

solved to put aside this cherished wish, and declared that he would be a hunter. This filled his father's heart with joy, for he felt that he should have some one to lean on his old age. Christian would take his place, and he had no need to fear that his family would be without a friend after his death. One beautiful summer morning, Christian had gone into the forest to gather some strawberries for Agatha. He was on his way home filled with joy at the thought of Agatha's pleasure, when, just as he came out onto the road, a beautiful coach came in sight, drawn by four horses. In it were two young men, richly dressed. As soon as he saw them Christian doffed his cap, but instead of returning his salute, they gazed at the berries.

"Look Albert," said one of the young men to the other, "this boy has just arrived in the nick of time. I have been wishing for strawberries; now we can regale ourselves with these."

They thought, of course, that Christian would be flattered, and tried to take the basket away from him, but he drew it away.

"These belong to my sister, and you cannot have them. Go and gather others."

"We will not give them up; we are hungry, and these will refresh us."

"If you are hungry, here is half a loaf of bread, and there is a stream a little further on where you may drink."

"We do not want it. Do you think, that like you, we eat bread and drink water. There are wine and provisions in the carriage; but we have wanted some strawberries for a long time, have we not, Albert," said he, addressing his companion.

"Certainly, and this youth should be pleased to give them to us."

"You would not accept my bread," said Christian, "therefore you shall not have these berries."

"Then one of the young men, taking a shilling from his pocket, threw it to Christian, saying "Give them to us; we are in a hurry."

"This means that you think me a beggar. Well you are mistaken. I never begged in my life. You are more miserable than I am, for you have begged for these berries."

"I shall soon teach you to be still," said Albert, seizing a silver mounted cane, but Christian quietly took it from him and broke it in pieces, throwing it on the grass.

"There is the cane, had you better not go and get it; and remember that I do not wish to receive your blows as well as your insults; had I been asked for the berries in a polite manner, I should have been happy to have gathered you some, or I might even have divided these. But, instead, you insulted me grossly, and then wished to finish up by striking me. I bowed to you with the respect due to your rank. Had I done what you are doing, I should blush with shame as this is an action unworthy of gentlemen."

"It is useless staying here any longer said Albert, "let us leave this young beggar. I shall not even take the trouble to punish him as he deserves; anyhow, here is our carriage."

They then walked away, after giving Christian a threatening glance, which he met without flinching. He, however, answered Charles, and said:

"Your honor consists in striking and insulting a polite and inoffensive youth."

The young men walked on, pretending they did not hear; they wished to revenge themselves, but he looked so powerful that though there were two of them, they thought it more prudent to let him alone.

When they were out of sight, Christian turned his steps homeward. For the first time in his life burning tears filled his eyes. The insults heaped on him by the young lords had impressed him deeply. Why had they acted thus? Simply because they were rich and powerful. It is true, he was only the son of a poor hunter, but not a beggar as they had said he was.

"My God! cannot I, too, become as great as they; how often has Agatha read of men who occupied humbler positions than him, and who by their courage and perseverance reached the ranks of the heads of their country. I do not think I am wrong in saying that nobility, which has been acquired by honesty and hard labor, is preferable to that given by birth and fortune. I am fifteen, tall and strongly built. I have some