

The Rotten Apples

ALLAN'S parents taught him the Bible and showed him a good example; so they were worried when they saw him playing with two boys who were sometimes very wicked. His father warned him to keep away from them, but Allan thought that being with them was good fun and would not do him any harm.

One day his father said to him, "Allan, go to the garden and fetch the best apple you can find".

Allan ran to the garden, for he expected to eat the apple. Soon, he returned with a beautiful, rosy apple.

"Put it in that dish," said his father, pointing to an empty bowl. Allan was disappointed but did as he was told.

"Now," said his father, "go and fetch two rotten apples."

Allan thought this a strange request, but he found two rotten apples under the tree and took them to his father.

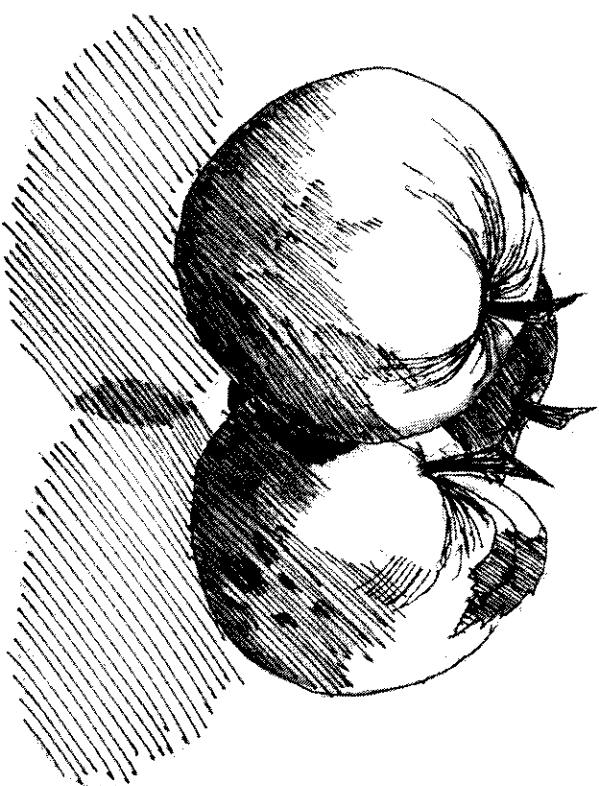
"Put them with the good apple," said his father.

"O Dad, the rotten apples will spoil the good apple," said Allan, who was still hoping to eat the good apple.

"Just do as I tell you, Allan," said his father.

So Allan obeyed, and his father then took the bowl away.

Some days later Allan and his father looked at the three apples in the bowl. There were the apples, and Allan was sorry to see that the good apple was now rotten and only fit to be thrown away; but that was what he really expected.



"Now Allan," said his father, "this is like what happens to a boy who goes with wicked companions. Just as the good apple became rotten because it was with the rotten ones, so the boy will learn to do wicked things along with his wicked companions.

"The Bible says, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners', or, keeping bad company will spoil good character. The Bible also says, 'The companion of