

feel. With all the glory he has got for himself, I'm thankful I'm not his mother."

Lincoln tacked the pictures on the wall and went back to his work. "If it wasn't for mother," he said aloud, as he resumed his hoeing, "I'd put up this hoe and enlist to-morrow. No trouble about my not passing muster with the doctors. I'm as sound as a nut." In proof of which statement he doubled up his right arm and showed its powerful muscle.

Just at that moment he saw his mother standing in the doorway of the kitchen blowing the tin dinner-horn, which had been used to announce the coming of that diurnal circumstance for many generations of Austins.

His eye rested upon the pictures as he sat down to dinner. "The pictures look first-rate up there, don't they, mother?" he said. But on looking up into his mother's face, he saw that she looked paler than usual, and a sad expression had come over it. One of the neighbour's boys, who had been over to the grist-mill at the village, came to the door and threw in the daily paper. "There's your paper, Lin; there wasn't no more mail for your folks this morning."

"Now, don't go to reading that paper till you eat your dinner," Lincoln," said his mother. "It will all be cold and just good for nothing, for when you once begin on that war news, you'll keep on reading till you get through." Her son noticed that his mother had prepared some of his favourite dishes, and he knew that in her weak state of health it had cost her much exertion.

"Dinner was first-rate, mother," he said, when he had finished eating. "I hope it didn't tire you too much getting such a spread for your boy," and he got up from the table and put his arm around the slight frame of his little mother and kissed her.

She looked up at him with tearful eyes and said: "Lincoln, I believe you want to go to war, and you are just staying home because you promised father you'd take care of me. If your heart is set on going, I don't want to hinder you. I'll get Jim Blake and his wife to come in and stay with me. They'll be glad enough to come."

"Now, mother, you know you and Jim Blake's wife never would get along in harness pulling together here in the house. Her ways are entirely different from yours. I've been turning this question of duty over in my mind, and I've settled. While you live it is my duty to be loyal to my promise to father and take care of you. We will do all we can to honour those already in the field by our prayers

and our loyalty to our country in any other way we can."

That afternoon a peddler came along with United States flags to sell, and the mother went to the sugar-bowl in the cupboard and got out a dime and bought one. This she draped over the front door while Lincoln was hoeing in the cornfield. "I'll let folks know that we're patriotic here, if it isn't Lincoln's duty to go to the front just yet. If it keeps on he may be able to go, for I have not been feeling very strong lately."

"Well, mother," exclaimed Lincoln, with a pleased look on his face, "you're as enthusiastic over the war as I am. Think of your buying the United States flag and putting it up over our front door!"

"I thought I would do what I could for my country's honour," was the reply. "I'm thinking of all those other mothers whose sons have gone to the front. I'm so sorry for them. Lincoln, I don't know but I ought to be willing to give you up in defence of your country, but you know you are all I have in the world."

"And you are all I have in the world, mother. The question of duty for me seems to be easily solved. I'll stay right here with you and fight quackgrass and cut-worms up in the east corn lot for a spell." As he took up his milk pails and went to the pasture he drummed on the bottoms of them, while he heard his mother's voice coming through the south window singing, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." "I'll be a man and a patriot even while I try to be a good son," he murmured.

"No man denies God until after he has departed from God; for as long as he delights in the sunlight and fellowship of God he cannot bring his heart to the state of denial; but once we are separated from God, as Peter was, it is easy to deny him. And then return to him must be by the path of tears and bitterness."



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