

distinction than the Legion of Honor. Wont you be proud, mother, to see me wearing it at the evening exhibition?" Mrs. Morris smiled. "Wont you be glad, mother?" asked Charlie, eagerly.

"Glad I shall certainly be of the scholarship that has won the honor, if it is fairly earned," replied the mother. "But what are your grounds of expectation?"

"Why, mother, I am at the head of all my classes but one, and in that there is no one above me but Henry Colton; I don't suppose there will be any hope of going beyond him if he is always there, but he is sometimes absent at the hour we recite, and so he wont have as good a chance of keeping his place in the class."

"What is the cause of his absence?"

"He has to do errands for his mother. She takes in sewing, and they are too poor to have a servant, so Henry carries the bundles home."

"Mrs. Colton has made great efforts to keep her boy at school. He is a good scholar, is he not?"

"Yes, mother; I don't know a boy that studies harder than Henry Colton."

"Not even Charlie Morris?"

"No, mother; but then I am not obliged to study so much, because I have been to school more regularly than he has, and then I have more time to myself at home. Why, Henry is up and studying before any one else is stirring in the morning, and always sleeps with his book under his pillow at night."

"Then, if he fails to obtain the highest rank in the school it will not be for want of diligence, or even of scholarship, but from the mere accident of his outward circumstances. But he will, doubtless, make a great effort to be punctual these six weeks to come."

"He will if he knows of the plan," said Charlie, moodily.

"He learns his lessons at home, does he not, so as to keep up with his class, though he should be absent a single day?"

"Yes, mother; but to-day we had a special explanation of something in arithmetic that I know he cannot work out by himself."

"Is my boy conscious of the spirit he is indulging?" asked the mother gently. "Does he really wish to gain the prize for himself at the expense of one who desires it full as much, and deserves it, perhaps, even more?"

"Then you don't want me to get the star after all, mother?" said Charlie after a few moments' silence.

"You will not doubt your mother's interest in your improvement, even if she should be less solicitous about this particular honor," Mrs. Morris replied; "you know all the ambition I have in the world is centered in my children. I would see them active, energetic; foremost, if possible, in the pursuit of every honorable attainment. And yet there is a 'more excellent way,' which I would have them follow, an attainment higher even than mental wealth—without which, though possessing 'all knowledge,' they are nothing."

Charlie's glowing ambition had somewhat cooled during his mother's calm but earnest conversation. He was listening attentively as he sat in his favorite place at her feet, though his eyes were downcast and a sense of shame stole over him.

"You remember the passage in which this 'way' is described?" asked his mother.

Charlie took down the little well-worn Bible, in which he always loved to read to his mother. Turning to the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians he slowly read the first six verses.

"Do you think, mother," he asked, "that this forbids seeking any honor for one's self? It says 'seeketh not her own.'"

"It is not necessary for us to settle the bearing of this on the question of prizes at school. But one question comes nearer to the case in hand. Do you think that, in strict honesty, the star would be *your own* if you gained it, not by superior scholarship, but by your more prosperous circumstances and

Henry's hinderance through his mother's necessities? The only value of the sign is in the thing signified. To me this badge would mean, not that my boy was a better scholar than Henry, but only that his father was richer than Henry's mother."

"Mother, I don't want that star at all," said Charlie with a resolute effort, "that is, if Henry can get it. I am going round now, if you are willing, to show him about the arithmetic, and to ask his mother to arrange, if possible, so that he can attend the school constantly the next six weeks."

Mrs. Colton's consent to the latter arrangement was easily gained, especially when Charlie had begged permission to assist in doing the errands after school-hours.

The obstacles in arithmetic were cleared away, so that the two rivals started on their friendly race with a fair field and no favor to either. Henry had been at the head of the class just the same length of time that Charlie had been before him, when, three weeks before examination, he was taken ill. It would be difficult to say which of the two classmates was most disappointed at this derangement of their plans. Charlie watched the progress of the fever almost as anxiously as Mrs. Colton, and dayly beset the doctor, to learn the prospect of a speedy recovery.

The third week had arrived before Henry was able to be dressed and breathe the outer air for a few minutes of the day. Examination-day came, and by Charlie's earnest entreaties the invalid was permitted to be present on the important occasion.

He sat next his friend, and leaned upon him when too weary with the effort and excitement. After many interesting exercises, the president arose, and, with some words of explanation, proceeded to confer, as he said, the highest mark of honor ever conferred in the institution. The star was awarded "to Charles Morris, for punctuality of attendance, propriety of deportment, and success in scholarship."

There was a moment of almost breathless attention through the crowded audience as Charlie walked to the foot of the platform and was seen to address a few words to the president. Those who were nearest could hear him say:

"The star, sir, does not rightly belong to me; Henry Colton has worked harder than I to obtain it. He is a better scholar, and but for his illness would have been at the head of his classes."

After a moment's consultation with the gentlemen on the platform the venerable-looking president replied:

"The examiners, Morris, prefer that you should retain the star, as you have literally fulfilled the conditions prescribed."

"It would not be right, sir," said Charlie firmly, though with a trembling voice; "I beg you will give it to Henry."

"In that case you must yourself bestow it," said the president. "Henry Colton will come forward."

Henry, not suspecting what was going on, advanced, his pale face flushed with wonder and excitement. Charlie, stooping down, fastened the star upon his breast, and then supported him back to his seat. The noisy applause of the audience jarred almost painfully upon his heart, full as it was of a deeper joy than earthly fame can give—the joy of obedience to the precept, "In honor preferring one another."

In his mother's loving smile he found a full reward for the sacrifice of his selfish ambition. Coveting earnestly the best gifts, he had found in the spirit of brotherly kindness "a more excellent way."

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

OUR FATHER AND HEAVEN.

Our Father! Who is our Father? God. What is heaven? God's home, our home, the home of good children. Isn't it nice for a child to have God for a Father and heaven for a home?

Well, every child may have God for *his* or *her* Father, and heaven for *his* or *her* home. Why?

Because Jesus died for every child, prays for every child, offers help to every child, forgives every child who calls on his blessed name.

Dear boy, sweet girl, is God *your* Father? Is Jesus *your* Saviour? Is heaven *your* home?

QUESTIONER.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

JOHNNIE'S RESOLUTION.

BY MRS. H. C. GARDNER.

I'm trying to be good;
I have a father dear,
A kind and gentle mother
Whose counsels I revere.
'Twould grieve them very much
If I should wicked prove,
If I should slight their wise commands
Or scorn their tender love.

I'm trying to be good;
For only goodness lends
To us the real beauty
Which wins and keeps dear friends.
I might be very fair
In figure or in face,
But I can gain no real love
Without that sweeter grace.

I'm trying to be good,
That, when I come to die,
I may be happy as an angel
Above the starry sky.
Bad children cannot go
Up to that holy place,
So while I am a little boy
I'll seek the Saviour's face.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE BOY WHO HAD PRESENCE OF MIND.



WILLIE HINTON carried a lighted candle to his chamber one night and set it upon the table near his bed. After disrobing and saying his prayers he blew out the candle, and jumping into bed, soon went to sleep.

In putting out the candle Willie did not notice that he blew a spark from

the wick into the folds of the bed-curtains. This spark did not go out, but sinking into the muslin slowly set it on fire. The smoke filled the chamber and woke the boy from his first nap. Starting from his pillow, he saw flames rushing up the bed-post!

What did he do? Most boys of his age would have rushed from the room screaming frantically. What did Willie Hinton do?

He leaped from his bed, ran to the door, and shouted, "Pa! pa!" Then closing the door, he took the ewer from his wash-bowl, and standing on the table, poured its contents steadily upon the flames. The effect was that when his father and mother entered the room a moment or two later the fire was so far subdued that it was easily put out. Willie had saved the house from being burned down.

Willie had *presence of mind*; that is, he thought clearly and acted wisely in a moment of danger. This quality of mind is very desirable. Children should cultivate it in little things by not allowing themselves to be frightened at trifles. Some little folk, for example, act wildly if they see a cow or a dog near them; if, in crossing the street, a horse is coming toward them, they run wildly hither and thither; if they hear any unusual sound in or around the house at night, they grow so scared that you can almost hear their hearts beat. Such conduct shows want of clear thought and wise action. It is the reverse of presence of mind. Those easily alarmed little folk should try very hard to think clearly and act wisely whenever they see anything that alarms them.

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