt."

"But, Miss Layton, she *always* scolds me! I can *never* please her, and I don't mean to try any more."

"O Ella, Ella! is this the end of all your good resolutions? Who is it that says, 'Honour thy father and thy mother?'"

"But aunt Prudence isn't my mother," said Ella.

"No, my dear, but she occupies the place of a parent to you, and the spirit of the command requires you to obey her."

"I can't please her, Miss Layton. I've tried and tried and tried, and what's the use of trying any more?"

"Ah, Ella, if you had a new heart, if you were a child of God, you would try to do right that you might please *him*; and you would not give up in despair, though no one else noticed your efforts, or looked upon you with approval. I am afraid, my child, that you love praise too well; that you 'love the praise of men more than the praise of God.'"

"I don't *like* to mind aunt Prudence! I wish I *didn't* have to!"

"This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous! There is the test, Ella; by your fruits you are to be known. God commands you to honour and obey your aunt, and if that command is grievous to you, does it not show that you are not one of his children?"

"I know I'm not, Miss Layton," said Ella, sadly. "I'm afraid I *never* shall be a Christian, for I'm so very, very wicked, and I can't make myself any better, for I've tried so hard, and I only seem to grow more and more wicked, the more I try to be good."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Ella. I had much rather hear you talk in that way, than as you did last night, because I know that a sense of your own helplessness, of your own utter inability to make yourself any better, is the first step towards feeling your need of the Saviour; for as long as you think that there is any hope that you can heal yourself, you will not apply to the Great Physician. 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for

my yoke is easy, and my burden is light!" That invitation is addressed to you, Ella, if you do, as I hope, feel your sins to be a burden."

"I'm afraid it doesn't mean me, Miss Layton, for I'm afraid I don't *want* to be good. I feel just like giving it up and not trying any more."

"Then, Ella, pray to God to *give* you the desire; to make you want to be good. Jesus said, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'"

"Won't you pray for me, Miss Layton?"

"I do, dear child, and will," said Miss Layton, kissing her; "but you must pray for yourself; I cannot do the work for you--no one can; you must pray and repent and believe for yourself."

"O Miss Layton, I wish I could live with you!" exclaimed Ella, "for then I think I could be good."

Miss Layton smiled. "I am coming to live at your house, my dear; didn't you know it? didn't your aunt tell you?"

"Oh no, ma'am; but are you, *really*? Oh, I am so glad, *so* glad!" and Ella clapped her hands, and fairly danced up and down with delight.

"Yes; Mrs. Price is tired of boarding me, and your aunt has agreed to take me for the rest of the time that I shall be here."

"And when will you come, Miss Layton? Oh, do come soon!"

"To-morrow evening, my dear; but, Ella, I shall not like to live with you, if you are going to be such a naughty girl as you were last night and this morning."

"Oh no, indeed, I'll not; I should be ashamed to be so bad before you."

"And do you feel more respect for *me*--a weak, sinful mortal--than for the great God? more ashamed and afraid to do wrong in my presence, than in his?"

"O Miss Layton, I can't see him, and I forget that he sees me."

"Do you think that that excuse will avail you in the judgment-day, Ella? The Bible tells us, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all they that forget God.' O Ella, when you are tempted to do wrong, remember these words: 'Thou God seest me;' and O my child, never, never dare to do in his presence, what you would be ashamed or afraid to do before any earthly being."

"I'm very sorry I was so naughty," said Ella, "and I'll tell aunt Prudence so, and ask her to forgive me, and I'll do as she bids me, and mend the dress over again if she says I must; though I'm sure I can't do it any better."

"Ask forgiveness of God too, Ella."

"Yes, ma'am, I will."

"I'm sorry I was so naughty and so impertinent to you last night and this morning, aunt Prudence," said Ella, coming up to her aunt, on her return from school. "Will you please to forgive me, and I'll try to mind you next time."

"Oh yes, it's all very well to say you're sorry now, but it'll be just the very same thing again, the very next time you're in a bad humour."

"Shall I rip that darn out, and do it over now, aunt Prudence?"

"No; I've had bother enough with it already; let it alone."

CHAPTER IV.

"Just look, Miss Layton, how Ella Clinton has torn my book," said Sallie Barnes, displaying her arithmetic, several leaves of which were missing.

"How do you know that it was Ella that did it?" asked Miss Layton.

"Why, because she hates me; and I heard her say, the other day, that she'd tear my books or do something to spite me, and when I came to school this morning, she was standing right beside my desk, and Abby Reed says she saw her turning my things over before I came, so I'm *sure* she must have done it."

"It does look like it, certainly," said Miss Layton, "but still I can hardly believe Ella would do such a thing. Come here, Ella. Did you tear this? or do you know how it came to be torn."

"No, ma'am," said Ella, indignantly, "I didn't touch it, and I don't know anything about it."

"Did you go to Sallie's desk, and turn over her things, this morning before school commenced?"

"I didn't turn over the things, Miss Layton. I went to her desk, and looked in her pencil box to see if my slate-pencil was there, but I didn't touch anything else."

"What made you think of looking for your pencil in Sallie's box?"

Ella coloured, and remained silent.

"I want an answer, Ella," said Miss Layton. "You must have had some reason for supposing your pencil was there; what was it?"

"I thought may-be she had hidden it; because the other day I told her something she said was a lie, and she was very angry, and said she would pay me for it," replied Ella.

"And were your suspicions correct? did you find your pencil there?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Ella.

"If she did, she must have put it there first, for I never touched it," said Sallie.

"Hush, Sallie," said Miss Layton. "Ella, are you sure it was *your* pencil? slate pencils are very much alike, you may have been mistaken."

"No, ma'am, I know it was mine, because I had cut some letters on it," replied Ella.

"I wish you'd look in *her* desk, Miss Layton," said Sallie, "and see if she hasn't got the leaves of my arithmetic hid there."

Miss Layton rose and went to Ella's desk, raised the lid and examined the contents, while the two girls stood looking on. Presently moving a pile of books, she found several leaves, which had been tucked away behind them, and which, on being compared with Sallie's book, proved to be evidently the missing portion; though one of them had been torn in half, and, from the stains of ink upon it, seemed to have been used for wiping a pen. "I told you so! I knew she'd done it!" exclaimed Sallie, exultingly; while Ella gazed at the leaves in her teacher's hand with an expression of unfeigned astonishment that did not escape Miss Layton's quick eye.

"And she's been using this leaf for a pen-wiper," continued Sallie, "she's always wanting a piece of paper to wipe her pen, because she's so careless she can never keep a pen-wiper."

"How do you account for this strong circumstantial evidence against you, Ella?" asked her teacher.

"I don't know, Miss Layton, I don't know at *all* how they got there," said Ella, with a bewildered look. "I've been in the school-room ever since it was opened this morning, and I didn't see any body put them there."

"I believe you, Ella," said Miss Layton, "for whatever other faults you may have, I know you to be a perfectly truthful child."

"Oh yes, it's a fine thing to be the teacher's *pet*!" said Sallie, tossing her head. "You'd be ready enough to believe that *I* had done such a thing, because you don't like *me*."

"I *should* be more ready to believe it of you, than of Ella, Sallie; because, and *only* because, you have not established the same character for truth. I have more than once had great reason to doubt *your* word, but *never* Ella's. A teacher soon discovers whose word she can trust and whose she cannot."

"It's just because she's your favourite," said Sallie, angrily.

"Go to your seat," said Miss Layton, "I will not allow such impertinence, and shall mark you for it in your weekly report. Can any of the rest of you throw any light upon this subject?" she inquired, turning to the other scholars.

"Miss Layton," said the girl who sat next to Sallie, "I think, perhaps Sallie tore her book herself, for I heard her say yesterday, that she would tear out those leaves because she couldn't do the sums."

The girl who kept the key and attended to the room, now came up, and told Miss Layton that Sallie had come to her to borrow the key on the previous evening, saying that she had forgotten her books, and must get them, or she should not know her lessons. "Yes, and I was going after the cows," said Charley Owen, "and I saw the school door open, and I thought may-be somebody was breaking in, so I ran and looked in at the door, and I saw Sallie sitting by Ellie's desk a writing, and she tore a leaf out of a book, and wiped her pen on it, and then she looked at the book awhile, and then tore out some more leaves, and then she raised up the lid and put the ink in the desk, and I guess she put the leaves in too."

"It's all a lie," exclaimed Sallie; "there was nobody here when I was getting my books."

"I just peeped in at the door, and then I ran off, and she didn't see me," said Charley.

"The proof of your guilt is too plain to admit of a doubt," said Miss Layton, turning to the now abashed and confused Sallie. "You will of course remain with me after the rest are dismissed."

"Oh, how shall I talk to that hardened girl!" was the thought which many times presented itself to Miss Layton's mind, while engaged in the duties of the day; and many a silent petition for assistance went up to Him who hath promised wisdom to them that ask it.

At length the hour had arrived, school was dismissed, and the children, always glad to be released from study and confinement, were not long in leaving the teacher alone with her refractory pupil. "Sallie," said Miss Layton, "you know that borrowing is against the rules, how then do you account for the fact of Ella's pencil having been found in your box?"

"What's the use of my answering? you won't believe me, if I do," said Sallie, angrily.

"You must speak more respectfully, Sallie," said Miss Layton, "or I shall feel obliged to inform your parents of your very bad behaviour. I wish you now to answer my question, and tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"I don't know anything about it," replied Sallie, "I didn't put it there, and if Ella Clinton found it in my box, she must have put it there herself."

"Well, Sallie, I cannot tell whether you are speaking the truth or not, but I want you to remember that God knows all about it; for the Bible tells us that 'all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;' and the Psalmist says, 'O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting, and mine uprising; thou understandest my *thought* afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways, for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.' God, who is the searcher of the heart, knows all your motives, has seen all your actions, and heard all your words, and in his book of remembrance all these things are written, and for them all, he will call you to account in the day of judgment. Sallie, do you ever read the Bible?"

"I read it sometimes of a Sunday, when I can't find anything I like better."

"I am sorry, Sallie, to hear you speak so slightly of God's word, which is the Book of books and the one which we should value above all others. But it seems you do read it occasionally--have you ever read the story of Ananias and Sapphira?"

"I don't remember," said Sallie, sulkily.

Miss Layton opened her Bible, and read aloud the story of that wicked man and woman whom God struck dead for telling a lie. As I suppose my little readers have all read this sad story, I shall not repeat it here; but if they have not read it, they will find it in the fifth chapter of Acts, and I hope they will get their Testaments, and read it now, and that they will take warning by the awful punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, and never, never *dare* to tell a lie.

When Miss Layton had finished reading, she proceeded to talk to Sallie of the great wickedness of her conduct, the dreadful sin of lying, quoting a number of texts to show God's hatred of that sin, such as, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," "The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment," "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish," "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," and many others.

"Sallie," said she, "I do not think there is any sin which is mentioned more frequently in the Holy Scriptures, as being exceedingly hateful to God, than that of lying; and we are expressly told that no liar shall be allowed to enter the holy

city, the New Jerusalem. 'For,' says the apostle John, 'without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever *loveth* and *maketh* a lie.' You would look with abhorrence upon a murderer--one who had dipped his hands in the blood of his fellow-man--and yet you see that liars are put in the same catalogue, as being no better than they. But have you not really been a murderer in *heart* this day, Sallie? Have you not felt hatred to Ella, and a desire to do her harm? and is not that the very spirit of murder? 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer;' and was not that the very feeling that led Cain to kill his brother? You have to-day broken several of God's commandments; the sixth, which is: 'Thou shalt not kill,' for the Bible tells us that anger is a breach of that command; and the ninth, which is: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.'

"Sallie, I should not be doing my duty, if I did not speak to you of the great wickedness of which you have been guilty; if I did not warn you of the necessity of repentance. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die,' says God. 'He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh.' But again, he tells us, 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he turn from his evil way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel!' O Sallie, can you refuse to listen to these awful threatenings, or to accept of these gracious invitations? Would that I could persuade you to turn from your evil ways *now*--now while you are young, and while you have health and strength and reason--for *now* is the accepted time, and *now* is the day of salvation,' and you can be sure of no time but the present."

Much more Miss Layton said to Sallie, but she went home that night with a sad heart, for she could not perceive that her words had made any impression.

When Miss Layton entered her school-room next morning, she found her pupils in quite a state of excitement. "O Miss Layton, Miss Layton!" they exclaimed on seeing her, "Sallie Barnes and her mother have been here getting Sallie's books, and they took them all away, and Mrs. Barnes says, Sallie shan't come to school to you another day, because you talked to her just as if she was the greatest sinner in the world, and she's just as good as other folks. And she's not going to have her abused; she won't let her stay where she's called a liar and a murderer. And Mrs. Barnes says, Sallie never told a lie in all her life, for she knows she'd get half killed if she did; her children are all brought up to speak the truth; and we all know that that's not so, for nobody believes a word that either Sallie or her mother says. Oh, she was *very* mad, Miss Layton, and scolded away ever so long, and swore too; and she says she's going to give you a piece of her mind when she sees you."

"I am very sorry indeed to hear that any one would behave so wickedly," said Miss Layton, "but if Sallie is such a very bad girl, I am glad she is gone, for the Bible says, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners,' and I fear she might have made some of the rest of you as bad as herself. But if Sallie has such a wicked mother, there is great allowance to be made for her, poor girl! and you should feel very thankful that you have been blest with good mothers, who, instead of encouraging you in wickedness, try to teach you to do right."

CHAPTER V.

"If you'll excuse me, Miss Layton, I'll just leave Ella to entertain you, as I have an errand out, but I'll not be gone long," said Miss Prudence Clinton, one evening, soon after Miss Layton had taken up her quarters with her.

"Don't hurry on *my* account, Miss Clinton; I have no doubt that Ellie and I can entertain each other very well, until you return," replied Miss Layton.

"Very well then, Ella, I shall expect you to do your best," said aunt Prudence, as she went out of the door.

"Will you take a walk with me, Ella?" asked Miss Layton.

"Oh yes, ma'am, I should love to, dearly! I'll get my bonnet in one minute!" exclaimed Ella, bounding out of the room. In less than the specified time she returned with her bonnet in her hand.

"Where shall we go, Ellie?" said Miss Layton; "the sun is nearly down, so we cannot take a very long walk before it will be getting dark."

"Will you come with me to see my mother's grave, Miss Layton? it isn't very far, and the grave-yard is very pretty; there are so many trees, and bushes, and flowers planted round the graves."

"Yes, Ellie, we will go there, if you wish it."

"I love to come here since mother died," said Ella, as they stood by Mrs. Clinton's grave. "Sometimes I sit down on the grass, and lay my head on the grave, and talk to mother, and it seems as if she could hear me; but Oh, I wish she could speak to me! Oh, if I could only put my arms round her neck once more, and give her just *one* more kiss!" and Ella burst into tears, and laid her face against the cold tomb-stone, while the tears fell like rain on the grass that covered her mother's breast. Miss Layton's tears were falling too.

"Your mother is not here, dear child," said she. "'Tis only the senseless body that lies there, but your mother lives in heaven."

"Yes, I *know* she does, because she was so good, that I am sure God would take her there."

"You don't mean, my dear child, that God would save her *because* she was good?"

"Why, yes, Miss Layton; it's the *good* people that go to heaven, isn't it?"

"My dear Ella, there is *none* that doeth good and sinneth not; they are *all* gone out of the way; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good--no, not *one*."

"But you said my mother was in heaven!"

"Yes, my dear, but not *because* she was *good*, but because Jesus died to save her. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' If we were able to save ourselves by our own good works, then Jesus need not have died. No, Ella, we cannot do anything *at all* to *merit* salvation, but must accept it as God's *free gift*, 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' 'By their fruits ye shall *know* them;' it is not said they shall be *saved* by their fruits, but by them they are to be *known*; they are the *evidence* of their acceptance with God. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' we are to be saved by faith, not by works; but unless we do good works, unless we love God's commandments and try to keep them, we have no reason to think we have any faith, for it must be a living faith that saves us, and the apostle James tells us that 'faith without works is dead.' Your mother professed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and she showed by her works that hers was not a dead faith, and therefore we may rest assured that she is in heaven; but if she had expected to be saved on account of her own good deeds, we could have had no such assurance concerning her."

"I think I understand it now, Miss Layton," said Ella, "and I remember that mother always seemed to think herself very wicked, though I don't think I ever saw her do anything wrong; but she said she was not afraid to die, because Jesus had died to save her."

"Yes, Ella, this is the experience of all true Christians. But come, it is time for us to be going; it is growing quite dark, and the stars are beginning to come out in the sky."

"How pretty the stars are! Miss Layton," said Ella, gazing up into the sky; "I love to look at them. Mother used to like to look at them too, and she told me that some of them were great large worlds, a great deal bigger than ours, and some were suns with worlds moving around them. Miss Layton, what is that white streak up in the sky, that they call the Milky-way? I asked aunt Prudence the other evening, and she said, 'Nonsense! go away, and don't bother me with such silly questions.' Do *you* think it's a silly question, Miss Layton?"

"No, my dear, not at all silly. The Milky-way is said to be composed of millions of stars, which, though they are very

large indeed, are at such an immense distance from us as to appear very small, and though they are at great distances from each other, so much farther are they from our world, that they look to us as though they were quite close together, and the rays of light coming from such a multitude of stars, mingle together, and cause that white appearance."

"How very great and wise God must be, to be able to take care of so many worlds at once!" said Ella.

"And remember, Ella, that he not only keeps all these worlds in their orbits, but takes the same care of each one of the innumerable beings which inhabit them, as though there was but that *one* for him to watch over and protect. You recollect that Jesus said, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' Then we need not fear that we are too insignificant for God to notice, or that he will forget us, because he has so many creatures to care for."

"How strange," said Ella, "that God can see everything, and take care of everybody, when he has so many, so *very* many people to watch!"

"There is another thing I want you to think of, Ella," said Miss Layton. "Our little world, compared with the millions of other worlds, is but as one leaf compared to all the leaves on all the trees of the forest, or as one grain of sand to all that are on the sea-shore; and yet the great God, who is the Creator and Ruler of all these mighty worlds, sent his own Son down to our little earth to suffer, and bleed and die to save *us*, who are rebels against him our Creator and lawful sovereign. 'When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' What *amazing* love and condescension! With what wonder and astonishment must the angels have beheld it! And now, Ella, is it not strange that any of us should be guilty of such *base* ingratitude, as to refuse to love this *precious* Saviour, who has shown such wondrous love and condescension toward us? How can *you* refuse to give him your heart *now*--to forsake your sins and devote your life to his service? It is a *reasonable* service, a service he has a right to demand of each one of us. And it is a *delightful* service; his yoke *is* easy, and his burden light."

Things now went on much more smoothly with Ella; Miss Layton's presence being a restraint upon her aunt as well as upon Ella. Miss Prudence still scolded, for she had indulged the habit so long that it had become second nature to her to do so, but not so continually as formerly, and Ella bore it more patiently.

"How do you get along with this child at school, Miss Layton?" asked aunt Prudence one day. "Don't you find her rather unmanageable sometimes? Mr. Burton used to make great complaints of her, and I frequently have much trouble with her myself."

"No, Miss Clinton, I have had very little trouble with Ella. She is always obedient, and though she is careless and quick-tempered, I find that when reasoned with kindly, she is always sorry for her faults and anxious to try to do better."

"Well, I don't see why it is that she behaves so much better for strangers than for her own aunt. I'm sure I've tried my best to make a good child of her, but whenever *I* reprove her, instead of seeming sorry for her faults, she is very apt to fly into a passion. You've no idea how bad she can be, for she has behaved remarkably well--that is, for *her*--since you've been in the house. And yet I can't think it's altogether because you are a stranger, for she must have got pretty well acquainted with you by this time, going to school to you every day, and she didn't mind showing out her badness to Mr. Burton just the same as to me."

"No, Miss Clinton, I don't think it is because I am a stranger; I think Ella is a very affectionate child, and can be very easily ruled by kindness."

"But you scold her, don't you?"

"I do not speak to her in an angry, impatient way. If you speak to a child in the loud, angry tones of passion, it rouses the same feelings in *his* breast, and instead of making him penitent on account of his misconduct, excites a feeling of rebellion against your authority. But if you speak mildly and kindly, in a way that shows him that you do it for his good, and not because his faults annoy and provoke you, you will generally find your admonitions have a very different effect."

"Well, I don't know; but I think when children are bad, they ought to be scolded; and whipped too, sometimes."

"They certainly ought to be *reproved*, Miss Clinton, but not *scolded*; at least not in *my* sense of the word. Some people, I believe, include *all* reproof under that head, but when *I* speak of scolding, I only mean loud and angry, or fretful and unreasonable fault-finding, and *that*, I really believe, never benefitted anybody."

"And you don't whip, either, I suppose, for most folks think that's worse than scolding."

"Then, there I differ from most folks," said Miss Layton, smiling. "I don't pretend to be wiser than Solomon, who said, 'Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him;' and again, 'Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.' I think it is *sometimes* necessary to use the rod,

though not very often; but when all other means have failed to make a child obey, I do not hesitate to resort to that. But different dispositions require different management. Ella, I think, can be most easily ruled through her affections; and I had much rather have the management of such a child, than of one who requires severity. Only show her that you love her, Miss Clinton, as I have no doubt you do, and I think you will find her easily managed."

"Love her! to be sure I do. She's the only near relation I have in the world. There was quite a large family of us, but James and I were all that lived to grow up; I was the eldest, and he the youngest, and I thought the world and all of my brother; but I never wanted him to get married, for I couldn't bear to think he should ever care more for anybody else than he did for me. However, I think now it's just as well he did, for though Ella does plague me half to death sometimes, I wouldn't be without her for a great deal."

"If you would just let Ella see, by your manner, that you do feel such a strong affection for her, I am quite sure you would find her much more manageable."

"Oh well, Miss Layton, people must act according to their dispositions; it never was my way to show my feelings, and I'm too old to alter my ways now."

"I think we should never consider ourselves too old to alter for the better," said Miss Layton, gently. "We are commanded to be 'kindly affectioned one toward another,' and parents are cautioned not to '*provoke* their children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

Miss Layton was an earnest Christian; one whose constant endeavour it was to glorify her Father in heaven by her daily walk, and to bring souls to Christ. She deeply felt her responsibility as a teacher; she remembered that she was making impressions on those young minds and hearts, not only for time, but for eternity; and she felt that, when she had done all in her power for the intellectual improvement of her pupils, she had performed but half her duty; for she considered the salvation of their souls of greater importance than anything else, and felt that her first duty was to lead them to the Saviour; and not only did she pray with, and for them, but she embraced every opportunity to converse with them on the importance of the 'one thing needful,' the necessity of repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And her labours were not without fruit. One evening, Mary Young lingered behind her young companions, and when Miss Layton kindly inquired if she wished to speak to her, she burst into tears, exclaiming, "O Miss Layton, I am such a sinner! what shall I do?"

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 'Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' These are the answers given you in God's own word, Mary."

"But are they meant for *me*, Miss Layton?"

"Surely, Mary; why not for you as well as for another?"

"Because I am so very wicked, and have put off repentance so long?"

"Jesus said, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance,' and, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But, O Miss Layton, I am *so* vile, *so* wicked, I've sinned against him so long and so often, that I'm not *fit* to come to him, I don't *dare* to come."

"I would not have you think any better of yourself, Mary. You are just as vile and sinful as you have said--yes, even far *more* wicked than you think--but it was just such as you that Jesus came to call. Just such ruined, helpless, undone sinners; and the more you feel your sinfulness, the more conscious you are of your lost and ruined condition, the more you feel your need of him, the more willing he is to receive you."

"But I am *so* wicked, my heart is so hard, and when I kneel down to pray, and remember what a holy God I am going to speak to, and that he sees my heart and knows how hard and full of sin it is, I am afraid to say one word. I don't *dare* to pray, for it seems like mocking him."

"You might well be afraid to come, if you had to come in your own name, Mary, but even you may dare to come in the name of Jesus, since he tells us that it was just such sinners he came to seek and to save; and you need not fear to come, weak and helpless as you are, for does he not say, 'Let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me, and he *shall* make peace with me?' You have no strength to help yourself, you must just look to Jesus. Take hold of Christ."

"O Miss Layton, *dare* I come just as I am--with such a hard heart? Must I not wait till I feel my sinfulness more? I don't feel half so sorry for my sins as I ought to."

"Come just as you are, Mary; you will never grow any better by staying away; and do you expect to make yourself

more acceptable to God by continuing longer in rebellion against him--by continuing to refuse to obey his command, 'My son, give me thine heart?'"

"But my heart is so *very* hard, so unfeeling; it seems to me that I ought to feel more sorry for my sins."

"I don't deny, Mary, that you ought indeed to feel more sorrow on account of your sins, but that need not keep you from Christ; if you wait for more feeling, you will never get it. Come *now*, just as you are. '*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.'"

"But it seems to me there never was such a sinner; will Jesus receive me?"

"He says, 'Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.' He says, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.' And again, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Do you doubt his word?"

"O Miss Layton, what must I do?"

"Just go and tell God what you have been telling me, that you are a lost, ruined, helpless, undone sinner, utterly unable to help yourself, or make yourself any better; cast yourself entirely upon his mercy, pleading for salvation only through the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. He will not reject you; you need not fear, for none ever came to him in the appointed way and was refused. 'I will in *no wise* cast out.' You have the word of him who cannot lie."

"When shall I do it, Miss Layton?"

"Now; this moment; the present only is yours."

They knelt down, and most earnestly did Miss Layton plead with God for her young friend, that he would pardon her sins, that he would wash them all away in the blood of the Saviour, that he would enable her to lay hold by faith upon Christ, and trust in him alone for salvation. And Mary prayed for herself, confessing in broken words, and with many sighs and tears, her great sinfulness, her entire helplessness, and pleading for mercy only for the sake of Christ.

From that day there was a marked change in Mary Young. An amiable girl she had always been, but now much more so; so willing to do a kindness to any one, ever ready to deny herself that she might give pleasure to others, and so conscientious, so afraid to do wrong, seeming ever to feel herself in the presence of God, so meek and humble, and with a heart so full of love to Jesus, ever striving to lead her young friends to a like precious faith. The language of her heart was,

"Now will I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found."

CHAPTER VI.

THE time had come for Miss Layton to leave S----, as she had only taken the school for the summer term, and there was a male teacher engaged for the winter. Poor Ella was greatly distressed at the thought of losing her friend. "O Miss Layton," said she, "what shall I do when you are gone? I will have nobody to help me to be good, and nobody to love me."

"Yes, Ella, your aunt loves you very much indeed; she told me so herself."

"Did she?" exclaimed Ella, looking up in astonishment, "I thought she didn't like me at all. She never kisses me, nor tells me she loves me, like mamma used to do, and she's always scolding me and telling me what a troublesome child I am. Are you *sure* she loves me, Miss Layton?"

"Yes, Ellie, *quite* sure, and you must try to believe it and to love her in return. She means it all for your good when she scolds you, and you must try to bear it patiently."

"O Miss Layton," sobbed Ella, "how *can* I ever be good when you are gone?"

"And why should you not, Ellie, just as well as when I am here?"

"Because you're patient and kind, and you seem pleased, and praise me when I do right."

"Ah Ella, don't you remember the other day you told me you thought you had been trying to please God all these weeks that you have been so good, and I told you then that I was afraid you were only trying to please me? And now, my dear child, do you not see that I was right? A desire to please your friends, Ella, is a good motive, but it is not the best. You must learn to do right because it *is* right, and pleasing in the sight of God. It is easy to deceive our friends and ourselves, but we cannot deceive God. He looks at the motives--at the feelings and desires of the heart, while we can see only the outward conduct. Dear Ella, I wish I could see you a child of God, striving to please him in all your ways."

"I do mean to try to be good when you're gone, Miss Layton; but I know I can't."

"Not if you try in your own strength, Ella; but you must ask help of God. Ask him to give you a new heart, my child--a heart that will hate sin, because it is so displeasing to him--a heart loving holiness, and earnestly desiring to please and glorify God. And if you ask these things with your whole heart, and in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, God will hear and grant your petitions, for he says, 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.' And he tells us that he is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than parents are to give good gifts unto their children."

"You try to please *me*, Ella, because you love me; but, O my child, how much more ought you to love your Saviour! I have shown you a little kindness, but what is that compared with what Jesus has done for you? Think how he left that beautiful heaven, and came down to our little world, and suffered, and bled, and died, that he might save you and me. O Ella, how can we help loving him with all our hearts, and striving to please him every moment of our lives! 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'"

In a few weeks, Mr. Crane, the new teacher, came, and school commenced again. Mr. Crane proved to be very much such a teacher as Mr. Burton, though perhaps not quite so severe. Unfortunately, Ella was not at all disposed to like him, nor indeed anybody who took Miss Layton's place; and he seemed to take a dislike to her from the first. Sallie Barnes, too, went to school again, and seeming to dislike Ella more than ever, was continually trying to get her into trouble. There would have been constant quarrelling between them, had not Mary Young acted as peace-maker, and done her best to keep them apart. Mary tried to take Miss Layton's place to Ella, and did all she could to encourage her to industry and attention; and she often talked to her of the love of Christ, trying to lead her to the Saviour, and telling her of the happiness she had found in his service. Still it was a very uncomfortable winter to Ella. She did not become quite as careless and indolent as she had formerly been, nor indulge her temper quite so much, yet she was bad enough to be often in disgrace, both at home and at school.

The winter seemed very long, but spring did come at last, and Ella was busy in her little garden, and again she planted flowers on her mother's grave, and went every day to water them and see how they grew. One evening, when on her way there, as usual, she met Mary Young; and they walked on together.

"Come, Mary," said Ella, when they had reached the churchyard gate, "come in with me, and see how pretty my mother's grave looks; the flowers are all growing so nicely, and the rose-bush has some buds on it already."

They went in; but when they reached the grave, what a scene of desolation met their view! Some one had been there before them, and pulled up all the flowers by the roots, trampled them in the dust, and even cut off the rose-bush close to the ground. Ella stood a moment struck speechless with astonishment and dismay, then bursting into tears, she

exclaimed, passionately:

"It was that wicked Sallie Barnes! I *know* it was! What a mean, bad, wicked girl she is! I hate her, so I do; and I hope somebody will go and tear up all *her* flowers, and spoil all her garden, for I *know* she did this!"

"O Ellie, Ellie! how can you say so?" said Mary. "I am very sorry for you, very sorry indeed; but I did not think you would have been so wicked, as to say that you hate anybody."

"Well, I don't care, I ain't half so bad as she is. I wouldn't have touched her flowers, and I'd rather she had spoilt all my garden, or killed my pet kitten, or done anything than this."

"But you don't know that it was Sallie who did it."

"Yes, I *do*. Nobody else would want to spoil anything of mine. Just see! every *one* of my pretty flowers pulled up, and my poor rose-bush cut down too. Oh! I can never forgive her!"

"O Ellie, *dear* Ellie, don't say that!" said Mary, putting her arms round her. "Have you forgotten that Jesus said, 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses?' Dear Ellie, think how much more you have done to provoke God, than Sallie has ever done to vex and displease you, and how he has never ceased to bless you; and remember the Bible says, 'Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer,' and in another place, 'If he love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?' O Ellie, it frightens me to hear you talk so. Just think how *wicked* it is to say you hate anybody and will never forgive them. What if God should say he would never forgive you?"

"O Mary, I am sorry I said such a wicked thing, but I was angry and didn't think how very bad it was. Won't you ask God to forgive me and help me to like Sallie?"

"I will, Ellie, but you must ask him yourself."

"O Mary, I feel as if I was too wicked to pray; sometimes I am almost afraid to say my prayers. I wish I was as good as you."

"Don't say that, Ellie, I'm not at all good; if you could see all the sinful thoughts and feelings that come into my heart, you would not call me good. I should often be quite in despair, but then I remember that 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' and I beg God to wash away my sins in his blood, and clothe me in the robe of his righteousness. O Ellie dear, there is no love so sweet, so satisfying, as the love of Jesus. You are always wanting some one to love you, why will you refuse the love of him, who laid down his life for you? 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.'"

"I am sure I would like to be a Christian, Mary, if I only knew how."

"There is nothing to hinder you, Ellie, if you really wish it. Jesus stands ready and waiting to save you, and you have nothing to do but come to him; come *now*, just as you are, without waiting to grow any better. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.'"

"How do you mean, Mary? how can I go to Jesus?"

"By praying to him, Ellie; praying with your heart. If you will do so, there is no danger that you will perish, for he never yet cast out any who came to him in the right way."

Ella sighed deeply; and sat for some time looking very thoughtful. Presently she got up from the tomb-stone, where they had been sitting, and began picking up the broken flowers, and putting them into her basket.

"I shall just throw these away, and plant some more," said she. "I guess it's not too late for them to grow. I hope Sallie will not pull them up again; but if she does, I hope I shall not get so angry again as to say that I hate her."

Ella knelt down, as usual, that night to say her prayers before getting into bed, but when she came to the petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," she stopped, for the text that Mary had quoted came freshly into her mind, and she felt in her heart that she had not forgiven Sallie. "Then I can't say that," said she to herself, "for it would just be asking God not to forgive me. What shall I do? I can't say my prayers, and I'm afraid to go to bed without saying them. Mother told me never to do that, and besides I'm afraid I might die before morning."

She sat down to think about it. She tried to feel that she forgave Sallie, but she could not; the more she thought about it, the more she seemed to dislike her. Many little things had occurred, during the last few months, to cause this dislike. Sallie had been continually annoying her in every possible way, and she felt not the least doubt that it was she who had destroyed her flowers--the flowers which affection for her mother had prompted her to plant--and she felt as if the act was an insult to the memory of that dearly loved mother, and therefore much harder to forgive than any unkindness done only to herself.

"I wish the Bible didn't say, 'Love your enemies,' for it's so hard to do it. Sallie is my enemy, and it seems to me I can't

like her; she's so disagreeable, and always doing something to vex me; but then it's very true, what Mary said--I do a great deal more to displease God, than Sallie does to vex me. How strange that he is so good to me! But what shall I do about my prayers? I'll ask God to make me willing to forgive Sallie; I can do that."

She did so, and then got into bed. Still her conscience was not at rest. She tossed about for some time, but at length, overcome with weariness, forgot her troubles in the sound sleep of childhood.

But the same struggle was to be gone through again the next morning, and so it was every night and every morning for days and weeks, her anxiety and distress constantly increasing, so that it would sometimes be long, after she had laid her head upon the pillow, before she could close her eyes in sleep. But she said nothing of all this to any one, for Mary Young had left town for a few weeks on a visit to a friend, and there was no one else whom she dared approach on the subject. At length one night, after tossing on her bed for hours, unable to bear her distress any longer, she threw herself upon her knees and earnestly begged to be enabled to forgive Sallie. This time she prayed with her whole heart, and she immediately felt that her prayer was answered, and that she could forgive her enemy. Then she prayed for herself, that her own sins might be forgiven; that her hard and stony heart might be taken away, and a heart of flesh given to her--a heart hating sin, loving God and desiring above all things to serve and please him.

She rose from her knees feeling relieved and calm, and lying down on her bed, slept soundly till morning. Ella waked with the same feeling of calmness and peace with which she had fallen asleep, and she found a pleasure in offering up her petitions, that morning, which she had never known before. She found it easy now to forgive Sallie and to pray for her, and very pleasant to pray for herself, and she was also conscious of such a desire to be kept from sin, and enabled to please God by her conduct that day, as she had never felt before; but it did not occur to her then, nor for some weeks afterwards, that her heart had been changed. She only knew that she felt a longing desire to become a child of God.

"I have some good news to tell you, Ellie," said Mary Young, as she came into Miss Clinton's sitting-room one morning, where Ella was seated busily engaged with some sewing. Mary's face was beaming with delight, and she looked as if she could scarcely wait for Ella to ask her what her news might be. But she was not kept waiting long.

"What is it, Mary? do tell me!" exclaimed Ella. "I'm sure it's something good, because you look so pleased."

"Yes, indeed, it is good news. Miss Layton is coming back."

"Oh! is she?" cried Ella, dropping her work to clap her hands, "Oh, I'm so glad! I'm *so* glad!"

"But that isn't all," said Mary. "It's a select school she's to have, and so she is to stay all the time--summer and winter."

"Oh, how nice! and I hope she'll live with us again."

"What's that you're talking about, Ella?" asked aunt Prudence, who had just come into the room.

"Oh, such good news, aunt Prudence. Miss Layton is coming back, and she is going to teach a select school, and so she will stay all the time, and I was just wishing that she would come and live with us again."

"Well, child, I think you're quite likely to have your wish. I had a letter from her this morning asking if I would take her to board again, and I shall write back that I'll be very glad to have her, for she's very pleasant company, and I don't have half the trouble with you when she is in the house."

The next week Miss Layton returned to S---, and became once more an inmate of Miss Clinton's family, and soon afterwards she opened her school. It was not long before Miss Layton noticed a change in Ella. She never had any of those violent fits of passion now; she was more patient and humble, and though she seemed to care less for praise than formerly, she was more anxious than ever to do right; she read her Bible more--not now as a task or a duty, but because she *loved* to read it--and she was more thoughtful and quiet, and listened attentively, and apparently with pleasure, when any conversation on the subject of religion was introduced in her hearing.

One evening as they sat together on the porch, Miss Layton said to her, "Ellie, what is the matter with you? you have grown so thoughtful and quiet lately. What are you thinking about?"

"I was just looking up at the stars, Miss Layton, and thinking of what you said to me once about the great love of Jesus Christ in coming down to our little world to suffer and die for us, and I was wishing--Oh, so much!--that he would give me a new heart, and teach me to love him as I ought."

"If you really wished it with all your heart, Ellie, it was a prayer; and a prayer that God will hear and grant, for he says, 'Ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart.' But don't you love the Saviour, Ellie?"

"Oh yes, Miss Layton, I hope I do. I love to read about him, to think about him, and to pray to him; and Oh, I want to

be one of his children! Oh, I wish I could be a Christian!"

"Dear Ellie, I hope you are one. You love the Saviour, and want to love him more; you love to pray to him, to think of him, and to read and hear about him; you love the society of his people, and I have noticed for some time that you seem to be trying to do right that you may please God. By your fruits we are to know you, and judging by them, I hope that with you, Ellie, 'old things have passed away and all things have become new."

"O Miss Layton, do you think it can be that I am a Christian? my heart is so hard and full of sin. But Oh, I am *sure I do* love Jesus, and I wish more than anything else that God would make me good!"

And now perhaps you, my reader, are thinking that all Ella's troubles are over; that everything will now go on smoothly, and she will have no more struggles with pride, indolence, or ill-temper. Alas! you are sadly mistaken.

The Christian's struggles are not over as soon as he turns his face Zionward; nay they are but scarcely commenced. He has but buckled on his armour for the fight, but girded up his loins that he may run the race; for the Christian life is compared, in the Scriptures, to a race--to a warfare, and we are exhorted to so run that we may obtain, to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life; and we are told that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Yes, the Christian's life must be one of continued warfare against sin and Satan; for as long as he remains in this fallen world, so long will his corrupt nature, the body of sin and death, cleave to him. Yet he need not despair; for is he not told, "My grace is sufficient for thee"--"As thy day so shall thy strength be"--"The Lord is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape"--"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us?" We are not left to fight alone. Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation.

Many a hard fought battle with her temper had Ella, and many bitter tears of repentance did she shed when no eye but God's could see her; but though at times she was almost in despair, she still struggled on, crying to God for help, and soon those about her could see that she daily became more patient and gentle, more meek and humble, more Christ-like, more full of love to Jesus. But aunt Prudence would not see that it was religion that had changed Ella so much. She said it was partly because Miss Layton was there to keep her in order, and partly because Ella was outgrowing her faults; that she was getting old enough to feel ashamed to indulge her temper. She forgot that her own temper was quite as bad, as when she was a little girl.

CHAPTER VII.

MISS LAYTON continued to teach in S---- for several years, until Ella was quite done going to school. When Ella had left school, she thought she would like to teach, but aunt Prudence said, "No, there is no need of your teaching. I have enough to support us both, and you must stay at home and learn housework and sewing for a year at least."

Ella of course did as her aunt wished; she stayed at home and worked, trying to do everything just as her aunt wanted it done; but Miss Prudence was very particular indeed, and it was often a very difficult matter to please her. Everything must be done exactly in *her* way, or it was not done right at all; and sometimes she would not explain how she wished a thing done, and then, after it was finished, she scolded because it was not done exactly her way. All this was very trying, and Ella had much need to pray for patience, and not only to pray, but to watch to keep her quick temper from getting the better of her. Daily and hourly she asked God to help her to 'let patience have her perfect work,' and to those who knew what an ungovernable temper she had had in her childhood, it was really surprising to see how very patiently she bore with all her aunt's vexatious ways.

About a year after Ella had quit school, Miss Layton went away to keep house for a brother of hers, who had lately lost his wife. A few days before she left, she and Mary, and Ella were taking a walk together, as they had often done before.

"O Miss Layton, I am so sorry you are going away!" said Ella, sadly.

"But not so despairing, I hope, as *little* Ellie was on a former occasion of the kind. Ah, I cannot call you *little* Ellie now, seeing that you are fully half a head taller than myself."

"No;" said Ella, answering the first part of Miss Layton's remark, "I am not despairing, for though very dear, you are not my best friend now."

"No, dear Ella, and I am glad to know that I am not. Glad, *very* glad to know that you have a Friend who has promised never to leave nor forsake you, and whose love will never grow cold; with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' How consoling when disappointed in the affection of earthly friends,--saddened by their estrangement, their absence, or their death--oh, how sweet to turn to that love that knows no change; to think of him who ever liveth, who is ever present, and who, having once loved us, will love us to the *end*--of him 'whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!'"

"Dear Miss Layton," said Mary, "we shall miss you very much indeed. How many sweet talks we have had together, of our best Friend, and our heavenly home!"

"Yes, Mary, and when I am gone, you and Ellie must talk together of these things. You must 'consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.' My dear girls, I hope you will ever be earnest, working Christians, striving to bring forth much fruit, that you may glorify your Father in heaven. You both profess to be followers of Christ; you have named the name of Jesus. Oh, be careful that you bring no reproach upon that blessed name; be careful to depart from iniquity, remembering that the world around you will judge of religion by the influence it has upon your life and conduct. There can be no such thing as an idle Christian; we are commanded to 'walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time,'--to 'work while it is called to-day, because the night cometh, when no man can work.' Then strive ever to be about your Master's business, use every talent in the service of Christ, that in the last great day you may hear the welcome plaudit, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Many persons seem to think that it is only the minister whose duty it is to labour for the conversion of sinners, but that is entirely a mistaken notion; the Bible says nothing of the kind, and it certainly is both the duty and the privilege of each and every Christian to labour to bring souls to Christ.

 'Wealth, talent, labour, freely give;
 Spend and be spent that they may live;
 What has your Saviour done for you--
 And what for him would you not do?'

"And that you may be able to do this, try to keep your own hearts full of love to him; pray for his Spirit; read every day, and meditate upon some portion of his life, and talk often together of what he has done and suffered for you, and of those heavenly mansions he has gone to prepare. 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.' Remember, my dear young friends, that this is not your rest, this world is not your home. You are strangers and pilgrims who seek a better country, even an heavenly, having no more interest in this world, than a traveller feels in the country through which he is passing, to reach his home; then be careful that your affections are not placed upon it, for 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Remember, that you are not your

own, and have no right to live for yourselves; for you have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and are to be a peculiar people zealous of good works. May the love of Christ ever constrain you to labour diligently in his service!"

It was only a few weeks after Miss Layton had left them, that Miss Clinton lost nearly all her property, having nothing left but the house in which they lived, with a few acres of ground around it. Miss Prudence, who had always looked upon poverty as disgraceful, was very much distressed and mortified by her loss; but she was of much too active a disposition, to sit down and waste time in useless fretting.

"I never was rich," said she to Ella, "but I never was *poor* before. I never had to work for my living, but that we'll both have to do now. I shall move away to some other place, however, for I'm not going to stay here to be talked about and pitied for the change in my circumstances, by people that know me. I shall just go off amongst strangers."

Ella would have preferred remaining amongst friends, but as her aunt did not consult her at all, she kept her opinions and feelings to herself.

"Well, well," continued Miss Prudence, "I do think it's very hard to have to lose all now, when I'm beginning to grow old. You don't seem to take it much to heart, Ella, but I can tell you, you may live to beg your bread yet."

"Oh no, aunt Prudence," said Ella; "I have not the least fear of ever coming to that. Does not David say, 'I have been young, and now I am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread?' And God says, 'Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure;' and if you are growing old, aunt, I am young and strong, and can work for us both; and thanks to you, I have a good education that qualifies me to teach, and I have no doubt that I can get a school somewhere; so cheer up, for I am sure we shall do finely, and I shall dearly love to be able to do something towards repaying you for all the care and trouble you have had with me."

"You don't know anything about it, Ella; you've no idea of the evils of poverty," said Miss Prudence.

"I know, aunt, that the Bible says, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,' and that we have no need to be unhappy, because we are poor."

In a few weeks after this conversation took place, Miss Clinton had found a tenant for her house, and she and Ella had removed to a little town, some forty or fifty miles distant, where they rented two or three rooms in a small house, and Miss Prudence took in sewing. Ella had brought a letter of introduction from her pastor in S---- to Mr. Thomas, the minister, whose preaching she and her aunt now attended; and as soon as they were settled, she called and presented it. Mr. Thomas received her very politely and kindly, telling her that he had noticed them in church the previous Sabbath, and intended calling on them soon, and then he inquired if there was anything he could do for her.

Ella told him of her desire to open a school, asking him if he could tell her of any suitable room, and if he thought she could find pupils enough to make it worth while for her to make the attempt.

He replied encouragingly, saying he knew of a room that would suit very well, if she could get it, as he thought it likely she could, and that he had no doubt she would soon find scholars enough to fill it, as such a school as she proposed teaching was very much needed in the town; adding that he would go with her now, if she liked, to see about the room, and to call on two or three families that he thought would probably send to her. Ella gladly assented, and they went; first in search of the room--which after some little trouble they succeeded in securing--and then to call on the families Mr. Thomas had mentioned.

As a person introduced by their minister, Ella was received very kindly by all, and several promised to send their children if she should open a school. She returned home in excellent spirits, to tell her aunt of her success.

"You seem very much elated, Ella," said Miss Prudence, "but I warn you that things won't always look so bright. You will find enough to damp your spirits even before you commence your school, and plenty of trouble afterwards, I'll assure you."

"I hope you may prove a false prophet this time, aunt," said Ella, smiling. Miss Prudence only replied by a shake of the head, and the next day's experience proved to Ella the truth of what she had said.

Mr. Thomas had told Ella she ought to call from house to house inquiring for scholars, as that was the custom of the place, and the only way to collect a good school. She determined to follow his advice, and as soon as her morning work was done up, she put on her things, and started out to do so. To Ella, who was naturally diffident and retiring in her disposition, this was a very disagreeable and trying business.

She called at several houses before she found any pupils. Some had no children, or only those that were too young to send, and some preferred sending to the public school, or thought they needed their children at home.

She was beginning to feel quite discouraged, when she found herself in front of a large house which bore the appearance of the abode of wealth.

"I will go in here," she said to herself, "they must be rich and *able* to send their children, if they have any, and I think I hear little voices."

She rang the door-bell. A servant appeared, and in answer to her inquiry for the lady of the house, ushered her into a handsomely furnished parlor, where she sat waiting, what seemed to her a very long time. At last the lady entered, made a slight bow, and sat down waiting for Ella to speak first. Her heart beat quickly.

"I am about opening a school," said she, in a timid voice, "and I called to ask, if you had any children to send."

"Oh, you're the Miss Clinton that I heard was about starting a school! Yes, I have three I'd like to send, but how much do you ask a quarter?"

"Two dollars and a half for little ones, and for others according to their studies."

"Oh, my! that's too much entirely! Why there's my Annie has never been to school in her life, and don't know one letter from another. I couldn't *think* of paying that much for her, and Howard only spells in two or three letters, and Jane is just beginning geography. You oughtn't to charge so much for little ones, for you know we only send them to get them out of the way, and we don't expect them to learn much. Any body can teach A B C you know, and I think teaching must be very easy work."

"The little ones are very troublesome, you know," said Ella, "and don't you think it is worth something to have them taken care of for six hours every day?"

"Well I sha'n't pay any more than a dollar and a half for my two youngest, and two for Jane. You must remember that you're just commencing, and nobody expects to make anything the first year in any business. You can't expect to have many scholars at first, because how are we to know that you are a good teacher? and if you want people to send their children, you'll have to take them very cheap."

"It would not pay at all, ma'am, at the rate you propose," said Ella; "you must remember that I have to furnish my room, and pay my rent, and very soon I will have to buy fuel. And if I am to have but few scholars, it seems to me that it's only an additional reason why I need to ask a good price."

"Oh, well, you can't expect to make anything the first year; I've often heard business men say so; but I've told you what I'm willing to give for my children, and I sha'n't pay a cent more. If other people choose to give more, of course they can do as they please."

Ella sat considering what she had better do.

"Will you take them for that?" said Mrs. Wiley, "I want to have it settled at once."

"Perhaps I had better," thought Ella, "as I am just commencing, and they are the first that have offered to-day, though it will be teaching them for almost nothing, and we need money sadly; but then anything is better than nothing. Yes, ma'am," she said aloud, "I will take them for that, as they are the first that have been offered to-day; though I am sure it is far less than my labour will be worth."

"Oh well, you mustn't expect to get the worth of your labour at first, for, as I told you before, people never expect to make anything the first year."

Ella carried a much heavier heart out of that house, than she brought into it. She felt so discouraged, so heart-sick, that it required quite an effort to keep back her tears, and she felt as if it were almost impossible to enter the next house. She was very young, and this was her first trial of the world. But she remembered that she was in the path of duty, and sending up a silent prayer for strength and assistance, she opened the gate, walked quickly up the path, and knocked at the door. It was opened by a pleasant looking lady, who kindly invited her to come in and take a seat. Ella sat down, and was hesitating how to introduce her business, when the lady remarked:

"You are the Miss Clinton, who is about opening a school, I believe?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Ella.

"I am very glad of it indeed, for I don't like to send my children to the public school; they get into so much bad company there. What are your terms, Miss Clinton?"

Ella made the same reply she had to Mrs. Wiley.

"Well, that's little enough, I'm sure," said Mrs. Blair, "for I know children are very troublesome; and I often wonder how teachers ever have patience to bear with them. I have four large enough to go, and I shall send them all, if you will take them. I hope they'll behave themselves, but if they don't, you must either correct them yourself, or let me know. The youngest is only four years old, but she's a bright little thing, and I'm sure will learn. Have you been in to see Mrs. Wiley?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Ella; "she is to send three, but is not willing to pay much more than half price."

"What a shame! She's perfectly able to pay double the price if she chose, for Mr. Wiley is the richest man in town; but they are very close, and never pay more for anything than they are obliged to. But you ought not to have taken them so low; the best plan is never to take any for less than your price, unless they are poor, and you do it out of charity."

"I did not know what was best," said Ella, "but I thought as they were the first that had offered to-day, and I am but just commencing, perhaps I had better not refuse."

"It may be so, but don't let anybody else know that you took them for half price, or they may expect you to do the same for them. I saw you looked quite down-hearted when you came in, but you must not get discouraged; there are some mean people here as well as everywhere else, but there are a great many very nice ones too; and I have no doubt you will have a very good school, and do finely after a little."

"Thank you; you are very kind," said Ella, gratefully.

"Kind words don't cost anything; so I think we can all afford to give them," replied Mrs. Blair, smiling.

"Aunt Prudence," said Ella that evening, half laughing and half crying, "I think I shall find it a puzzling matter to know how to manage my school; at least if I try to please all the parents. One woman told me her child would have to be petted and humoured; another, that she wished me to be very strict with hers. One thinks that they should play nearly all the time, and another, that they should have scarcely any play at all. One says I must never strike *her* child; she will never send him where there is any whipping done; and judging by what I saw of him to-day, I think it will be no easy task to manage him, for he doesn't mind his mother at all. And lastly, another woman tells me I *must* whip *her* child, for she knows I can't manage her without. Now what am I to do?"

"Well, Ella, you must try to do your duty by them all, and just use your own judgment about it. It would be impossible to please all the parents, so you may just as well take your own way."

"Thank you, aunt Prudence, you have quite comforted me. I will take your advice; try to do my duty, and ask God to give me wisdom, and I know he will, for he says, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.' I am to have some quite large girls, aunt Prudence; some of them quite as tall and as old as myself."

"Do you think you can manage them?"

"I don't know, I feel a little nervous about it, and should feel *very* much so, were it not for the promise I just repeated, and this other, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be.'"

"How fond you are of quoting Scripture, Ella, you seem to have a text for everything! You are just like your mother for that. I don't see how you can ever remember and think of them all."

"I suppose it must be because they are so sweet and comforting," replied Ella.

Ella lay awake a long time that night, arranging her plans for conducting her school. It seemed to her a very great undertaking, full of responsibility, and her thoughts could dwell upon little else for weeks beforehand. She thought over all Miss Layton's rules, and her mode of teaching and of managing her scholars, and determined to copy her as nearly as possible. She remembered that Miss Layton always opened her school with prayer; must *she* do that? She shrank at the thought of doing so before so many young persons, some of whom were older than herself. "But I *ought* to do it," said she to herself. "In all thy ways acknowledge him; yes, I *ought* to do it, and whatever I *ought* to do I *can* do. But I know there are many teachers who do not,—perhaps, after all, it is not necessary. It would be a great cross to me to do it. I will pray for my scholars at home, surely that will be sufficient. No, it will not; I must show them that I am on the Lord's side, that I am trying to serve him, and am not ashamed to have it known that I am his servant. I will ask God to deliver me from the fear of man, and help me to forget all but his presence, that I may not approach him with lip service, but may come with my *whole heart*. Yes, I will acknowledge him in all my ways, and he will direct my paths."

Ella succeeded pretty well in collecting a school. She had nearly twenty scholars present on the first day, and, in accordance with her resolution, she did open her school with prayer that morning, and every day afterwards, though for a long time it continued to be a trial to her to do so. She found many opportunities to practise patience, both in teaching and governing her scholars. Sometimes they were idle, or dull; sometimes stubborn, mischievous, or impertinent. Sometimes they came late, or stayed away altogether, until they were far behind their classes; and there seemed to be no end to their carelessness, and forgetfulness concerning books, inks, pens, pencils, &c. &c. Then at the end of the term she found it both difficult and disagreeable to collect her dues. And these were not all her trials. She was separated from her dear Christian friends, Miss Layton, and Mary Young, and she missed them sadly. And aunt Prudence's temper had not been improved by poverty, as Ella was often made to feel. But when the weary day with all its cares and toils was over, and she could be alone with her Bible and her best Friend, her heavenly Father, how sweet it was to cast all her cares upon him, to tell him all her griefs, her troubles, her doubts, and her fears, and to ask him for

strength for coming trials!

How sweet to remember 'all his mercies past, and future good implore!' How sweet to read his blessed word and call each promise hers! How sweet was the sense of pardoned sin--how sweet to remember that Christ had kept the law for her, and suffered the penalty in her stead!

Another, though inferior source of comfort was found in writing to, and receiving letters from Miss Layton, and Mary Young.



CHAPTER VIII.

MISS PRUDENCE continued quite unable to do anything all winter, some of Ella's scholars dropped off on account of the severity of the weather, and the man who had taken her aunt's house failed to pay his rent. All these causes combined brought down their resources very much indeed, and Ella began to economize in every possible way, while she looked forward to the future with a good deal of anxiety. She also exerted herself to sew in the evenings that she might earn a little more, but she was generally too weary and sleepy after her day's work to accomplish much. She did not fail to ask help of Him who has promised to be a Father to the fatherless, and to hear his children when they cry; and sometimes when she had cast all her cares upon him, and read the precious promises of his word, her heart was filled with peace and joy, and she felt sure that he would never suffer them to come to want; but she was a young Christian, and sometimes her faith was weak, and unbelief would suggest that perhaps, after all, these promises were not meant for her; that one so weak and sinful as she, could hardly hope she was a child of God; then what right had she to claim his promises as hers? and besides, were not Christians sometimes left to suffer want? and then she was unhappy indeed.

One day Ella felt very much distressed; they were almost out of flour, and fuel, and nearly every other necessary, all her last quarter's money had been spent, their rent was due the next day, and her present quarter would not close for some weeks. What was to be done? She had no earthly friend to go to for assistance, but she carried her trouble to her heavenly Father.

"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." These were some of the promises she found in his word, and feeling a firm assurance that he would be faithful to his promises, she went to her work with a calm and quiet mind, and a cheerful countenance. "Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Do you doubt it, reader? Only make the trial. "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord."

Ella returned from school in the evening, and still there was no apparent prospect of relief, but she did not feel troubled; she knew it would come in due time. Her aunt had no idea how nearly destitute they were, for Ella had not thought it necessary to tell her, as she knew it would only distress her, and could do no good.

Tea was over, the dishes washed, everything put in order, and Ella had seated herself with her sewing at her aunt's bedside, when there was a rap at the outer door. Ella rose, went into the hall, and opened the door. Seeing a gentleman standing before it, she said,

"Good evening, sir, will you walk in?"

"No, thank you," said he, "I have hardly time. I cannot account for it, Miss Clinton, but it has come into my head several times to-day, that you might be in want of money, and that I might just as well pay you for the children's schooling *now*, as two or three weeks hence; so I have brought it round. I suppose you have no objection?"

"Thank you," said Ella, scarcely able to command her voice, "I *was* in need of it. You are very kind indeed."

"Not at all," said he. "Good evening!"

It was a gentleman who sent her a number of scholars, and the money he had brought was more than sufficient to relieve their present necessities. With a full heart, Ella thanked the Giver of all good. "Oh, how could I ever doubt!" she exclaimed. "Truly he is faithful to his promises!" She now went to her aunt, and told her the whole story.

As they had only Ella's school to depend upon, they had quite a struggle to live through the winter, and several times were brought to great straits, but help always came in time to save them from actual suffering.

As spring approached, there was some improvement in Miss Prudence's health, so that she was now able to sit in an arm-chair through the day, and use her hands a little in sewing. She had been more silent than usual for some days; seeming very low spirited, seldom speaking, and when she did, always in her very crossest tones.

It was a dark, chilly, uncomfortable afternoon. Ella was coming home from school, and as she passed the post-office, she called to inquire for letters. It was a long time since she had heard from either of her friends, and she was anxiously looking for a letter; but there was none, and she turned away with a heavy sigh. There are times when the mind seems to partake of the weariness of the body; when the spirit sinks beneath its load; when one feels weary of life--weary of the constant struggle for existence, and longs to be done with the cares and toils, the doubts, fears and anxieties of this life. So Ella felt to-night, as she wended her weary way towards her cheerless home.

"Oh, if I had only one friend to sympathize with, and encourage me!" sighed she. "It is so long since I have heard from either of my dear friends, that I almost begin to fear that they have forgotten me. If so, how entirely friendless I am! No, not *friendless*; there are many dear, kind, christian people here, though I do not yet know them well enough to go to them with my troubles, and ask for their sympathy; but have I not a 'Friend that sticketh closer than a brother?' one whose love will never grow cold; one who never changes; 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?'"

'His love, no end nor measure knows,
No change can turn its course;
Immutably, the same it flows
From one eternal source.'

"Oh, how wrong is this feeling of discontent and weariness; this repining at my lot, when I know that it is all ordered by Him who is infinitely wise and good! And Oh, how many blessings I have, and yet how unworthy am I of the very least of them! 'Be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Precious promise! what more do I need?"

Filled with such sweet and comforting thoughts, she entered the room where her aunt was sitting, with a light step and cheerful face. She was extremely surprised to find Miss Prudence in tears. It was a sight so unusual--for it had always been Miss Prudence's boast that she was above such weakness--that Ella thought something dreadful must have happened.

"Dear aunt Prudence, what is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"Nothing," said Miss Prudence, turning away her face.

"Nothing, dear aunt Prudence? I am very sure it can be no trifle that moves *you* so. My dear aunt, we two are all alone in the world; surely, you will not refuse me a share in your confidence."

"Go away, Ella! I told you it was nothing; can't you believe me?" replied Miss Prudence, angrily.

Seeing that it would be useless to press the matter farther at that time, Ella left her aunt, and set about getting tea, her mind all the time occupied with conjectures as to what might be the cause of Miss Prudence's trouble. Miss Prudence had never made a profession of religion, but she often boasted that she was "quite as good as any member of the church, and a great deal better than some of them; for she read a chapter in the Bible every day, and went regularly to church twice every Sabbath, rain or shine, which was more than some of the members did. She was a good neighbour, kind to the poor, never cheated anybody in her life, and always tried to do as near right as she could; and so she thought she had about as good a chance of going to Heaven as any of the rest." Indeed, she was very much like the Pharisee who prayed: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; unjust, extortioners, nor even as this publican."

Ella had offered up many fervent prayers on her aunt's behalf, that she might be led to see upon what a broken reed she was leaning; that God would open the eyes of her understanding, that she might become sensible how entirely without merit were her very best deeds, yea, even needing to be forgiven, hateful in the sight of God, because not done from any desire to glorify him, but from entirely selfish motives; and that seeing these things to be so, and how utterly helpless and undone she was, she might be led to lay hold upon the hope set before her, and accept of Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel, trusting in his merits alone for salvation. Could it be that her prayers were about to be answered? She felt a faint hope that it might indeed be so. The evening passed in almost total silence, for though Miss Prudence seemed restless and ill at ease, she was not disposed to talk, but appeared to be occupied with her own thoughts. Ella was wearied with the labours of the day, and had been nodding over her sewing for some minutes, when the clock struck nine.

"You had better go to bed, Ella," said Miss Prudence. "There is no use in trying to sew, when you can't keep your eyes open."

"I believe I might as well," replied Ella, folding up her work; "but you will go too, aunt Prudence, won't you?"

"No; it's no use, for I couldn't sleep," said Miss Clinton, leaning her head upon her hand, with a heavy sigh.

"Do your limbs pain you worse than usual to-night, aunt?" asked Ella.

"No, child, they're easy enough at present; but bodily pain is not always the hardest to bear."

"What is it that troubles you so, dear aunt? let me at least give you my sympathy, if I can do nothing more."

Miss Prudence remained silent, but Ella ventured again to urge her to confide her trouble to her.

"Ella," she said at last, "I used to say--and I *thought* it too--that I was quite as good as any of my neighbours, and quite as likely to go to Heaven as any of those who made a profession of religion. I considered myself quite good, and deserving of salvation; but lately my views and feelings have changed, and I seem to myself to be a very great sinner,

so hardened and so wicked that it frightens me to think of it; for I don't see how it is possible that such a vile wretch can be saved. I'm afraid I have sinned away my day of grace, and I shall go down to hell."

"Dear aunt Prudence, listen to what God says, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'"

"But not such sinners as I; remember how many years I have been turning a deaf ear to all his invitations; how often he has called, and I have refused. Oh! these words are constantly ringing in my ears: 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamities, I will mock when your fear cometh.' O Ella, I am sure those words are spoken to me," she added, with a shudder, covering her face with her hands.

"Dear aunt, he says, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.'"

"It doesn't mean me," she replied, with a hopeless shake of the head.

"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Dear aunt, those words are addressed to you as much as to any one."

Miss Clinton shook her head. "They might have been once, but not now, it is too late."

"Aunt Prudence, God says, 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he turn from his evil way and live.' 'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'"

"That's not for me, for I can't turn. I might have done it once, but now it's too late."

"Why do you say it is too late, aunt? Would you limit the power of God? Are we not told that 'Christ is able to save to the *uttermost*, all that come unto God by him,' and does he not invite you to come? 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and *I will* give you rest.'"

"But he says, 'My Spirit shall not always strive,' and I can't expect that he will ever strive with me again, since I have resisted him, and grieved him away so often. No, it is too late."

"Aunt Prudence, I am sure he has not ceased to strive with you, or you would not feel the anxiety that you do. I believe he is striving with you now."

"No, Ella, you have no idea how hard, how dreadfully hard my heart is. Ella, fifty years I have lived in rebellion against God, I have given all my best days to the world; I did not seek God early, and now I cannot expect to find him."

"Remember the thief on the cross, aunt Prudence, saved at the eleventh hour. 'God is the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.'"

"But who will by no means clear the guilty," added Miss Prudence, "and who more guilty than I?"

"But aunt Prudence, he says, 'I have found a ransom.' Jesus says, 'Come unto me and *I will* give you rest; you have only to come casting away every other dependence, and he *will* receive you.' 'Return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon you, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.'"

"No, Ella, not me. I have sinned away my day of grace, and now it is too late; there can be no more mercy for such a wretch as I."

"Aunt Prudence," said Ella, "the adversary of souls, the devil, 'who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,' has long been successful in making you put off repentance, by persuading you to trust in a false hope, telling you that you were as good, and as likely to be saved as others; and now that he finds that he cannot make you shut your eyes any longer to the danger, he would fain persuade you that it is *too late* to repent and seek God. But don't-- Oh! don't listen to his suggestions. It is *not* too late. Jesus stands ready to save you. Oh! come to him now, for he says, 'I will in *no wise* cast out.'"

Miss Clinton sat for some time without speaking, her face buried in her hands, while Ella was silently lifting up her heart to God in her behalf.

"Ella," said she at last, "go to bed, child, and leave me; I wish to be alone now."

Ella bent over her aunt, and kissed her forehead, saying in a low tone, "Good night, dear aunt; remember, 'He is able to save unto the *uttermost*.'"

The next morning, Miss Prudence seemed more composed, but said nothing on the subject of the last night's conversation, and there was something in her manner which kept Ella from alluding to it. Weeks passed away, and gradually a change seemed to come over Miss Prudence. She seemed calm, and even cheerful, was more patient than Ella had ever known her, and spoke very gently and pleasantly, and Ella several times surprised her reading her Bible,

and shedding tears over it; still she said nothing on the subject for some time.

At length one quiet Sabbath-evening when they were sitting together at the window, watching the last rays of the setting sun, laying her hand on her niece's shoulder, while the tears trembled in her eyes, she said, "Ella, I have begun to indulge a faint, a trembling hope that I have been born again, that I am changed; that with me 'old things have passed away, and all things have become new,' and that when my Sabbaths here on earth are over, I shall go to spend an eternal Sabbath in heaven. Yes, spend it in praising redeeming love,

'Amazing love! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.'

"And it is to *you*, Ella, under God, more than to any one else, that I owe this. I have watched you for years, and have been astonished to see the careless, proud, self-willed, passionate child, change to the meek, submissive, patient, and humble young Christian. I had often said to myself that there was nothing in religion, but how could I doubt it any longer when I saw such fruits?"

"O aunt Prudence," said Ella, "I have often felt afraid that *I* was the stumbling block in your way that was keeping you from coming to Christ; for I have come so very far short in the performance of my duty, I have shown so little of the spirit of Christ."

"I know you are not perfect, Ella, but you are strangely changed, and I can plainly see that you are trying to serve God."

"Give the glory where it is due, dear aunt Prudence; but Oh, how happy I am! I feel as if I had nothing more to ask for, now that you, my dear aunt, will be my companion in my pilgrimage. God has heard my prayers. He is indeed 'the hearer, and answerer of prayer.' But, aunt Prudence, you had two much brighter examples of piety before you, in my mother and Miss Layton; did not the beautiful consistency of *their* lives convince you of the truth and value of religion?"

"I never knew them until years after their conversion, and when I was forced to notice how good and amiable they were, I said to myself, It is their natural disposition; but I *knew* what *you* were by nature, so that that excuse did not avail me then, and I could not but acknowledge to myself, that nothing but the power of God could have wrought such a change. And I bless God for the affliction, with which he has visited me this winter, for while confined to my bed unable to do anything, and often with nothing but my thoughts to occupy me, I seemed to be compelled to think of my past life, and to consider my latter end."

During the ensuing summer, Miss Clinton's health was almost entirely restored. She also recovered the money she had lost, and they returned to S---, to their old home. Mary and Ella were rejoiced to be once more near each other; able to take sweet counsel together, to walk together to the house of God, and together to talk of their common hopes and joys. All her old neighbours were surprised to see the strange change in Miss Prudence. The quiet, gentle, humble woman that returned to them, was so different from the loud, boisterous, proud and passionate woman that went away, that they knew not what to make of it. They all agreed that she was very much improved, but no one enjoyed the change so keenly as Ella. There was now no discord in her home, but peace and love reigned in its stead. Aunt Prudence, from being her greatest trial, had become her dearest earthly comfort: formerly, they seemed to have nothing in common; now,

"Their fears, their hopes, their aims were one,
Their comforts and their cares."

"Aunt Prudence," said Ella to her aunt, one day a few months after their return, "the school Miss Layton had when she was here last, is now without a teacher, and a gentleman was speaking to me yesterday about taking it; what do you say?"

"I think you had better not; there is no longer any necessity for you to exert yourself, unless you are too proud to depend upon me."

"I confess that I prefer being independent, aunt, though I hope it is not *pride* that makes me feel so; but setting that reason aside, I still feel a desire to teach. I think that scarcely any one has more opportunities for doing good than a christian teacher, and it is certainly our duty to do all the good we can; to use every talent in the service of our Master. 'To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' You know I succeeded in my first effort so well, that the parents of my pupils urged me to stay, and continue my school; I think that proves that I have a talent for teaching, and if I have, ought I not to use it?"

"Think of the great, the solemn responsibility, Ella."

"I have thought of it, aunt Prudence, and I feel that it is a *very* great responsibility; but would I get rid of it by burying my talent in the earth?"

"But, Ella, you used to come home looking so miserably tired, so completely worn out. I don't believe, my child, that it is your duty to work yourself to death."

"Nor I, either, aunt Prudence; but I don't think it will kill me. You must remember that *then* I had the care of the house in addition to the school; and that I shall not have *now*; and besides, as somebody says, 'I had rather *wear* out than *rust* out,' rather die of too much work than of too much idleness."

"Well, Ella, if you really are so anxious to teach, I will not oppose it; but as to your not liking to be dependent upon me, what difference does it make whether you take a part of my money now, or get it all at my death? for I have no one to leave it to but you, and it must all be yours at last."

"Don't talk about dying, dear aunt," said Ella, with tears in her eyes; "I hope you have a great many years yet to live."

"If it is God's will, I have no objection, Ella; but I hope we may both be ready whenever our Lord shall come; if we are only prepared, it will make very little difference *when* the summons comes. But I did not mean to distress you; I am perfectly well, and as likely, I suppose, to live to old age as any one else."

"Well, auntie, may I take the school?"

"Yes, child; if you wish."

So Ella taught school in the same town and in the very same room where she had been a pupil herself; and people said she was very much such a teacher as Miss Layton, which Ella considered the highest praise that could have been bestowed upon her. And she *was* like Miss Layton in her patient, gentle manner towards her scholars, and her earnest efforts to lead them to Christ.

"By their *fruits* ye shall know them." Reader, what kind of fruit are *you* bearing? "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Judged by your fruits, what are you? A good or a corrupt tree? Are you a careless, unconcerned sinner walking in the broad road that leads to eternal death?—or are you treading the strait and narrow way that leads to life everlasting? Are you taken up with the things of *this* world, living only for the present moment, careless of the interests of your immortal soul, and unconcerned about the forgiveness of your sins? Are you a slave to the law, trying to work out a salvation of your own, and merit heaven by your own good works?—or are you a loving child, serving a tender and beloved Parent, striving to bring forth much fruit, that you 'may glorify your Father which is in heaven?' "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

"We would no longer lie
Like slaves beneath the throne;
My faith shall Abba, Father, cry;
And thou the kindred own."