

FINLEY MARTHA

ELLA CLINTON; OR, BY
THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL
KNOW THEM

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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 meddling, 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.

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