

Mathews Joanna Hooe

Mamie's Watchword



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Содержание

I.	5
II.	10
III.	15
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	19

Mamie's Watchword Thou God Seest Me

I. *THE DOLL*

**"MAMMA! can I have it? Can I, mamma?
Buy it for me, buy it; will you, mamma?"**

"May be so, dear. I will see about it."

"No, not may be; not see about it, mamma! I must have it, and I know you can afford it!"

The speakers were Mrs. Stone and her little daughter Mamie; the scene, Miss Ashton's broad, shady piazza, where, at this time, a little fair was taking place.

And what was the object on which Mamie's heart was so set; for which she was begging so persistently, you will ask.

Why, just this.

A beautiful doll; a famous, much-talked-of doll, dressed as an infant by Miss Annie Stanton, for the fair; a doll eagerly desired by all the children present, as any little girl will readily believe when she hears that seldom has a doll had such an outfit.

Mamie's eyes were fixed eagerly upon her as she pleaded and entreated with her mother, holding fast to her hand, and almost dancing in her extreme anxiety to secure the much-coveted prize.

"Perhaps I can, dear," said Mrs. Stone's rather languid voice, as she looked smilingly down at her little daughter; "perhaps I can afford it; but you know, Mamie, that the doll is to be sold to whoever shall offer the highest price for her."

"Well, *you* offer the highest price for her, mamma; do, oh, do! Offer a great deal more than any one else, so I shall be sure to have her. I want her so!"

"But it is not to be known what each one offers till the fair is over, Mamie," said her mother; "then, whoever has said they will give the most, is to take the doll."

"Ask Miss Stanton to tell you," pleaded Mamie.

Mrs. Stone shook her head.

"That would not be fair, Mamie; and Miss Stanton would refuse to tell if I asked her. I will make an offer for the doll, but you will have to take your chance with the rest, my darling."

Mamie was so little used to any opposition or contradiction from her over-indulgent mother that she did not know how to meet it; and, though it was made thus plain to her that it might not be within her mother's power to give her the doll, she felt as though the possibility of disappointment were more than she could bear, and as if it would be altogether mamma's fault if the longed-for toy did not fall to her share.

The eager face clouded over, a frown gathered between her eyes, and an ugly pout upon her lips.

Oh, if little children who like to appear well only knew how such pouts and frowns disfigure the faces which God has made to be so pleasant and so fair, they would surely beware how they let Discontent set his hateful mark upon them!

"But I want it so; and I must have it," Mamie muttered fretfully.

"Yes, dear; we shall see," was Mrs. Stone's answer, as she went forward to the table where the baby doll lay in her glory.

"Tell me what you are going to give," said Mamie, as her mother bent forward with a smile, and whispered her offer to Miss Stanton.

"Ah! but that is a secret, Mamie," said the young lady, drawing forth the paper on which she wrote the names of would-be purchasers with the sum each one proposed to give; and putting down Mrs. Stone's, and the amount she had offered for the doll. "No one is to be told till this evening."

"Did you offer the *most*, mamma?" repeated Mamie, upon whose mind it seemed impossible to impress the fact that no one would know this till the appointed time.

"I doubt if any one will give more than I will," said Mrs. Stone, who thought that she had really offered more than the value of the doll, as indeed perhaps she had done, so anxious was she to gratify her little daughter.

Mamie's face cleared a little.

"I do want it so," she said less fretfully, but still with much energy in her tone.

"Yes, I believe the children all do," laughed Miss Annie Stanton; "at least, I can answer for several, Maggie and Bessie among them."

"I don't believe anybody wants it so much as I do," persisted Mamie. "I've been thinking about it and thinking about it till I feel as if I could not bear to give it up. Oh, I must have that doll, I must!"

Somebody who was passing paused at her side as she spoke, and turning her eyes from the doll, they met those of Miss Ashton fixed rather anxiously upon her. Mamie's color deepened, and she looked a little ashamed, for she hardly knew herself how much she valued the good opinion of her teacher, and now it seemed to her that her last speech had been rather obstinate and selfish.

"I mean if I could have it quite fairly, Miss Ashton," she said, as if in answer to the lady's look, for she had spoken no word.

"Of course," said Miss Ashton, smiling; "we would not believe you wished to do what was unfair, even to gain the doll, Mamie."

"No," answered Mamie half reluctantly; "but you can't think how much I want it, Miss Ashton. I'm sure none of the others care as much as I do about it."

"I do not know about that," said Miss Ashton. "Look at Belle, Mamie. How do you think she feels?"

Mamie turned and looked at Belle.

Her little schoolmate stood beside the doll, quite absorbed in regarding its beauties, – not that they were new to her, for she had watched the progress of its magnificent wardrobe from the very commencement, – her eyes wandering from one pretty trifle to another with longing, almost loving, interest; her fingers touching them now and then, but so daintily and so carefully that there was no fear they would come to harm through her handling. Miss Stanton had found it necessary to warn off more than one little pair of hands that day, lest they should mar the splendor of that wardrobe, or its mistress; but there was no need of this with Belle, so gently and delicately did she smooth and touch them. Her face was very wistful as Mamie looked at her, showing plainly that her desire for the beautiful doll was quite as great as Mamie's own, and that her disappointment would be quite as severe if it did not fall to her lot.

Mamie watched her for a moment, and then, leaving her mother's side, walked slowly over to the corner of the table where Belle stood.

"Isn't she lovely?" she said, meaning the doll.

"Yes," answered Belle. "I should think she is! Oh, I want her so! Don't you, Mamie?"

"Indeed, I do," said Mamie with quite as much emphasis as Belle had used. "Indeed, I do."

"But I don't s'pose you want her as much as I do," said Belle; "least I don't s'pose you need her so much."

"Why not?" asked Mamie, half resenting such a supposition.

"'Cause you have your little sister to play with," said Belle, "and I have no sister, nor any mamma to play with me," she added with a half-smothered sigh.

That appeal seldom failed to touch the hearts of Belle's playmates and companions; the child's longing for her lost mother was so great, her sense of loneliness, at times, so pitiful; and the years which had passed since her mother's death seemed to have little or no power to weaken these in her loyal little heart.

Mamie stood silent. The doll was not yet hers to give up; but she now had a feeling as if she ought to wish that Belle, rather than herself, should be the fortunate possessor.

"I b'lieve if I had a little sister I should not care so much about dolls," continued Belle, with an air of deep consideration; "but this doll does seem so very *real* and live; doesn't she, Mamie?"

Mamie assented, with a half impatient, though unspoken wish that Belle did not care so very much about the doll.

"Belle," she said, "if I do have her, I will let you play with her a great deal; and sometimes I'll let you take her to your own house, if you'll be careful of her."

Belle shook her head.

"That wouldn't be like having her for my very own, Mamie; I'd like to make believe that she was my sister if I had her, she's such a very real doll."

"S'pose none of us have her; but somebody who is a stranger to the school," said Lily Norris, who had just drawn near, and who easily guessed what the other children were talking about. "Wouldn't that be a shocking occurrence?"

"Yes," said Belle, giving a long sigh at the possibility of such a catastrophe. "Shocking! But we'll have to bear it, perhaps."

"Belle!" called Bessie Bradford from the other end of the piazza where she stood behind the flower-table; "Belle, how long you've been away from our table!" and recalled thus to a sense of her duties as saleswoman, Belle ran back to her post, which she had been tempted to quit for a closer view of the coveted doll, so often seen, but of whose perfections she never tired.

"I hope Mr. Powers will be the one to give the most for the doll, so Belle can have it," said Lily to Mamie, when Belle had left them.

"Don't you want it yourself?" asked Mamie.

"Yes," answered Lily; "but I think I'd 'most rather Belle would have it than any one. She seems to feel as if it would be a kind of company for her; and she's very lonesome sometimes. She don't have such large families as we do, you know; nothing but herself and her papa. Yes, I think I would rather Belle should have it than to have it myself."

Mamie felt that she could not make up her mind to be as generous as Lily, were the opportunity offered to her; and still she wished that she could be so. Lily was not "one bit selfish," she saw; neither was Belle, spite of her intense desire to possess the doll, at all inclined to be jealous or ill-tempered about it, as Mamie felt she might be herself if another child carried off the prize.

"Belle used to fret and cry like every thing if she didn't have what she wanted," she said to herself; "but she doesn't now. I wonder why;" and again there came a disagreeable consciousness to Mamie that she had not improved in this respect as much as her little schoolmate.

The excitement and anxiety respecting the doll increased rather than lessened as the day wore on and the fair drew near its close. Every papa and mamma, grandmamma, uncle, or aunt, who came in, was introduced to the young lady, and besought to "offer a whole lot for her."

But none were as eager as Belle and Mamie, though the former did not show the impatience Mamie had displayed. Her papa was seized upon the moment he entered the fair, it is true; and begged to offer so much for the doll that he should be sure to gain it for his little daughter; but she did not insist that she *would* have it, as Mamie had done, or worry and fret her father.

And somehow, she scarcely knew why, this seemed to keep Mamie a little in check. It really appeared as if Belle, lonely little Belle, needed the doll more than she did. True, Belle had "lots of toys," but so had she; and then she had a baby sister at home, and Belle had none, and "no mother;" and Mamie really caught herself wondering if she could resolve to wish that Belle, rather than herself,

might have the doll, and if she ever could be so generous as to give it up to her if it were in her power to do so.

The day passed on, evening came, the fair was drawing to its close, having proved a most triumphant success, and the time for announcing the name of the doll's purchaser had arrived. This was proclaimed by Mr. Stanton's voice from his sister's table at the end of the piazza, and instantly every little saleswoman had deserted her stand, and they all flocked to the place of interest.

"I hope it is you, papa; oh, I hope it's you! I could almost pray it might be you," said Belle, holding fast to her father's hand, and squeezing it tight in breathless expectation, as all waited to hear the name of the happy owner.

Mr. Powers smiled down at her rather sadly. He could not help a feeling of amusement, and still he did not like to see her so eager, so excited over that which might prove a disappointment.

Mamie, who stood near, watched her, too; curious, despite her own interest in the grand affair of the day, to see what Belle would say and do if another than her papa should prove to be the munificent purchaser.

Mr. Stanton took the list from his sister's hand, and casting his eye over it, proclaimed aloud that Mrs. Benjamin Howard had offered the largest sum for the doll, and hence it was hers. This was not Gracie Howard's mamma, but her grandmamma; but still each young hearer felt sure that the prize would be bestowed upon Gracie or one of her little sisters. For whom else could Grandmamma Howard want it?

When Mrs. Howard's name was announced, Belle's face wore, for a moment, a look of blank and utter disappointment, and Mamie's was not more pleased. But still the latter kept her eye on Belle, and it seemed as if it only needed a display of temper from her to produce the same from Mamie.

But that did not follow. Choking back her sobs, and dashing some bright drops from her eyes, Mamie saw her raise her face towards her father, and say some words which did not reach her own ear; saw Mr. Powers smile tenderly down on his little daughter as he answered her, and presently Belle was smiling and bright again.

Mrs. Stone was agreeably surprised that her own little spoiled child made no loud outcry over her disappointment. It is true that Mamie could not or did not refrain from a pout and a fretful "I declare, it's just too bad! I wanted it so, and – and – so did Belle."

And she was half inclined to feel resentful towards kind old Mrs. Howard, and to think she had no right to have purchased the doll; and later, when Maggie and Bessie came to her and said, —

"Mamie, we feel that it would be only taking a polite interest in Mrs. Howard for us all to go and congratulate her on having the doll," she refused to join her companions in doing so.

But when she saw them all, even Belle, going up with cheerful and pleased faces to where the dear old lady sat, she felt ashamed to be left out, and fell into the ranks, standing by while Lily Norris delivered herself of the following speech, composed on the spur of the occasion by Maggie, who was too shy to speak it herself, and so begged Lily to be spokeswoman.

"Dear ma'am: while we have to mourn for ourselves, we have also to rejoice for you, and to congratulate you because you have the doll; and we do it with all our hearts, 'cause you have been so kind and good to us about the fair."

This little oration was pronounced by Lily without the slightest embarrassment or faltering; for, although not conceited, she was a self-possessed little monkey, and now she felt that the credit of the performance was due to Maggie, and not to herself.

And lest there should be any mistake on this head, she added, almost in the same breath with the concluding words of the speech, "The praise of making that up is Maggie's, not mine;" and retired within the ranks of her schoolmates.

Their congratulations were received by Mrs. Howard with much pleasure, and by all such as heard them with some amusement; after which a farewell look was taken of the famous doll, who was now carried away by her owner.

Mamie was petted and made much of by her not over-wise mother, because she bore her disappointment so well, for it was something so new to see her conduct herself in such a peaceable and sensible manner when she was crossed in any way, that Mrs. Stone was surprised as well as pleased.

Mr. Stone, too, and even her brother Walter, had each his word of praise for Mamie as they drove home; and she really felt herself quite a heroine, because she had not cried and fretted like any baby.

But in spite of this consciousness of superior virtue, which was all the more pleasing because it was somewhat of a novelty, Mamie felt that Belle had been, to use her own words, "even better" than she had. Belle had not shown even a shadow of sulkiness or ill temper; and yet her heart had seemed to be set upon the doll even more than Mamie's own.

"Belle is always so good now," she said to herself, "and yet she used to be so spoiled, and to be provoked if she did not have every thing she wanted, and cry about it just – just like me. I wish I could grow as good as she is now. Everybody says she has improved so. I wonder how she does it. Some time I'll ask her."

Such were Mamie's thoughts and resolutions as she lay in her bed that night, and she dropped off to sleep on this last.

The opportunity for putting it in practice came sooner than she had supposed probable; for it was vacation, and she did not expect to see Belle at school every day, as was usual.

II. *HOW BELLE DID IT*

"WHY, Belle! Is that you?"

"Why, yes, Mamie! Is that you?"

These very unnecessary questions were put by the two little schoolmates as they stood facing one another within the saloon of the drawing-room car attached to the train which was on its way to Boston.

There certainly could be no doubt in the mind of either that the one was Belle and the other Mamie; and the above exclamations were only due to the surprise felt by each one at the sight of the other.

"Yes, it is I," was Mamie's answer. "Where are you going, Belle?" she questioned in the next breath.

"To Netasquet," replied Belle; "and Lily Norris is there now."

"Why, I am going there too!" exclaimed Mamie, in a delighted voice; "all of us are, – papa and mamma, and all the boys, and Lulu and me. How very fortunate, Belle, that so many of us are going there together! Won't we have nice times?"

"Um – m, well, maybe so. Maggie and Bessie are not going there," said Belle in a tone which told that she thought all pleasure questionable in which her last-named two little friends did not share.

"They've gone to Newport, haven't they?" said Mamie.

"Yes, their papa has bought a house there, and now they'll go there every summer. Papa and I are going to make them a good long visit by and by; but first we have to go to Netasquet."

Belle said this with a sigh, as if even the prospect of the "good long visit" could scarcely console her for the present separation from Maggie and Bessie.

"Who are you with?" was Mamie's next question.

"Papa and Daphne and Uncle and Aunt Walton," answered Belle.

"Oh! and Ma – bel?" said Mamie, following the direction of Belle's eye, and seeing the head of her little cousin, Mabel Walton, peeping out from the door of a compartment at the end of the car.

"Yes. You don't seem very rejoiced about Mabel," said Belle, who had noticed the tone in which Mamie uttered the last words, – a tone expressive of any thing but pleasure.

"An' no wonder," muttered old Daphne, Belle's nurse, who stood behind her young mistress; but Mamie, thinking it as well to change the subject of conversation, only said, —

"Don't you want to see my little sister Lulu, Belle?"

"Yes," answered Belle with alacrity, and would have followed Mamie at once to that part of the saloon where her friends were seated, if Daphne had not interfered, saying, —

"You just come back to your pa, honey. De hosses done pullin' us now, and dey're gwine for put to de injine, and dere'll be a screechin' an' a shakin' an' a jerkin' fit to knock de bref out of yer. 'Sides, I've foun' out it's best to stick close to yer pa when we're trabellin' roun'. Come to lose sight of him, 'taint easy sayin' what'll become of us."

And with a fearful recollection of having been "gone off with" by the cars on one occasion, when she had been separated from her papa, Belle rushed back to the compartment of her own party, and, in dread of such a catastrophe occurring again, clung to him till the train was speeding on its way. Then she felt safe; neither she nor papa could leave the cars while they were rushing on at this rate.

But after some time, just as she was beginning to tire of looking out of the window, and watching the rapidly changing scene without, Mamie's face showed itself at the open door of the

compartment; and having nodded in her own free and easy way to the party in general, she said to Belle's papa, —

"Mr. Powers, couldn't Belle come with me to see our Lulu?"

Mr. Powers consented, finding that his little daughter wished to go, and Belle, slipping from his knee, took Mamie's outstretched hand, looking back, however, at her Cousin Mabel.

"Mabel can come too if she likes," said Mamie; but Mabel, feeling that there was a want of cordiality in the invitation, plumply and poutingly refused it; upon which Mamie looked rather relieved.

Mabel and Mamie were never the best of friends; each one called the other "a horrid child," "selfish," "hateful," and other such uncomplimentary names; not always in one another's hearing, it is true; but Mamie knew pretty well what Mabel thought of her; and Mabel, on her side, felt that Mamie regarded her with no friendly eye.

Some little readers may know the reason why; others may wish to ask it.

It was this: —

Both were spoiled, selfish children, allowed to do pretty much as they pleased, and each one so accustomed to having her own way that they were almost sure to clash and quarrel when they were thrown together. Out of school, that is; in school Miss Ashton's authority and the peace-making efforts of their little classmates kept matters pretty smooth; but in their play-time, or when they met one another elsewhere, there was apt to be some falling out which each always declared to be entirely the fault of the other. Mabel, a quiet child, to whom words did not come easily, would generally relieve her feelings by "making faces" at Mamie, in which ugly practice she had become quite an adept; but Mamie had a sharp little tongue of her own, and put no check upon it if she chose to say biting or taunting things to Mabel.

So now you will understand the reason of Mamie's dissatisfied "oh! and Ma – bel?" when she heard of whom Belle's party was composed. Probably Mabel was not much more pleased when her cousin told her whom she had met without in the saloon.

But Belle, who was at peace with Mamie, and who was extremely fond of babies and very little children, was only too glad to accept the latter's invitation, and go with her to play with her little sister.

Lulu, a bright, cunning child nearly three years old, soon made friends with Belle, and graciously received all the petting and coaxing that were lavished upon her.

But, pet and darling though she was, and though Mamie seemed both proud and fond of her, Belle could not but perceive that Mamie domineered over the little one, and sometimes needlessly contradicted or crossed her. Sometimes Lulu would take such things quietly; at others she would resist or fret, thereby making a disturbance, and annoying those about her.

Belle noticed all this, though she made no remark; but Mamie did not fail to perceive that she looked at her once or twice with wondering disapproval, when some petty act of tyranny or selfishness showed itself towards the little sister.

And once, although Belle meant no reproof, Mamie felt reproached and ashamed.

For Mrs. Stone had given to each of the three children a cake. Mamie's and Belle's were alike, being the only two of the kind that the stock on hand afforded. Lulu's was quite as good if she could have thought so; but it did not strike her in that light, and she clamored for "a tate lite Mamie's."

"There are no more, my darling. Change with her; will you not, Mamie?" said her mother.

But no; Mamie, too, fancied her own cake the best, and she flatly refused to exchange with her sister, who sat upon papa's knee, holding the despised cake at arm's length, and regarding it with a comical expression of displeasure. Lulu put up a grieved lip at this, and would probably have burst into a loud cry, for there is no denying that she, too, was somewhat over-petted and spoiled; but Belle stepped forward and put her own cake in the baby's hand, taking the rejected dainty in exchange.

"That is a kind, unselfish little girl," said Mr. Stone; "but are you sure you like that cake quite as well, my dear?"

"I can eat this one quite as well, sir," answered Belle, too truthful to say that she did really like the one as well as the other, and then added, "Lulu is so little, sir, I s'pose it makes more difference to her than to me."

She did not look at Mamie, nor did her manner seem to throw any blame on her; but the latter did feel thoroughly ashamed to think that a stranger should yield that which she had refused to give up for the sister over whom, at times, she made so much ado; and she ate her cake with very little real enjoyment. At first, too, she felt rather provoked with Belle for being more unselfish than herself; but presently that feeling passed away, and she looked at her with admiration, as she thought, "She is better than I, a great deal better."

For spoiled though she was, and at times extremely perverse, fretful, and selfish, there was much that was good in Mamie Stone; and one of her best qualities was that she was always quick to see and acknowledge what was worthy of praise in others, and she was also honest with herself, and ready to confess her faults.

But then the trouble was that she was too often satisfied with allowing that she had been wrong, and took little or no pains to correct herself, and to strive against such naughtiness for the future.

Of late, however, Mamie had felt the wish to be a better and more amiable child; and she would often please herself with imagining how she would grow less selfish and exacting, more willing to give up her own will to that of others, more obedient and respectful to her parents and elders.

But when the time arrived for these good resolutions to be put in practice they always seemed to fail her; temptation came in her way, some small trifle crossed her, and she saw herself, her own wilful, pettish, perhaps disobedient little self, not one whit improved by all those good resolutions and delightful dreams of the wonderfully good child she had intended to become.

Still she did honestly wish to do better; but she did not seem to know the right way to set about this; perhaps she had not a good motive; perhaps it was from the desire to have people say what a good girl she had become; how much she had improved; to receive such praise as she often heard bestowed upon some of her young companions, – Belle for instance.

"A kind, unselfish little girl," her father had called Belle; and Mamie would have been very much pleased to hear papa say that to her; but he never did, – and why? Because she never deserved it. Mamie felt that, although it did vex her that it was so. And she would really like to deserve it, she thought.

"But I never can remember in time," she said to herself. "I wonder how Belle does it. People used to say she was spoiled when she first came to this country, and knew Maggie and Bessie and all of us, and went to Miss Ashton's school; and now every one says she is so good and sweet; and so she is too. And she has a right not to be so good as me, too, I s'pose, 'cause she has no mother, and her father and old Daphne do spoil her dreadfully, every one knows that."

If "spoiling" meant indulgence, Belle certainly had her share of that; but, only child and motherless though she was, it was not the weak and foolish yielding to every whim and temper which had nearly been the ruin of poor Mamie's mind and character, and which were fast doing their own ill work even with little Lulu's sweeter and more docile disposition.

"I'm going to ask Belle how she does it," Mamie said again to herself; and saying this recalled to her mind that she had made the same resolve on the day of the fair; but until now she had never had the opportunity to carry it out.

Now, ever since that time, Mamie had not ceased to plume herself on her good behavior on the occasion, and her mamma had bestowed upon her praise enough to turn half a dozen little heads.

So, her mind full of this, Mamie began the conversation in this manner.

"Weren't we good that day, Belle?"

"What day?" asked Belle, surprised, as she had reason to be, at this sudden reference to a matter she had well-nigh forgotten.

"Why, *that* day; the fair day," answered Mamie; "were we not good?"

"Oh, yes," said Belle, still rather surprised; "every one was very good; and we made such a lot of money for Jessie and her grandfather. It was all very nice."

"But *us, we*, you and I, I mean," persisted Mamie. "Were we not good about the doll?"

"Well, yes, I s'pose so," said Belle, her great black eyes fixed wonderingly on Mamie. "But I don't know if we were any better than all the rest, and I think maybe I was not so good; for I was real provoked, at first, that I could not have it, and it was very hard work for me not to cry. But, do you know, Mamie, I think now I am glad Mrs. Howard had it, and gave it to Nellie Ransom, 'cause Nellie does not have so many toys and pretty things as most of us children in the school, and she was so very pleased to have it."

"Um – well, I don't know about that," said Mamie, reflectively. "Mamma says I behaved beautifully about that doll, and the next morning she took me to Bruner's, and let me choose the prettiest one that was there; but it wasn't so lovely as *that* one; but I don't think I'm such a mountain of goodness as to be so very glad Nellie had it instead of me. I'd 'most as lief *you* had had it as to have it myself, Belle."

"Oh, thank you, dear!" said Belle, flushing with pleasure, and kissing her playmate with as much gratitude as if she had really bestowed the doll upon her.

"I would," repeated Mamie, feeling more and more virtuous; "and I do think that you were real good. Tell me how you do it, Belle;" and she lowered her voice and drew closer to Belle, so that no one might overhear her.

"Do what?" asked Belle, more and more mystified by Mamie's obscure manner of expressing herself.

"How is it that you try not to be – well – not to be spoiled – or – or – selfish – or to stop yourself when you feel like being naughty. For you do try, Belle, I know; and I would like to, too, and to have people say I try to cure myself and am good; but every time I make up my mind, I will go and forget, and am naughty again, and then it is too late."

"But I'm *not* always good," said Belle; "sometimes I am quite naughty, though I do know better than I used to. But you see, Mamie, papa is always sorry then, and that helps me to remember about being obstinate or selfish or naughty. I don't like to grieve papa, so I have to try to be good, so as to keep him as glad as I can."

"Is that the reason?" said Mamie. "Well, I like to please my papa and mamma too; but then it is such a bother, and I cannot remember always."

"Well," said Belle, solemnly, and with the air of one giving advice in a grave matter, as indeed she was; "there's another thing that might help you more than that if you could think about it, Mamie. Bessie put me in mind of it. She said it always helped her when she felt provoked, and felt like being in a passion with any one; and it does help me to be good. It is remembering that our Father in heaven sees us all the time, and knows all the naughty things we do, whether they are much naughty, or only a little naughty; and what He thinks about it."

"Oh, yes," said Mamie, slowly, as if the thought had struck her for the first time. Presently she added: "Belle, do you suppose God noticed just now when I wouldn't give Lulu the cake?"

"Yes, of course He did," answered the little Mentor.

"And do you believe He thought I was dreadful?" asked Mamie.

"Well, yes," said Belle. "I'm afraid He did. Pretty dreadful. You see Lulu is so little, and I s'pose He thinks such a big girl as you ought to know better and give up more."

"Yes," said Mamie; "but, Belle, I don't know if I like to think God sees *every* thing I do. It's a little uncomfortable."

"When you're not good it is," answered Belle; "but that's the help, you see. And we can't help His seeing us whether we like it or not. And then you know if He sees when we're naughty, He knows right away when we're sorry too."

Mamie sat as if thinking for one moment; then speaking in a still lower whisper than she had done before, she said, —

"Belle, don't tell anybody; but I believe I quite enjoy being naughty sometimes."

"I'm not surprised," said her young teacher. "I do, too, sometimes, and so I thought there was not much hope of me; and I told Maggie Bradford about it, and she said she enjoyed it very much sometimes, but afterwards she felt so horridly about it that it did not make up for that. And that was just like me, so it encouraged me a good deal."

"Yes," said Mamie, after another pause for reflection; "every one thinks Maggie is such a nice child that that is rather encouraging. It seems as if I couldn't help being obstinate or cross sometimes, or liking to fret mamma when she don't want to do what I want her to. She 'most generally does though, 'cause I fuss till she lets me."

Mamie said these last words in a tone of some triumph, very different from the rather subdued way in which she had spoken before, and Belle was much shocked.

"O Mamie!" she said; "s'pose your mamma was to go away from you to heaven."

Mamie turned and looked at her mother, who was leaning back in her chair with a languid, weary air; and, smitten with a sudden fit of remorse for many past offences in the way of fretting and "fussing," — one no longer ago than this very morning, — she rushed at her and half smothered her with penitent kisses; then, without giving her any explanation of this unexpected burst of affection, she returned to her conversation with Belle.

"I don't see how I'm to remember always about God noticing what I do," she said.

"That is bad habits," answered Belle. "You've never been accustomed to it, and so it seems hard at first. But you know that text, 'Thou God seest me.' Take that to remember by."

"I don't want to," said Mamie, with a disdainful shrug of her shoulders; "that's too old-fashioned. I've known that ever since I was born. (I'd rather have something new.)"

"There's a Bible verse I had the other Sunday," said Belle, "that means the same, I believe. Maybe you'd like that."

"Let's hear it," said Mamie, with an appearance of real interest.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," said Belle. "I s'pose you understand it."

"Yes," said Mamie. "It means He sees us whether we are good or whether we are naughty. It's nice to think He sees us when we're good. Yes, I like that, and I think I'll have it to remember myself by. Tell it to me again, Belle."

Belle did as she was asked, repeating the text till Mamie knew it quite well.

"I'd be rather surprised at myself if I did turn good," she said, when this was accomplished; "but we will see. Now let's stop being sober, and play."

III.

THE BREAKWATER

NOW perhaps you may think that Mamie was irreverent and careless, and did not really wish to improve herself; but, heedless as she seemed, she had really in her heart a desire to be a better girl, less troublesome and wilful and disobedient. It was a wish that came and went; sometimes she felt as if she did not care at all about curing herself of her fretful, unruly ways; at others, she felt as if she "would give any thing to be as good as Maggie, Bessie, and Belle," who all were so much happier and brighter than she was, because – Mamie knew this – they were so much more contented and amiable.

So, when Belle had left her and gone back to her own friends, she sat for a while quietly in her corner, thinking over what her little friend had said to her, and the verse she had given her for – a – a – what was it? Mamie had the idea in her mind, but she could not think of the word she wanted.

It would be, as she had said to Belle, rather pleasant to know that the Father in heaven was watching her attempts to be a better girl, and she really thought it would be a help to have such a – what was that word?

"Papa," she said at last, "when people take a text or any thing to remember by, what do they call it?"

"To remember what by, daughter?" asked Mr. Stone.

"Well, to remember – to remember how to behave themselves by; to keep good by. Don't you know what I mean?"

"A motto, do you mean?" asked her papa.

"No, not a motto. I s'pose it's the same as a motto, but it has another name. Dora Johnson had a motto; so I want something else."

Now it is not very surprising that Mr. Stone did not immediately hit upon the word which Mamie wanted; but after he had suggested one or two which would not answer, she grew pettish and irritable, as she was too apt to do, leaning back in her seat with raised shoulders and pouting lips, and giving snappish, disrespectful replies to her father's efforts to help her.

"Oh, don't! you bother me so I can't think myself." "You're real mean not to help me;" and such dutiful little speeches found their way from her lips.

"Well," said Mr. Stone, after he had shown more patience with the spoiled child than most fathers would or should have done, "perhaps the word you want is 'watchword.'"

"Yes, that is it," said Mamie, her face clearing, and her lips and shoulders settling themselves into their proper places; "watchword! I am going to have a watchword, and behave myself by it."

"And what is your watchword?" asked Mr. Stone.

"Now stop! you shan't laugh, or I won't tell you," pouted Mamie. "It is 'the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' So when I am good, He sees me, and is pleased."

"Yes," said her father, becoming grave; "but how is it when a little girl wears a scowling brow and puckered lips at her papa? For 'the eyes of the Lord are in *every* place.'"

Mamie sat silent, quite confounded for the moment. This *was* bringing it closely home to her. That All-seeing Eye had then marked the cross, fretful face she had put on to her father; that All-hearing Ear – for it flashed across her mind that the ear of the Lord was as quick to hear as His eye to see – had heard her disrespectful words to him when he was so kindly trying to help her out of her difficulty. Here, within a few moments, she had been selfish and unkind to Lulu, undutiful to her father; just, too, when she had been saying she wanted to be a good girl; and "the eyes of the Lord" had been watching her all the time. It was not a pleasant thought.

Mamie turned her face away from her father, and, planting both elbows upon the window-frame, gazed out, but without seeing or heeding much of the rapidly changing landscape. She was

thinking, half ashamed of herself, half vexed at she scarcely knew what. But she began to doubt if, after all, she would have "a watchword." It seemed likely to prove troublesome, perhaps more of a reproach than a help to her; and she half resolved that she would keep it in mind no longer. She "wished Belle had not told it to her."

However, her reflections, unpleasant though they were, kept her quiet and thoughtful for so long, that her father, not wishing to see her make herself unhappy, spoke to her, saying, —

"There, never mind then, daughter. Papa did not mean to make you fret. We will think no more about it."

But Mamie's thoughts had done her this much good. Turning to her father, she said, in a half shamefaced manner, so unused was she to making apologies when she had been in the wrong: "I'm sorry I was cross, papa, and spoke so to you."

Mr. Stone was pleased, and showed that he was so, which restored Mamie's good-humor with herself; and she was much more amiable and tractable than usual during the remainder of the journey, which did not come to an end till quite late in the evening.

They reached the station where they were to quit the cars some time before sunset, it is true; but then there was a ride of several miles in a great, jolting stage-coach, — rather a severe trial to the young travellers, tired with a long day's journey. Perhaps older and stronger people than Mamie, Belle, and Lulu were inclined to be fretful at the prospect, and to feel as if a very small trifle were too great to be borne after the heat and fatigue of the day.

A large number of passengers had left the train at this point, all bound for the same watering-place as our friends, and had to be accommodated with places in the stage-coaches which were waiting their arrival. There was a choice of seats in the lumbering vehicles, those upon the top being generally preferred, as being cooler now that the day was drawing to its close, and also as affording a better view of the country than those inside.

"I speak for a seat up on top! I speak for a seat up on top!" cried Mamie, as she saw several people climbing to the coveted places. "Papa, I want a seat up there."

"Please, papa, go on top of the stage-coach, and take me," pleaded Belle; and Mr. Powers, who had his eye already on that airy position, and who had no one but Belle and old Daphne to care for, speedily swung his little daughter to her high seat, and, following himself, established her in comfort on his knee.

"I want to go too; I will go too!" said Mabel Walton, who had been unusually fretful and aggravating during the last hour of the journey; but her mother interfered, saying that Mabel had not been very well, and she did not wish her to ride outside in the night air.

Mamie's brothers, four in number, had clambered up, some on the top of one stage, some on another; but Mr. Stone, who had his wife, baby, and nurse to render comfortable, was too late to secure one of these seats. Every one was filled, and Mamie and her papa were obliged to ride inside.

Mr. and Mrs. Stone both dreaded an outcry from their little girl, or at least some wayward behavior; and indeed there were signs of a coming storm on Mamie's lips and brow, as her father lifted her within the stage-coach. But it was perhaps held in check by the terrific howl which burst from Mabel when she found she could not have her own way, and ride where she chose; for while she had been arguing and fretting with her mother on the subject, every place without was filled, and when Mrs. Walton gave way it was too late to indulge the whim of the ungoverned child.

Mamie saw the frowns, shrugs, and looks of annoyance with which the other occupants of the coach regarded the screaming, struggling Mabel, and at once resolved to form a pleasing contrast to her; and it was with a delightful consciousness of superior virtue that she nestled into her own corner. Her mother's praises added not a little to this, and altogether Mamie felt well satisfied with herself and her own behavior throughout the day. And in this state of feeling she resolved to keep to her "watchword" after all, for it was rather pleasant to believe that "the eyes of the Lord" had beheld more good than evil in her.

Now, I cannot say that the state of Mamie's mind was altogether right, or that she was not a little self-righteous; but she certainly enjoyed it, and it had, at least, one good result, that it was productive of great comfort to those about her. For Mabel, even after she had screamed herself hoarse, did not cease to whine and fret till they had nearly reached their destination, and there could be no doubt that all the other passengers were ready to declare her a nuisance. To do her justice, it was some time since Mabel had shown herself so wilful and fractious, for her fits of perverseness were becoming less frequent than they once were.

At last, however, her interest in the new scenes to which she was approaching took her thoughts from her own woes, and she ceased to grumble and complain.

When they reached the shore it was almost too dark for the children to see more than the long line of hotels, the greater part painted white with green blinds, standing each in its plot of ground, surrounded by its white-washed picket fence, their piazzas thronged with people, their windows gleaming with lights.

On the other hand was the sea, – the grand, glorious old ocean, calm and quiet to-night, as its gentle waves rippled and glanced in the beams of a young moon, and beat out their ceaseless song in a measured murmur on the shore.

And now they parted company, Belle and her papa, Mabel and her parents, being left at one hotel, while Mr. Stone's family passed on to another.

However, the houses were quite near enough for the little girls to feel sure they could have each other's society whenever they were so inclined.

Belle was enchanted to be met by Lily Norris at the very door of the hotel; for Lily had heard that her little friend was coming, and was on the watch to welcome her.

To Mabel, the pleasure of the meeting was more doubtful, for Lily sometimes took rather a high hand with some of her shortcomings, and teased her now and then when she was cross, so that they were not always the best of friends. But on the present occasion, Lily was gracious and rather patronizing, as was thought to become one who had been already on the ground for three days, and who was therefore entitled to do the honors of the place.

There never was such a charming spot as Netasquet, according to Lily's showing; but just at present, supper and bed were the first things to be thought of for our tired, hungry little travellers, and all other pleasures must be postponed till to-morrow morning.

Directly after breakfast, Mamie sauntered out upon the piazza, and stood gazing at the sea, not knowing exactly what to do with herself. Her brothers had started off on their own discoveries, the other children in the house were strangers to her, and she was just wishing for Belle and Lily, when she saw all three of her little playmates coming towards her, bright, good-natured, and gay.

"Ask your mamma to let you come with us," said Lily; "we're going to have some fun, and I expect she'll be very glad to have you out of the way while the unpacking is being done; and mamma says my nurse can go with us to take care of us all."

Mamie was only too glad to go, and at once signified her readiness to accept the invitation, not even thinking it necessary to ask the permission Lily had suggested, but contenting herself with simply telling her mother that she *was going*.

The other children were too much used to such independence on her part, however, to pay much heed to it; and they all four went off pleasantly together.

"Now, what shall we do?" said Lily. "You shall choose, 'cause you're the newest come. There's the beach, and there's the rocks and the river and the spring and the ditch and the breakwater, – lots of places to go, and lots of things to do."

"What is the breakwater?" asked Mamie, for whom the name had a great attraction.

"There it is, over there," answered Lily, pointing to where a long, narrow pier jutted out into the sea, the central part broken and ruined, the heavy stones of which it had been built lying in a confused mass, some on one side, some on the other. Useless as a pier, the only purpose it now served was that

which its name denoted, to break the force of the waves as they rolled in on the bathing beach, save that it was also a fine, though not always a very safe spot from which to watch the breakers.

"Mamma never allows me to go there alone," added Lily; "and she will not let me go even with some one to take care of me, if the waves are very high; but they are not high to-day, so Nora will take us."

"Let's go there, then," said Mamie; and the others assented.

But just then Mrs. Stone's voice was heard calling to Mamie from the piazza they had left.

"Mamie," she said, "I do not wish you to go near that breakwater, my darling."

Mamie ran back a few steps and then stood still, where all she said reached both her mother and the children.

"Now," she said, in her most obstinate tones, "that's too bad, and I'm just going. We're all going, and Lily's nurse is going to take care of us."

"No," said her mamma, far more decidedly than she was accustomed to speak to Mamie, "I cannot allow it. I am afraid for you to go there."

Lily came forward as Mamie stood fuming and pouting. "Mrs. Stone," she said respectfully, "mamma thinks it is safe when the waves are so low as they are to-day, and she lets me go quite often with Tom or Nora, and sometimes she takes me herself. Nora will take good care of us all."

"No, dear," said Mrs. Stone, who was rather a nervous, anxious mother; "I should not know one moment's peace till Mamie came back. I really cannot let her go. I think it a very unsafe place for children to play. Why cannot you amuse yourselves on the beach?"

Now, having made up their minds to go to the breakwater, this proposal did not suit any of the children; but probably Belle and Lily would have submitted to the change of plan without murmuring, if Mamie had done so.

But Mamie was the last to think of this; her mother's words and her mother's wishes had little weight with the spoiled child when they interfered with her own pleasure; and she shocked both Lily and Belle by declaring passionately that she *would*

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