

DON'T FORGET YOUR LANTERN.

"It will be quite dark before you return, Charley: don't forget your lantern," said a mother to her boy, who was going to spend his half-holiday at a farm about two miles distant.

"I'm not afraid of the dark, and I know my way well enough," he muttered. "No, I shan't take the stupid old lantern; it will only be in the way."

Off he went, and spent a merry afternoon with his companion, never thinking of his mother's words, or troubling about his journey home.

It was quite dark when he said good-by to his friends at the farm, and as there was no moon, and the night was very black, they kindly offered to lend him a lantern. But he was too proud to accept it after boasting to his mother that he knew his way well; and declaring more loudly than ever that he knew his way blindfold, and shou'd be half home before the lantern was lighted, he ran down the path, along the road, and across a field.

In the corner of the field was a broken stile, which had to be crossed in order to enter the wood. Part of the stile had rotted away, but the long nail which had fastened it still remained, and catching Charley's jacket as he climbed it, tripped him up, and threw him suddenly into a bed of stinging-nettles in the dry ditch beyond. Bruised and smarting and mortified, he crept out of the ditch and began to make his way through the wood. There were several paths, but the widest and most frequented was his nearest way.

Perhaps it was the pain he was suffering, or the annoyance he felt which caused him to forget to take the turning on the right, for after walking a short distance he found the bushes were close to him on either side, and felt sure that he had strayed into one of the narrow pathways which crossed the wood in every direction.

How he longed for his lantern! He had no idea which way to go, but wandered on and on until he grew tired and footsore. At last he came to a more open space, and thinking he had reached the road he pressed boldly on, but found the ground give way beneath his feet, and in another moment he was struggling in the water. There was a large pool in the midst of the wood, and into this he had fallen. Happily, it was not very deep, and after groping about for something to which he could cling, he seized hold of a tough bough, and by its aid managed to scramble out of the water and into the pathway.

Some minutes later, bruised and bleeding, with clothes torn and stained with mud and weeds, and soaked with water, he reached the gate of his own home, where all the family were assembled, wondering what had become of him.

"Mother," said the miserable but penitent boy, "I've been very foolish, but I'll never go without the lantern again."

Four years passed, and Charley, grown a fine tall lad, stood again by the gate, saying farewell to his mother; not for a few hours; but for months—perhaps years.

"Don't forget your lantern, my boy," she said, as she placed in his hand a small bible. "Let God's Word be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. Whenever you are in doubt as to the way you should take, let the light of this book shine upon your path,

and the way will be plain."—*Brooklyn Temperance Banner.*

FRANKIE'S DECISION.

A few mornings since a little incident came under my notice and touched me as one of John B. Gough's wonderfully pathetic stories could not.

A little lad of St. Louis, whose mother had been an invalid for months, saw, aye, and felt too, that the little they had left from a once handsome property was melting hopelessly away. Seeing his little sister going out to her daily duties in a Christian publishing house, it occurred to Frankie that he, too, could do something. The mother's heart ached sadly as from her pillow she saw him walk bravely out into the October sunshine to conquer a fortune. Of course no one wanted a boy without experience or prestige: so in a couple of hours his feet began to lag, and his heart sank, when whom should he meet but Mrs. Wilson, a former acquaintance of his mother's who seemed heartily glad to see with what bright-faced bravery the little lad had taken up his burden. So she said: "Yes, Frankie, I want just such a boy as you."

Those who have tried and failed, and with last met with partial success, will understand what eager alacrity his feet flew over the pavement on errands for Mrs. Wilson until near dinner-time, when she said, "Now, Frankie, you may go and get the beer for Mr. Wilson's dinner." Had she presented a pistol at his head he would not have staggered more under this spell than under this mandate; and how easily it would have seemed to some—and to none more so than to the really kind-hearted Mrs. Wilson—to take that five minutes' walk and earn money to buy some luxury for sick mamma. Not so with Frankie. His religious training was pronounced; there were no modern by-ways in it. So there came slowly, and with a little quiver in his boyish voice:

"I cannot go, Mrs. Wilson."

"Tired so soon?" she asked.

"No, ma'am; but I can't buy the beer."

The angry blood rose to her face, and she was about to lecture him on what she thought, at the time, impertinence; but the quick-seeing instinct of childhood saw the storm rising, so he slipped quickly out and home.

It was well that the heavily-shaded room did not allow even a mother's quick eye to see the trace of tears; but the mother's heart always vibrates to the least note of sadness in the voice of her little ones, and she knew he was disappointed. So she drew his head close to hers on the pillow; and said: "Oh my precious boy, you are not the first who has found that the world does not meet you half-way; but be brave, and by-and-by you will succeed."

And he was brave enough to keep his bitter sorrow in the background; and it was only after Mrs. Wilson's anger had cooled she saw his conduct in its real light, that she came to the mother and related the incident, and offered to take him back. But he preferred to make paper boxes at twenty-five cents a day. Being in St. Louis this week, I brought the little temperance lecturer home with me. Now, I would like to know how many lads of Cincinnati—a ye, and men, too—are ready to stand as bravely by their colors as does little Frankie.—*J. R. L., in Journal and Messenger.*