

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

James Baldwin

A cruel battle was being fought. The ground was covered with dead and dying men. The air was hot and stifling. The sun shone down without pity on the wounded soldiers lying in the blood and dust.

One of these soldiers was a nobleman, whom everybody loved for his gentleness and kindness. Yet now he was no better off than the poorest man in the field. He had been wounded, and would die; and he was suffering much with pain and thirst.

When the battle was over, his friends hurried to his aid. A soldier came running with a cup in his hand.

"Here, Sir Philip," he said, "I have brought you some clear, cool water from the brook. I will raise your head so that you can drink."

The cup was placed to Sir Philip's lips. How thankfully he looked at the man who had brought it! Then his eyes met those of a dying soldier who was lying on the ground close by. The wistful look in the poor man's face spoke plainer than words.

"Give the water to that man," said Sir Philip quickly; and then, pushing the cup toward him, he said, "Here, my comrade, take this. Thy need is greater than mine."

What a brave, noble man he was! The name of Sir Philip Sidney will never be forgotten; for it was the name of a Christian gentleman who always had the good of others in his mind. Was it any wonder that everybody wept when it was heard that he was dead?

It is said, that, on the day when he was carried to the grave, every eye in the land was filled with tears. Rich and poor, high and low, all felt that they had lost a friend; all mourned the death of the kindest, gentlest man that they had ever known.

Source:

Baldwin, James. "Sir Phillips Sidney." *Fifty Famous Stories, Retold*. New York: American Book Company, 1896. 49 – 50. Electronic.

THE UNGRATEFUL SOLDIER

James Baldwin

Here is another story of the bat-tle-field, and it is much like the one which I have just told you.

Not quite a hundred years after the time of Sir Philip Sidney there was a war between the Swedes and the Danes. One day a great battle was fought, and the Swedes were beaten, and driven from the field. A soldier of the Danes who had been slightly wounded was sitting on the ground. He was about to take a drink from a flask. All at once he heard some one say,—

"O sir! give me a drink, for I am dying."

It was a wounded Swede who spoke. He was lying on the ground only a little way off. The Dane went to him at once. He knelt down by the side of his fallen foe, and pressed the flask to his lips.

"Drink," said he, "for thy need is greater than mine."

Hardly had he spoken these words, when the Swede raised himself on his elbow. He pulled a pistol from his pocket, and shot at the man who would have be-friend-ed him. The bullet grazed the Dane's shoulder, but did not do him much harm.

"Ah, you rascal!" he cried. "I was going to befriend you, and you repay me by trying to kill me. Now I will punish you. I would have given you all the water, but now you shall have only half." And with that he drank the half of it, and then gave the rest to the Swede.

When the King of the Danes heard about this, he sent for the soldier and had him tell the story just as it was.

"Why did you spare the life of the Swede after he had tried to kill you?" asked the king.

"Because, sir," said the soldier, "I could never kill a wounded enemy."

"Then you deserve to be a no-ble-man," said the king. And he re-ward-ed him by making him a knight, and giving him a noble title.

Source:

Baldwin, James. "The Ungrateful Soldier." *Fifty Famous Stories, Retold*. New York: American Book Company, 1896. 51 – 52. Electronic.

THE MILLER OF THE DEE

James Baldwin

Once upon a time there lived on the banks of the River Dee a miller, who was the hap-pi-est man in England. He was always busy from morning till night, and he was always singing as merrily as any lark. He was so cheerful that he made everybody else cheerful; and people all over the land liked to talk about his pleasant ways. At last the king heard about him.

"I will go down and talk with this won-der-ful miller," he said. "Perhaps he can tell me how to be happy."

As soon as he stepped inside of the mill, he heard the miller singing:—

"I envy no-body—no, not I!—For I am as happy as I can be;And nobody envies me."

"You're wrong, my friend," said the king. "You're wrong as wrong can be. I envy you; and I would gladly change places with you, if I could only be as light-hearted as you are."

The miller smiled, and bowed to the king.

"I am sure I could not think of changing places with you, sir," he said.

"Now tell me," said the king, "what makes you so cheerful and glad here in your dusty mill, while I, who am king, am sad and in trouble every day."

The miller smiled again, and said, "I do not know why you are sad, but I can eas-i-ly tell why I am glad. I earn my own bread; I love my wife and my children; I love my friends, and they love me; and I owe not a penny to any man. Why should I not be happy? For here is the River Dee, and every day it turns my mill; and the mill grinds the corn that feeds my wife, my babes, and me."

"Say no more," said the king. "Stay where you are, and be happy still. But I envy you. Your dusty cap is worth more than my golden crown. Your mill does more for you than my kingdom can do for me. If there were more such men as you, what a good place this world would be! Good-by, my friend!"

The king turned about, and walked sadly away; and the miller went back to his work singing:—

"Oh, I'm as happy as happy can be,For I live by the side of the River Dee!"

Source:

Baldwin, James. "The Miller of the Dee." *Fifty Famous Stories, Retold*. New York: American Book Company, 1896. 46 – 48. Electronic.