

Elsie's Lesson in Prayer.

Katharine Smalley, in the 'Presbyterian Banner.'

One morning, when Elsie woke, her first thought was that it was very early, for the sun was not shining. She was snuggling down to go to sleep again, when she remembered the plans for the day: Nell Grover's grandfather was going to send a hay-waggon to take a dozen of Nell's little friends—and Elsie was one of them—out to his ranch, and it was such a delightful place to spend the day. She lay thinking what a lovely time they were going to have when she became aware of a continual patter, patter, drip, drip.

She sprang out of bed and ran to the window. Out doors all was gray and wet. There was a gentle, but steady rain falling, and Elsie was old enough to know that meant a wet day.

'Oh, dear!' she sighed; 'Oh, dear, oh, dear!' And she wished it had not rained, and she wished it would stop, and as she stood, wishing and wishing, she thought of the story of the stilling of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, which her father had read at worship the morning before. God could stop the rain, she thought, and she would ask him, so they need not lose their happy day, for it could not be some other time, as Nell was going on a long journey to be gone a long while.

She knelt down by her little bed and she prayed earnestly for this thing she wanted so much, not only for herself, but for her little companions. Elsie had but lately learned to pray, and not just 'say her prayers.' When she rose from her knees she went to look out the window, as if she expected to see the rain slackening, but it was still falling very steadily.

'Of course,' said the little girl to herself, 'I don't suppose it will stop right away, it will just "clear off."' But she kept praying in her heart.

While she dressed she studied the golden text, and when she was ready went down to help her mamma with the breakfast as usual. Her mother kissed her good morning and said: 'I'm sorry Grandpa Grover planned your outing for to-day with this settled rain.'

'Oh,' said Elsie, brightly, 'I think it will clear off before it's time to go.'

'I'm afraid not, dear,' said mamma, kindly, and as she looked into the serious little face she wondered not to see tears instead of a brave smile.

When breakfast was over Elsie saw the rain was coming down faster than before and her heart began to feel heavy, but she kept praying until almost time for the waggon to come, and it was still raining hard, and there was not a break in the dull gray clouds and she knew it would not come. But keen as the disappointment of giving up her good time was, there was a deeper sorrow in her heart that God did not hear her prayer.

Mamma saw the corners of the sweet rosy mouth were drooping, and the bright eyes were winking hard to keep back the tears.

'There's a new book we got yesterday,' she said, 'don't you want to read it, it is such a nice story?'

'No, mamma, I couldn't read,' she answered unsteadily.

'Would you like to sort over the ironed clothes, and put them in their places? That would help me, so I can get more sewing done to-day.'

Elsie said she would like to help, and was

laying the clothes out in different piles, trying bravely to keep back the tears, but one or two did drop on the white things. Then her mother called out merrily:

'Oh, here comes Uncle George on horseback, in his yellow oil skin. Run to the door and see what he wants.'

Elsie left her work, and hurrying to the door, opened it, as her uncle was coming up the walk with a basket in his hand.

'Hello, Roses!' he called out gaily, as he sprang up on the porch, and stooping he kissed the pink cheeks. 'How's everybody?'

'Oh, we're all well. Come in,' said the little girl, holding wide the door, for Uncle George stood still on the porch.

'No, it isn't worth while, and I'm all dripping. How are you?' he said to his sister, as Mrs. Morris came to the door. 'I had to come to town this morning, and Bess would have me bring a basket of strawberries,' and he handed the basket to Elsie. 'Bess thinks there aren't any berries in town to match the ones she has.'

'I don't believe there are, either,' exclaimed Elsie, lifting the cover and seeing great glowing red berries packed with shining green leaves. Mamma admired them, too, and they sent thanks and love to her kind Auntie.

'Isn't this rain grand!' said Uncle George, enthusiastically. Elsie opened her mouth to protest, but he went on: 'It is a God-send.'

Elsie gave a little gasp.

'Why, was the rain needed very much?' asked his sister.

'Oh, yes. The young crops were not getting a good start. Of course we irrigate, but that is not like rain, besides the creek is low and water scarce; and the pasture on the range is very short, so the stock was suffering. Then there's been a fire on the other side of Mount Piny, and it was getting up into the big timber, and would have done a great amount of damage in another day. But this rain will settle it. Haven't you noticed how smoky it has been?'

Mrs. Morris had, and so had Elsie, but she did not know what caused it, she only thought the mountains had been very beautiful. A thrill ran through her. How good God was not to have answered her prayer! After a few more words Uncle George bade them both good-bye and was gone.

They took the berries to the pantry, and mamma got a pretty china plate and put some fine sugar and a half-dozen of the largest berries on it, with a piece of cake for Elsie. The little girl was so pleased, it was such a delicious treat and looked so pretty. With shining eyes she took it to the dining-room and sat on the window seat, where she could see the mountains that had been so blue yesterday, but were now almost hidden by the rain.

And while she ate the great, luscious berries slowly, so as to enjoy them the longer, Elsie, because she was little herself, thought of the little things,—the lambs, and little bossies, that would have been hungry without the rain to make the grass grow; and of the pretty ferns and flowers, and the 'Christmas trees' that would have burned up, as well as the beautiful big trees. And all the while she kept thinking how good God was, and how glad she was he had not answered her prayer, not because he didn't hear, but because it was not best.

Then she thought she had not prayed right, but rather had been teasing for what she wanted without caring if it were best, and

that she had better ask God to help her be patient, even if things were not just as she liked them.

Though she was still sorry that she could not have gone to the ranch and had a merry day with the other children, it was such a sweet, patient face that smiled up into mamma's when she took the plate back that Mrs. Morris kissed it and said:

'My little Elsie is not sorry now it rained.' 'Oh, no, mamma, I'm glad. I did not know,' replied Elsie.

'And even when we can't know why things are hard,' said mamma, 'we must think there is good reason, for God is good.'

'Yes, mamma,' said Elsie. 'Now I'll finish putting away the clothes, and then I'll read that pretty story book.'

He Unbraideth Not.

Last winter, as the train was coming into the station, one stormy day, we saw a boy leap from it and fall under the cars. A bystander seized him and drew him out before the wheels touched him. The man who drew him out stood him on his feet and then dismissed him with a kick. The boy went away much frightened at his peril and hurt by the kick. We could not help thinking that if God had served us that way we would have deserved it. If he had snatched us from hell, where we were bound, and then had punished us for having ever dabbled with sin, it would have served us just right. But that is not the divine method. God is not like man. 'His mercy endureth forever.' He not only forgives us but loves us freely. He never brings up the past to cause us to feel sore or dejected, which he might do. But he says that he will remember our sins against us no more forever. God never twits us as to the past as men do. We have known professed Christians who would bring up sins of the past after a man had been saved from those sins. But this is not God-like, but devilish.—'Christian Witness.'

To The Loser.

So you've lost the race, lad?
 Ran it clean and fast.
 Beaten at the top, lad?
 Rough? Yes, but it is past.
 Never mind the losing;
 Think of how you ran.
 Smile, and shut your teeth, lad;
 Take it like a man!
 Not the winning counts, lad,
 But the winning fair;
 Not the losing shames, lad,
 But the weak despair.
 So when failure stuns you,
 Don't forget your plan.
 Smile, and shut your teeth, lad;
 Take it like a man!
 Diamonds turn to paste, lad;
 Night succeeds to morn.
 Where you'd pluck a rose, lad,
 Oft you grasp a thorn!
 Time will heal the bleeding:
 Life is but a span.
 Smile, and shut your teeth, lad;
 Take it like a man!
 Then when sunset comes, lad,
 When your fighting's through,
 And the Silent Guest, lad,
 Fills your cup for you,
 Shrink not, grasp it boldly:
 End as you began.
 Smile, and close your eyes, lad;
 And take it like a man!
 —C. F. Lester, in 'Success.'