

## The Battle of Life.

BY JENNIE F. WILLING.

Go forth to the battle of life, my boy,  
 While it is called to-day;  
 For the years go out and the years go in,  
 Regardless of those who may lose or win,  
 Of those who may work or play.

And the troops march steadily on, my boy,  
 To the army gone before;  
 You may hear the sound of their falling feet  
 Going down to the river where two worlds meet;  
 They go, to return no more.

There's a place for you in the ranks, my boy,  
 And duty, too, assigned,  
 Step into the front with a cheerful face;  
 Be quick, or another may take your place,  
 And you may be left behind.

There is work to be done by the way, my boy,  
 That you never can tread again—  
 Work for the loftiest, lowliest men—  
 Work for the plow, plane, spindle and pen—  
 Work for the hands and the brain.

The serpent will follow your steps, my boy,  
 To lay for your feet a snare;  
 And Pleasure sits in her fairy bowers,  
 With garlands of poppies and lotus flowers  
 Inwreathing her golden hair.

Temptations will wait by the way, my boy,  
 Temptations without and within;  
 And spirits of evil, with robes as fair  
 As those which the angels in heaven might wear,  
 Will lure you to deadly sin.

Then put on the armour of God, my boy,  
 In the beautiful days of youth;  
 Put on the helmet and breastplate and shield,  
 And the sword the feeblest arm may wield  
 In the cause of right and truth.

And go the battle of life, my boy,  
 With the peace of gospel shod,  
 And before high heaven do the best you can  
 For the great reward and the good of man,  
 For the kingdom and crown of God.

## A Narrow Escape.

BY LILLIE B. DAY.

"Boys! there's Dutch Charley! Let's make him wild! You, Bob, open the door of the chicken-yard and scare the old hens out. Art, you just knock over the pail of water he's using for his celery-plants—accidentally, you know. I'll untie that stupid cow, and give her a fine send off toward Jericho. Won't he be jolly mad, though! He hates us boys like thistles, and he's crazy enough any time."

Dutch Charley was working busily in his master's garden, where row upon row of late vegetables bore witness to his industry. Bess was browsing contentedly in the warm October sunshine. The chickens clucked and crowed as only well-fed chickens can in their own cosy domain. Whoever would have suspected the spirit of mischief which was brewing in the heads of the three manly-looking boys who loitered about the garden gate?

Perhaps Dutch Charley did; for every now and then he would look up from his weeding, and scowl in the direction of the boys. He was a faithful workman—everyone acknowledged that—but he had such a temper! and when temper is in, reason is out. Besides, he knew just about what to expect when Bob and Arthur and Phil were together. Hadn't they bothered him, more than once, to such an extent that if his legs had not been so stiff and rheumatic that he could not run fast, he would have caught them; and given them each the sound thrashing he had earned.

"Now, boys, let's go in and talk to him. Ask him about his crops. He's just so conceited he'll blow over them by the hour, if you give him a

chance. When I give the signal, walk off easy, and work quick. Then cut and run."

Three well-dressed, intelligent, educated boys unlatched the garden-gate, and proceeded leisurely to the place where Dutch Charley stood with a hoe in his hand.

Remarks about the weather were in order. Then followed inquiries as to the best method of raising celery-seed, and young strawberry plants and onion sets. The evil look in Dutch Charley's eyes died away. "After all," thought he, "dese boys are goot fur sometings."

Presently, Phil coughed; the other boys looked startled for a moment, then, nodding pleasantly to Charley, the three moved off together.

"Hark! Vat vas der matter mit dese schickens? And vere vas dat Bess a-going up der road? Vat fur did dat vasser get schpillt on der grund? Dese good-fur-noting boys! I vill catch him dis time, so!"

Four agitated figures, besides the twenty fluttering, dismayed hens, were now scurrying over the orderly garden. Three active, runaway boys, and after them Dutch Charley, with a demoniac glare in his angry eyes, and a volley of frightful oaths pouring from his mouth.

"Quick, Bob, quick!—get in the barn! He's after us sharp! Climb up over into the feed-bin, one compartment's empty. We'll both hide in it until he's gone back to his work. He'll never think to look for us here, if we shut the cover half down on the cleat. It's lucky Art got such a start of us. He'd been a goner by this time. Isn't Charley fu-ri-ous! Hush! There he is now."

Two motionless boys crouched in the bottom of the empty feed-bin.

Four legs and four arms were cramped and twisted in an unaccustomed position. How uncomfortable it was, and what a stuffy odour pervaded the partly closed bin!

Dutch Charley rushed in the barn, stamping on the floor with his heavy boots—talking to himself between the ugly words which still fell from his lips.

"I see him run here. I find him soon. Dese goot-fur-noting boys. Tink he fool Charley! Ha! I got him!"

Down fell the heavy lid, and, with a triumphant yell, Dutch Charley placed his own solid body on top.

"Hero, Hans," cried he, to his little four-yearson, who had run in the barn, too, to find out what all the commotion meant, "gib me dat hammer and nails. I schut him up tight vere he no bodder me no more dis day."

It was of no avail for the inmates of the feed-bin to keep quiet any longer. They called and shouted and screamed—kicking, meanwhile, against their prison walls as much as the limited space would allow. Then they tried entreaty.

"Charley, we shall die here, and you will be a murderer. Come, let us out—please do. Do you mean to smother us!"

Sharp, determined blows from a hammer, wielded by an angry hand, were the only response.

Little Hans had not understood what it was all about, but he did as his father directed—then ran away, terrified towards the house.

"Bob," said Phil, sobbing, "it's no use; we may as well give up. No one can hear us, shut in here. We've got to die. Oh, Bob, it's all my fault! I don't want to die. I never knew what it meant before."

"There can't be enough air in this box to keep us much longer," answered Bob. "Do you remember the Black Hole of Calcutta? I wonder if any of those poor fellows were ready to be suffocated! Phil, Phil, why won't we ready?"

"Bob, I can't remember any good thing I ever did in all my life. I have done no end of mean, hateful, wicked acts. I see them all now. Oh, I feel as if my body were bound with iron, and my head will certainly burst! I can't think, not even to ask God to forgive me. Couldn't you pray for us both, Bob?"

A weak but very earnest prayer went up from the shut feed-bin. Dutch Charley heard never a word of it. Neither did the strong man who entered the barn breathlessly, with an iron pick in his hand, and in less time than it takes to tell, had forced the cover open, so God's pure, life-giving air could come again to the fainting, half-conscious boys huddled together in that strange place.

God's answer was sent before the prayer was spoken, else— But no; it is too dreadful to think what might have been.

Three unusually quiet, subdued boys could be seen the next morning talking to Dutch Charley's master, evidently making an urgent request of him. Did they ask that punishment should be meted to the ignorant man for the suffering two of them had endured?

Quite otherwise. They had heard that Charley's ungovernable temper would cost him his situation, and they were there to intercede for him.

"For you know," they said, "we tried to make him angry. We call him Crazy Charley when he's in a temper, and we thought it was fun to get him mad. It was all our fault."

Three thoughtful, Christian boys are working for their Master in that busy town. "God's mercy saved us from death that time," they said; "and Christ's love alone can save us from death everlasting."—*Sunday-school Times.*

## Two for a Farthing.

Do you know that the chubby, bright-eyed, brave little English sparrows, that have lived in our American cities for the last dozen years, are exactly the same kind of sparrows that Christ spoke of so tenderly in Palestine? Whenever I think of that, I am always sorry to hear of shooting the little birds, or harming them in any way. Not long ago I saw in print a very earnest suggestion that a simple way to put sparrows to death would be to poison their crumbs!

I am glad that there was a kind-hearted man in Boston, a few days since, who was not ashamed to help even a sparrow.

One of these much abused birds got into the globe of an electric lamp, just before the hour for turning on the current, and didn't seem to know enough to get out. A little crowd assembled to see what would happen when the current was turned on; but before the catastrophe, an elegantly dressed man, accompanied by a lady, walked up. When he saw the situation, he handed his cane to his companion, pulled off his kid gloves, climbed the slippery pole—to the great detriment of his good clothes—and, putting his hand within the lamp, released the bird, which flew away. The crowd applauded, and the gentleman went home for more good clothes.—*Selected.*

Kind words are the brightest flowers of earth's existence; they make a very paradise of the humblest home that the world can show. Use them, and especially round the fireside circle. They are jewels beyond price, and more precious to heal the wounded heart, and make the weighed-down spirit glad, than all the other blessings the world can give.