

OUR CHILDREN'S CORNER.

WHEN BILLY AND BERTHA FOUGHT.

By Annie James.

Billy was seven years old and his sister Bertha was two years younger. They had always played in the greatest good humor together, each giving up toys or, bonbons to the other in the most loving and generous manner. But one day a Naughty Voice whispered into Billy's ear: "Take all the apple and candy from Bertha. You are big and strong and can do it."

They were playing in the warm sitting room when the Naughty Voice whispered in Billy's ear. They had a little table spread for make believe dinner, an apple cut in halves and two blocks of taffy. Bertha was playing at being hostess and Billy was her "company." Billy reached across the table and took both blocks of taffy, putting one in his mouth and the other into his little trousers pocket.

"Oh-o-o-oh! You took all 'e can'y," said little Bertha, looking shocked at her guest's very uncivil conduct. "You mustn't do 'at way bruver. You must play nice."

The Naughty Voice again whispered and Billy obeyed its promptings. He reached over and took the two pieces of apple jumped up from the table and ran out of the room, looking back thru a crack in the door to make a wry face at Bertha and laugh at her tears.

"You're a bad—b-a-d boy, so you are," cried Bertha. "I'll not p'ay wif you any more. I dont like you—no I don't. Give me back my can'y an' apple or I'll go tell mamma."

"You'd better not tell mamma," said Billy, threateningly. "I'll smack your ears if you do."

Bertha began to weep loudly and declared he was a bad, bad bruver. Billy, fearing that their mother—who was in the sewing room up stairs—might hear, ran into the sitting room and clapped his hand over Bertha's mouth. The Naughty Voice had prompted him how to act. "Shut up this minute," he commanded, his fat fist crushed against Bertha's mouth.

Now the owner of the Naughty Voice was in his glory. All he had to do was to whisper into Bertha's ear to have a fight started. The situation was prime for just such a thing. Bertha, being now very angry with her bad brother, listened in turn to the Naughty Voice and heeded what it said. "Fight!" it whispered in her ear. "Scratch, bite and pull hair."

Bertha, a strong little pudgy of a girl, thrust her hands into her brother's curly hair before that fellow knew she had any intention of retaliation. She pulled and scratched, hurting Billy till he began to cry out. But he fought like a little animal, scratching his sister's wrists and pulling her flaxen hair nearly off her head.

How long the fight might have lasted there is no way of knowing, but it would probably have kept going till one or the other had cried "nough!" for the Naughty Voice was whispering first in Billy's ear and then in Bertha's ear, urging them to "fight like soldiers and never give in." But the noise of the conflict—the crying and shuffling of feet—caught the ears of their mother away up stairs and hurrying down to the sitting room she beheld a sight that at first quite took away her breath.

After she had separated the children she led them to her room, where she placed them on chairs in front of her and sat down to question the cause of such an unusual and smocking sight as she had just witnessed in the sitting room. After the drying of tears, the adjustment of collars and shoe laces and smoothing of hair, Billy and Bertha told their stories.

"But why did you take all the candy and apple from your sister?" asked their mamma, addressing Billy. "Didn't you know that was selfishness and that selfishness is wickedness?"

Billy hung his head, but made no answer. The mother turned to Bertha: "And you, little daughter, should have come to mother about it, instead of fighting with your brother over it. Because he was naughty was no excuse for you to be so, too."

"But bruver spoiled the play," pouted Bertha. "He et up our play dinner an' made an ugly face at me. I jes' had to fight, mamma."

While there was a smile lurking in the mother's tender eyes, her voice became very, very serious. "Well, my dear little son and daughter, I can see but one way to avoid future quarrels and fights between you. If I send Bertha to her great aunt Mary and Billy to his grandmother, in the country, to live, there will be no chance of your falling out again. Of course, you cannot be allowed to visit each other again after the separation."

Bertha's face grew serious and her lips trembled as though she were about to break into tears. "I don't want to go to my great aunt Mary's," she whimpered. "I want to stay wif my mamma and—"

Here the little miss broke into sobs, unable to complete her sentence. The mother turned to Billy. "Well, son, what have you to say in regard to going to live with grandmother?" she asked.

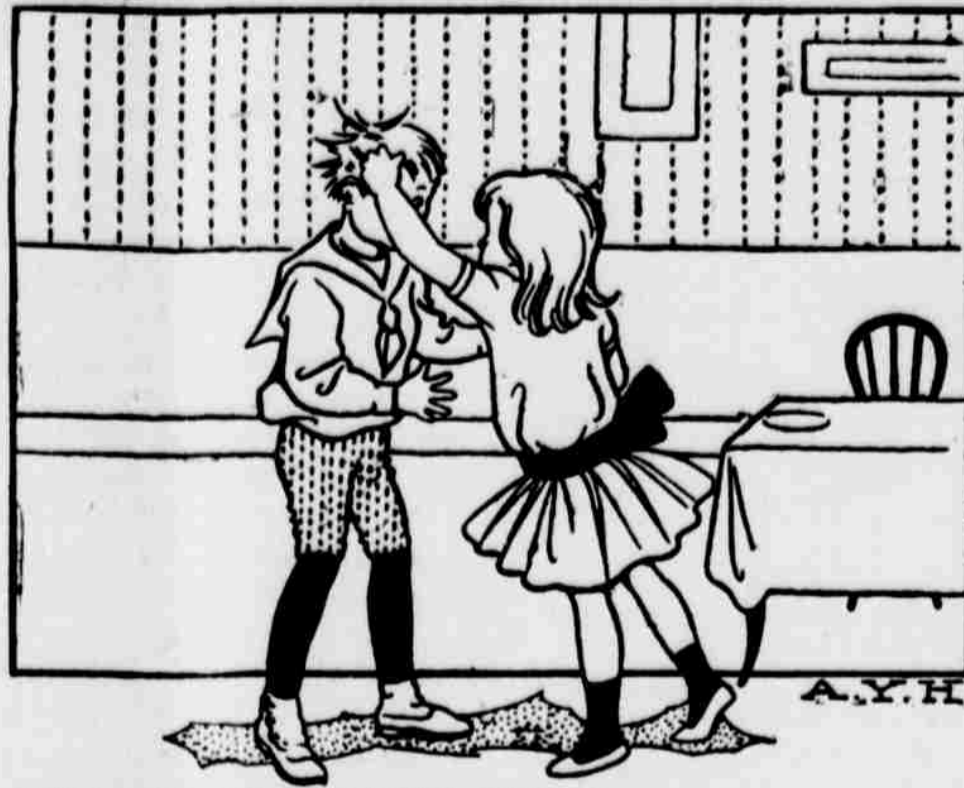
Billy hung his head in a shamed way, batting his eyes furiously, as though something were in them. "I—I—want to stay at home," he said in tremulous tones.

"But how can I allow you to remain here if your sister stays?" asked his mamma. "You don't want to be with her, do you?"

Billy nodded his head vigorously. "I want to have sister at home," he admitted.

"But children who fight don't love one another," urged the mother.

"I love sister," said Billy, thinking that he was about to lose her forever. "I was very naughty, mamma, and I think I need a whipping," he pleaded. "It was all my fault, for I took the



She pulled and scratched until Billy cried out.

play dinner and et some of it, and put the rest in my pocket. I don't know why I was so bad—honest I don't mamma."

The mother folded both little ones to her breast, saying: "It was the Naughty Voice that whispered in your ears. If you pay any heed to it it will come again and again, each time whispering louder and bolder, urging you to do very, very naughty things, until at last you will become a very wicked boy and bring grief to those who love you so dearly."

Billy sat very quiet, meditating a moment. Then he broke out with:

"If the Naughty Voice whispers to me any more I'll make a face at it and tell it to get a move on itself, I will. And now, mamma, may sister and I stay at home with you and papa?"

Bertha had dried her eyes during her brother's and mother's conversation, and was an interested listener. Without waiting for her mother to answer her brother's question she said vehemently:

"The ole Naughty Voice whispered to me, too, mamma, dear. I dess it tole me to fight bruver, tause I jus' fought him as hard as I tould but all the time I was not mad wif him. I love bruver an' don't want him to be sent away to Granny's."

"Then my little son and daughter won't ever, ever again listen to the Naughty Voice?" asked mamma. "They will always remember what happened today when the wicked promptings come to their ears?"

"Yes, indeed, mamma," promised Billy. "I'll not forget that I was almost sent to live with Granny away from papa and mamma and Bertha. I would have been so unhappy I would just have died of homesickness, so I would."

"An' I'll never, never flink of quarreling wif bruver again, nor biting him and pulling his hair," declared Bertha. "An' we'll play at keeping house and having dinner, too, won't we, Billy?"

Billy sat straight up taking from his

pocket the appropriated play dinner, holding it out to Bertha. "Here Bertha, take it an' go and fix up the dinner again. I'll come down in a minute and knock at the door. Play I'm company invited to dinner. Will you?"

"Yes, bruver, an' play 'at I'm a great lady like mamma, an' 'at I'm having a party. Ole Towser and ole pussy-cat can be uver company. They don't like taffy or apple an' will sit at the table very quiet."

Then, with the apple and taffy in her apron, Bertha ran, happy and laughing, from the room to prepare the feast for the expected company.

And it is safe to say that never again did the Naughty Voice find listeners in Billy and Bertha. Their one experience with him had almost cost them their happy home and each other's society, and they never, never forgot it.

Tolstoi in His Home.

By all odds the most interesting national feature that Russia allowed me to see was Count Tolstoi's novels. And yet I had never read any of Tolstoi's novels before meeting him, and my notions of his altruism were vague indeed,—about what the ideas are of people who have never been in Russia or seen Tolstoi, and who, on learning that you have been there and met him ask immediately: "Say, on the level, is he a fakir or not?"

Once and for all, so far as my simple intercourse with him is concerned, it may be most boldly declared that he never was a fakir—no more of one when he was sampling all the vices he could hear of, than he is now in urging others not to follow his example as an explorer of Vicedom.

The man at Yasnaya Polyana, in 1896 was a fairly well preserved old gentleman, with white beard, sunken gray eyes, overhanging bushy eyebrows, and a slight stoop in the shoulders, which were carrying, I think, pretty close to seventy years of age.

The place looked neglected and unkempt in many respects, but the two remaining wings of the old mansion were roomy and comfortable. Eight children of the original sixteen were living at the time of my visit, ranging in years from thirty and over to fourteen. The countess was the "boss" of the establishment in and out of the house. What she said of a morning constituted the law for the day, so far as work was concerned. She had assistants, and I think a superintendent to help her, but she was the final authority in matters of management.

The count did not appear to take any active part in the direction of affairs. He spent his time writing, riding, walking and visiting with the guests, of whom there were a goodly number. At one time he may have worked in the fields with the peasants but in July of 1896 he did not share any of their toil—at least I personally did not see him at work among them.

What the countess really thought about the whole business I never found out. We had one short conversation about the count and his work, during which she delivered herself of these remarks: "You will hear many things here that I do not agree with—I believe it is better to be and do than to preach." I judged from these sentiments that Tolstoiism as a cult had not captured her. But that she thought much of the count as a man and husband was evident from her solicitous care of him. — From "My Life — So Far," by the late Josiah Flynt in "Success" Magazine.

An excellent demonstration of the art of government was given by that guileless policeman of Newark who, assaulted, battered and rugged to a station house the acting mayor of that settlement. The acting mayor seems to have invited and deserved his fate. He asked questions. He criticised the curt generality of the answers he got. In short, he committed the unpardonable sin of "giving lip" and not moving on. He was lucky to escape with his life. A policeman's time is valuable. He has many friends to converse with. Strangers have no claim upon his attention. The first duty of a good citizen is to be meek.

The circus giant has to size up to the situation.

Jests and Jingles.



Wise Boy.

His Mother—Tom, I'm afraid that that girl you are going to marry does not know how to cook.

Tom—I know she doesn't mother, and what's better than all she has promised never to try to learn.



A Hot One.

Mr. Naggitt—I've a great mind to go to the mass meeting tonight.

Mrs. Naggitt—Whose?

Mr. Naggitt—Whose? Whose what?

Mrs. Naggitt—Whose great mind?



The Way it Works.

She—Don't you think a woman is clever enough to do any work that a man can?

He—She's smarter than that. Why, she's clever enough to make the man do the work and give her the benefit of it.



Force of Habit.

The Doctor—Gracious, man. You gave that poor fellow arsenic yesterday instead of salts. Have you no regret?

The Druggist (absently)—No; but I have something just as good.



Paying the Freight.

Willie (aged seven)—Say, pa, when a man expresses an opinion can he collect charges on it?

His Pa—He can, if he's a lawyer.



Kissable.

Grace—You look tired. There's an awful worn look about your mouth.

Evelyn—I guess you don't know my fiancé.