

TALKS TO BOYS AND GIRLS.

THE MONTH OF THE POOR SOULS

Pray for them little children,
When you hear the wild winds sigh;
Some under seas are sleeping,
Some in lone graveyards lie.

To-day with light feet bounding
Where once, perhaps, they trod,
Whisper your Requiescat
Close to the ear of God.

Murmur it over and over—
"O may they rest in peace!"
Be sure that the Lord will listen
And grant them swift release.

Whether in tombs long mounded,
Or under the fresh-turned sod;
For the prayers of the little children
Are keys to the heart of God.

—Sylvia, in Ave Maria.

I trust that our young readers appreciate the "talks" we've been having for the past several weeks, and which we hope to continue should they meet with approval.

As you have probably noticed, we are endeavoring, firstly to form the character of our young folks by encouraging the practice of, and respect for virtue; secondly, to make all detest and abhor vice; and thirdly, to establish a taste for good literature by introducing selections which will be both instructive and interesting to boys and girls and to many others of more mature years.

Accordingly, if our readers give the matter in these columns more than a passing thought, we hope that much benefit will be derived by all.

A philosopher has said that the true education of boys is to "teach them what they ought to know when they become men."

1. To be true and to be genuine. No education is worth anything that does not include this. A man had better not know how to read, and be true and genuine in action, rather than be learned in all sciences and in all languages, and be at the same time false in heart and counterfeit in life. Above all things, teach the boys that truth is more than riches, power or possessions.

2. To be pure in thought, language and life—pure in mind and body.

3. To be unselfish. To care for the feelings and comforts of others. To be generous, noble and manly. This will include a genuine reverence for the aged and things sacred.

4. To be self-reliant and self-helpful even from childhood. To be industrious always, and self-supporting at the earliest possible age. Teach them that all honest work is honorable; that an idle life of dependence on others is disgraceful.

When a boy has learned these things says a writer in an exchange, when he has made these ideas part of him—however poor or however rich—he has learned the most important things he ought to know.

It is not by any means a strange occurrence to see boys and girls, big and small coming in late for Mass, or any Church service on a Sunday or holiday. Ignoring the holy water fount at the entrance of the church, they stalk hurriedly and noisily up the aisle, and give a little bobbing courtesy instead of the proper genuflection before entering their pew.

Kneeling on only one knee, or emulating the position of the bear, they make the sign of the cross as if fanning off flies, and after a short prayer which constitutes the sum total of their devotions, they sit down and for the remainder of their stay in the church they are whispering, laughing

and causing distractions to those around them, or continually turning around like a weather-cock, they deliberately stare up at the choir or at those entering the church.

Again, they go to sleep or read their prayer-book during the sermon, and when the collection box approaches for their contribution, they pretend to be in an ecstatic condition of devotion. Then before the priest has finished the last gospel, they make a rush for the door—being the last to enter the church, they endeavor to be the first to leave it.

This not only occurs among small boys and girls who can be excused for want of sense, but more generally among young men and women whose conduct is unpardonable.

The following rhyme about going to church hits the nail on the head and the subject needs no further comment.

Some go to church just for a walk,
Some go there to laugh and talk,
Some go there the time to spend,
Some go there to meet a friend,
Some go there their dress to show,
Some go to see a belle or beau,
Some go to learn the preacher's name,
Some go there to wound his fame,
Some go there for speculation,
Some go there for conversation,
Some go there to dose and nod,
Few, very few to worship God.

I fear the young folks will think that I am one of these old fogeys who are constantly bewailing the degeneracy of the times in which we live. However, they should remember that if the advice does not apply to them personally, there are many others to whom it does; and we must all acknowledge that a great laxity exists among many young people. It is not a question whether it exists in a larger or smaller degree than formerly, so long as it exists at all. We therefore should not object to being constantly on our guard, and all should accept the advice in a right spirit.

Everybody has heard that pathetic song "Home, Sweet Home," but very few know its origin.

This famous song was sung at the burial of an Indian, who while temporarily insane from grief at the loss of his wife and child committed suicide upon their grave. The poet John Howard Payne, suspected of inciting the Indians to riot over the State boundary disputes, had been arrested. From his place of imprisonment in the council house he witnessed the burial of the poor Indian and it was then that he began to sing softly to himself the first lines of his now famous lyric. According to the account given in a Southern journal, General Bishop, who had kept a close scrutiny on his actions, heard the song and called Payne to him.

"Young man," said the stern old Indian fighter, "where did you learn that song?"

"I wrote that song myself," replied Payne.

"And where did you get the tune?"

"I composed that also."

"Would you let me have a copy of it?"

"Certainly I will."

"Well, a man who can sing and write like this is no incendiary. Appearances may be against you, but I am going to set you free. I shall write out your discharge immediately and a pass to carry you anywhere you choose through the nation."

The song that is still a passport into every human heart had purchased the poet's freedom.—Thomas Whelan.

WHAT CAME OF A SURPRISE.

Continued From Page Seven.

"Well, two boxes! there is no help for it."

"Two boxes!" cried his wife, clasping her hands in dismay. "Good gracious, Zarnekow, we thought—"

"Yes," said he, "and I thought too."

"And then they began to defend themselves, and defence became re-creation. The Herr Rathsherr Darius was laughing in his sleeve, and said to me—"

"Thank God, my confounded box is on its travels—the devil knows where. If that should come, too, the business would be complete!"

"Yule-rap!" cried a voice in the hall.

"So," said I to myself, "misfortune take your course!" for I heard Jochen's voice in the hall. The door opened and my black box came in with the inscription, "To the Herr Rathsherr and the Frau Rathsherr Zarnekow," for I had got it ready for myself.

"Scarcely had Herr Darius seen the black box when he sprang up and ran toward it. He looked as if he were ready to do a battle.

"Why, this is—this is—" and he looked at me suspiciously.

"Addressed to me and my wife," said Herr Zarnekow, and began to cut off the black cover. But the moment the box with its marks came to light Herr Darius pushed Herr Zarnekow aside, and seating himself on the box cover, and spreading his coat-tails over it, shouted, "It is a mistake! this is a saddle for Schregel at Moderitz."

"No!" said Herr Zarnekow. "No!"

said his wife. "No!" said I likewise. "He is only joking." He was dragged off the box amid laughter, and as the marks appeared Herr Zarnekow cried—"Why, great Heavens! Darius, this is your giraffe box!"

"Cursed box!" shouted he. "Let me out! I want to go home." But the ladies stood between him and the door; they did not know what was in the box.

"The Herr Rathsherr Darius threw himself on a sofa in the corner in silent rage and muttered—"

"Well, well, take your surprise, then! I have had enough of the kind! And as for you," turning savagely on me, "you may go home alone to-morrow; not another step will I ride with you!"

"So the box was opened and out came—a new carriage box! Bless me, what a face Herr Zarnekow had and how all the family looked.

"Herr Darius was now in a spiteful mood and laughed loudly—"

"Do you see, Zarnekow, you block-head; you made me the sport of all Paris when sending the box after me; now you have your giraffe. You see, Zarnekow, it never rains but it pours. You see, Zarnekow, now let us put all three in a row and look at your presents. It is a pity you haven't another, and you could each have had a private box."

"But he turned pale with terror, for the door opened again. Herr Zarnekow's coachman Frederic entered with something on his shoulder.

"Herr Rathsherr," he said, "I have a pleasant surprise for you this Christmas Eve—our old box has been found. And he set the fourth box down on the floor.

"And, now, my son," added Uncle Matthias, "you have a specimen of

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pleasant surprises; now make the application, and tell me what you are going to surprise your mother with!"

I opened my package and displayed a pair of spectacles.

"Oh," said he, "spectacles! what made you think of those?"

"Well," said I, "we were sitting around the table the other evening and mother was trying to thread her needle, and it wouldn't go, and she got vexed over it, and said, 'I certainly shall have to buy a pair of spectacles,' and so I thought of it."

"Well, wait a moment," said my uncle, and he called my sister.

"Lizette, what are you going to give your mother?"

"You mustn't tell, uncle— a pair of spectacles."

"And you, August?"

August was a ruddy boy, who stammered dreadfully. He could sing, however, so when he could not speak he was always allowed to sing. August put on a broad smile and began to stammer.

"Sing, child," said my uncle. And August began to sing in a fine clear voice to the tune of "The Maiden's Wreath:"

"I'll give my mother some spectacles
With a blue ribbon tied."

"That will do, my son," and turned to me. "What do you say now?"

"I had nothing to say."

"Don't you see," he went on, "your mother would have been more vexed than pleased over three pairs of spectacles? Come here." He added, stepping to the window. "What is that lying on the ground?"

"Snow," said I. "It is winter."

"Right," said he, "and if the Lord should surprise you in winter with soft warm weather, and in the summer with snow, you children would get the sniffles, and we old folks should catch our deaths of cold. This is the way the Lord does things, and he knows best. Even joy, when it is unexpected, has a taste of pain. Every experienced farmer will tell you that the richest and most prosperous year is that that runs its regular course, and I can tell you that the happiest human life is the one which, so far as possible, remains free from surprises."

With that he turned away, and his cheerful old face had grown sad.—By Franz Reuter, in "Short Stories."

WATER WORKS AND SEWERS.

Messrs. McConeil & Marion, Civil Engineers, Montreal, have been selected as experts to inspect the water works and sewerage systems of St. Lambert, Que., before their acceptance by the municipality.

We have among mankind in general the three orders of being: the lowest, sordid and selfish, which neither sees nor feels; the second, noble and sympathetic, but which neither sees nor feels without concluding or acting; and the third and highest, which loses sight in resolution and feeling in work.

Let us do our duty and pray that we may do our duty here, now, to-day; not in dreamy sweetness, but in active energy; not in the green oasis of the future, but in the dusty desert of the present; not in the imaginations of elsewhere, but in the realities of now.

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