

## MABEL CLEMENT

by

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### CHAPTER FIVE

Mabel returns home - Cool reception - Sharp rebuke - Dr. Stanly coming to reclaim her

At the end of eight weeks Mabel's visit terminated, and with a somewhat heavy feeling about her heart she began to pack her trunk for her return home. Her heart almost sank within her when her lively imagination pictured out what might be before her. There were times when she felt that she did not have the courage to go home. But she had committed her way unto the Lord and trusted Him for grace to do and to endure. She took an affectionate leave of her aunt and cousin; and, with hearty thanks for what the Lord had done for her while at Thornton and earnest prayer for help in the future, she stepped into the old stage coach which rolled and rattled off toward her home.

The journey was made in silence. A stranger sat opposite her; but she seemed not to see him. Only now and then did she appear to see the beautiful scenes through which she passed and on which she looked. Her mental vision was focused on scenes in Sterling that passed vividly before her in succession. She compared her state of mind going to Thornton with her state of mind returning. There was a wide contrast. Then the surface was placid because of peace and satisfaction; now it was turbulent with conflicting emotions. But there was an undercurrent of joy deeper than all depths that worlds are too poor to buy.

She arrived home just as the town clock was striking three. Her father and mother came out to meet her, but not with wonted eagerness and joy. She thought on the whole she was received rather coolly, but was not surprised. She kept her mortification hidden, however, and in spite of a heavy heart tried to smile as sweetly and appear as cheerful and pleasant as usual.

At an early hour she made her toilet as perfect as practicable not to appear to do so, for she was secretly expecting Arthur to call, as she had informed him when she would get home. But Arthur did not put in an appearance. This greatly perplexed her. But she assumed a nonchalance not at all peculiar to herself. If he could be alienated for so slight a cause and without one word from her in palliation of her supposed crime, he was surely not what she had taken him to be and she would give him up as cheerfully as possible. But she was sick at heart as she brooded over her surroundings. She longed to have a good cry, but dreaded for her mother to find her in tears.

On the following day Mabel was violently assaulted by her parents and reproved in a way that made the blood rush to her cheeks at first, but afterwards caused her to weep profusely.

"Mabel," said her mother harshly, "we wish to know why you left the Christian church and joined that ignorant sect and thus brought disgrace on us all. To think you would do as you have

done after your father and I have spent so much time and money on you is almost incredible. It is a shame and disgrace! I have no patience with any such doings. I have been sorry a thousand times I ever let you make that visit, but I never dreamed it would come to this. It will be a long spell before my consent is given for you to go again." She grew heated as she proceeded and the words burned down deep into Mabel's soul.

"Yes, my daughter," added Mr. Clement, "we had no thought of your being so foolish. We supposed our child had more common sense than to be weaned so easily from the true church to one holding doctrines so palpably wrong. I have often heard it said we do not know what will become of our children; but I could never have been persuaded that my daughter would be instrumental in bringing so much trouble and disgrace to our home."

During these speeches Mabel's heart was half the time in her throat and her eyes full of tears; but at the last with a tinge of indignant pride on her cheeks and her eyes kindling she replied:

"Father, I am truly sorry that I am the occasion of so great distress and disgrace; it pains me very much to know I have caused you both great trouble instead of being as I wished, a source of happiness to you. I hope you will forgive me and allow me to share your blessing and have your love as I have during all my life."

"Nothing will satisfy us but your reclamation from error," he responded.

"Father, I can never be a member of the church to which you belong. Nothing was harder than to take the step I did; but I took it advisedly, solemnly convinced that it was a duty I owed to my Saviour. What I did was done with the understanding that, if it cost me every friend I had, I would have to lose them."

"There is absolutely not a single reason for doing what you have done, and it is nonsense for you to talk in that pious style."

"Father, I am very sorry you believe me so silly and weak as to be capable of acting as I have without a reason; but, if you will grant me the privilege, I am persuaded I can present some valid reasons for changing my church relationship."

"Very well," said Mr. Clement, "you will be permitted to expose your ignorance and weakness tonight, as Dr. Stanly means to call and see what can be done for you. Now you can go to your room, if you wish."

To say that Mabel was mortified is not sufficient. Language can hardly portray her feelings as she arose and went to her room. It was the first time she was ever ordered out of her father's presence. She threw herself on her bed and sobbed out her great sorrow before the Lord.

She lifted up her heart unto the hills whence cometh all our help. This upward look strengthened her. She felt an internal peace deep as an ocean and a consciousness that her Lord was with her and would stand by her, in all future emergencies.

The whole of the afternoon was spent in prayer and the study of the Scriptures. Misgivings would often rush into her mind, but she would re-examine her proof-texts and thus reassure her

mind. Plain Scripture and prayer were the antidote of all her fears and doubts. In her great anxiety she wished to be with GOD and the Bible. It was here alone she felt strong and hopeful in view of the coming struggle to vindicate the course she had taken and which was now the talk of the unsympathizing people of the town.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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