

"I don't know anything about it," was all Bert could say.

It seemed then just impossible for George North, the "good" boy of the school, to tell of his part in the performance, so he kept still. For a week after, Bert was so dull and sullen that George silenced his conscience by saying to himself that Bert did not care for a few extra scoldings; he got more or less of them anyway. If he confessed, everybody would say he left the "Key" there on purpose, whereas he thought himself very honourable not to copy the right answer.

A week passed, and Bert was not at school one day. "Expelled," the boys said, until Mr. Lennox gravely announced that Bert was dangerously ill, and the doctor said he must have been greatly out of health for weeks—that his dulness and languour were the result of disease. "I have far more charity now for poor Bert's fault than I have had," added Mr. Lennox kindly. "I think he may not have been quite in his right mind. He was careless, but never before dishonourable."

George North, conscious-smitten, resolved to explain everything if—if—well, if Bert got worse or seemed to care when he got well. Two days passed; then late one afternoon a messenger came to say Bert Fulton was dead.

"He died very quietly; he sent his love to all the boys—begged Mr. Lennox to forgive all his faults, and to believe him when he said he did not *cheat* about that 'Key.'"

There were low sobs in the school room, but no such bitter grief as that which broke forth from George North, and no boy who heard his confession would have been in his place for anything then or afterward.

"God may forgive me, but I wronged Bert, and he never can come back to speak to me," was his sorry cry.

BOB'S BATTLE.

It took place in the cornfield.

A strange place for a battle, you say? Yes, but the curious part of this affair was that it left no traces after it. The corn was not trampled, but stood as green and straight and tall as ever; the earth was not torn up, there were no ghastly dead and wounded soldiers. More curious yet, you could only have seen one living creature among the corn, and that was Rob himself. Strangest of all, that one soldier, Rob, did not even know what side he was on in the fight—till it was over.

He found as soon as he came into the field, after the doctor had seen his brother Willie, that he could not work. He felt the battle fast coming on, and could only throw down his hoe and turn soldier.

General Strong-desire opened the engagement.

"You want to go away to school next fall," said his great guns, slowly. "You have earned money to pay for your schooling at the academy; Willie is big enough to take your place on the farm; you care more for books and study than anything else in the world. Why not go!"

General Insist-on-your-rights moved up his corps in support of Strong-desire. "Why should you always give in for the benefit of others? Besides, your mother told you herself not to change your plan. Aunt Susan might withdraw that fine chance to live with her and work out your board, out of school hours."

General Hope reinforced Duty. "Aunt Susan is always kind-hearted. Tell her all about it, and she will arrange it for you to come later."

"No use!" boomed Despair's cannon. "You can never catch up with the class if you don't begin the term with them. And who knows what may happen another year! How are you ever going to become the great and learned man you want to be, if you have no chance to study?"

Then General Duty made a terrific charge.

"If you never have another chance, you ought to do what is right now."

The enemy's line wavered and broke. General Ambition rushed up, rallied the retreating troops, and sent out a forlorn hope under Colonel Appearance-of-virtue. "Isn't it right to make the best of oneself? Will you not be doing wrong to let go this, perhaps, only, chance of becoming a great and useful man?"

It was a well planned attack, and General Duty hastened to send a new detachment into the field. It was only a little band known as "Bible Words," and their ammunition was just, "Jehovah-jireh—the Lord will provide," out of one of the old Bible stories Rob's mother used to tell him. "Do the right thing, and the Lord will provide. He always does; some way or other. Not the way we like, perhaps, but the best way of all, always."

"I can't stand this," quoth General Ambition, and he called in his troops and fled. He was followed by Insist-on-your-rights and Strong-desire, leaving Duty master of the field, and Rob on his side, heart and soul.

No more delay now. Rob seized the hoe, and attacked the weedy corn—not happy, perhaps, but at peace, which is far better. "Peace with honour" had been won by this soldier.

He walked up to the house at sunset with the tread of a conqueror. "Mother," said he, gently, taking the pail of water she was carrying. "Why didn't you call me? This is too heavy for you."

"I didn't think it worth while, my boy," she replied, with her patient smile. "I must get used to carrying it this fall, you know."

"No, ma'am!" he said; "I'm going to be here to carry your pails of water myself, till Will is able to do it. I've made up my mind."

And he began to be repaid when he saw the look of relief which, much against her will, flitted over his mother's face.

Will he ever get his schooling and be the great and good man he wants to be? I cannot tell you. I can only say that he has taken the very best of ways toward that second object; and—"Jehovah-jireh."