

young man who will be dishonest in order to keep himself clothed as finely as his companions, nor of the people who, to keep up a style of living like that of their neighbours, will incur liabilities which result in bankruptcy and cheating of creditors.

But we wish to speak of this advice chiefly as it applies in the moral world. Often men and women are kept from doing what is wrong by asking, what would people say? If they could only do a wrong action and be sure that the world would never hear of it, they would not care, but the fear of its "getting out" restrains them. The disgrace or the credit of its appearance before their fellow-beings seems to be to a great extent the determining power in their lives. Such a motive to righteousness all must acknowledge to be very weak, but it is better than none at all. It will not, it cannot, produce satisfaction in the soul, nor anything more than external respectability; it cannot produce a righteousness which is true, positive, and always to be relied upon. But, still, it is better than nothing.

The wise man learns to respect appearances, and to see that his outward actions, like his heart's motives, are void of offence. It is not without meaning that we are told to avoid the appearance of evil. Men have not the omniscience of God, and their opinions must be more or less moulded by appearances. If we would strike the happy mean of conduct, it will be found on one side in giving no cause to others to be offended by appearance, so far as this is possible. True it is that times come when God's own people, through no fault of their own, are condemned by appearances. They may seem to be guilty of what they have really not done, and yet they cannot say a word to dispel the misunderstanding. It is then that they may pray that others will adopt the wise scriptural rule of charity, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." This is the second rule of conduct that helps us to a just mean.

He who begins the day with God is likely to continue in the same company. To begin well is almost certainly to end well.

MISS SKINNER'S BIRTHDAY.

"Mamma, it's Miss Skinner's birthday next Monday, and the boys and girls say they are going to get lots of fun out of it."

"What is that, Dolly?" asked Mrs. Motherwell, turning around from the table, where she was making sugar cookies. "Sit down and tell me about it."

"But, mamma, it's a secret," said Dolly, anxiously. "Not all the boys and girls know. But I always tell you everything."

"Yes, Dolly," said Mrs. Motherwell, looking at her with the beautiful brown eye, so sincere, yet so loving, that invited confidence from every one.

"Well, mamma; you know how cross Miss Skinner is—never says a pleasant word to anybody, and what a fuss she makes whenever we children play in the grove near her house—as if it belonged to her! Grant Scudder says he's wanted to 'pay her off' ever since she slapped his little brother for picking up an apple outside her fence. And now we've found out when her birthday comes! Lucy Well's aunt stopped to speak with Miss Skinner the other day, when she was working in her garden, and she told her how we all celebrated Squire Bennet's ninetieth birthday last week. But all she said was, 'Humph! it takes rich folks to get attention! My birthday comes next Monday, but there won't be a soul to remember it, and, land knows, I wouldn't thank 'em if they did! I don't ask favours from nobody!' Then she went on to abuse the village folks, till Miss Carter couldn't stand it any longer, and just gave her a piece of her mind. Lucy heard her aunt telling about it at the table."

"But what is this plan for her birthday?" asked Mrs. Motherwell, as Dolly stopped to take breath.

"Well, mamma, I don't know as you'll like it, and I don't—exactly—though I couldn't help laughing when the boys and girls were talking. They're going to send a lot of presents, not nice ones at all, and they've elected a committee of five to see that they get to her. Grant's chairman. He's going to give her some candy with pepper in it, and

Kitty Palmer says she'll make her a cake that looks lovely on the outside, frosted, with her initials in pink, but inside it will be stuffed with cotton." At the thought Dolly broke into an involuntary laugh. It grieved her mother that her little girl should be so thoughtless, but, controlling herself, she said quietly, as she put the last pan of cookies in the oven.

"We won't talk about it any more now, Dolly. But I want you to ask the committee to stop here on their way home this afternoon, and I'll show them how to get the best kind of 'fun' out of Miss Skinner's birthday. But here comes Nora with the strawberries, and we shall have luncheon in five minutes."

"I wonder if mamma really approves of our plan?" mused Dolly on the way back from school. "Somehow I don't believe she does, and yet I can't quite make out from her face what she's thinking about. But I'm sure the committee will stop in to see her. I do believe they'll do whatever she asks them to, they're all so fond of her!"

Mrs. Motherwell sat in her pleasant parlor, with the "committee of five" about her. Their faces were very sober now, and the girls had tears in their eyes. After some minutes of pleasant chat, while they discussed her sugar cookies and lemonade, she had led the conversation to Miss Skinner, and asked them to listen to the story of her life. Mrs. Motherwell had only heard it herself lately, from one who knew the poor woman before she came to the village, where she had been living for about three years.

"Oh, boys, we must give up our plan," broke out Kitty Palmer, an impulsive, warm-hearted girl. "I wouldn't make that cake now for the world! Think of the sorrow that poor creature's had! Her father and brother drowned, her mother dead, and after such a long, dreadful illness! And then to lose her little property through that treacherous friend! No wonder it made her hard and bitter. Why, I really feel now as if I'd like to do something kind for her birthday."

Mrs. Motherwell smiled, well pleased.

"I am glad that thought sug-