

HALF AN HOUR IN BAD COMPANY.

A youth was once unintentionally thrown into the company of some half dozen young men of very immoral character. Their language, their jests, were of the lowest order. Indecent expressions, vulgar anecdotes, heart-defiling oaths characterized their conversation. It was evident there was no thought of God in all their hearts.

He left them and went to his room.—It was time for retiring to rest. He opened his Bible and attempted to read its sacred pages; but he could not confine his thoughts. The low, vulgar anecdotes of that godless party were continually flitting across his mind. Their hollow mockery of God still rung in his ear; the thought that perhaps there was no God, no heaven, no hell, disturbed his hitherto pleasant evening meditations; but that kind, friendly voice within, the lives and death-beds of parents whom he had loved only to lose, told him too plainly there was a God above, of tender and forgiving mercy; there was a heaven of bliss and joy; there was a lake whose waves of fire and brimstone were never quiet. He knelt down to pray, and the profane jests of that God-rejecting company intruded themselves upon his thoughts; he retired to rest, they haunted his slumbers; he awoke in the morning—they lingered in his mind. Year after year had passed away, but that half hour in the company of the profane, the wicked, still exerts its injurious influence upon the heart of the young man. It will never leave him.—

Wherever he goes, whatever he does, it will remain in his mind to the last day of his life. It may be forgotten for a time, but like a serpent concealed in a bed of violets, it will again come up to pollute his best and purest thoughts, to poison his sweetest affections.

My dear young friends, particularly boys, write this as your motto upon the fly-leaves of your books—write it upon the walls of your room—write it in your copy-books—write it on your hearts—keep out of bad company.

A WORD TO BOYS.

Some one has said: "Boys, did you ever think that this great world, with all its wealth and wo, with all its mines and mountains, oceans, seas, and rivers, with all its shipping, its steamboats, railroads,

and magnetic telegraphs, with all its millions of men, and all the science and progress of ages, will soon be given over to the hands of the boys of the present age—boys like you, assembled in schoolrooms, or playing without them, on both sides of the Atlantic? Believe it, and look abroad upon your inheritance, and get ready to enter upon its possession. The kings, presidents, governors, statesmen, philosophers, ministers, teachers, men of the future, all are boys, whose feet, like yours, cannot reach the floor, when seated on the benches upon which they are learning to master the monosyllables of their respective languages."

Boys, be making ready to act well your part. Become good scholars. Read only what is instructive. Spend no time with novels. Study science and government, and the history of the world. Study agriculture and mechanism. Become as nearly as possible perfect in the occupation you may choose. Learn prudence and self-control. Have decision of character. Take the Bible for your guide.—Become familiar with its teachings, and observe them. Seek wisdom and prosperity from your Heavenly Father. As you grow in stature, in bodily strength, and in years, grow in piety, in intelligence, in caution, in activity, in firmness, and in charity. Aspire to be men of the noblest character. Resolve to be useful, and we trust you will be happy. Cherish the feeling that you were born to receive good and to do good. Be manly in spirit and in act.

HOLD ON!

Hold on to your tongue when you are just ready to swear, lie, or speak harshly or use any improper word. Hold on to your hands when you are about ready to strike, pinch, scratch, steal, or do any improper act. Hold on to your foot when you are on the point of kicking, running away from study, or pursuing the path of error, shame, or crime. Hold on to your temper when you are angry, excited, or imposed upon, or others are angry about you. Hold on to your heart when evil associates seek your company, and invite you to join in their games, mirth, and revelry. Hold on to your good name at all times; for it is more value to you than gold, high places, or fashionable attire. Hold on to the truth, for it will serve well, and do you good throughout eternity.

Hold on to your virtue—it is above all price to you, in all times and places.—Hold on to your good character, for it is, and ever will be, your best wealth.

THE ADOPTED SON.

A mother buried her little boy. He was three years old, and a darling boy to his parents. His mother's heart was almost broken. Like poor Rachel of old, she almost refused to be comforted. God took her little boy, and she knew he had a right to take him, but she wished he had taken her also. Yet God knew best.

One day, her husband thought he would bring home something to comfort her.—What was it? Another little boy, just the age of the little boy who died. He had no father or mother; he was an orphan: he had no mother, and this poor mother had no little son; the good man hoped they would be mother and son to each other. When she first saw him, she looked and looked at him, and then, with a tear in her eye, told Sophy to take him away, and give him some supper.

Sophy gave him some supper, and after supper she took him to bed with her.—"Are you my mamma?" asked the little boy, when Sophy lay down by his side. "No," said Sophy, "but I shall love you dearly, I know." "Then ye not found my dead mamma," said the little boy; "mans said I see my mamma dis place." "Not your dead mamma," said Sophy. "Dead mamma under ground," said the little boy; "but mans say I see my mamma dis place." "Perhaps you will," said Sophy, "to-morrow, or some time." "I wish to-morrow would come," said the little boy. "You must go to sleep now," said Sophy.

The little boy clasped his hands together upon his breast, shut his eyes, and said softly,—

"Lord Jesus, take me to thy breast.
And bless me, that I may be blest:
Both when I wake and when I sleep,
Thy little lamb in safety keep."

The next morning, after breakfast, Philly—for the little boy's name was Philip—had the blocks to play with in the sitting room; they were the very blocks the little boy who died used to play with. Towser, the great black dog, came in and smelled him all over, and then lay down beside him, with his nose between his fore paws, looking at him. The lady was in the room. She was sit-