

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

Well, we are getting close to Christmas. I know all your minds are made up as to what you want Santa Claus to bring you, and what he is to bring your dearest friends. My girls and boys must not forget when placing their orders with old Santa that there are some little ones who will not have any one to think of them and no pleasure to look forward to at Christmas. Now, I think it would be so nice if my little friends would look up some poor little children (they are easily found), even if they have to sacrifice some pleasure very dear to themselves, and so make at least one lonely heart happy at the season which breathes only good will and plenty. I feel sure this little suggestion will be heeded.

Your loving,
AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Although I have not written you for a long time, I do not forget to read the letters and stories in the little corner. I have not had a sleigh ride yet, but winter is near. Papa and I were in Montreal Thursday last; we went in to see a doctor about my leg. I am in bed now. I would have liked to call and see you, but I did not have time. I will try and remember the little birds when I get up. Love to all my cousins and a good share for you, Aunt Becky.

JOSEPH C.

Granby Que.

(So sorry that you are a little invalid. Hope you will be better for Christmas. I thought I knew my little friends when I spoke of the birds.—Ed.)

THE ELEPHANT'S LITTLE JOKE.

When Anita started for school one morning she found the fences covered with flaming posters which told the little folks of Riverbeach that a "really" circus was coming to town. It seemed almost too good to be true, but there were the posters with their gaudy pictures and letters of scarlet and gold. My, how Anita saved her pennies to buy peanuts for the elephant! For this was only a poor little country circus, with but one huge beast in it to keep it in countenance.

When the longed-for day finally dawned Anita came dancing down to breakfast so excited that she could hardly pour the cream on her oatmeal. She popped a spoonful into her mouth, and then—it suddenly seemed as if the top of her head started to come off, and then settled down again with an awful wrench. At her sharp cry of pain mother took her in her arms and, looking at her father, said:

"I was afraid she would catch it!" "Poor little mumps!" said father, trying to scare up a smile on his little daughter's weebegone face. "Will her face puff out as though she had an orange in each side of it, so that everybody will think she's some fat woman the circus has left behind?"

At the mere mention of circus Anita began to cry again. She hadn't a very clear idea of what this horrid mumps was that all the children were having; but she knew it always kept her little friends home from school.

"But I won't have to stay away from the circus, mother? Please say I may go this afternoon!" How mother hated to cut her little girl off from the treat on which she had been counting so long. When Anita was told that she would not be well for many a long day she was a brave little child. After one hard, disappointed cry she did not whine or fret, and even offered her brother Tom all the bags of peanuts which she had bought for the elephant the night before.

While the rest were eating supper, poor Anita, who was afraid to bite anything for fear of bringing back the sharp pain, sat dolefully in the broad window-seat, watching the rippling river. Suddenly there was a shout from the street-boys, and down to the water's brink, right in front of the house, came two, two, twenty, thirty horses—all that the circus owned—to be watered for the night. Anita was so busy counting them that she forgot her mumps; and when the little white key came trailing down to the river

she excitedly called her father and mother to come and see the fun.

Soon there came another great shouting. Anita couldn't make out what it was all about, but she could see that every one was watching something coming down the side street. Twisting her head away around the corner, what should she see but the elephant waddling heavily toward the river for its good-night drink.

His keeper, riding a sorry-looking horse, drove the great drab beast right down to the stream. Filling his long trunk with water, Mr. Elephant jauntily curled it aloft, sprinkling many a small boy who had ventured too near the edge of the bank. The peals of laughter grew louder and louder, till at last the boy who got the most sprinkles came to be the envied hero of the beach.

After a while the keeper thought the elephant had played his little game long enough, so he made his horse wade far enough out into the stream to head off the huge sprinkler and drive him back into town. But the elephant wasn't ready yet. There was another little joke he wanted to play—this time on his keeper. So, just as his master came riding up to him, down on his knees went the elephant, right under the water! Nothing could be seen of him but a small island of drab floating round in the river. Such a sudden collapse sucked the water in all around the unwieldy beast, and nearly drew the frightened horse off his feet, making him jump first this way and then that, and nearly pitching the angry keeper into the stream.

How the people roared and shouted! And the elephant laughed, too, rolling from one flabby side to the other, and splashing the water over his poor keeper till there wasn't a dry thread of clothes on him. The more his master tried to make him get up, the more the elephant chuckled and cuddled down under the water, spouting the spray over his back in a perfect ecstasy of watery bliss. "I shouldn't wonder," said Tom, "but that slab-sided old chap came down here just to show off for the mumps girl who sent him all those peanuts!"

"Perhaps," said happy Anita. "Anyway, I'd rather have funny circuses come to me after this than go to the New York Hippodrome."

CLARA'S WAY.

Clara's mother was sick. She was so sick that a nurse had come to take care of her. Clara was very sorry about her mother's illness, and a little sorry that the nurse was there. She would have liked to take care of her mother herself, and she felt very sure of being able to do it. Clara was a small girl with a rather big idea of what she could do.

On one of those days when her mother was the sickest, Clara stole into the bedroom while the nurse was telephoning the doctor. Her mother's face looked very pale against the pillow, and Clara decided that she must have a headache. Well, she knew what to do for a headache, if she didn't.

Clara hunted among the bottles on the table for one of camphor, and, pouring a little into her hand, she began to rub her mother's forehead. But she had poured out too much of the strong camphor, and part of it ran down into her mother's eyes. She cried out with pain, and the nurse coming in just then, turned Clara out of the room. Clara felt very much hurt. She had been trying to take care of her sick mother, and she did not see why she should be scolded.

But Clara needed another lesson before she learned a better way of helping. After her mother grew better, the nurse was very careful to prepare nice little lunches which would tempt her appetite. Clara stood watching her one morning, wishing that she might share in the operations. When the nurse was looking the other way, she caught up a salt-shaker and added a generous sprinkling to what the nurse had already used.

When the tray was carried, mamma did not seem to relish her lunch. "What is the matter?" asked the nurse, and when Clara's mother answered that it was too salty she took a taste herself.

"Dear me!" she cried, much surprised. "I must have salted it twice by mistake. Well, I'll hurry back to the kitchen and make more."

And Clara resolved to try that better way of helping without waiting a minute.

POLLY'S PROBLEM.

My teacher says two twos make four. And nothing less and nothing more. But when I wrote the numbers straight Upon my pretty porcelain slate My papa said 'twas twenty-two. Which one is right? I wish I knew! —Zitella Cooke, in "The Grasshoppers' Hop."

A TALK TO BOYS.

When George Washington was still a boy he wrote out for himself a set of principles for the regulation of his own actions. Daniel O'Connell did the same. For, by having positive laws for their behavior, written down and memorized, they were better able to think, and speak, and act, and keep silent, according to a definite standard, than if they had never adopted any principles.

Some boys and some men have few or no right principles. They have little control over themselves. They live for their own comfort, to gratify their stomach, to enjoy their ease, to yield to the passions of the body. In Baptism we all promise to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and through Confirmation we get fortitude from the Holy Ghost to be strong to resist the unruly inclinations of our body. Now, those divine promises and graces are wasted if we don't have Christian principles and stick to them.

Every boy ought to draw up for himself a set of principles like these: 1. I will get up out of bed every morning at — o'clock. 2. I will say my morning and night prayers; I will offer myself, my life and my actions to God every day; often during the day I will say: "God save me—I will do nothing to displease Him!" 3. Every night I will think over my trespasses of the day and make an Act of Contrition. 4. I will obey my parents and my teachers for God's sake, who commands me to obey them; that will make my obedience divine. 5. I will say "No" quickly and firmly to every invitation or temptation to do wrong, no matter from whom it comes. 6. I will tell the truth and hate all form of lying. 7. I will be strictly honest and steal not a cent, or a pin, or anything else from anybody. 8. I will be industrious, keep busy and shun idleness. 9. I will say a special "Hail Mary" every day in honor of the Immaculate Virgin, asking her to keep me innocent; and I will never listen to any dirty words or laugh at them. I will not go with vicious boys, no matter at what sacrifice of pleasure in the way of sport that this principle will cost me. 10. I will be a practical Catholic, proud to belong to the one true Church that Christ founded, and I will cherish the faith as the best thing in all the world. 11. I will make some act of self-denial at table at every meal, to strengthen my will and to carry the

cross, even if it be only a half slice of bread or a pat of butter.

12. I want to grow up to be a manly man, a true Christian, sober, abstemious, pure, charitable, kind, brave, high-minded, and faithful to every duty. The boy who writes out for himself a set of principles like these, and lives up to them, will develop a noble character.—Catholic Union and Times.

A GAME FOR A RAINY DAY. The following game is very popular with little French children and may help you to pass some pleasant moments: Choose a letter of the alphabet, say "D," for instance. Each player with pencil and paper is told to write the name of a country, river, mountain, city, soldier, artist, writer, musician and statesman, all beginning with the letter "D."

At the end of five minutes the lists are closed. One reads the names from his list, and those having the same names on their list scratch them off. The winner of the contest is the one having the most names not on the lists of the others. The fact of his names being more uncommon shows him to have the greatest knowledge and memory. This game will be well worth trying, and will be enjoyed by every member of the family.

A FEW DON'TS. Don't write letters with a lead pencil. Don't write out soiled or torn sheets of paper. Don't fail to enclose a stamp to carry an answering letter to a letter of business. Don't send a letter bearing blots or scratches. Make a new copy if necessary. Don't seal a letter of introduction. The person to whom it is given is supposed to inform himself of its contents. Don't write carelessly. Spell correctly and be painstaking about your punctuation and the language in which you express your thoughts.

THE BEAVER'S TOOTH. No carpenter's chisel can do more effective work than is turned out with ease and neatness by the beaver's tooth. This is the principal tool with which these patient, clever builders construct their dams. The outer surface of the tooth is a scale of very hard enamel, while the body of it is of softer dentine. As the softer substance wears away in use the end of the tooth takes a chisel-like bevel, leaving a thin, slightly projecting edge of hard enamel as sharp as any carpenter's tool fresh from the oilstone. The thin scale of enamel gives keenness, the softer dentine supplies strength, and thus the combination forms a formidable tool, which actually sharpens itself by use.

TEETHING TROUBLES. Teething is generally accompanied by nervousness, irritability and stomach disorders, which may lead to serious consequences if not promptly treated. Baby's Own Tablets is the best medicine in the world for teething children. They allay the inflammation in the tender swollen gums, correct the disordered stomach, and help the teeth through painlessly. Mrs. T. Nutt, Raymond, Ont., says: "My baby suffered terribly while teething, but as soon as I began giving him Baby's Own Tablets he improved in every way and is now a bright healthy child." The Tablets also cure colic, constipation, diarrhoea, indigestion, simple fevers and destroy worms. They are guaranteed to contain not one particle of opiate or harmful drugs, and may be given with equally good results to the newborn baby or the well grown child. Sold by all druggists, or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

PARTING. Men have been known lightly to turn the corner of a street, and days have grown to months. And months to lagging years ere they have looked in loving eyes again, Parting at best is underlaid With tears and pain; Therefore, lest sudden death should come between, Or time, or distance, clasp with pressure firm the hand, Of him who goeth forth; Unless, Fate goeth too. Yes, find thou always time to say some earnest word Between the tide talk, lest with thee, henceforth, Night and day, Regret should walk.—Somerset Patmore.

MILBURN'S LAXA-LIVER PILLS

The liver is the largest gland in the body; its office is to take from the blood the properties which form bile. When the liver is torpid and inflamed it cannot furnish bile to the bowels, causing them to become bound and constive. The symptoms are a feeling of fullness or weight in the right side, and shooting pains in the same region, pains between the shoulders, yellowness of the skin and eyes, bowels irregular, coated tongue, bad taste in the morning, etc.

Price 25 cents, or 5 bottles for \$1.00, all dealers or mailed direct on receipt of price by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

Fruit-a-tives

OR "FRUIT LIVER TABLETS"
Positively made from fruit with tonics added. Absolute cure for constipation, biliousness, headaches, kidney and skin diseases. "I have been troubled lately with my back and kidneys, and received great benefit from taking Fruit-a-tives." Mrs. JOHN FOX, Cobourg, Ont.
At druggists—50c. a box.
Manufactured by FRUIT-A-TIVES LIMITED, Ottawa.

A DRUNKARD'S CONVERSION.

This is but a simple narrative, without a plot or a sensation, told by a humble priest in the hope that its perusal may stimulate mothers to pray for the erring ones who destroy the domestic and social comforts of the home.

"I should feel guilty if I let him slip away." These were the words of an old and highly respectable lady to a Catholic priest whose good offices she sought, to advise and endeavor to persuade her son to give up what she termed "the black evil"—the drink habit. The young man had become an almost inveterate drunkard and consequently grew selfish, worthless and ungrateful, but in spite of all he was dearer to her from his misfortune, and though disgrace settled upon his name, she loved and cherished him all the more.

He spent much of his time in the saloon—that attractive social centre, where men are wont to meet and drink, squander and destroy the food, education and social comforts of their children, and for which, as yet, no substitute has been found. His hours at home were few and uncertain so that it made it difficult for one outside the family circle and the home to get near him or to see him. One morning, however, a message came to the presbytery; it was a sick call; the young man had become very ill. The good priest, remembering the words of the old lady, responded without hesitation, and in a few minutes found himself by the bedside of the young but unfortunate youth. His aged mother stood there, too, and she wept as she smoothed his pillow and administered to his little wants. He was deathly pale, dejected and sick, and one would think from his general appearance that it was to be his last illness. Turning on his bed, so as to assume a position of ease, he saluted the priest saying: "Good morning, Father S. I am glad to see you," and he began almost immediately to regret his years of bad behaviour.

He told of how he fell from virtue's way, and how he affected to keep mean and scandalous company, and said, as his appetite for drink increased, he valued nobody but just as they drank and agreed with him in every opinion he thought best to take up, and in every subject that he wished to discuss. He spoke, too, of how he neglected his labor, spent his days in idleness, rioting and disorder, and at night instead of losing himself in that sweet and refreshing sleep, from which the good rise with new health, cheerfulness and vigor, he dreamed in stupor of the gambling halls, the social infernos, the mirrored bars and the games at chance, and waked only to regret the illusions that had vanished. With tears in his eyes he spoke of his home as not being the home of the past wherein domestic happiness knew no limit; for, said he, "I have destroyed its social comforts by my life and actions, engendered discord among my relatives and friends, and have been the cause of blasting poor mother's influence over the rest of the family, who have left home on my account. Oh, Father," he said, "the remembrance of all this, and the past, is bitter to one who has become wretched by the loss of every grace, but I ask our dear Lord, here and now, to pardon me and take me back—if I am worth taking," he added in a trembling tone of voice. "My present condition, my sickness, your presence and this change, must have been the effect of my poor mother's prayers, for living as I lived, I should have died amid the singing of profane songs and the speaking of blasphemy in the resorts that afforded me shelter. I did not pause to think," he said, "how far I was straying or had strayed from God, but my poor mother did, and redoubting her loving solicitude for my soul and body, she prayed more earnestly and in fact incessantly for my conversion, which, thanks to God who heard her prayers, she is able to witness and bear testimony to today."

Father S., who had listened attentively, became so full of sympathy for the young man, that he spoke kindly and gently to him. "My good young man," he said, "you are truly sick and I am sorry for you, but it delights me to see that you have realized your state before God. Your story is but that of many another prodigal, and your sincere repentance reminds me of what we read, for instance, of St. Thais, who, having led a very wicked life, was happily brought by prayer and sickness to a sense of duty and became a true penitent. You do well to attribute this complete change of heart to your mother's prayers, for do you know," said the priest, "that a mother, like your mother, is omnipotent, all powerful, with God. It is true that she may not be always able to keep her son a saint, but even if for a time he fall away, she can win him back to God by her prayers and heroic sacrifices. The only thing that God requires of her is that she should be a true Christian mother, a mother who persevered in prayer like St. Monica. Your mother was all of this. She spared no trouble, no fatigue, in her desire for your conversion. Every first Friday and feast day of our Lord and His Holy Mother she approached the Holy Table. On other days she could be seen making the Way of the Cross, sitting in meditation before the image of the crucified Christ by the side of the little altar of the Sacred Heart and telling her beads. She made novenas to St. Anthony for the recovery of her son, and was so quiet in all her movements about the Church which she loved, that few saw her goodness and none, save our dear Lord Himself, knew of the sorrow and desires that filled her Christian heart. To-day few know of her triumph and its resultant joy."

As the priest left the sick room and passed down the hallway that led to the door, the old lady following him, said: "You're going away, Father?" "Yes, but I shall return." And as he crossed the threshold, she asked whisperingly: "Is there any hope of his recovery?" "None whatever," answered the priest, shaking his head. The door closed and the poor woman, going to the bedside of her son, threw her arms around him and burst into tears. "My dear mother, I shall not live long; I feel it here. This piercing pain under my lung, at times it seizes me, and I cannot—no, I cannot breathe."

The mother was silent, but her heart spoke. Recovering herself, she spoke in his ear: "My son, have patience in your little sufferings, you will be better soon." "Yes, mother, I shall be better soon, for sooner than you think all pain and sorrow will be over. It will be a reality. The beautiful prayer of the Church I have just heard from the priest, I shall never hear again on earth!"

The day passed, and in the evening Father S. was again at the bedside of the sick man, who was sinking visibly. "Well, friend," said the priest, "how are you to-night?" "Oh, Father, I am full of pain, and I fear."

The priest knelt and prayed, but ere he finished, the young man, raising himself upon his elbow, said: "Oh, Father, help me that I may sincerely and humbly confess all my sins, and that I may keep back nothing in my heart," and he, by a good confession, made his peace with God and was united to the Heart of Hearts. The priest then took from a bag which he carried a little silver oil stock, and dipping his thumb in the holy oil, anointed the invalid upon the eyes, ears, nose, lips, hands and feet in the form of a cross, saying: "May the Lord forgive thee whatever sins thou hast committed by the senses." Amen. When this ceremony was completed, the priest retired, leaving the mother alone with her dying son.

During the remaining hours of his life, he evinced the deepest sorrow for his sins and prayed much. He died on the feast of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin, saying: "Mother of Sorrows, pray for me. Merciful Jesus, have mercy upon me." He was buried from the Church of St. Anthony, and a little mound at Cote des Neiges marks his final resting place.