

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## Ethel's Temptation.

(By Ida Newell Austin.)

Three girls of the sixth grade tripped merrily down the steps of the High School. Still engaged in animated conversation, they paused a moment at the street entrance.

'I wish you were going my way,' said Ethel More, taking a few steps backward and away from her companions.

'Come with Lula and me as far as Cedar street. It'll not be much out of the way,' coaxed Belle Carver, the judge's daughter.

'Oh, do!' exclaimed Lula, taking Ethel's arm. 'We want to talk about the school fair.'

Ethel knew that her mother needed her assistance, and had told her to come directly home at the close of school; but silencing her accusing conscience by a pro-

joined the Christian Endeavor Society. Under its pure, warming influence her life was daily expanding into a noble, beautiful womanhood.

Mrs. More, a widow, whose cares rested heavily upon her, felt a restful lifting of her burdens when Ruth's sweet face appeared.

'Where is Ethel?' she inquired as Ruth, with kitchen apron about her, stood in the sewing-room door.

Before Ruth had time to reply, Ethel rushed in the doorway, flushed and breathless. Throwing her satchel of books on the hall table, she entered the sewing room tumultuously. 'Oh, mamma, please give me a dollar! I want to get the ribbon for my dress. I'm to have the art table at the fair. Miss Hall told me to-day. Belle Carver says there is wide ribbon at Tracy's—a per-

in school. Ethel was a warm-hearted, impulsive girl of fourteen. Of late she had formed acquaintance with girls of her own age, who came from homes of wealth and luxury. The influence of their close companionship had caused to spring up in Ethel's heart a spirit of selfish discontent, manifested chiefly at home. Mrs. More was painfully aware of the change in her daughter, and also of the five and often ten minutes of tardiness after school hours.

Ruth watched her sister, as with dejected countenance and listless manner she proceeded to set the table for supper.

'Are you disappointed about the ribbon?'

'Yes, I am! I can't have anything as the other girls do. It is "wait," "wait," all the time;' and Ethel brushed away the tears that would come.

Ruth did not appear to notice the tears, but went on toasting the bread and making tea for supper.

'Mamma has to work very hard, Ethel, and we are old enough to help her—by being thoughtful, I mean, and considerate. She can't get everything we desire. Belle and Lula are situated far differently. They have parents, not only willing, but able to gratify them in little matters like this.'

Ethel's mood had changed, and she looked very indifferent and unconcerned at Ruth's 'moral lecture,' as she called it. Ruth set the plate of buttered toast on the table and glanced at her sister, pained to see the expression of contempt, and said pleasantly, 'Endeavor meeting to-night, Ethel.' Mrs. More entered just then, and noticed Ruth's anxious look and the impatient curve of Ethel's lips. In fact her sweet face was often marred, and not a few hateful little creases were forming at the corners of her mouth.

After supper Ethel was requested to do an errand for her mother.

'The silk and dress lining will cost a dollar, and I want a yard of cloth like the sample. You'll receive three dollars in change,' said Mrs. More, handing Ethel a five-dollar gold piece.

Ethel looked bright and pretty in her neat school suit and sailor hat, her hair brushed loosely back, and her face tinted with the glow of health. Mrs. More watched her from the window and breathed a silent prayer that the quick, strong impulses of her daughter's nature might be purified and controlled by Christian principles.

Halfway down the street Ethel met Lula Foster. 'Oh, Ethel! she exclaimed, 'if you haven't your ribbon, you must get it to-night, for others are intending to get off the same piece, and there'll not be any to match your dress if that's all gone. I'd go back with you,' she continued, 'but mamma's waiting. It'll take three yards. I told you two to-day.'

'All right, I must get it soon,' said Ethel, hastening on with heightened color. Not for the world would she have Lula know that the purchase of a bit of ribbon required consideration and not a little sacrifice at her home.

She left the bill of goods at Holden's, saying, 'I'll call in a few minutes.' She wanted to see the display at Tracy's. All the girls had been talking of it that day. Oh, how beautiful! She paused by the open door and feasted her eyes upon the rich, creamy laces and festoons of ribbons.

Yes, there was the ribbon, 'her' ribbon, the ribbon she must have—baby blue with a sea-shell tint in its changeable loveliness. 'A perfect match for my dress,' she repeated as she retraced her steps. Mr. Holden had gone, but his young son handed her the



'OH, MAMMA, PLEASE GIVE ME A DOLLAR!'

mise to run from the corner of Cedar street and thus reach home at nearly the usual time, she walked up the street with the girls. There was to be a fair held by the pupils of the sixth grade, and at this particular time it was the all-important theme of discussion.

'There go the members of the "Mystic Three,"' laughed Edna Weir. 'They are always inseparable. Do you ever have Ethel at home, Ruth?'

Ruth More stepped to the open window of the hall and saw her sister walk up the street with her two friends. 'Ethel ought to go home directly,' she remarked pleasantly and hurried away. When she reached the street, the girls were out of sight. Ruth More was a sweet-tempered, bright girl of sixteen. Three months before she had

fect match for my dress. It's fifty cents a yard. Just two yards, mamma!' she pleaded.

Mrs. More laid her hand on the young girl's shoulder with a caressing gesture. 'My dear child, I have no money to spare for the ribbon to-night. But you shall have it before the fair—nearly a week yet, you know.

'But, mamma, it'll be gone by that time;' and she clasped her hands about her mother's arm and looked eagerly into the kind, loving face.

Mrs. More shook her head and turned wearily to the cutting table to resume her interrupted task. 'Go into the kitchen, dear, and help Ruthie get supper.'

Mrs. More sighed deeply as she bent over her work. She toiled early and late to maintain daily expenses and keep her girls