

and then came straight on. The old man, unused to such courtesy and rather taken aback, waited till he came closer.

'Didn't I tell 'ee never to set foot on my ground agen?' he demanded gruffly.

'Yes, sir.'

'Then what be 'ee come for? Want another thrashing, do 'ee?'

'Please, sir, I've come to 'polygise.'

'To what?'

'To 'polygise . . . to say I'm sorry I picked your apples. Father says it was wrong to 'pick them, but I didn't mean to steal them. I was only getting them for somebody else.'

'Eh, what? Getting 'em for somebody else? It was them other lads, then, putting you up to it. Who be 'em? Come now, they deserve a lickin', and they shall 'ave it.'

The child drew back. 'Oh, no, please, I didn't mean to say that. It was for a poor lady I was getting them what wants to sell them.' (Maurice had been warned not to repeat the latter half of the story, for though substantially true, the farmer had only acted within his rights, and therefore could not reasonably be accused of injustice.) Father says it's wicked to take people's things to give to other people,' he continued, 'and please, sir, I'm very sorry, and I won't do it again.'

The farmer looked down at the small, fragile figure, a dawning compunction tugged at his rough old conscience.

'Yer feyther sent 'ee then, did 'ee? Did ye tell 'un what I sez?'

'Yes; and father wanted to come with me, but I said I'd rather come all by myself. Father said you wouldn't hurt me when I only came to 'polygise.'

'Hurt 'ee? No, I ain't going to hurt 'ee.' He took his hat off, scratching his head, and looking down at Maurice again. The fearless simplicity of the child was probing unsuspected depths in his nature.

'You be a cool kid if ever there was one,' he observed after a pause. The problem evidently afforded him some perplexity. Suddenly an idea occurred to him. It was not a solution of the difficulty, certainly, but it answered the purpose as well.

'You be thirsty, I reckon. Would 'ee like a drop of cider.'

The boy looked at it doubtfully. He was half-afraid to refuse, but after an instant of hesitation, candor won the day.

'Well, there, a drop o' milk, then? I be goin' down to the 'ouse. You can come along wi' I.'

A loaded cart was just passing at the time. The farmer hoisted the child up on one of the shafts, and telling him to hold on, kept pace beside him. A tall figure that had been watching the proceedings anxiously from behind the opposite hedge prepared to follow, though at a distance. The team turned out of the field and proceeded slowly towards the farm.

'But I don't know whether I can quite love you just yet,' said the boy presently, eyeing the rough old farmer at his side.

'Eh (Coom up, Drag-on!) What be talking o'bout — 'taint likely as any one should be ut?'

'Father says we should love our enemies,' replied Maurice, gravely, as he watched the flies settle on old Dragon's back.

'Ho! ho!' chuckled the farmer. 'He do, do 'ee. That's the rummest notion ever I 'eard.'

'It's in the bible.'

'Oh! oh! Well, I don't know nowt about that. But 'tain't human natur', that I'd know, and there baint no sense in ut, as I can see.'

'And it says that we ought to bless those that perse—perse—I forget the word—it's such a long one—'

'Aye, prosecute, you'd mean. 'Ave 'em up afore the magistrates. Ay, I've a prosecuted a many in my time, but I don't know as they'd bless I for ut.'

'What do you prosecute them for?'

'What for? Why, for trespassing and sich-like, of course.'

'But, you shouldn't prosecute them, you know. You should forgive them.'

'Forgive 'em, eh? Naw, naw, that baint my way, young master.'

'Well, but God can't forgive us, if we don't forgive other people. I didn't want to forgive you yesterday, and I didn't say so in my prayers either, but father says I ought to, and he read me a story about it out of the bible this morning. Don't you ever read the bible, Farmer Joliffe?'

'Naw,—naw,—leastwise not neow, I'd mind when my feyther read it. There was a lot about 'ell fire in ut, as far as I can recollect. I don't mind much else.'

'I think I could find that story,' said Maurice, eagerly; 'It's somewhere near the picture of Jesus with the little children. I'll show it to you.'

'I don't know as I've got a bible,' said the old man, slowly; 'but p'raps Martha she'd know for one.'

Arrived at the farmyard he lifted the boy down, and calling to his old housekeeper to 'get the lad a hunch o' cake and a drink o' milk,' pointed him the way into the kitchen. Following himself a few minutes later, the sound of voices directed him to the musty parlor, where he found Martha mounted on a chair, unearthing a big dilapidated book from under a quantity of rubbish on a top shelf. The dust of years was on its dingy cover.

'Tain't no use now 'cept to stand the old chaney on,' said she apologetically, wiping it with her apron.

The boy turned over the pages eagerly. Then looking up with an expression of mingled doubt and disappointment,—

'But there aren't any pictures here at all. Is this a bible really?'

'Ay, ay, it's a bible, right enough,' said Martha.

'Maybe all bibles baint the same,' suggested the farmer.

'I think I could find what you want, if you will let me try,' said a manly voice from the doorway.

All the three heads bending over the big book on the table turned at the sound. Edward Fenn, his face glowing with quiet triumph, stood looking at the group. Maurice, a great slice of cake still in his hand, sprang forward at sight of his father. The farmer drew back; but Mr. Fenn held out his hand with so winning a smile that, after a moment's hesitation, the old man decided to haul down his colors, and coming forward took it in his rough, hearty grip.

Maurice eagerly explained the difficulty, and begged his father to find the story. Mr. Fenn drew a chair to the table.

'And perhaps Farmer Joliffe will let me read it to him,' said he, turning the leaves rapidly. The farmer grunted and sat down, the old woman slipped into a chair. Maurice stood at his father's side, and there, in the dingy, disused parlor, with the glorious summer sun illuminating the yellow page of the old well-worn bible, the clergyman read once more the wonderful parable of the unforgiving servant. Then, in a voice that trembled with deep and reverential awe, he went on to interpret its meaning, and to expound to his attentive listeners the great

and marvellous mystery of the forgiveness and love of God.

The church clock was striking eleven on the following Sunday morning. The loiterers in the church-yard had turned in and taken their accustomed places. The organ had already begun to sound when the latest of late-comers passed with shuffling gait under the shadow of the porch and entered the open door. A suit of black that had not seen the light for over thirty years, rendered his appearance as conspicuous as did the cleanliness of his face and the oily smoothness of his head, but no one for a moment mistook the old man's identity—it was Farmer Joliffe.

His strategy for avoiding the comments of his neighbors by no means secured his immunity from observation. All eyes were fixed on him, as it seemed, in one great Gorgon stare, as he crept in and looked helplessly round. But not a soul came forward to relieve his embarrassment. The sextons, in their rusty black, positively shrank away from him as at the approach of an enemy; the Sunday-school children giggled, the elder boys and girls began whispering together. But as he stood in the doorway shuffling uneasily from one foot to the other, and sheepishly twirling his hat behind him, suddenly little Maurice Fenn came down the aisle, and taking him by the hand led him straight up to the vicarage pew.

Then as they saw the rough old farmer kneeling with bent head beside the vicar's son, an audible gasp of astonishment went through the church. Each man looked in his neighbor's face, each seeing in each a reflection of his own.

From his place at the reading-desk the clergyman was reciting in solemn, earnest tones:—

'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.'

'If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

### If the Lord Should Come.

If the Lord should come in the morning  
As I went about my work,  
The little things and the quiet things  
That a servant cannot shirk,  
Though nobody ever sees them,  
And only the dear Lord cares  
That they always are done in the light of  
the sun,  
Would he take me unawares?

If my Lord should come at noonday,  
The time of the dust and heat,  
When the glare is white and the air is still,  
And the hoof-beats sound in the street;  
If my dear Lord came at noonday,  
And smiled in my tired eyes,  
Would it not be sweet his look to meet?  
Would he take me by surprise?

If my Lord came hither at evening,  
In the fragrant dew and dusk,  
When the world drops off its mantle  
Of daylight like a husk,  
And flowers in wonderful beauty,  
And we fold our hands and rest,  
Would his touch of my hand, his low command,  
Bring me unhopd-for zest?

Why do I ask and question?  
He is ever coming to me,  
Morning and noon and evening,  
If I have but eyes to see,  
And the daily load grows lighter,  
The daily cares grow sweet,  
For the Master is near, the Master is here  
I have only to sit at his feet  
—Margaret Sangster.