

GRACE, AND HER CHANGE OF HEART.

"Do ask your mother if we may not go into the woods this afternoon," said Fanny Storer, who was spending a week at the house of Grace Gray. "She'll give us leave, I am sure; but I will run and ask her now, so as to be certain," said Grace, jumping up from the step of the garden door where they were sitting, and running into the house to find her mother. Presently she came back and shook her head. "Oh, why not?" cried Fanny; "we depended upon it; besides, the Johnsons can't go any afternoon but Wednesday.—Why won't she let us go?" "Because the Mothers' Society meets here this afternoon, and she wants me to keep the door," answered Grace. "Then we shall have a good time at home," cried Fanny, brightening up from her disappointment. "We shall have to keep very still, Fanny," said Grace.

"What is the Mothers' Society?" asked Fanny; "I never heard of one before." "It is the mothers meeting together to pray for their children," answered Grace. "Can't they pray at home?" asked Fanny. "Oh, they do," said Grace; "but you know when people are interested in any thing how they get together and talk it over—so our mothers meet together to talk how to bring us up in the best way; and they pray because they want God to help them." It was a new idea to Fanny, and after reflecting a minute, "I think you ought to be very good, Grace," she said.—Grace had often thought so before, but now her pride was a little touched, and she wanted to say, "Well, I am not good?" but she did not say it; and soon after Mrs. Gray sent the little girls down town on an errand.

In the afternoon, Grace with Fanny was stationed in the sitting-room to go to the door and show the ladies up stairs; it was in the best chamber where they generally met when they came to Mrs. Gray's. Fanny sometimes went to the door with Grace, and the mothers, as they passed in dropped many a kind word to the little girls. "I am sure they love us," said Fanny; "I wish my mamma was at the meeting."

The children did not know how to amuse themselves in the sitting-room; they soon got tired of looking out of the window; at last they wished they had a book to read together, and Grace went up stairs to select one.—She went to the little room over the stairs where her books were, and as it was next to where the meeting was, she overheard a voice very distinctly; indeed, the door from her little room to the best chamber was ajar, and Grace heard part of a mother's prayer which went to her heart. Oh, thought Grace,

she means me with the rest; I know I ought to be good, as Fanny says. Tears came into her eyes, but she hastily brushed them away, found a book, and ran back on tiptoe to the sitting-room. It was a funny book; Grace was sorry, for she did not feel like reading a funny book just then. Fanny was delighted; but Fanny's laugh did not banish Grace's seriousness.

More than a week had passed away; Fanny had gone, and Grace had returned to her studies, when one morning having forgot her history, she went home after it. It was not down stairs, and Grace thought it must be in her mother's room. Stealing in, in order to take her by surprise, she found no mother there. It was very still: so still that a low noise from a little closet caught the ear of Grace. She hushed and hearkened. It was her mother in prayer, in prayer for *her*, that God would send down his Holy Spirit and make her a penitent and believing child.—"A'n't I as good as other children?" was the instant whisper of pride in Grace's heart, as she turned round and crept down stairs. "As good as others, perhaps," said conscience; "but are you truly and honestly good,—good in the sight of God, who sees you just as you are? don't you do anything to displease him?" Then, quick as thought, Grace remembered how, only the day before, she deceived her teacher by "making believe study," when she was reading the "Arabian Nights;" how she said her head ached because she did not want to be sent on an errand; how rudely she demanded Joseph's knife, and how angry she was because he said he had not got it; and how often she had neglected her prayers, because she did not want to pray. "Oh," said Grace, overwhelmed with the memories that came upon her convicting her of her sins and short-comings, "I am *not* good; I am bad, very bad. God sees that I am a sinner, and do not love him; my mother knows it, and she prays for me." Grace went out of the door crying, and very wretched, and went back to the school-room without her history. The teacher observed something unusual in her, but for the present forbore to ask questions.

Grace did not return in the afternoon, nor for several days, detained perhaps by a heavy storm which set in; but when she did come back her countenance looked like the clear shining after the rain. Grace well knew that she had faults; many of them were secret faults, known only to God, and she was often unhappy on account of them; but she hated to think long about them, and she put off the subject of religion to some more convenient season. Some people do so all their lives, and at last die without one penitent tear, or