

parcel, and she waited for the change, holding out her gloved hand to receive the silver: one, two, three—'Why, he has given me four dollars!' she thought as she stepped into the street. She turned back, but the boy had retreated to the farther end of the store; and just then a strong temptation took possession of her. No, no! she could never do that. 'But the money's yours,' whispered the tempter, 'Get the ribbon now. I'll give this back sometime when I have money. I'll not always keep it. I am not to blame for the mistake.'

She was at the store now. A clerk was smiling and drawing the shining ribbon along the edge of the counter. 'How many yards? You'll want three. All the other young ladies have bought three.'

Ethel's dry lips refused to articulate. Her heart was beating wildly and her cheeks were stained with a burning blush. The shears were in place, when Ethel put out her hand—'I'll not take it to-night.' Too late! He had severed the three yards and explained to her that he could not cancel the bargain.

Curious eyes, drawn by the conversation, were fastened upon her, and she said in a low tone, 'I have but one dollar to-night. Will you wait a few days for the other half-dollar?' He would see.

He passed to the desk, and Ethel, the most miserable of girls, stood staring vacantly at the corner, while her guilty conscience sought in vain for an excuse.

'You're Mrs. More's daughter, are you not?' asked the clerk coming to her side.

'Yes,' she faltered.

'Well, we'll wait for you a few days. We don't do business that way, but we'll make an exception this time.'

Ethel never knew how she reached home, but delivering the parcel and three dollars into her mother's hand, she sought her own room. Opening the tiny package, she spread the ribbon out before her. It had lost its beauty.

With a choking suffocation in her throat she thrust it out of sight.

When Ruth entered the room an hour later, she did not disturb the quiet sleeper as she softly kissed the little tear-stained face and prepared to attend the Endeavor meeting alone.

The two days that followed, though bright and sunny, were dark and dreary to Ethel. At home, at school, or on the street she was wretched. The rustling of the leaves seemed to be whispering her story in the ears of the passer-by. The words of mother and sister fell like coals of fire, burning her stricken conscience through.

Every ribbon she hated, for it reminded her of another whose silken folds were chains of sin dragging her down, down away from innocence and happiness. Belle and Lula she studiously avoided, because their conversation was wholly on the coming event; and Ethel felt as if she never wanted to hear of another fair. All the girls voted her dull, and she was very glad when Miss Hall touched the retiring bell at the close of her second dark day.

Rushing to the dressing room, she snatched her hat and nearly ran over her teacher, who intercepted her at the stairway. 'Are you ill to-day?'

The tone, so tender and kind, touched her guilty heart and she burst into tears. Miss Hall restrained her with a gentle hand. 'If you're in trouble, dear, tell your mother all about it,' she whispered in Ethel's ear.

Long before Ruth reached home, Ethel had sobbed out the whole story with her head on her mother's shoulder. Mrs. More clasped her erring daughter close to her

heart and whispered words of forgiveness and counsel for the future.

'Oh, mamma! I have suffered so much! I don't want to wear my new dress to the fair. It is so hateful to me now. And I know I can never wear any ribbon again.'

Mrs. More prayed silently, and Ethel's sobs grew less, when she lifted her swollen, tear-stained face and said earnestly, 'The load isn't all lifted yet. I have wronged so many beside myself.'

Mrs. More opened her purse, taking from it a silver dollar and a half-dollar, placed them in Ethel's hand. 'You know what to do, dear,' she said. 'It's you that has to suffer now.'

'Mamma, you need this money; I know you do. I ought to work hard to earn it.'

'I'm glad you feel that way about it, my child. You can earn it by taking your share of the work in the kitchen after school hours. That will save Ruth a little, as she is working too hard.'

'Oh! thank you, mamma; I feel better already. I have been thoughtless. Ruth hasn't had time to keep up her music lessons, and she is anxious to learn.'

A few minutes later Ethel walked into Holden's store, and, laying the dollar on the counter, said simply, 'A few days ago your little boy, in making change, gave me a dollar too much.' She hurried out to escape any words of commendation which she did not deserve.

Paying the bill at Tracy's, she hastened home.

The two sisters attended the Endeavor meeting that evening. It was a joyful time for Ethel, nothing like former gatherings, when she half reluctantly took her place among earnest workers, but grand and sweet with words of helpfulness and songs of praise, to which her own heart echoed a glad refrain.

The day of the school fair dawned beautiful and bright. Evergreens, flowers and ferns decorated the walls of Miss Hall's room. The table at which the girls were to preside were appropriately draped and ornamented. The exhibits, in whatever line, were products of the pupils' efforts. These were to be sold and the proceeds used toward the purchase of an organ for the sixth grade. Miss Hall looked about her, an encouraging smile on her lips as the girls in bright ribbons and pretty dresses fitted to and fro like so many butterflies.

By the side of the art table stood Ethel, arrayed in simple white, a fall of lace at the neck. Instead of ribbons, a cluster of chrysanthemums and geranium leaves—most fitting to the bright young face.

'Doesn't Ethel More look sweet?' exclaimed Edna Weir to Belle Carver. 'Has the "Mystic Three" disbanded?' she asked; 'I don't see you together so much.'

'No, it hasn't,' said Ethel, joining them in time to hear the remarks. 'It wasn't convenient for me to dress as I intended,' she continued, 'but there's the bell.' The flutter of drapery and murmur of voices ceased. Miss Hall gave a short talk, explaining in detail the duties of the exhibitors. The doors were then opened to the admission of visitors. The fair proved to be a financial success. That evening Ethel and Ruth attended Endeavor meeting. During the opening service of song, Ethel's eyes sought the door often and anxiously. Yes, there they were at last, Belle and Lula with an embarrassed air which quickly fled in the homelike atmosphere to which they had been introduced.

Nor was this their last attendance. Their friendship with Ethel, the warm interest manifested by the members, the songs and heart-to-heart talks, the knowledge of pray-

ers offered in their behalf—all served to form a chain of influence that, tenderly entwining their young lives, drew them into the kingdom.—'Wellspring.'

Not Afraid.

An answer to the question, 'Are you not afraid to die?'

'Am I afraid to die,' my dear?

Why should I be afraid?
My Saviour-Lord has died for me,
And all my debt has paid.

I'm not afraid to die, my dear;

For, when my flesh doth fail,
And thought of all that draweth near,
May cause my heart to quail,

The Lord himself will then appear,

And to my soul will speak
The words of peace I often hear
When I that refuge seek.

I'm not afraid to die, my dear!

For when death calls for me,
'Twill be his voice that I shall hear,—
'My child, I come for thee!'

I'm not afraid to die, my dear,

For all that darksome flood
Will gleam most bright with lovely light
From out the throne of God.

I'm not afraid to die—for why?

The Lord my Surety is;
His hands outstretched will draw me high,
And through the gates of bliss.

Oh! I should fear to die, my dear,

Did I not know for sure
That he has conquered sin and death,
And made my place secure.

And at the gate of heaven he stands:

My passport what beside
The wound prints in his pierced hands
And in his holy side?

Then by the holy riven side

Of Jesus Christ, my King,
My soul will evermore abide,
The praise of God to sing.

Wilt thou not trust this Lord of mine,

Who also died for thee,
Who loves thee with a love divine,
Far deeper than the sea?

And he will guide thy soul through all,

Safe to the home above,
Then at his feet thou, too, shalt fall
And praise the God of love.
—Grace Filder, in 'The Christian.'

Not Knowing.

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half smiling, half reluctant to be led,
And leaves his broken playthings on the floor,

Still gazing at them through the open door,
Not wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;

So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand

Leads us to rest so gently that we go,
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends that we know.

—Longfellow.