

NEW SERIES OF PENNY BOOKS.

BEFORE HONOUR IS HUMILITY

A STORY FOR THE YOUNG.



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CHARLEY WALL was an only child, and lived with his father and mother in a small and rather shabby-looking house, in the suburbs of the large town of Hedley. His parents, though poor now, were once very well off, but, through a bank failure, Mr. Wall lost almost the whole of his property, and suddenly became a comparatively poor man. Young as Charley was, he could remember the time when he went out driving with his mother every day in a handsome pony-phaeton, and in the evenings played games of hide-and-seek with his little brother (now dead) in a beautifully-furnished drawing-

room. But these were things of the past, and looked back upon by Charley now only as a pleasant dream; still he could not help sometimes recalling those happy days to mind, and often lay awake for hours at night comparing his life now with what it was then, and wondering if his father would ever again live in such a large handsome house, and have plenty of servants.

It grieved Charley, too, to see his mother obliged to do so much hard work; for Mrs. Wall could not afford to keep even one servant now, and was only occasionally able to get the assistance of a charwoman. But Mrs. Wall never complained or grumbled at the change in her circumstances; and although Charley knew well she had never been accustomed to such rough work and poor living, still she always looked cheerful and happy, and never alluded to their former independence.

The sudden loss of all his wealth was a great trial to Mr. Wall, and affected his health seriously for some time; but he knew his troubles were sent by a wise and loving Hand,

and had all been ordered for the best. He therefore submitted patiently and meekly to his chastisement ; and so far from cherishing a discontented or rebellious spirit, he settled down happily with his wife and child in his new and humble home.

As is often the case when fortune reverses, all those who had been friends and acquaintances of Mr. Wall in his days of prosperity, forsook and neglected him now in his days of adversity. But he found much more faithful, although humbler, friends in the families he now lived among ; and through the kindness of one he succeeded in getting employment in a merchant's office in the town. Mr. Wall was not troubled by any feelings of false pride in accepting a situation so much beneath what he had once occupied himself, and which he had never expected to be obliged to fill. He banished all such foolish and useless ideas from his mind, and accepted gratefully the means offered him of earning his bread.

Shortly after Mr. Wall entered on his new

employment, he sent his little son to a day-school in the town; and there Charley, who was an active, intelligent boy, soon made rapid progress in his studies, and, as he grew older, evinced such a decided talent for drawing, that the master mentioned the matter to Mr. Wall, telling him that if he could afford to get his little son well taught, he was sure he would one day become a great artist. But this Mr. Wall could not do, much as he would have wished it; for already he found it difficult enough to pay for Charley's attendance at the day-school, and to do so was forced to economize in many other respects. However, after a time, he chanced to make acquaintance with an eminent artist living in Hedley, who, on hearing of the little boy's great taste for drawing and painting, and learning his parents' history, offered to give him lessons with his other pupils three times a week, without any charge! Charley's delight knew no bounds when he heard of this kind offer; and, accordingly, he started for Mr. Weldon's house next morning

in the best of spirits. Although but thirteen years of age, he was a manly, independent boy; and soon after entering Mr. Weldon's studio he felt quite at home, and sat down very happily and contentedly to his work.

At the same desk with Charley sat another boy, called Harry Noblett. He looked about fifteen or sixteen years old; but Charley was surprised to see how much more backward he was than any of the other pupils. He seemed, however, quite satisfied with his progress, although Charley more than once that morning heard Mr. Weldon reprove him for his inattention and carelessness. But Harry only laughed, and whispered to Charley, when his master's back was turned, that it was "all humbug working so hard at anything," and that *he* wasn't going "to make a slave of himself."

"I say, young Wall," he cried, as Charley was going away after class, "wait a bit, and I'll walk part of the way with you. I'll be ready in a second."

Charley turned back and waited until Harry

had collected his pencils and paper and joined him, and then the two boys started on their walk. On the way they passed by the office in which Mr. Wall was employed; and Charley, knowing his father would like to hear how he had got on at his drawing-lesson, asked Harry to wait while he called at the house.

"Who do you know in that dingy hole?" asked Harry, when his companion came out of the office. "That's a merchant's office, isn't it?"

"Yes; that's where my father is employed," replied Charley innocently.

"Your father!" exclaimed Harry, shrinking aside. "Why, I was sure you were a gentleman's son."

"And so I am," said Charley. "Father is a real gentleman, only he is not so well off now as he once was."

Harry smiled contemptuously; and, after a short silence, said he wondered how he could afford to get Charley taught by the best drawing-master in Hedley if he was so poor.

Charley explained that he would not have to pay anything; and his companion seemed more surprised than ever.

“Well,” said he, “all that I can say is, that I don’t know how you can do such a mean thing as to take Mr. Weldon’s lessons without ever paying anything. Bah! I don’t know how you could do it!”

Charley’s face crimsoned; and he was not at all sorry when, in a few moments afterwards, his friend wished him good-bye, and turned off in another direction.

“I suppose he’s ashamed to be seen walking with me,” muttered Charley indignantly, as he pursued his walk alone, and dashed away the burning tears that had risen to his eyes. “But I won’t mind him. Father would not allow me to take lessons from Mr. Weldon if it were mean or wrong, and he has often told me I need never feel ashamed if I was doing what was right.”

That evening Mr. Wall was detained at the office later than usual; and as Charley sat

waiting tea for him with his mother, he told her of what Harry Noblett had said, and of his own determination not to mind such foolish words.

"That's right, my boy," said Mrs. Wall. "I know you have more sense than to allow such silly thoughts to trouble you. It is no disgrace to be poor. God gives riches to some, and poverty to others, and we will accept gratefully and humbly what he has been pleased to appoint for us. Wealth makes no difference in his eyes. High or low, we can serve him in any station of life; and if he sees fit to withhold riches from us in this world, we must submit patiently and humbly to his will. You know the Bible says,—'*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble;*' and it would be very wrong of us, through any foolish feeling of pride, to refuse Mr. Weldon's kindness to you. God has sent you, through him, the means of earning your living honestly hereafter; and I am very glad you see that, so far from being any disgrace, it would be a sin to neglect such an opportunity."

Charley felt greatly comforted by his mother's words, and resolved in future to take no notice of Harry Noblett's taunts, but to persevere diligently at his studies. Mr. Weldon was a kind-hearted old gentleman; and seeing how grateful Charley was for his services, and how hard-working and diligent he always was, he often kept him on for an hour or more after the other boys left. In this way Charley soon made rapid progress; and although he suffered much sometimes from the sneers and haughtiness of the other pupils, still he was a sensible, good boy, and bore their scoffing words very patiently.

Before Charley was fifteen years old, he had outstripped many of Mr. Weldon's other pupils, and astonished even the master himself by his talent and perseverance. Meanwhile, Harry Noblett learned nothing. He was decidedly clever, and would have got on very well, if he had not been too proud to take either advice or correction; but that he would not condescend to do, and consequently his father's

money, and Mr. Weldon's time and trouble, were completely thrown away on him.

Foolish Harry forgot that "*before honour is humility,*" and that he could never hope to succeed while he considered it an indignity to be corrected or to take trouble about anything.

So matters went on until Charley Wall had been three years at Mr. Weldon's. At the end of that time he succeeded in finishing a drawing so well, that Mr. Weldon, who was always much interested in the boy's success, and knew what a help and encouragement it would be if he could earn something by his drawings, suggested his trying to sell the one he had now finished. He mentioned the name of a rich lady living in the town who was very fond of pictures, and advised Charley to take his drawing to her house next morning, with a letter of introduction from him.

Charley was delighted with the plan; and thanking his kind master over and over again for his kindness, he took his leave, promising to call early next day for the picture and note.

He determined not to tell his father or mother of Mr. Weldon's plan just yet, and amused himself during his walk home by trying to imagine their delight and surprise on hearing he had already sold one of his pictures. Excitement kept poor Charley from sleep that night, and he was up with the sun next morning. Mr. Weldon told him that twelve o'clock would be the best time to go to Mrs. Gordon's; and accordingly at that hour Charley set out for her house, carrying his picture under his arm.

On the way he met Harry Noblett, who inquired where he was taking his picture. For a second Charley hesitated to reply, but the next moment answered truthfully that he was going to try to sell it.

“To sell it!” repeated Harry scornfully. “Well, if *I* were obliged to do such a thing, I'm sure I'd get some one to take it, and not hawk it about with me, like a pedlar. I wouldn't lower myself so for any money.”

But Charley did not feel he was degrading

himself in the least by what he was about to do ; so wishing Harry good-bye, he hurried away, and soon reached Mrs. Gordon's house. He was shown into a beautifully - furnished drawing - room, where Mrs. Gordon and her daughter sat at work ; and going towards the former lady, he presented Mr. Weldon's note. Mrs. Gordon seemed greatly pleased with his recommendation of Charley, and asked to see his picture. Poor Charley's fingers trembled as he unfolded the paper wrapped round it, and held it up for inspection ; but he was soon reassured by Mrs. Gordon's praises and admiration. She immediately promised to buy it ; and was so struck by the lad's gentle, winning manner, that she not only paid him a sum far exceeding what Charley expected for his picture, but undertook to get purchasers for any he might wish to sell in future !

From that day Charley's fortune was made. He had a bright future in prospect now ; and when, a few days afterwards, Mrs. Gordon made herself acquainted with his parents'

history, and promised to be a kind friend to them also, Charley's cup of happiness was filled to the brim.

“*Before honour is humility ;*” and that was the whole secret of Charley Wall's success in life. For does not the Word of God tell us that “*Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*” ? (Luke xiv. 11.)



