

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

ONLY NOW AND THEN.

Think it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act
Only "now and then."
For you must be careful
As you go along,
If you would be manly,
Capable, and strong

Many a wretched sot, boys,
That one daily meets,
Drinking from the beer-kegs,
Living in the streets,
Falling in the gutter,
Over and again,
Once was dressed in broadcloth,
Drinking "now and then!"

When you have a habit
That is wrong, you know,
Knock it off at once, lads,
With a sudden blow.
Think it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you break commandments
Only "now and then!"

BOYS' OPPORTUNITIES.

"Well, what is it, my boy?" asked Mrs. Leonard, as Frank came in from school one Thursday afternoon, and pettishly threw his books upon the table. Twirling his hat in his hands, Frank answered:

"It's everything, mother. You know it's composition day. Well, the subject is, 'My Opportunities.' I don't believe I have any opportunities. I think I might write about some other person's opportunities, though. Only think, the boys have all gone over to the cricket ground this afternoon, and here I have got to stay shut up in the house to write that miserable composition. The other boys can write theirs this evening, while I am tied up to that old store. That's just the way all my opportunities slip from me—my opportunities for sport at any rate."

"I am glad you added that last clause," said his mother; "but you know you could have gone with the boys."

"Why, mother Leonard! do you think I would give up the chance of going to college for an afternoon's fun? When I promised father I would save him the expense of hiring a clerk, by helping in the store evenings and Saturdays, so he could better afford to send me to college, I meant to stick to it. But, you see, the fathers of the other fellows are able to send them to college without their having to pinch and dig for it."

"Frank, you are looking only at your opportunities for sport. Just think of some of your opportunities for making a noble, strong-minded, educated man of yourself. You forget how many boys there are who cannot possibly receive so good an education as you, because they haven't the advantages. There is Tom Howard. You have often told me what a desire that boy has for learning. And there's a whole family looking to him for support, on account of his father's intemperance. But the boy is fast learning many things that neither books nor school could teach him."

Frank lifted his face with a penitent yet eager look, and said, "Mother, I had entirely forgotten that blessed old Tom. I am afraid I have been—well, at least, cracking the tenth commandment. Preach away, ma'am."

"I knew you would come round to the right view," she answered. "In missing the sport you are gaining something better. By being obliged to depend on yourself in part for the expense of your education, you are learning self-reliance, which will be of inestimable value to you in future life. I think, too, that you will improve—and are improving your opportunities for learning, better than if you were at no trouble to obtain it. We all prize a thing that costs something."

"Thanks for your sermon, mother," said Frank. "I believe 'My Opportunities' will make a first rate subject for a composition."

HOW BECKY SAVED A BABY'S LIFE.

Some years ago, in the far West, there stood on the brow of a hill a very lonely-looking house; the nearest neighbours lived more than a mile away. In summer, when the roads were good, the neighbours saw a good deal of each other, but in winter, when the snow lay piled in great drifts, it was more difficult to get about. It had been arranged amongst the settlers that in case of distress or trouble a loud horn should be blown. In this house of which I have spoken lived Farmer Wilson, his wife and little Becky, his only child. One morning she had been left alone with her dog Frisky while her parents had gone to the village for supplies.

As the hour approached for their return, the faithful companions stationed themselves at the window to catch the first view of the farm waggon as it came over the hill. Suddenly they were startled by the loud blast of the horn, three times it sounded. "What shall I do?" thought Becky. "If father were only here! May be they are in great trouble."

Then a sudden thought struck her. "I know what we'll do, Frisk," said she, "we'll hang father's horn on the door to let him know there's trouble; perhaps we can help." Then she knelt down just for a minute and asked God to take care of her and help her do what she could, and was off, with Frisky at her heels. They soon reached the house from which the horn had been blown, and tapped at the door. A very troubled voice called "Come in;" but when Mrs. Mayhue, who lived there, saw only Becky, she looked dreadfully disappointed:

"I hoped your father would come, for poor baby is very sick, and I am afraid if we cannot get a doctor he will die. What shall we do?"

"I'm sure I can mind Tommy if you'll go for the doctor yourself," said Becky. "I'll do my best, and I'm sure mother will soon be here when she finds us gone."

"That's a good plan," said the poor frightened mother, "and I'll hurry back."

The hours passed very slowly, and the baby moaned and tossed, but the brave little girl soothed him as well as she could. Her courage was almost gone when she heard steps at the door, and knew that help was at hand.

"I was just in time," said the doctor, after examining the baby; "a little later and I could have done nothing for him. But thanks to this little girl, you were able to come for me; you owe the baby's life to her."

Becky's father and mother had come in just in time to hear these words, and their hearts throbbed with joy when they heard of their dear child's thoughtfulness and care.

A MOTHER'S PRAYERS.

A weather beaten sailor, on making his homeward passage, as he doubled the stormy cape, encountered a dreadful tempest. The mother had heard of his arrival outside the cape; she was waiting with the anxiety a mother alone can know to see her son. But now the storm had arisen, and when the ship was in the most dangerous place, fearing that each blast, as it swept the raging deep, might howl the requiem of her son, with strong faith in God, she commenced praying for his safety. At this moment news came that the vessel was lost.

The father, an unconverted man, had till this time, preserved a sullen silence, but now he wept aloud. The mother observed: "It is in the hands of Him who doeth all things well;" and again the subdued and softened spirit bowed, in an inaudible voice, broken only by the bursting of a full heart, to God.

Darkness had now spread her mantle abroad, and they retired, but not to rest, and anxiously waited for the morning, hoping, at least, that some relic of their lost one might be found.

The morning came. The winds were hushed, and the ocean lay comparatively calm, as though its fury had subsided since its victim was no more. At this moment the little gate in front of the dwelling turned on its hinges; the door opened, and their son, their lost, loved son, stood before them. The vessel had been driven into one of the many harbours on the coast, and was safe. The father rushed to meet him. His mother, hanging on his neck, anxiously exclaimed: "My child, how came you here?"

"Mother," said he, as the tears coursed down his sunburnt face, "I knew you would pray me home."

What a spectacle! A wild, reckless youth, acknowledging the efficacy of prayer! It seems he was aware of his situation, and that he laboured with these thoughts: "My mother prays; Christians' prayers are answered, and I may be saved." This reflection, when almost exhausted with fatigue, and ready to give up in despair, gave him fresh courage, and with renewed effort he laboured till the harbour was gained. Christian mother, go thou and do likewise. Pray for that son who is likely to be wrecked in the storm of life, and his prospects blasted forever. He may be saved.

A WORD TO BOYS.

When do you suppose he developed all those admirable qualities? When he was a boy. The boy that is late at breakfast, late at school, stands a poor chance to be a prompt man.

The boy who neglects his duties, be they ever so small, and then excuses himself by saying, "I forgot, I didn't think," will never be a reliable man.