

THE LITTLE FOLK.

The Battle of Life.

Go forth to the battle of life, my boy,
Go while it is called to-day;
For the years go out and the years come 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 sword the feeblest arm may wield
In the cause of right and truth.

And go to the battle of life, my boy,
With the peace of the 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.

JENNIE F. WILLING.

The Two Knives.

Harry and Leo Farley had the same birthday, though there was a difference of five years in their ages. Their uncle Stanton, who was very fond of both the boys, never forgot them on the twenty-fifth of May. They were always sure of some trifle in the way of a gift from him.

So, on the morning of the twenty-fifth, when Harry was twelve and Leo seven, they were both eager to go to the post-office to see what the mail had brought. But, as it was a mile to the village, and the weather was quite warm, Mrs. Farley decided that it was too long a walk for Leo, and Harry went alone.

"I'll walk fast, and get back just as soon as ever I can, Leo," said Harry, "and you can go as far as the big oak, and wait for me."

All the way to the village Harry was wondering what his uncle had sent, and felt very much excited when the post-master handed through the delivery window a small box directed to "Harry and Leo Farley."

It had been agreed that he should open it without waiting for Leo to share that pleasure with him; and so he tore off the paper cover to the box at once, pulled off the lid, and found two knives. On one was a slip of paper bearing his own name; on the other a slip with the name of his little brother.

Harry looked puzzled and surprised as he examined his knife. It was an old knife, though it had once been handsome, and bore unmistakable evidence of having been used a great many years. What did uncle Stanton mean by sending him an old, worn-out knife? He opened the one sent to Leo. That was a knife any boy might be proud to own. It had four blades, and was handsomely mounted in pearl. Harry's heart rebelled against the distinction which had been made. He told himself that surely there was some mistake, and the old knife had been intended for Leo, who was so little that he really ought not to be trusted with a handsome knife having four sharp blades.

"I can change the slips of paper, and he will never know anything about it," thought Harry. "He will be pleased enough to have any sort of a knife at all."

He stopped under a tree to think about it; and as he stood there debating whether to give Leo the old or the new knife, some still, small voice seemed to whisper to him: "Do what is right; you are on your honour."

His face flushed.

"But Leo never know," he muttered, in answer to that silent voice; and at once the voice seemed to say: "That has nothing to do with it. You are on your honour."

He reflected how often his father had said to him that he must do right for right's sake, let the consequences be what they may; and that his mother had warned him against yielding to temptation. "Weakness brings its own misery," she had said. "Be strong, however much it may seem to your interest to yield to the voice of the tempter." The debate with his conscience ended as Harry remembered his mother's tender advice. He set off down the road as fast as he could go, and in a few minutes saw Leo standing under the old oak, waving his handkerchief.

The little boy gave a whoop of delight when Harry handed him the new knife.

"What a beauty!" he said, "and just what I wanted, too. I hope mamma won't take it away from me—it's pretty sharp." Then he held out his hand for the other knife. "Is yours like mine?" he asked.

As Harry, rather reluctantly, let him take the knife, and the little brother saw that it was old and worn, his eyes filled with sudden tears.

"Uncle Stanton made a mistake," he said, at once. "He meant the old knife for me, Harry. He was afraid I might cut myself with a new knife. You must let me have the old one."

But Harry refused to take advantage of his little brother's generous offer, and was deaf to all Leo's pleadings.

"I would be ashamed to take the new one," he said, remembering the debate with his conscience. "It was sent to you, Leo, and you must keep it."

"And I don't want it," said Leo, "I know I would cut myself. My fingers are all scratched and cut up now, just using the butcher knife to whittle."

Again Harry was tempted, but again he was strong; and he shook his head resolutely.

"You can't make me take what was meant for you," he said; and he had never felt happier than he did all the rest of that day.

"It's just because I didn't give in about that knife," he thought, as, on going to bed he reviewed the events of the day. "What a mean sneak I would have felt if I'd taken it, and changed those papers!"

The next morning came another package and a letter. Uncle Stanton wrote that he had bought the knives on his way down town to his office, and, on arriving there, had used his own knife to cut off the price tags, carelessly leaving it upon his office table on being called away suddenly, and putting one of the new ones by mistake into his own pocket. He had directed his office boy to label the knives, and mail them at once, and had not discovered for twenty-four hours the exchange that had been made. "As my knife is one given me by my old grandfather twenty years ago," ran the letter, "I value it very highly, and will ask that it be returned to me."

The package contained a pearl-mounted knife similar to the one Harry had so desired.

A few hours later Harry had to go to the village on an errand, and he went to the mirror in his mother's room to brush his hair. His pleasant, honest face was reflected there, and he smiled as he noticed it.

"I guess I'd have been ashamed to look at myself in a glass if I'd exchanged those knives," he thought. "How glad I am I stuck to the right! It's going to be easy the next time, too."

And then he ran whistling down the stairway, his heart as light as a feather.—*Christian Soldier.*

Jack the Soldier.

"Can't do it. It's against orders. I'm a soldier now," said one newsboy to another.

"Yes, you look like a soldier!" was the mocking reply.

"I am, though, all the same," and Jack straightened himself and looked steadily into Jim's eyes. "Jesus is my Captain, and I'm going to do everything on the square after this, 'cause he says so."

"That won't last long," said Jim. "Just wait till you're in bad luck and awful hungry, and you'll hook something fast enough."

"No; my Captain says, 'Don't steal,' and I won't. What I can't earn I'll go without, and if I'm likely to steal any time, I'll just call on him. He's always watchin' to see if any of his soldiers need help, and he's ready with it as soon as they ask for it. He'll help me to do anything he's told me to do."

Wise Jack! He had learned the secret of a happy, useful Christian life.