

RIPE CHERRIES,
OR
THE HISTORY
OF
WILLIAM AND JANE.



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RIPE CHERRIES.

William and Jane one day were allowed by their mother to go and play by themselves in the garden. She could trust them, for they had learned always to try to do what is right, though nobody was looking at them. And we should always remember this; for God sees us, though we cannot see

him ; as it is written in the 139th Psalm, "Thou art acquainted with all my ways ;" and as the beautiful hymn says,

Almighty God, thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night,
And our most secret actions lie
All open to thy sight.

There's not a sin that we commit,
Nor wicked word we say,
But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,
Against the judgment day.

O may I now forever fear
T' indulge a sinful thought ;
Since the great God can see and hear
And writes down every fault.

They played for some time in a pleasant, good-humored manner, like children who knew the "sweet delight

of being kind." If children could but persuade themselves to remember how they wish their playfellows and companions to behave to them, I think they would often avoid doing unkind things, or saying rude words. See how well William and Jane agree, and how affectionately they are reading to-



gether that pretty hymn in Watts, called "Love between Brothers and Sisters." After reading for some time,

William went to weed his garden, while Jane was feeding the chickens, for she was very fond of her “pretty chicks,” as she called them, and never forgot to



feed them. It is a cruel thing to neglect the creatures of God, and leave them to suffer from hunger or thirst. Jane thought so too, and was very kind to dumb creatures. When Jane had finished with the chickens, she went to see how William came on with his

garden, and to ask him for a few flowers.

There was a wall on one side of the garden, with fruit trees nailed against it: among them was a very beautiful cherry-tree; there were not many cherries on it that year, and they were quite ripe, but they had been allowed to remain on the tree, as William and Jane's father was expected to return from a long journey the next day, and their mother had told them that she wished to keep these cherries for him.

There are some children I have known, who will go and gather fruit and flowers without asking leave, if they are allowed to walk in the garden, and will try to help themselves slyly, which they know is wrong.

These silly children forget that God sees them, though man may not. William and Jane were not like these children; they had been taught never to help themselves to any fruit without leave; and, as I told you, their mother could trust them. Is it not very pleasant to feel that you can be trusted? Well, then, take care; the Bible tells us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. 10: 12; and what I am going to tell you will show you how necessary it is to remember that text.

William and Jane were running along the walk, when, as they came near the cherry-tree, a gust of wind shook the leaves, and several ripe cherries fell off the tree. William stopped

to look at them, and I am sorry to have to say that Jane stooped down and picked some of them up; she ate two



or three, and gave the rest to her brother. They had not finished eating them, when Jane recollected that they were doing wrong. "Oh, William,"

she cried out, "what have we done? How displeased mamma will be! What shall we do?"

William. The cherries looked so good, I quite forgot—but suppose we don't tell her.

Jane. O William! that would be making bad worse. We have done wrong, it is true; but you know we must tell her.

William. But you know she is displeased if we do not remember what she tells us, and punishes us if we disobey her.

Jane. Yes; but I had rather she knew all and punished me, than to try to hide it; for I am sure I never could feel happy when she looked at me, if I had deceived her; and you know she

does not punish us because she is angry, but that we may try to do what is right in future.

William. Yes; but I don't like to see her displeased, and she is always grieved when she knows we have done wrong. Why should we make her unhappy?

Jane. She would be much more unhappy if she found that we try to hide what we have done. Recollect what she told us last Sabbath, that God is always ready to forgive those who come and ask pardon for Christ's sake, when they have done wrong. Your text was, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. And you

know, she said, that if God, who is so great and so good, has promised to do this, then surely a parent or teacher who loves God, will be ready to do the same ; and if you recollect, she told us never to let false shame keep us from telling her at once we had done wrong, or we should get more and more into sin and trouble.

William. Well, well, you are right ; let us make haste and go to her, and tell her the truth.

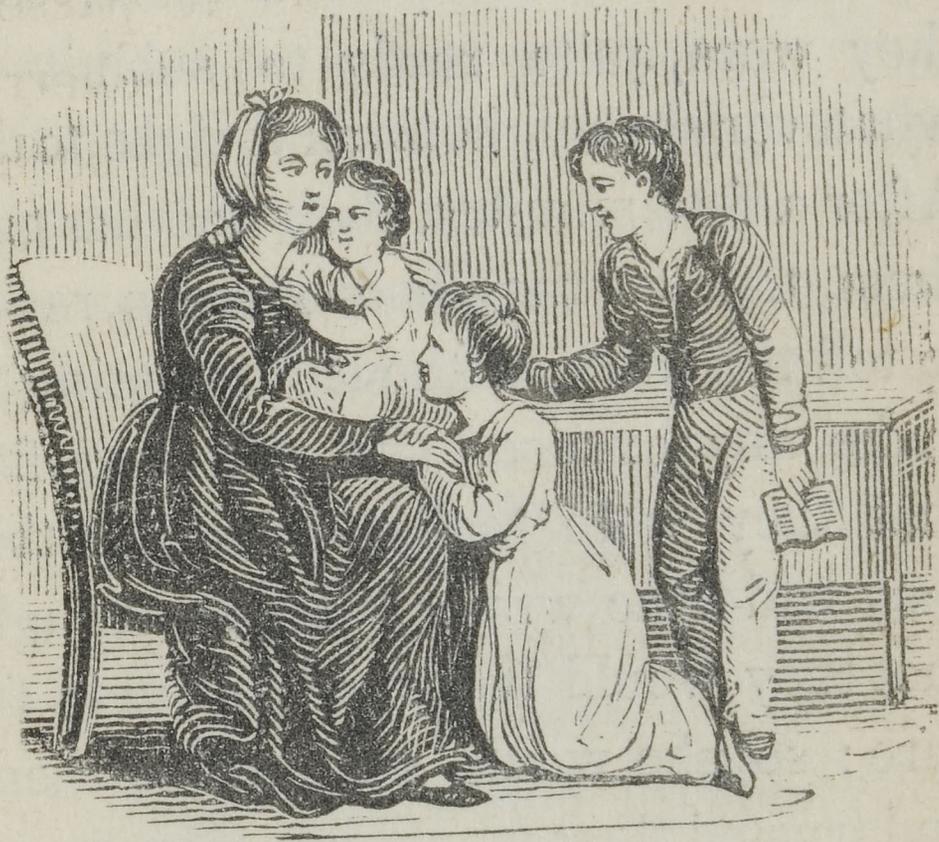
So they went, hand in hand, to find their mother ; of course they were not very cheerful, but they felt thankful that they had been able to determine to do what was right, and tell the truth.

“ Oh, mamma,” said Jane, “ you will be sorry to hear that we have been

naughty children; but we know it would not be right to try to hide what we have done, so we are come to tell you the truth. Jane then told all that had happened, exactly as it passed, and William produced the cherry-stones, which he had brought, that his mother might see how many he had really eaten; and I can assure you they did not try to make any excuses, but told the whole truth.

Their mother was sorry to hear they had disobeyed her, but she was pleased to find that they were ready to tell the truth, and still more so, to find that they did not attempt to say, "It was only a very few;" or, "It was Jane who gave them to me;" or, "If William had not stopped, I should not have touched

them.” I am afraid there are some children who would have made foolish excuses like these: such conduct is always a bad sign. If little boys or



girls begin to make excuses, I am then certain that they are not really *convinced* that they have done wrong, but

are only sorry that they have been found out.

When William and Jane had told their mother all the truth, they expected that she would punish them, and they were quite ready to submit to whatever she might think it right to do. After a few minutes, their mother told them, that as they had been so ready to tell the truth, without attempting to make any excuse, she was satisfied that they were really convinced that they had done wrong, and she thought that they would be more careful in future: so she would not punish them, and trusted they would not soon forget what had happened, and that their brother and sister would remember it also. She then reminded them that they

could only overcome temptation by looking to God for grace to enable them to resist it, and that this was necessary in every thing, whether great or small, as a very trifling fault often leads to a very great one.

If my little readers like this story, I hope that they will remember what it is to teach them, and not merely think about the cherries.



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How kind is Jesus, oh! how good!
For my poor soul he shed his blood;
For children's sake he was reviled,
Yet Jesus loves a little child.

To me may Jesus now impart
Although so young, a gracious heart;
Alas! I'm oft by sin defiled,
Yet Jesus loves the little child.

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