

HOW THEY KEPT LENT.

"They" were three girls, school friends and companions. They were together one afternoon in Leslie Grant's pretty little room, and, for a wonder, just when I ask you to look at them, they are sitting before the fire without saying a word. Suddenly Leslie says:

"I was thinking about Lent, girls."
"Oh, dear," sighed Kitty; my one idea of Lent is going without butter, and then wishing I hadn't."

"Now, Kitty, just behave. You know that is all nonsense," Leslie said, laughing, as she spoke, at Kitty's assumed look of misery. "You know you try to keep Lent just as much as any one."

"Yes; I know it to my sorrow," the girl said, as the fun died out of her eyes and voice, "but you know, Leslie, that it never amounts to anything; I go to all the services and try to be different, but it is all so vague and unsatisfactory. I'm so tired of good resolutions, I will just do my best, as I try to do at other times, and leave Lent and fasting and all that to people who know what to make of it. I don't think I will even try to keep Lent this year."

"Oh, wait a moment, Kitty," Leslie said, eagerly. "I want so to talk over a plan for Lent that I thought of last night. It was that verse in Isaiah in the chapter about fasting that made me think about it: 'Is not this fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?' I think it would be very nice if we could follow that. To fast from sin seems the idea. Just think how grand to starve out some bad habit or besetting sin! I'm going to try it on thinking evil and speaking evil, for I'm afraid it has grown into a habit with me lately."

"Yes; but, Leslie, don't you think we always ought to do that?" objected Alice, for the first time joining in the talk. "In Lent it seems as though we ought to do something different."
"It's different enough for me," said Kitty laughing. "I'll follow suit, Leslie," but, with a pathetic sigh "it involves a long farewell to all my take-off stories."

"I think, Alice," said Leslie, "if we get into the habit in Lent of not doing any of these things, we will be pretty sure not to want to afterward."

"Kitty," Alice said, suddenly, after a silence in which the three girls seemed very busy thinking, "I will give up my novels this Lent if you will."

"Now, Alice, how can you? Why did I come here? I was afraid Leslie would pounce on my weakness, but never dreamed of you."

"Bessie Norton did it last year," Alice urged, "and she has never felt the same interest in them since. Let's do it Kitty. You and I read so many, and you said the other day they spoiled you for everything else."

"Well, here's my work, after all my talking too! I believe I was just lazy before, and did not want to find anything to do. Leslie never will let me take it easy."

"Because, Kitty, you and I promised once to run with patience the race set before us, and oh! there is so much to be done! And, girls, it does seem to me that when this quiet time is

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given us, for even the world allows it, we ought to make the most of every hour, and do all that we can to push on toward heaven."

"Yes, indeed, we ought." There was no trace of lightness now in Kitty's voice or manner. "I creep when I could run, and give up when the lions are almost passed."

"I can do all things through CHRIST who strengtheneth me." Let us take this for our motto," Leslie suggested. "The smallest evil habit is too much for us, but the greatest is nothing to Him."

Then the girls knelt together and gave the battle into His hands, and He did fight for them. They learned that Lent taught us what it was to "triumph in CHRIST." It is a lesson He is ready to teach us all.—*F. in Parish Visitor.*

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