

Why, they packs you back to town, and they has me out 'stead of you."

Jim Benner, a big boy of twelve, was gravely proposing this plan of transferring his fresh-air trip to his little chum, Andy Burke, a curly-headed chap of half Jim's size and not much more than half his age. But Andy was timid, and doubted his own ability to carry out the bold stroke.

"You go first, Jim," he said, "then you let on you ain't Jim, and send back for me; and whiles I'll keep your box and black shoes."

Jim saw the weak point in this scheme, and doubted very much whether he could disprove his identity, but Andy evidently could not be trusted to carry out the first plan, so the next thing was to carry out the second dodge. Alas! neither boy shrank from the falsehood; they did not know of that great Father in heaven who hateth a lie.

So Jim went to the country, while Andy took his stand and did his best to "shine" Jim's customers; and every day he watched eagerly round the corner for Jim to come back and let him take a turn at the orchard and the sheep and the cows and the bucketsful of milk.

Meanwhile Jim had fallen on a soft place. Farmer Stone's was all that the boy had dreamed of, and more, and the poor city waif was treated to the best of everything.

"Now, Jim Benner," said Farmer Stone, "you are full welcome to all you can get out here, and the only return I ask is that you will never use an angry word and never tell a lie while you are here."

Of course Jim promised. "And there, now," he said to himself, "Andy's chance is up, 'cause I can't say I ain't Jim Benner 'thout telling a lie, and I promised not to tell a lie."

But as the days went on, and Jim watched the ways and heard the words of this God-fearing, God-serving family, he longed more and more for his little mate to share his new view of life; and one charming day, while Mother Stone was working the milk out of the butter, Jim made a clean breast of the promise he had made Andy to change names with him. There was some salt drops on Mother Stone's face that had nothing to do with her work; and the next day, as the little bootblack watched the corner, Jim appeared with a ticket for Andy's journey to Clover Hill.

"I've just made up my mind," said the farmer's wife, "that them two boys is not to go back to the city. You step around lively, father, and get a place for the little chap, and we'll have work enough for Jim."

"Seems likely that's what the Lord sent him out here for," said Farmer Stone. "They was busy keeping some of His commandments—'bout lying one another, and preferring one another—and now He's passed 'em on to us to learn them the rest."

And this is the way Jim and his mate came to be farm-boys, with plenty of fresh air and sunshine, no stumps of cigars to smoke, no dirty police reports to read, but long days of honest work, long nights of good sleep, quiet, church-going Sundays, and a blessed chance to fear God and keep His commandments.—*The Morning Star*.

### A MOTHER'S ARGUMENT.

66 **H** E most-to-be-regretted act of my life," says a lieutenant commander in the navy, "was a letter which I wrote home to my mother when I was about seventeen years of age. She always addressed her letters to me as 'my dear boy.' I felt at that time I was a man or very near it; and wrote saying that her constant addressing me as a 'boy' made me feel displeased. I received in reply a letter full of reproach and tears. Among other things she said: 'You might grow to be as big as Goliath, as strong as Samson, and as wise as Solomon. You might become ruler of a nation, or emperor of many nations, and the world might revere you and fear you, but to your devoted mother, you would always appear, in memory, in your innocent, unpretentious, unself-conceited, unpampered babyhood. In those days when I washed and dressed and kissed and worshipped you, you were my idol. Nowadays you are becoming part of a gross world by contact with it, and I cannot bow down to you and worship you. But, if there is manhood and maternal love transmitted to you, you will understand that the highest compliment that mother love can pay you, is to call you 'my dear boy.'"

### IF I WERE A GIRL.

**I** F I were a girl, a true-hearted girl,  
Just budding to fair womanhood,  
There's many a thing that I would not do,  
And numberless more that I would.  
I never would frown with my mouth drawn down,  
For the creases will come there and stay;  
But sing like a lark, should the day be dark—  
Keep a glow in my heart, anyway!

If I were a girl, a bright, winsome girl,  
Just leaving my childhood behind;  
I would be so neat, from head to my feet,  
That never a fault could one find.  
So helpful to mother, so gentle to brother,  
I'd have things so cheery and sweet  
That the streets and their glare could never compare  
With the charms of a home so replete.

If I were a girl, a fond, loving girl,  
With father o'erburdened with care,  
I would walk at his side, with sweet, tender pride,  
With ever a kiss and a prayer.  
Not a secret I'd keep that would lead to deceit,  
Not a thought I should blush to share;  
Not a friend my parents would disapprove—  
I would trust such a girl anywhere!

—Linnie Hawley Drake, in *Golden Days*.