

PATTY;
OR,
BEWARE OF MEDDLING.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.



REVISED BY DANIEL P. KIDDER

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Sarah Frances Orbell
with her son





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AH! Patty, is it come to this? You have often been told, little girl, that it is wrong to be prying, and curious, and meddling; and if you had minded

the good advice given you, this sad business would not have happened. There you go! that barrel cover has tipped up, and you have lost your footing; the door of the safe to which you have caught seems to be giving way, and it will be well if the jars do not all tumble down. O what mischief you have done! We are sorry for you, little Patty. What a fall you will get! People, whether they be little or big, are often forced to pay dear for a little wisdom at last, because they would not have it when it was offered to them for nothing.

Do you know what I mean by this, my dear reader? I will tell you. Patty Blake, the little girl whom you see in the picture, was a very curious child indeed; and, I am sorry to say, the more she was warned against

prying into anything, the more curious she was. Her mamma often told her that if she did not leave off her naughty way before any harm came of it, she would be hurt some day, and be very sorry that she had not been wise in time.

One day her papa told all the family at breakfast, that nobody must go near a part of the garden where the children had often played. He did not tell them the reason; but he looked very grave, and said they must not go on that side at all. He went out soon after on horseback; and I am sorry to tell you that Patty could not settle herself to her lessons, or mind her work properly, her silly little head was so busy thinking about what her papa had said; and her heart was set on going to see

what was the matter in that part of the garden. She soon began to tease her mamma to tell her all about it ; but her mamma bade her mind her task. Then Patty asked if she was not to go out in the sunshine all that fine day ; and her mamma said, Yes ; but she must finish her lessons first ; and she must not go on the south walk, or near the round grass-plot, as her papa had said.

Patty went to work at once. She thought if she only got out, she should be able to take a run, and get near enough to find out the great secret that troubled her fancy. But when all was done, and Patty had tied on her bonnet, she found her mamma ready too ; and that she would still be kept in sight by her careful parent.

After running about a little while,

Patty said, "Mamma, I just want to see if the bud on my rose-bush is blown yet; I wont be a minute."

"No, Patty, it is too near the round grass-plot; you must not go that way."

"But why? what reason can papa have for keeping us away from that pretty place?"

"A good reason, you may be sure, my dear," said Mrs. Blake.

"But I want to know why, mamma; and I want to see what it is."

"Fie! Patty," said her mamma, "this naughty, curious temper of yours will lead you into the great sin of disobedience, if you do not pray against it, and get the better of it."

But Patty still looked cross, and said, "You often blame me for being curious, mamma; what harm is there in it? If nobody were curious, no-

thing would be found out, and the world would be no wiser now than it was a thousand years ago."

Mrs. Blake smiled, and Patty was pleased, and went on. "Do, mamma, let me be curious now; it will help to make me wiser!"

"Well, Patty, I do not object to that. Bring me a flower, and we will look into it curiously, and see how wonderfully it is put together, and how every part of it is made to answer the useful purpose that God's wisdom saw good it should fulfill."

"That's not what I mean," said Patty; and she spoke fretfully.

"Look about for an empty snail-shell, then; there are several lying around. I will show you how beautifully it is formed to be a close, safe,

and movable house for the poor little insect that once lived in it."

Patty still looked displeased, and her kind mamma was very sorry to see it.

"My child," she said, "it is good to be curious about these glorious works of the Most High, that we may learn more of his ways, and find fresh cause to praise him. But there are greater wonders than these, which truly wise children will seek to find out. Yea, we are told in the Bible, that the very angels desire to look into these things. Do you know what things I mean, Patty?"

The little girl just said, "Yes, mamma," but hardly loud enough to be heard. Her mamma went on:—

"The apostle Paul calls them, 'the depth of the riches both of the know-

ledge and wisdom of God.' And in another place he says that 'in Christ Jesus are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' You ask me to let you be curious, that you may become wise. I say, Yes; be as curious as you can, to find out all that God has told us in his holy word, about his great love to sinful man, in giving his only Son to suffer death on a painful cross, for the salvation of our souls. Ask of God to show you the wonderful things of his law; and if you grow more curious every day of your life to find out all his goodness, I can tell you, Patty, you will have as much to find out at the end as at the beginning, though you will get much true wisdom by the way, and have a happy ending before you."

Mrs. Blake said all this cheerfully ; but Patty never looked up. At last she said, " I want to go to the round grass-plot."

" No, you shall not ; and I must punish you for this very naughty, sullen behavior. I shall take you in doors again, and not allow you to come out till papa says you may. You make me very unhappy, Patty."

So Mrs. Blake went back to the house, and there she talked more to her little girl about this bad feeling. " It is a bad feeling," she said, " for it brings on this very bad temper. Nothing can be right that leads you to do wrong."

That evening, at tea, Mr. Blake had his hand bound up, and seemed in great pain. Patty went and asked him what it was ; and he took off the

bandage, and showed her a large swelling, very red and sore. "It is stung," he said; "this morning I found that there was a wasp's nest at the root of the old tree, on the round grass-plot, and a swarm of young wasps ready to leave it. I went for two men to take it carefully, so as to leave no wasps about. Two of them lighted on my hand, and stung me as you see."

"O dear!" said Patty, looking at her mamma, and turning very pale. "Yes, Patty," said Mrs. Blake, "that was the danger that you wanted to run into. Now, be thankful for your escape, and learn wisdom from it; or you will suffer some day for your folly."

"But, mamma, I should not have wished to go if I had known what it was." "I am not sure of that," said her papa, "you would have wanted

to see what a wasp's nest was like, and might have gone too near before you found out the danger."

"No, indeed, papa; I am never curious where there is any danger."

"Where there is sin there is danger, Patty. Your prying temper often makes you disobey us, and that is very sinful. Now, take warning by this lesson, and remember that meddling is the mark of a foolish person; that is, of one who has not the wisdom that cometh from above."

If Patty had taken the kind advice of her dear parents, it would have been well for her. Now you see in the picture what happened not long after. Mrs. Blake had a sort of store-room, where many things were kept, to be used when wanted. There

were barrels and boxes, and a large wooden cupboard, or safe, which was kept locked ; and some covered pans into which Miss Patty sometimes got a peep. Her mamma, too, often told her what was in the jars and jugs in the cupboard ; but one day Patty was so very rude and troublesome with her questions about something that the cook had brought, when Mrs. Blake was busy giving orders to her, that her mamma sent her out of the room, and would not tell her anything about it.

The next morning Mrs. Blake was called away from the store-room while looking over some things ; and Patty, always on the watch, spied the door ajar. She slipped in ; the bunch of keys was in a drawer, and the naughty girl at once thought to herself, “ Now

I will see what is in that jar." By means of an old stool in the room she managed to get on the barrel, and open the door of the cupboard. You see in the picture what happened then: the barrel cover gave way, and down came the naughty child with a very sad fall. There was a strong pickle in one of the jars, too, and some of it splashed on her where the skin was broken, putting her to such great pain that she screamed out very loudly, and her mamma and the servants all ran to see what was the matter. Patty, and the barrel cover, and the jar, were all lying there; the pickles were strewed about them, and Patty's arm and face were bleeding, besides the bruise that she got on her back, that made her unable to stand. I cannot tell you how frightened Mrs.

Blake was ; she did not get over it for a long time.

All children are not so curious as Patty ; but some do the same things for the sake of mischief ; and others, to seem very brave, will run into great dangers ; and I am sorry to say, some will do wrong just because they are told not to do it : they think it a fine thing to have their own way.

It would be a sad story to tell you how much poor Patty had to suffer from her wounds before she was able to run about again. I believe it was the happiest time of her life, though ; for she was made to feel her own weakness and sinfulness ; and she learned to pray every day, with her heart as well as her lips, to be kept from all evil. When she saw the tears running down her kind mam-

ma's face, and her papa walking about the room in great distress, while the doctor dressed her painful wounds, she felt how cruel she had been to those dear parents, by bringing all this sorrow and expense upon them because she would not attend to their wise and kind counsels. She also knew how near she had been to breaking her bones, and so perhaps being a cripple for life, if the goodness and mercy of the Lord had not followed her. So she was sorry at heart, and repented of her evil ways, and prayed to have her sins forgiven for the sake of Jesus our Saviour, who died to redeem us to God by his blood. She prayed for a new heart, and for an humble, obedient spirit; and when she got about again it was delightful to see how changed she

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was. But there was a scar on her face, that never left it; and when she saw it in the glass, she remembered the great pain that she had suffered, because she would not ask and receive the wisdom that God is so willing to give.

Dear children! believe me, God is willing, for his dear Son's sake, to give you all wisdom, and salvation, too, and eternal life, if you will but ask him. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John xvi, 24.

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