

Childrens' Department.

TALKING BACK.

Contradicting is the Latin of it. Some boys and girls have a bad habit of doing this. The habit grows upon them until they become quite unconscious of it. Whatever is said to them by parent or teacher, in requirement, advice, expostulation or reproof, these boys or girls have some defence or objection to make. What they ought to do is to receive admonition in silence, or else with a thoughtfully spoken assent.

There are children who never seem to regard a direction from father or mother as binding on them if they can only think of something to say against it. And generally they can. The direction must be repeated, or they consider themselves free because they have talked back.

Boys and girls don't "talk back," it is a miserable habit. Ask your friends if you do it; for if you do, it is probable you are not aware of it. So ask to be reminded when you talk back. Then say nothing to the reminder, except "Thank you," and bite your lips in silence. Make your lips bleed rather than "talk back."

OUR BETTERS.

When James Hand came to that part of the Church Catechism where we are taught to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all "our betters," his bold comment upon the text was:

"I have no betters; I am just as good as anybody."

"Well, then, James, if you have no betters, and if you are just as good as anybody, then I have a wonderful boy in my class. I have known you for some time, but I did not know that you were such a very good and very superior boy as to stand on a level with anybody in the parish—with old Mr. Whitehead, whom everybody honors for his gentle and spotless life."

"Now, teacher, you are making fun of me, and the bigger boys laugh at me."

"But why do they laugh? Is it not because you brag and try to make yourself out bigger and better than you are? It is not modest for a little boy to talk as you do. But, James, about a year ago, you and Jack Bluff got into a fight. Now, what was that about?"

"Why he said that he was a 'better' boy than I was, and I said he wasn't."

"And then you fought hard until I came up and stopped you, just when Jack had got you down and was beginning to kick you. Now, who was the 'better' boy then?"

"Why, Jack was, I suppose, but I don't like to talk about that."

"Well, we are not going to talk about it long; but we must try to understand the Catechism."

"Was he any kinder and gentler than you?"

"No, indeed; he was a rough talker, and he hit hard."

"Have you ever quarreled with him since?"

"No, I have not. That settled it. He was a better boy than I was."

"And so, now, you order yourself respectfully to Jack Bluff, who you say, is your 'better.' It does seem to me, James, that you can help us to explain this part of the Church catechism. But, James, who was that man that came up and took Jack Bluff away the day of the fight?"

"Why, don't you know him? That was Aaron Strong; he is my 'boss.'"

"Your boss? What do you mean by that?"

"He is over me at the factory. He keeps us all in order, and tells us what we are to work at, and how we are to do it."

"And, I suppose, James, that as you are as good as anybody, you need not mind him, unless you want to."

"We have to mind him, for if we don't he turns us off, and some other boy takes our place. After that fight he would not let either Jack or me do any work or draw wages for two weeks. Mind him? I tell you he doesn't stand any nonsense from the boys."

"Well, James, that will do. I wish that you had not had that fight, and that you had not been kept out of the factory two weeks; but you have illustrated our lesson. You have your betters. Both Jack and your boss are your betters. Jack is your superior in strength; and your boss is your superior in office and power. Now do as your Catechism tells you, and order yourself lowly and reverently, that is, very respectfully, to all your betters, so you will enjoy 'peace and promotion, and not suffer punishment and shame.' But here comes our Rector. Let us ask him if he has any betters?"

"Oh, don't tell him about me."

"I am not going to do that. I don't tell all I know about my friends or my scholars."

"Mr. Bigheart, have you any betters?"

"Of course I have. It is with me, as it is with my two brothers in the army and navy. The Colonel in the army has the General over him, and the Captain in the navy has the Admiral over him, and I (the Rector of this parish) have the Bishop of the Diocese over me. Tell the boys that I have my 'betters' and they have theirs."

—Willie was naughty one day and his mother said she must punish him. He did not agree with her, and tried to argue the case. After the punishment began, he

sobbed out, "Mamma, I told you not to do it, and you went right on and whipped me without any invitation."

CHRISTMAS DAY.

BY NORA PERRY.

What's this hurry, what's this flurry,
All throughout the house to-day?
Everywhere a merry scurry,
Everywhere a sound of play.
Something too, 's matter, matter,
Out of doors as well as in,
For the bell goes clatter, clatter,
Every minute—such a din!

Everybody winking, blinking,
In a queer, mysterious way;
What on earth can they be thinking,
What on earth can be to pay
Bobby peeping o'er the stairway.
Burst into a little shout;
Kitty, too, is in a fair way,
Where she hides, to giggle out.

As the bell goes cling a-ling-ling,
Every minute more and more,
And swift feet go springing, springing,
Through the hall-way to the door,
Where a glimpse of box and packet,
And a little rustle, rustle,
Makes such sight and sound and racket,
Such a jolly bustle, bustle,—
That the youngsters in their places,
Hiding slyly out of sight,
All at once show shining faces,
All at once scream with delight.

Go and ask them what's the matter,
What the fun outside, and in—
What the meaning of the clatter,
What the bustle and the din.
Hear them, hear them laugh and shout
then,
All together hear them say,
"Why, what have you been about, then,
Not to know it's Christmas Day?"
—St. Nicholas.

THE NAME IN THE GARDEN.

A Scottish philosopher, the wise Beattie, formed the ingenious idea of putting in operation the proof of final causes, to inspire his young child with faith in Providence. This child was five or six years old and was beginning to read, but his father had not yet sought to speak to him of God, thinking that he was not of an age to understand such lessons. To find entrance into his mind for this great idea in a manner suitable to his age he thought of the following expedient: In a corner of a little garden, without telling any one of the circumstance, he drew with his finger on the earth the three initials of his child's name, and sowing garden cresses in the furrows, covered the seed and smoothed the earth.

"Ten days after," he tells us, "the child came running to me all amazed, and told me that his name had grown in the garden. I smiled at these words and appeared not to attach much importance to what he had said. But he insisted on taking me to see what had happened."

"Yes, said I," on coming to the place; "I see well enough that it is so; but there is nothing wonderful in this, it is a mere accident," and went away.

"But he followed me, and walking beside me, said very seriously:



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"That cannot be an accident. Some one must have prepared the seeds to produce this result."

"Perhaps these were not his very words, but this was the substance of his thought."

"You think, then," said I to him, "that what here appears as regular as the letters of your name cannot be the product of chance?" "Yes," said he firmly, "I think so."

"Well, then, look at yourself, consider your hands and fingers, your legs and feet, and all your members, and do they not seem to you regular in their appearance, and useful in their service?"

"Doubtless they do."

"Can they, then, be the result of chance?"

"No," replied he, "that cannot be, some one must have made them."

"And who is that some one?" I asked him.

"He replied that he did not know."

"I then made known to him the name of the great Being who made all the world, and gave him all the instruction that could be adapted to his age. The lesson struck him profoundly, and he has never forgotten either it or the circumstance that was the occasion of it."—*Feet's Final Causes.*

NUMBERS.

One, two,—
Who are you?
Three, four,—
Shut the door!
Four, five,—
Jack's alive!
Five, six,—
Tiles and bricks!
Six, seven,—
Stars in heaven!
Seven, eight,—
Hold your plate!
Nine, ten, twenty, thirty,—
Sips of milk, they will not hurt ee'.