

CHILDREN AND

FORBID THEM NOT

TO COME

PEACE ON EARTH

GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN

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THE RUNAWAY'S RETURN.

BY FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ.

"LET us take a trip to the city!" said Peter Wild one fine Fourth of July morning to three or four companions of his own age, which was about fifteen.

"I go in for that," replied George Easy.

"So do I," added Richard Pliable.

"And I wont say nay, my charmers," said Edward Walker.

"And what do you say, Mr. Wisacre?" asked Peter Wild, speaking to Willie Winsom, who, being more quiet in his manner than most boys, was called "Wisacre" by his playmates.

"I think I shall not go," replied Willie.

"Why not?" rejoined Peter.

"Because my mother told me not to go away from the village to-day," said Willie.

"Pretty little baby!" "Chicken-hearted Willie!" "Tied to apron-strings, hey?" "Afraid of his mother!" With such mocking phrases as these did the boys greet Willie's respect for his mother's wishes. I am sorry to add that, with these and similar words, they succeeded at last in driving him from his purpose to obey his mother. An hour later Willie and his tempters were on a boat steaming down the noble Hudson toward New York.

That was a costly trip to Willie. It led to sorrows of which he had never dreamed.

The boat landed them near the Battery. The boys strolled round the shore, lolled beneath the trees, and finally, being very thirsty, they yielded to Peter's tempting voice, went to an ice-cream stall, and, instead of good cold water or refreshing lemonade, drank strong beer. Willie refused it at first, but yielded under the fire of ridicule which they poured upon him.

The beer found its way to their heads and fitted them to do foolish things. Wit, sense, piety, and every other good thing flies from the mind when strong drink enters the mouth. You need not wonder, therefore, when I tell you that on their return to the Battery they fell an easy prey to an evil-minded man.

This man was in search of men and lads to form crews for whale-ships. Seeing the boys to be in a silly mood, he joined them, and began to tell them stories about the sea. They were charmed. He told them more stories, and finally prevailed on them all to go on board a sloop lying in the East River and put down their names for berths in a whale-ship about to sail from an eastern port. This foolish deed was soon done, and a lot of the roughest fellows these boys had ever seen came on board the sloop shortly after. They had been picked up from all parts of the city, and were no sooner on board than the sloop weighed anchor and sailed.

I am not going to tell you the history of these foolish boys. It would take a book to do that. I only wish to say here that they soon came to their senses, were very wretched, and wished they could get back to their village homes again. There was no chance for their escape, however. The sloop made a good run to her port. Three whale-ships, all ready for a start, received the boys and men from the sloop.

The boys were deprived of the poor privilege of sailing in the same vessel, for they were divided among the ships and were soon far, far away at sea.

Poor Willie! How bitterly he wept over his folly! He would have given a gold-mine, had he owned one, to undo the folly of that sad fourth of July morning. But tears and regrets were alike vain. He was far away from home, a cabin-boy in a whale-ship, and, willing or unwilling, must make a long, weary voyage before he could see home again.

But how about Willie's mother and father? They were heart-broken. Every night their pillows were wet with tears as they thought of and prayed for their runaway boy. No words can paint their grief. Could they have known where he was, they would have felt slightly better; but even that poor comfort was denied them, and so, after making many vain inquiries, they went on their way toward the grave