

fold of the soft shawl, and she began, as she usually did, to repeat some short petitions, each one freshly dictated by her mother, and coming from the depths of her mother's heart. To-night Lily caught them up very glibly, and waited rather impatiently for what was coming next; for there was Willie's voice calling now, and the fun would certainly be half over before she reached the nursery.

She had just repeated, in rather a heedless tone, "God be merciful to me a sinner," when her mother paused, and Lily looked up wondering to see the cause of the unusual delay. To her surprise tears were stealing down her mother's face, the thin hands were clasped together, and her lips whispered tremulously, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The mother's soul was alone with God at that moment, forgetful of her child's presence, even of her child's needs. Lily continued to gaze with a mixture of curiosity and woe. What could it mean? Was her mamma saying her prayers too, and was being a sinner real enough to make one sorry—to make one cry as she had never seen her mother do before?

Presently the feeble hand was laid gently on the little girl's raised head, and Lily went on with her prayers. But there was a knot in her throat as she repeated the words now, and an awed sense of a listening presence which she had never felt before. What could it mean?

If Willie had not burst into the room at that moment, calling, "Mamma, mayn't I say my prayers first? Nurse said I was to, and here's Tim wants to begin; is it fair, now, mamma?" Mrs. Hepburn's heart might have been gladdened by knowing that "while she was yet speaking," her prayer was being answered.

Long after the other curly heads were fast asleep, Lily sat up in her little crib and looked wakefully about. The candle had been taken away, but the embers on the nursery hearth sometimes flickered up for a moment, and the reflection of the flame kept dancing on the wall, and made the chairs and tables throw queer shadows all about. It lighted up the shelf where the nursery Bible lay, a big black book, which Lily knew well, for she used to find the letters

of the alphabet there when she was quite small; and now she sometimes amused herself by getting it down from the shelf, to puzzle her little brothers and sisters with the great black letters at the beginning of the chapters. This was all the use that Lily had as yet made of God's Word; but to-night she wanted to look into it for another purpose. Those words which her mother had earnestly spoken to God were surely to be found there. She fancied she remembered seeing them in one of the chapters, and wanted to find out very much who said them, and if the person felt as sorry for being a sinner as her mamma did, though she was so good and gentle.

Sleep would not come to Lily; the thought of the earnest prayer she listened to that evening would keep haunting her till her lips quivered and the tears ran down her little face. Forgetting all about what nurse might think, she sat up in her crib, and, covering her face with her hands, said quite loud, "O God, help me really to pray to Thee as mamma does. Make me sorry for being a sinner, too. May I want—more than to have the doll's-house, or anything else in the world—that the Lord Jesus Christ should be my Saviour. I do want it to-night; may I not forget before to-morrow." And presently Lily was sleeping as soundly as any of her brothers and sisters.

Not long afterwards, Mrs. Hepburn left her

home to seek health in sunny southern lands, taking a sad farewell of her merry boys and girls. They never saw their mother again. Before many weeks passed, Mrs. Hepburn laid down her weak, suffering body to rest in a foreign grave, and her soul went to the home of God.

Many a year has come and gone since then, and Lily Hepburn is a middle-aged woman now. She can look back on the way the Lord has led her through these years "to humble, and to prove, and to know what was in her heart, whether she could keep His commandments or no." Many a picture from that wilderness journey can never be forgotten by her; but among them all there is none more vivid than that early scene when she knelt by her fading mother's knee—the last night she "said her prayers," the first she ever really prayed.

