



Saying NO!

"No!" The word was clear, sharp, and ringing, with an emphasis that could not fail to arrest attention.

"I don't often hear such a negative as that," remarked one gentleman to another as they were passing the playground.

"It is not often anyone hears it. The boy who uttered it can say, 'Yes', too, quite as emphatically. He is a newcomer here, an orphan who lives with his uncle, about two miles away. He walks in every morning, bringing his lunch, and walks back at night. He works enough to pay his board, and does more toward running his uncle's farm than the man does himself. He is the most coarsely dressed boy in the school, and the greatest favorite. Everybody knows just what to expect of him."

"Quite a character. I should like to see him. Boys of such a sturdy make-up are getting to be scarce."

"That is true. If you wish to see Ned, come this way."

They moved on a few steps, pausing by an open gate near which a group of lads were excitedly discussing some question.

"It isn't right, and I won't have anything to do with it. When I say 'No', I mean it."

"Well, anyway, you needn't speak so loud, and tell everybody about it," one of the boys responded impatiently.

"I am willing everybody should hear what I have to say about it. I won't take anything that does not belong to me; and I won't drink cider, anyway."

"Such a fuss about a little fun! It's just what we might have expected. You never go in for fun."

"I never go in for doing wrong. I told you 'No', to begin with, and you are the ones to blame if there has been any fuss."

"Ned Dunlap, I should like to see you a minute."

"Yes, sir!" And the boy removed his hat as he passed through the gate, and waited to hear what Mr. Palmer might say to him.

"Has your uncle any apples to sell?"

"No, sir. He had some, but he has sold them. I have two bushels that were my share for picking. Would you like to buy them, sir?"

"Yes, if we can agree on the price. Do you know how much they are worth?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right, then, I will call for them, and you may call at my house for the pay."

This short interview afforded the stranger an opportunity to observe Ned Dunlap closely. The next day, a call was made at his uncle's, and although years passed before he knew what a friend he had gained that day, his future was assured. After he had grown to manhood, he was offered a good job. He asked why it had been offered to him.

"Because I knew you could say 'No' if necessary," answered his employer. "'No' was the first word I heard you speak, and you spoke it with a will. More people, old and young, are ruined for want of using that word than from any other cause. They do not wish to do wrong, but they hesitate over the temptation until the tempter has them fast. The boy or girl who is not afraid to say 'No' is reasonably certain of becoming an honorable man or woman."