

choose? What do you really wish for most? Think a minute, and then tell me, one by one."

How the faces brightened. Every child was interested in this. All wanted something, of course, and all wanted to tell what they would choose.

Up flew the little hands to show that the minds had been made up, and as Miss Lee asked different ones to speak, the wishes seemed to come pattering about like so many hailstones. These were some of them:

A horse, a knife, a gun, and so on.

But nearly every little girl sitting on the small chairs wanted a doll. To be sure each child must have had at least one, but each wanted another, while not a boy wanted a doll—not one. More than one boy wished earnestly for a gun, and several wished for horses and knives.

But all had not told their choices.

"What would you like best to have, Jean?" asked Miss Lee.

"Wisdom," answered Jean softly.

"She has been studying the lesson about Solomon's wise choice," thought Miss Lee, but she said nothing, only went on with the questions.

Presently Georgia's turn came, and she said, "Wisdom," and after some others had answered, Louise, who had thought a pony and cart the nicest thing, said, "Please, I've changed my mind; I would rather have wisdom," and when Miss Lee found out by asking, that these girls understood wisdom to mean knowing how to do right, she was very glad to hear their choice.

"I wanted you to be honest, and say what you really meant," she said. "You have told me a great deal about yourselves, in telling your wishes. If it were dark here so that I couldn't see your faces, I would know that it was a boy who wanted a horse and a girl who wished for a doll. I know from your wishes what sort of play you like. The things you want are good things, most of them, unless it may be the guns. But how long would they last if you had them? Only three of you have chosen something that will last forever. What is it?"

"Wisdom," was the answer that came, after a moment.

"Yes. A heart that knows Jesus and knows how to please Him, is the sort of a wise heart that Solomon chose when God told him to ask what he liked. Now I will put a mark on the board for every one who thinks that after all the best choice is a heart like this, a wise heart that will always be a blessing."

And every one in the class decided finally, after thinking and hearing about it, that a wise, loving, obedient heart was the best thing to choose. Those who really choose this can have their choice, for God will give it.

What is your choice?

PRAY WITH THE SPIRIT AND UNDERSTANDING.

Christian teaching and Christian prayer and Christian praise are to be intelligible to the people, yea, to the meanest among them. (I. Cor., xiv. 15.) To conduct any of these in a foreign tongue, which the people do not understand, is an absurdity so monstrous that nothing but the fact of its having been done, and now being done, in the Church of Rome, could ever reconcile us to the mention of such a thing. For what is prayer? The expression of the heart to God, the breathings of man's inner spirit to the Father of his spirit, the Abba Father of the reconciled and adopted son in God's family. Surely, if anything should be hearty and earnest, this should! Some tell us of holy places on earth, and men have lavished cost to represent by stately form and gorgeous colour and dim religious light the presence of God, and have erected

altars before which men should bow in reverence, and shrines which they should pass with soft and trembling steps; but I would have you know but one holy place in this world, and that place is the footstool of the throne of grace, when a Christian's heart is lifted in prayer. The liturgy of the sanctuary is the universal utterance of mankind; it speaks in the lisp of the infant, in the falter of the aged, in the silent assent when the voice has failed. There the true Cross of Jesus is uplifted before the eye of faith. There is the mercy seat, and the mild and reconciled presence of Him who once dwelt awful and unapproachable between the cherubim. And there every believer, at every time, has boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus.—H. Alford.

A FABLE.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Howley," smiled the rector, as the surly, ungracious door opened to his tap.

Only that morning the rector had heard that her little son was sick. This had taken place soon after his last visit to the family, and had been kept a profound secret from him, meantime, so far as the home folks were concerned. He saw quickly that Mrs. Howley was not overpleased and divined the reason, but nothing was left him but the obvious remark:

"I hear that Erasmus has been quite ill."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Howley, with a vigour that made the windows rattle; "and he might easily have died and been buried for all he's seen of you."

The rector, being of a very meek and placid nature, as all rectors are, recovered from the shock directly, and further asked:

"When was he taken ill?"

"Three weeks ago and more," responded the energetic mother.

"That is a long time," replied the spiritual visitor. "Have you had a doctor for him?"

"Had a doctor!" The words were ground between the teeth of the irate mother.

"Of course I had a doctor. Do you suppose I would let my child lie here in the house and die without a doctor?" The rector did not see the look of scorn hurled at him with these words, or he might have trembled afresh.

"Ah, you have had a physician. But how did he happen to call?" the rector meekly continued. "Perhaps he was accidentally passing by and dropped in."

"Now, did I ever! Mr. Camp you must be beside yourself," interjected the further indignant mother. "How did he happen to call? What a question! He called because I sent for him."

"O! you sent for him!" said the rector.

"Now, do you think any doctor would come if we didn't send for him? How did he know Erasmus was sick?" The mother looked at the meek man of God as though she heartily pitied his stupidity.

"But do you always send for the physician when you are sick?" the pastor further queried.

"Well, I do say! What sort of a question will the man ask next?" muttered Mrs. Howley, gazing vacantly at the ceiling.

"Only as you seem to think the clergyman must find out for himself if any member of his parish is sick, I suppose you might do the same with your family physician."

These last words from the rector were uttered with a twinkle in his eye, and with the best of grace, so that something new and strange began to dawn upon the clouded brow of Mrs. Howley.

"Yes, I see," she at last broke in. "I guess I had ought to send for you, as I do for the doctor. But really, did you not know till this morning that Erasmus was sick?"

"Till that time I had not heard a whisper of it; and then only by the merest chance."

"Well, well, I shall remember better next time. Will you not come in and see Erasmus? He'll be mighty glad to see you, Mr. Camp."

The rector went in, pleasantly chatted with the convalescent boy a few moments, offered prayers at the mother's request, and went home meditating on the somehow unequal ways of life.

Moral.—Hæc fabula docet, that however reasonable and sensible people may be in secular concern of the world, they are not so consistent in things ecclesiastical and spiritual.

USING GIFTS PROFITABLY.

Let us remember that even when we seem to be using our gifts profitably, we may be using them in a spirit of blindness and presumption before God, as unlovely as that of those who more openly misuse them. High intellectual culture, good as it is and stimulating, often carries with it an element of moral weakness in developing a man's acuteness out of all proportion to his training in judgment and moral strength. It has a tendency, especially in early life, to lead to a very false estimate of qualities so common as mere cleverness, or even cleverness combined with learning, to overrate them as possessions, and as keys to unlock what is really deepest in human life—to make a man overlook the fact that others whom he perhaps despises for their beliefs, are able to rest in them, not because they are less acute than their critics, but because they are of a more earnest mood and a finer spirit. May God keep us all from yielding to the temptations to which our several temperaments or circumstances may most naturally incline us—from illness and selfish indulgence, from coldness and vanity—that none of these things may ever bind us to our true position and duty as in the sight of the Great Judge who is no respecter of persons.

TO-DAY, NOT TO-MORROW.

There are duties that must be done at a particular moment or they cannot be done at all. It is to-day the sick neighbour needs your visit, your help; to-morrow he may be well, or others will have administered to him, or he may be dead. It is to-day that your friend needs your sympathy, your comfort; it will not be of any use to him to-morrow. It is to-day that this tempted one needs your help in his struggle; to-morrow he may be defeated, lying in the dust of shame. It is to-day you must tell the story of the love of Christ; to-morrow it may be too late. Learn well the meaning of Now in all life. To-morrow is a fatal word; thousands of lives and countless thousands of hopes have been wrecked on it. To-day is the word of Divine blessing.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT.

Parents often feel in doubt as to how to educate their children; but of one thing they should never doubt, that is that every one must in the main educate himself, no matter how many or how capable his teachers may be. Herbert Spencer puts it correctly when he says: "In education the process of self-development should be encouraged to the fullest extent. Children should be led to make their own investigations and to draw their own inferences. They should be told as little as possible, and induced to discover as much as possible. Humanity has progressed solely by self instruction; and that to achieve the best results each mind must progress somewhat after the same fashion, is continually proved by the marked success of self-made men."