

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Fire at the Old Manor House.

(J. Scott James, in 'Friendly Greetings'.)

It was twenty years and more since Henry Brightwell left his father's home. He had gone little more than a boy; he was returning a middle-aged man, looking even older than he was.

He had been a wanderer in many lands, living a wild, even dissolute, life, and now in coming back there was none of that

went away. A long illness roused his conscience. He began to realize how wrong he had been, how wicked it was to waste life, and to sin as he had sinned. And above all, whenever he prayed for pardon, the grieved and troubled face of his father rose up before him—that father who had loved him so and had hoped for such great things from him—seemed to stand between him and God. And when Henry Brightwell got better, he said, 'I will arise and go to my father.'

where he ought to have been at home! He entered the old hall he remembered so well, where the old pictures still hung, and the trophies of a bygone age; and then he sent in his name. He learned that his father was ill, confined to his room, and lived alone, his mother having long been dead.

Presently the housekeeper returned. His father would not see him. 'That which was done, was done,' the old man said, 'and could not be changed.' Nothing



HE AT LAST EMERGED, HIS FATHER HAPPILY SAVED.

bright hope of loving and cordial welcome, that so often cheers the wanderer at the thought of home.

He had deeply offended his father ere he left. It was not simply that he had squandered his inheritance—he had done that sinfully and wickedly, but there was one act his father would not forgive. He had banished him from his home, had disinherited him, and returned, unopened, each letter he had sent. But Henry Brightwell was not the same man as when he

Oh, how that ingratitude and sin troubled him! It rose up between him and the hope of forgiveness whenever he prayed. It was a burden on his conscience, so that he felt he must get his father's pardon before God would forgive him. And he had come back from California in order to gain it.

Oh, what feelings rose within him as he walked through the old park, where as a boy he had so often played, and stood at the door of the old house, a stranger

would alter him, and Henry had to go away with despair in his heart.

He went through the park, across the bridge over the stream, and into the woods beyond. All recalled the old days—days so happy and so full of love. And now all was changed. He was an outcast, hated and unforgiven.

Oh, fool that he had been to fling all away so recklessly! He threw himself down on the ground, strong man as he was, and cried earnestly to God for help.