

Annie and Vanie's First Real Prayer.

from

Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer (children's edition)

Compiled by Rev. S. B. Shaw, 1895

Two sisters, one about five years of age, the other next older, were accustomed to go each Saturday morning, some distance from home, to get chips and shavings from a cooper shop.

One morning, with basket well filled, they were returning home when the elder one was taken suddenly sick with the cramps or cholera. She was in great pain, and unable to proceed, much less to bear the basket home. She sat down on the basket, and the younger one held her from falling.

The street was a lonely one, occupied by workshops, factories, etc. Every one was busy within, not a person was seen on the street.

The little girls were at a loss what to do. Too timid to go into any workshop, they sat a while, as silent and quiet as the distressing pains would allow. Soon the elder girl said: "You know, Annie, that a good while ago mother told us that if we ever got into trouble, we should pray, and God would help us. Now you help me to get down upon my knees, and hold me up, and we will pray."



There, on the side-walk, did these two little children ask God to send some one to help them home. The simple and brief prayer being ended, the sick girl was again helped up, and sat on the basket, waiting the answer to their prayers. Presently Annie saw, far down the street on the opposite side, a man come out from a factory, look around him, up and down the street, and go back into the factory.

"O, sister, he has gone in again," said Annie. "Well, said Vanie, "perhaps he is not the one God is going to send. If he is, he will come back again."

"There he comes again," said Annie. "He walks this way. He seems looking for something. He walks slow, and is without his hat. He puts his hand to his head, as if he did not know what to do. O sister, he has gone in again; what shall we do?"

"That may not be the one whom God will send to help us," said Vanie. "If he is, he will come out again."

"Oh yes, there he is; this time with his hat on," said Annie. "He comes this way; he walks slowly, looking around on every side. He does not see us; perhaps the trees hid us. Now he sees us, and is coming quickly."

A brawny German in broken accent asks:

"O children, what is the matter?"

"O sir," said Annie, "sister here is so sick she cannot walk, and we cannot get home."

"Where do you live, my dear?"

"At the end of this street; you can see the house from here."

“Never mind,” said the man, “I takes you home.” So the strong man gathered the sick child in his arms, and with her head pillowed upon his shoulder, carried her to the place pointed out by the younger girl. Annie ran round the house to tell her mother that there was a man at the front door wishing to see her. The astonished mother, with a mixture of surprise and joy, took charge of the precious burden and the child was laid upon a bed.

After thanking the man, she expected him to withdraw, but instead, he stood turning his hat in his hands, as one who wishes to say something, but knows not how to begin. The mother, observing this, repeated her thanks, and finally said: “Would you like me to pay you for bringing my child home?”

“O no,” said he with tears, God pays me! God pays me! I would like to tell you something, but I speak English so poorly that I fear you will not understand.” The mother assured him that she was used to the German, and could understand him very well.

“I am the proprietor of an ink factory,” said he. “My men work by the piece. I have to keep separate accounts with each. I pay them every Saturday. At twelve o’clock they will be at my desk, for their money. This week I have had many hindrances, and was behind with my books. I was working hard at them with the sweat on my face, in my great anxiety to be ready in time. Suddenly I could not see the figures; the words in the book all ran together, and I had a plain impression on my mind that some one in the street wished to see me. I went out, looked up and down the street, but seeing no one, went back to my desk, and wrote a little. Presently the darkness was greater than before, and the impression stronger than before, that some one in the street needed me.”

“Again I went out, looked up and down the street, walked a little way, puzzled to know what I meant. Was my hard work, and were the cares of business driving me out of my wits? Unable to solve the mystery, I turned again into my shop and to my desk.

“This time my fingers refused to grasp the pen. I found myself unable to write a word, or make a figure; but the impression was stronger than ever on my mind, that some one needed my help. A voice seemed to say: “Why don’t you go out as I tell you? There is need of your help.” This time I took my hat on going out, resolved to stay till I found out whether I was losing my senses, or there was a duty for me to do. I walked some distance without seeing any one, and was more and more puzzled, till I came opposite the children, and found that there was indeed need of my help. I cannot understand it, madam.”

As the noble German was about leaving the house, the younger girl had the courage to say: “O mother, we prayed.” Thus the mystery was solved, and with tear-stained cheeks, a heaving breast, and a humble, grateful heart, the kind man went back to his accounts.

I have enjoyed many a happy hour in conversation with Annie in her own house since she has a home of her own. The last I knew of Annie and Vanie, they were living in the same city, earnest Christian women. Their children were growing up around them, who, I hope, will have like confidence in mother, and faith in God.
Jeigh Arr.

{ Annie was the wife of James A. Clayton, of San Jose, California. I have enjoyed their hospitality, and esteem both very highly. *James Rogers, of Alabama Conference, M. E. Church.* }