

"I don't care if we do," replied Robert; "but we must only walk round once and then go out just as quick as we can."

"That's all! We will walk round just once, only once round and out. Come, let us go in."

They went in, all but Mary and Alice, who went back to their seat on the grass beneath the big branches of the old pear-tree.

The city cousins were delighted with the long rows of fuchsias which rose one above the other on the shelves of the green-house. They all passed slowly along, making various remarks, and laughing, until they forgot they were treading forbidden ground. At the end of the house they saw a collection of *cactuses*, which amused them very much.

"What queer things!" cried Harriet.

"There's one that looks like a snake!" said Robert.

"See!" cried Joe, pointing to one in bloom, "what a glorious flower there is on this crooked chap!"

Joe now touched the flower with his fingers. As he did so Harriet brushed past him and pushed him toward the step which ran along in front of the shelves. He tripped forward, and his hand striking heavily on the flower, it dropped from its stem to the ground.

"Now you've been and gone and done it, Master Joe," said Robert Raynor. "That plant cost my pa five dollars. He sent it home only yesterday morning. Wont he be vexed. I wish we hadn't come in here."

"It was Harriet's fault, she pushed me," said Joe.

"Let's go," said Harriet, running toward the door of the green-house.

"What, my children, in the green-house!" said Mr. Raynor in a stern voice as he met them on the threshold.

"We only walked round it just once," said Joe by way of apology.

"Didn't I tell you not to go into it at all?" asked Mr. Raynor.

"Yes, sir, but we only meant to go round it once," persisted Joe.

"Only once? Wasn't that as truly a violation of my command and of your own promises as if you had gone round it a hundred times?"

"Yes, sir," said Joe, blushing; "but we didn't mean to do any harm."

"Joe, I'm ashamed of you," said Mr. Raynor in a voice more stern than before. "Isn't disobedience and lying harm?"

Joe was silenced. Harriet then stepped up and said, "Mr. Raynor, we broke one of your flowers, but we didn't mean to, sir. It was an accident. We are very sorry."

Mr. Raynor was vexed when he saw the cactus flower lying on the ground, but his vexation was lost in the grief he felt at seeing how easily his children and nieces had trampled upon his wishes and their own promises. Leading them to the pear-tree, he sat down among them and said:

"Children, you have allowed your curiosity to control your consciences. It was very natural you should desire to see the inside of my green-house, and I meant to gratify you at a proper time; but you ought to have let my wish and your promises control that desire. As for Joe's plea about your purpose to go round the house *just once*, it isn't worth a copper button. Doing a wrong thing only *once* does not make that wrong thing right, but it does make it easier to do it again. If a thing isn't right to do twice, thrice, or oftener, it isn't right to do *once*. That 'only once' is a miserable cheat, and has led millions into the ways of evil and death. On the contrary, if you refrain from doing a wrong only once you are safe. If you don't enter a path you can't walk in it. If you don't begin to do wrong you can't go on in sin. I hope, therefore, that henceforth you will never be cheated into committing sin by that miserable sham of a fellow called 'Only once.'"

Mr. Raynor's advice was true wisdom. It is just

as good for my children as it was for his nephews, nieces, and children. Who will accept and practice it? Let all who will say in their hearts:

"God helping me, I will never do a wrong thing only once; I will never do it at all."



For the Sunday-School Advocate.

AUNT HELEN'S ADVICE.

BY MRS. H. C. GARDNER.

Do you know any willful, saucy girl,
Who will not mind her mother,
Who does not care for the tears she sheds,
Or the grief she tries to smother?
Keep away from her—she's a wicked child;
Her footsteps fear to follow;
A merry companion she may be,
But her heart is false and hollow.

Do you know a boy who is not ashamed
To stand on the corner smoking,
Who fills the air with tobacco fumes
Though the passers-by are choking?
Keep away from him—he's a filthy lad;
Don't let his arts beguile you;
And never touch with your young fresh lips
What only can defile you.

Are there boys at school who at recess time,
When the others sport and ramble,
Hide away from the teacher's watchful eye
To toss up cents and gamble?
Keep away from them—never stoop to meet
Those lads with a cordial greeting,
Or join in a play that leads astray,
And only thrives by cheating.

In the play-ground is there a boy or girl
Whose lips are used to lying,
Who boldly speak what they know is false,
God's holy law defying?
Keep away from them—for the lightest touch
Of their unclean hands will stain you;
If you linger near them, alas! how soon
Will the falsehoods cease to pain you.

Have you heard little angry children swear?
Did you ever sadly listen
And, shuddering, think of the God they dare,
As you watch their fierce eyes glisten?
O children, dear, keep away from these!
Ask God to keep and guide you;
You are only safe from pollution here
While Jesus is beside you.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE RUNAWAY.

MANY of you have read a book from your Sunday-school library entitled "Archie Aldie." It is about a little boy that was so wicked as to run away from his dear mother, who was a widow, and go to sea. He was gone a long time, but at last, after get-

ting tired of his sinful ways and of the cold world, he decided to return to his mother and ask her forgiveness, and a good resolution it was too. But it was made *too late*, for when he got to his old home his mother was a long time dead.

Let me tell you of a very similar occurrence that transpired within the four years of our terrible war for the Union, Freedom, and Right.

A little boy, altogether too young and small, wished, as many of you have done, to go to war. He only thought of the bright blue uniform with its gay buttons, and the gay times that he would have. He thought not of the long marches, the hospital, the terrible field of conflict!

His name was Benson, and, like Archie Aldie, his mother was a widow. He would tease her to let him go. But she knew that he was too young, and of course told him that he could not. If he had been a good boy this would have been sufficient; but he was not, and so after finding out that it would be useless to tease her longer, like Archie Aldie, he determined to run away.

So one night, after all was still in the house, he went softly down stairs with his little bundle of clothes in his hand, unlocked the door, carefully closed it, and then hurried off to the city. He reached it by morning and at once went to one of the many recruiting-offices stationed there, where they were so anxious for recruits, or, rather, for the money that they got for them, that they readily passed little Benson.

He was at once sent to camp, and instead of his own nice, soft bed, prepared by a loving mother, he slept on the hard ground that night. For a few days he enjoyed the novelty of being a soldier, but his blue uniform with its bright buttons did not give him as much pleasure as he anticipated, for they had been *dearly bought*, and before the regiment left the state he was heartily sick of it and wished himself at home with his kind mother, whose heart was breaking for her boy. But it was *too late!*

He had been disobedient to his mother and he now suffered for it. For, as he had been disobedient at home, so was he here, and many times he suffered severe punishments for disobeying orders. At last he was taken sick, and was for a long time in the hospital. While there, through the instrumentality of a good man, he was led to the Saviour. Most bitterly did he repent of his folly.

His health did not improve fast, and at last, through the influence of this gentleman, he got his discharge. He was just able to ride home, whither he immediately went. He could but just walk from the station, and had to sit down to rest many times. At last he got to the door. Poor boy! how his heart beat at the thought of seeing *mother*. But *she* did not open the door with her loving hand—she did not embrace the prodigal! A neighbor opened in answer to his timid knock. His mother has *just died!*

The shock was too much for him in his feeble condition, and in a few days they made another grave by the side of hers!

Boys, many of you were too young to go to war. But there are rebels of the worst kind for *you* to fight. Noble soldiers are needed to fight intemperance, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, and all the host of evils. Will you enlist? Your cousin,

GENBIE BELMONTE.

A GRANDCHILD'S REBUKE.

SOME time ago a gentleman on Long Island was making too free with the Bible, and brought forward his strong argument against it, declaring, in the face of all present, "I am seventy years of age, and have never seen such a place as hell, after all that has been said about it."

His little grandson, of about seven years of age, who was all the while listening to the conversation, asked him, "Granddaddy, have you ever been dead yet?"