

BOYS AND GIRLS

How it Paid to Keep the Sabbath.

A TRUE STORY.

'And you don't care to do a bit of gardening on a Sunday, Mr. Royal?'

'Not I. Six days are enough for me to work in.'

'Nonsense! Change of work is as good as play, you know.'

'I don't care about playing either. You may laugh, and call me old-fashioned, but I can never forget a text which I learnt when I was a boy—"Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary."

One day the firm for which my mother worked had an uncommonly big order come in; the work had to be done by a given time, and all was hurry and drive. I may tell you it was when those big poke bonnets were worn, and before the present Factory Act was passed.'

'A long time ago, then, Mr. Royal.'

'Of course; I'm no chicken, and it happened when I was a child; but, as I said before, my mother was left a widow, and had a lot of little mouths to fill. The manager was at his wits' end to get the order executed in time; it was a rare job for him, so he said the hands must work overtime and Sundays, too, till it was done. My mother went to him, and quietly and firmly said she

can hardly realize what that means to a woman, when she is the only bread-winner, and there is no loaf in the cupboard.'

'Her Sabbath-keeping didn't pay, then.'

'Wait a bit, my friend, and you will hear. One morning the manager sent for mother. I remember it well, for she trembled and cried.

"Don't cry, mother," said I, "perhaps he means to take you on again!"

"Let's hope so, Johnny!" said my mother, as she kissed me, and bade me take care of the little ones. Well, the long and short of it was just this: the manager had nearly all that big order thrown back on his hands; the goods weren't up to sample, the work was faulty, the shape in many cases wrong, and there was a fine outcry; but the queer part of it was, that every bonnet of my mother's making was pronounced of the best quality and the finest workmanship, besides being as many in number as those turned out by each of the women who had worked in the factory every week-day and on Sunday, too.

The manager's heart was touched. "Mrs. Royal," he said, "you have acted the part of a faithful Christian, and an industrious one, too; so please come back to the factory, and forgive and forget."

'This my mother did with thankfulness; but the manager never forgot her, or the lesson her steadfastness taught him.'

'And you tread in her steps, Mr. Royal?'

'I humbly hope so. I try to. There, the bell has started ringing for church: leave the digging and come with me.'

'Is there time for me to get ready?'

'Plenty, and plenty of room.'

'A word spoken in season, how good is it!'—Elizabeth Norton, in 'Friendly Greetings.'

Saturday Night.

Placing little hats all in a row,
Ready for Church on the morrow, you know:

Washing wee faces and little black fists,
Getting them ready and fit to be kissed,
Putting them into clean garments and white;

That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Spying out holes in little worn hose,
Laying by shoes that are worn through the toes;

Looking o'er garments so faded and thin,
Who but a mother knows where to begin?
Changing a button to make it look bright;
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Calling the little ones all round her chair,
Hearing them lisp forth their soft evening prayer.

Telling them stories of Jesus of old,
The Shepherd who gathers the lambs to His fold.

Watching them listen with childish delight,
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Creeping so softly to take a last peep—
Silence the token of childhood's first sleep.
Anxious to know if the dear ones are warm,
Tucking the blankets round each little form.

Kissing each little face, rosy and bright,
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Kneeling down gently beside the white bed,
Lowly and meekly bowing her head,
Praying as only a mother can pray.
God guide and keep them from going astray.

Angels are telling with Angels' delight,
That is what mothers are doing to-night.



'That kind of thing is all gone out of fashion, nowadays.'

'God forbid! Besides, it pays to keep the Sabbath.'

'How do you make that out, Mr. Royal?'

'Would you care to hear a story—a true one, mind?'

'By all means. Out with it.'

'I expect you have heard of Dunstable, and Luton, and all those places where straw bonnets and hats are made?'

'Of course—who hasn't?'

'Well, when my mother was a girl, she lived in that part of the country, and did a lot of straw plaiting—got quite clever at it; she was left a widow early, poor dear, and then she worked at the bonnet-making in the factory. Women earned good money in those times.'

'They didn't work on Sundays?'

'Oh dear, no; but I'm coming to that.

'could not, would not, work on Sunday.'

"That's all nonsense, Mrs. Royal," said the manager; "you'll have to work on Sunday, like the rest, or quit." My mother thought about her little ones, but she stood firm.

"I'll work later at night, sir," said she; "if you will let me take the plait home, I'll get through as much as possible; but I dare not break the Sabbath."

"Maybe you'll tell another story yet," said the manager; "anyway, as we are driven up, you may take the plait home, but the factory is closed to you."

'Oh, it was hard for my mother: piece-work at home was not like day-work in the factory. Now she had to toil from morning far into the night to keep things going—dear, patient soul! At last the contract was complete; the order sent home; and—my mother was out of work. A man