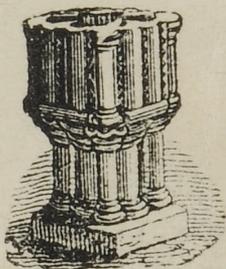


# Good and Bad Temper.



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## Good and Bad Temper.

THERE were two little girls, named Sally and Ann Smith. They had some younger brothers and sisters, and they had some nearly grown up, who went out to work. Their father and mother worked hard, that they might feed and clothe all their chil-

dren. They were steady, quiet people, and always tried to do their duty towards God and towards their neighbour.

While the elder ones went out to work, Sally and Ann were very useful at home. Five days in the week they went to school, and on Sundays. On Saturday they were very busy helping their mother to clean the house and mend the clothes, and make all tight and nice against Sunday. Sometimes they had leave from school for a day, when their mother was obliged to go out, and wanted one of them to watch the children. Helping their mother at home was as good to them as play, though they liked play as well as other girls; and their mother liked them to have it when there was time.

These two little girls were very much alike in their looks. Sally was only a year older than Ann, but she was much taller. They had both

light hair and blue eyes, and were sunburnt with being a great deal out in the air with the younger children. And they were both reckoned good girls at their books, and got praise for being useful at home. They never told lies, or took what did not belong to them. I never heard of their behaving ill at church, or being rude and bold, or using bad words. And yet every body knew them apart at once; and if you had lived a day with them, you would have said no two girls could be so unlike each other. The difference was in their tempers. You could not look at them without seeing it.

Sally was cheerful-looking, and always seemed pleased with every thing. If you spoke to her, she always answered with a smile. Ann most commonly looked as if she was out of sorts. You would have thought she had all the trouble of maintaining the family, if you had seen her going about with a discontented look,

as if every thing went against her. This was not always the case; but a day never passed without Ann's finding something to be cross about. At school she could keep from cross words and looks — she knew her teachers would notice them. What a pity she did not take the same pains to watch her temper at home!

The little ones were not near so fond of Ann as of Sally; because when Ann was out of humour, she would give a push or a sharp word to any of them who came near her. But Sally always found fault with them kindly; and if she had to punish them, she did it gently. So they liked her best, though Ann used to spend a halfpenny quite as often as Sally did in buying gingerbread for them, and she would take them about the garden and the lane, just as Sally did.

I will tell you a few things about these two girls, which will shew you how much happier Sally was, owing

to her good temper, than Ann could be.

They had a little money of their own, which they had got together in different ways. Some halfpence their father had given them; and their eldest brother, who went to work, had given them sixpence a-piece out of his wages; and some they had earned by going on errands, or taking care of their neighbours' children, as well as of their own little brothers and sisters. They had each a little tin box to keep their money in. Their mother had told them they should keep some of it towards buying clothes at the end of the year; and their sixpence, she said, they might spend as they liked.

So they considered some time; and at last they settled they would each buy a drinking-cup, such as they had seen at the fine china-shop at Stockton, when they went in turn with their mother to market, and to help carry home her basket. They

were cups with a pretty border round them, and each had a name upon it. All the common names were there, so that any boy or girl might choose their own. Their mother said they might go the next Saturday and buy their cups.

So they talked a great deal about them; and Ann said she was sure she had seen one with "A present for Ann" in fine gold letters on it; and Sally said hers was a common name, and she hoped she might find that too. Billy said, "It will not be a present, though, if you buy it yourselves." And Sally answered, "But it will be John's present, for he gave us the sixpences."

They then put on their tidy frocks, and set off to the town,—Sally, as usual, in good humour, and Ann at that time as good-humoured as Sally.

I have not time to tell you how they got to the fine shop, and were almost too shy to go in; and how they were half-frightened when the

man in the shop said, "Mind how you come in : take care of my china with your umbrella there ;" and how the cups were taken down, and each name found. Then they had nothing to wish for, but walked home with their treasures in their hands, looking at the gold letters, and at the border, and wondering how such beautiful things were made.

They walked along the footpath by the side of the high road, and then turned into the shady lane, where the tall elms grew quite close together, and then into the corn-fields, through which was their way home. Ann took the two cups carefully in her hand, and Sally carried the basket, in which she had got soap and candles for her mother.

All the time they were gone, the children at home had been thinking of the cups. They wondered when their sisters would come home. At last Billy said, "I see them coming through the barley-field ; the barley

is so high I can only see their heads. Harriet, let us run and meet them, and see if they have got 'Sally' and 'Ann' both."

So the two children got up, and clambered over the gate into the barley-field, at the end of which they now saw their sisters sitting to rest on the stile, — Sally with the basket in her hand, and the cups, which Ann had given her to hold, while she untied her bonnet, and fanned herself with her handkerchief, for it was very hot.

The children set off along the dusty path as fast as they could go, pushing and tumbling after each other, and trying which could reach Sally soonest. Billy called out, "I shall touch her first." And so he did; but it was a pity he tried to do it, for in his haste he fell against her. Poor Sally went backwards over the stile, and her cups with her, and the basket upon them. She was not hurt; but she heard a crash, and

guessed what had happened. As soon as she got up, she saw the cups both broken in pieces. She only said, "Oh, what a pity!" and looked as if she could hardly keep from crying; but Ann gave Billy a push, or rather, I am afraid, a blow, and called him a naughty, good-for-nothing boy.

Billy and Harriet went home crying. Sally said nothing more, but took up her basket and walked home; and Ann followed, complaining of her ill luck, and scolding at every body. She could not bear this trial at all.

Her only comfort seemed to be telling the whole story to her mother, with a great deal of complaining and grieving,—how she had had the hot walk for nothing—how she wished she had done something else with her money, and so on. Her mother said, "I am very sorry, my dear—I hate to have money wasted—I wish the children would not be so rude;

but when you have lived as long as I have in the world, and known real troubles, you will not fret long about such a thing as this."

This was all her mother said about it; and Ann could only spend her ill-humour in complaining of the heat, and telling the children not to plague her, and that she did not see what they were fit for but to do mischief and give trouble.

The little ones were really sorry for the accident. Billy said, "As soon as I have sixpence, I will buy another cup." This he said to Sally, who had recovered her disappointment, and was standing at the door mending her father's stockings, and looking almost as cheerful as she had done in the morning. Harriet said, "Can't they be mended? we will go and pick up the pieces." So they did, but there were too many bits to be put together—they could only put those with the letters on them side by side.

“They are of no use now,” Billy said; “they will do for playthings.”

Sally answered, “Look, you may have all mine with the gold letters, and use them for your feasts. The next time you play together, you can pretend these are fine china dishes, such as I saw at the shop to-day. You can put your little bits of gingerbread in them.”

The children were very much pleased; and I really believe Sally was as happy afterwards, whenever they were making their little feasts, as she could have been with her cup, and with the pleasure of seeing people look at it and admire it.

Soon after this, on a fine Sunday in the autumn, Sally and Ann were walking together to church, along with the school-girls. They passed by a pool of water, where some idle boys were loitering. They had sticks, and were amusing themselves with splashing in the water. As the two girls walked by, one of the boys

threw his stick suddenly into the water, and splashed them with the mud. Their clean white tippets and their Sunday frocks, and even their bonnets, were spotted with it. Ann stopped and began to tell the boys they ought to be ashamed of themselves; she would speak to their fathers, and get them punished. She was very angry, and could hardly be persuaded by Sally to walk on. Sally was vexed too, but it could do no good to scold; it would not mend the mischief. She said, "We must let the mud dry, and then try to get it off. Make haste, or we shall be late for church."

As they went through the churchyard the people noticed their splashed frocks; this kept up Ann's anger, but Sally only smiled. She went to her place, and took out her book, and attended to the service as usual. But Ann went into church angry, and so she came out; therefore you may be sure she did not attend to

her prayers, nor to what she heard. She came home discontented with herself, and could find no pleasure in any thing. But Sally spent her Sunday evening cheerfully and happily with her father and mother and brothers and sisters, and was only sorry because Ann was out of humour.

Now the winter after this was a hard one, and their father could not always get work. He said he hardly knew how to find bread for so many mouths; and he and his wife often said they must try to get places for Sally and Ann—any thing to begin with—where they might earn a little, and learn to be servants. Their mother spoke to the grocer's wife at Stockton with whom she used to deal, who promised to look out for her. The girls thought a great deal about going to service; they really wished to do something to help their parents, and they thought, as girls

are very apt to do, that they should like to live in a town.

One day, when they had just finished their dinner, a light cart stopped at the door, and Sally said, "Mother, here is a lady coming in." And Ann whispered, "Don't you remember her? it is Mrs. Andrews, who keeps the china-shop." And she turned red at the remembrance of her ill temper about the misfortune of the cups.

Mrs. Andrews came in and sat down. She told their mother that she had heard how she had two girls who wanted places, and that she was willing to try one. Their mother called them both to come, while Mrs. Andrews talked about her maids, and the trouble she had with them, and how she was determined to have one out of the country. Their mother said they had always had a good character at school, and had been handy at home.

All this time Mrs. Andrews was looking at them.

“Now, I must tell you, Mrs. Smith,” she said, “that there is one thing I am particular about, and that is temper. The last girl I had was cross, and ill-used my little girl when my back was turned. Now this—Ann, you call her, I think—is a good, strong, tidy-looking girl, but is she good-tempered?”

Mrs. Smith was silent a moment, and at last said, “I will tell no lies, ma’am; it is not my way. I must speak out. I cannot say Ann is good-tempered; she is easily put out of sorts, and then she may be hasty, and give a child a cuff or a cross word. I am sure, I hope she will mend.”

“I thought so—I saw something of it in her looks. Now is Sally like her?”

“Nobody ever found fault with Sally’s temper, that I will say for

her. *I* never knew her cross, nor any body else."

So it was settled that Sally was to go ; and if she suited Mrs. Andrews, she was to have a few clothes given her after a month, and something more at the end of the half year. Ann could not complain, though she was unhappy. She could not but own that her temper was bad. She had more cause to grieve when the time passed on and Sally was settled in her place ; but nothing was heard of for Ann ; and her mother, when money and bread ran short, could not help saying, " Ah, if Ann had been better tempered ! People do not like to take her because of that. Every body finds out what a girl's temper is."

At last her mother came home from market one evening, and said to her, " I have heard of a place for you."

Ann looked pleased, and asked, " Where ?"

“ You will not like it, child ; but I cannot help it. Your father says we must all do what we can ; the little ones cannot help us, but you must make up your mind to what is disagreeable at first, and hope to do better afterwards. In short, it is at Mrs. Edwards’s.

Ann was silent. Every body knew what Mrs. Edwards was. She was a farmer’s wife, who lived in the same parish as the Smiths, an active, bustling, tidy woman, but with a terrible temper and tongue. People were more afraid of Mrs. Edwards than of her husband ; for it was said she managed every thing. One or two of the girls she had for servants had run away home, and others had been struck by her ; she made them work very hard, and allowed them no amusement. However, she clothed them the first year, and if they pleased her, she took pains to get better places for them. This the grocer’s wife, who was a distant relation of

hers, told Mrs. Smith ; and she said, " It will be a good place for Ann, after all ; Mrs. Edwards will bring her queer temper into order, and that is all she wants."

Ann knew she must go. As she was a dutiful daughter, she could not bear to burden her parents any longer ; but it was with a heavy heart she set out for the lonely farmhouse, carrying her little bundle, and thinking of Sally, who was so comfortable at Mrs. Andrews's, and so fond of the little girl she took care of, and getting to be a favourite with her mistress on that account.

When she got to the farm-house, Mrs. Edwards was not yet come in, so she sat down by the kitchen-door with her bundle in her hand. Presently she started ; for she heard Mrs. Edwards come in, scolding the man, who had been late in milking the cows, and complaining that every thing went wrong the moment she was out of the way.

“ And here’s the new girl, sitting idle like a lady. You’ll have no sitting still here, child, I can tell you. Take off your bonnet, and come along with me. Fetch Tommy in out of the garden. You must coax him, though; for Tommy is not used to be contradicted. Make haste.”

Ann went towards Tommy, a child between two and three years old, who was running up and down the grass walk, between the gooseberry-trees. Ann said, “ Won’t you come in out of the cold?” but the boy looked at her a moment, and said, “ I won’t.” “ But mother wants you,” said Ann, trying to catch him up in her arms. He began kicking and screaming, and scratching; and Ann was obliged to let him go. When he was tired of this, he ran in by himself, and began crying for his supper; and Ann got scolded because she could not tell where to find it. She was not used to such trouble-

some children, and she foresaw that she should not have much comfort with Tommy.

She had to coax him to go to bed, and then to come down stairs and help to get the men's supper. She had scarcely time to eat any thing herself, and was heartily tired, when Mrs. Edwards told her she might go to bed, and shewed her where she was to sleep, in a little garret at the end of the house, where a bed was made up for her. But she could not get to sleep. After she had said her prayers, and was in bed, she began thinking of home, and of her new place, and of the difference between hers and Sally's. She knew well enough that her own ill temper was in fault. She was really anxious to improve; she knew it was sinful not to take pains to mend this fault, and she resolved she would submit to Mrs. Edwards.

She went on tolerably for two or three days, though many things hap-

pened that were disagreeable enough to her, and she had plenty of trouble with a spoiled child like Tommy. On the morning of the third day she was minding him in the garden. Tommy chose to climb on the garden-gate, and Ann held his frock that he might not fall. However, Tommy did not choose to be held; he kicked and scratched till Ann let him go. Presently, as he leaned forward, he came down, head over heels, upon the stony path. Ann ran to pick him up, and found his nose and face bleeding. He screamed frightfully, and the noise brought his mother out of the house.

“You idle girl,” she called out, “you have been gaping about, and have let the poor child hurt himself in this manner. Get along into the house,” and she pushed her in roughly. “You deserve to go without your dinner, and you shall.”

Ann, who had been tried and worried by Tommy's ill behaviour all the

morning, felt as if she could not bear this. She looked out into the fields, she saw the path leading to her quiet happy home: she could see the smoke of the chimney, she thought. Without considering a moment, she snatched up her bonnet, and set off across the fields as hard as she could go. She reached home quite hot and out of breath, and could not speak to her mother, who asked her half-a-dozen questions at once; for she was not a little surprised to see her there.

Ann began to tell of all her wrongs, crying very bitterly. Her mother bade her sit down, and finished the shirt she was ironing. Then she said, "I see how it is, child—I am sorry for it, but there is no help for it. You must do something to support yourself—you *must* try to keep this place for a year. If Mrs. Edwards beat you so as to hurt you, or starved you, I would not keep you there. But she is only cross and

ill-tempered—that is what you have been; and living under her will shew you what that is. Come, I will go back with you, and beg pardon.”

She put on her bonnet and shawl, begged a neighbour to mind her children, locked her cottage-door, and set out for the farm, followed by poor Ann, who sobbed still, but said nothing against it.

When they reached the farm, there was Mrs. Edwards looking red and angry, and leaning against the door. She began about runaway girls immediately, but Ann's sorrowful face softened her a little; and when her mother began to say “she was very sorry, and would not do so again, she was sure—she herself should never encourage a girl in such things,” — Mrs. Edwards seemed quieted, and told Mrs. Smith to sit down. “She was a civil, quiet body,” she said; “she had nothing to say against her; but really Ann was so careless and thoughtless.”

Now Ann was really neither careless nor thoughtless, as her mother knew, and herself too. But they knew she had another fault, and was now suffering for it; and silence, and Mrs. Smith's "soft answers," turned "away wrath." Tommy, whose bleeding was over, was glad to see Ann, and went to her of his own accord; and Mrs. Edwards, who was not unkind when she was in good humour, told Ann where to find some dinner, and asked her mother to take some too. But Mrs. Smith thought it better to leave Ann at once, begging her, before Mrs. Edwards, to be a good girl, and do as she was bid; and then set off to her own children.

Now, after this, things went on better, though it could not be a comfortable home to Ann. Mrs. Edwards had a bad temper; it had not been corrected when she was a girl, and it was daily less likely that it should mend.

Ann had something disagreeable to bear every day. But as she had been well and religiously brought up, and wished and prayed to be the better for her trials, her temper at the end of the year was very much improved; and instead of blaming Mrs. Edwards for her fault, she only tried the more to mend the same in herself.

Next year, Mrs. Edwards told Ann's mother that Ann might better herself by going to another farmhouse, to look after the children, where she would get wages, and where it was known that the mistress was a very nice kind woman. And though Mrs. Edwards never could give Ann a good word while she was with her, she recommended her very strongly to this new place.

Ann was very happy, and went on very well there. Sally, too, went on well in her place; but afterwards I believe that Ann was considered the better servant of the two. *Her*

great fault was quite cured; but Sally was always a little thoughtless and careless.

However, we need not inquire which was the best girl of the two. They tried to learn their duty, and to do it; and therefore I need not tell you they were happy.

