

advantage of his helplessness to remain out until late hours at night. His mother often tried to keep him in, and threatened him with his father's punishment if he persisted in staying out so late. But her son only laughed, and said (like an undutiful son, as he was), "Why don't you keep father at home? He's worse than me; he comes home drunk, and I don't!"

Many tears did that poor mother shed over her erring husband and her wayward boy; and many prayers did she offer to the Throne of Grace for both of them.

Not far from Sawyer's house there lived a boy named Bill Jones, who was noted for being an idle, good-for-nothing fellow. He was known to be connected in some way with a gang of young men, who met frequently at nights for some purpose unknown. He had money to spend too, sometimes, though he never earned any, and his mother was poor. Bill was often in James Sawyer's company, but had never mentioned his connection with the gang. But now, thinking that James would be company for him coming home at night, he decided on making him a member of his club. Meeting him one day, he said:

"Come, Jim, come with me to a meeting of jolly boys to-night. There's about ten or twelve of us; and if you like them, we will make you one of our company."

"What do ye do, Bill, when ye meet? and how late do ye stay out?" queried James.

"Oh, we enjoy ourselves, and have lots of fun," replied Bill. But you'll have to come and see for yourself, and I'm sure you'll like it."

"Well," said James, "I'll go if you'll call for me. Just give a whistle or two outside the house, and then wait for me at the corner."

"All right," said Bill; "I'll call for you after tea."

The two lads then separated.

At the appointed time, Bill gave a whistle outside James's house, and then walked to the corner near by.