

## OUR STORY PAGE.

### A Sunday Bicycle Outing.

"You are old enough to decide for yourself, Harriet," said grandmother to a young girl, one Saturday evening. "To me the Sabbath is a day to be kept holy. I was taught to reverence it from my earliest childhood. To go off with a party for pleasure on that day would have been considered a most grave desecration in my girlhood."

"Well, grandmother, Alison Cornwall is going, and she is a member of the church: it is not wrong for her to go, it is certainly not wrong for me, for I make no professions of being religious, you know. Wallace Hunter is going, too, and he is a church member, so the girls say."

"I would far rather you did not go, my dear, but of course I can put no commands upon you."

"A spin on the wheel is such a delightful way of getting about the country, grandmother, and you know we shall not be here long."

While this bit of conversation was going on between Harriet and her grandmother, a young girl sat on the porch of a cottage near by, turning over and over in her mind the same problem, whether it was right to take that proposed spin on her wheel the next day. She had never taken an outing for pleasure on the Lord's Day. It was Alison Cornwall, the young friend Harriet had mentioned.

"I really do not think we ought to go to-morrow, if we are away from our own church," spoke the young man, in a bicycle dress, who was standing by her side.

"I do not think there will be anything so very wrong about it, Wallace," the young lady answered. "It is not likely anyone at home will know it. Of course I would not do such a thing there, neither would you, but we are in the country now for our health and pleasure, and our stay will soon be over."

"If you haven't any conscientious scruples, Alison, I do not know why I should, so we will consider that matter settled. I will call for you at nine o'clock."

Alison Cornwall was such a bright, pretty girl, it would be a delight to be with her all day in the pleasant outing over the well kept country roads. If she thought there was no harm in thus spending the Lord's Day, why should he?

"Go? Why, of course I shall not go," said Mabel Strong, as the young man stopped his wheel on the way to the hotel to ask if she were to make one of the party. "I never went on a pleasure excursion on Sunday in all my life. I always go to church unless I am ill. Why

cannot this be put off until a week day, I should be very glad to make one of your party then."

"We are all away from home, you know, we church members, and you see how it is, we shall not be here long, and no one where we live will be apt to know of our trip; we certainly do not care for the people here. We could not possibly have any influence over them."

"I am not so sure about that, Mr. Hunter. At all events, I shall not go. I should feel that I was doing great wrong to my Lord and Master. Is Alison going?"

"Yes. I just left her on the cottage porch. She does not think there is any harm in our going."

The young lady looked surprised at this answer, but it explained the position which Wallace Hunter had taken to defend himself.

A more beautiful Sunday morning never dawned than the one selected for the outing.

"Grandmother was very much opposed to my going," said Harriet Goodwin, as the party wheeled up to the farmhouse where she was in waiting. "She was brought up in the old Puritan way, you know. I told her, Alison, that if you did not think it wrong to go on Sunday, I certainly need not. That settled it."

It was a thrust that went home to Alison's soul. The question came to her again and again as she sped along the way, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

"How very distract Wallace Hunter is to-day," said one of the young men to his companion. "He is always so jolly."

Ah, he, too, was hearing the still small voice asking, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" There are three of the party who had never had any religious home training regarding the Sabbath. It had been the custom of their parents to use that day as a family holiday. They spoke jestingly of those who revered the day, and expressed themselves glad that the biblical traditions were being put aside as fallacies. And as for church members, they were no better than people out of the church.

"If I had only listened to the still small voice, and had not dishonored my Lord in this way, how happy I should have been," was Alison's thought, as the party wheeled back into the village again at nightfall. When she was alone in her room she realized what her influence over her young companions had been. Kneeling down before the throne she prayed for forgiveness. She felt as if she had denied her Lord, as Peter did, and the tears of true repentance filled her eyes. Before she went to sleep she wrote a note to Wallace Hunter, and told him how sorry she felt that she had been the means of leading him to do what was

wrong. And a contrite note was also written to her friend Harriet.

The remembrance of that Sunday outing is not a joy to her heart, but a sorrow. We do not realize how great our influence is over others, wherever we are. "A child can throw a pebble into the water, but the wisest man cannot say where the wave it sets in motion shall be stilled." It is a light matter to fling off actions and words into the world, but a hard one to know where their influence shall cease to act.—*Evangelist*.

### Florence Nightingale's First Patient.

There is a beautiful incident related of Florence Nightingale's childhood, and it shows that God had already planted within her the germ which was to develop in after days.

Her first wounded patient was a Scotch shepherd dog. Some boys had hurt and apparently broken its leg, by throwing stones, and it had been decided to put it out of misery.

The little girl went fearlessly up to where he lay, saying, in a soft, caressing tone, "Poor Cap, poor Cap!" It was enough. He looked up with his speaking brown eyes, now bloodshot and full of pain, into her face, and did not resent it when, kneeling down beside him, she stroked with her little, ungloved hand, the large, intelligent head.

To the vicar he was rather less amenable, but, by dint of coaxing, he at last allowed him to touch and examine the wounded leg, Florence persuasively telling him that it was "all right." Indeed, she was on the floor beside him, with his head on her lap, keeping up a continuous murmur, much as a mother does over a sick child.

"Well," said the vicar, arising from his examination, "as far as I can tell, there are no bones broken; the leg is badly bruised. It ought to be fomented to take the inflammation and swelling down."

"How do you foment?" asked Florence.

"With hot cloths dipped in boiling water," answered the vicar.

"Then that's quite easy. I'll stay and do it. Now, Jimmy, get sticks and make the kettle boil."

There was no hesitation in the child's manner; she was told what ought to be done, and she set about doing it as a simple matter of course. "But they will be expecting you at home," said the vicar. "Not if they are told I'm here," said Florence. "But you will wait and show me how to foment, won't you?" "Well, yes," said the vicar, carried away by the quick energy of the little girl. And soon the fire was lit, and the water boiling. An old smock of the shepherd's had been discovered in a corner, which Florence had deliberately torn to pieces, and to the vicar's remark, "What will Roger say?" she answered, "Well, get him another." And so Florence Nightingale made her first compress, and paid all that bright, spring day in nursing her first patient—the shepherd's dog.