

Our Boys and Girls.

THE DUTY OF THE STRONG.

You who are oldest,
You who are the tallest,
Don't you think you ought to help
The youngest and the smallest?

You who are the strongest,
You who are the quickest,
Don't you think you ought to help
The weakest and the sickest?

Never mind the trouble,
Help them all you can;
Be a little woman!
Be a little man!

ELSIE'S SIN.

BY FLORENCE SHORT.

"O, Elsie," cried the selfish-looking little girl sitting with her playmate on the broad stone steps of the hotel, "don't you wish we had some candy? Some of that lovely candy over there in the baker's window!"

"Of course I do," said Elsie, "but then, Tressie, what's the good of wishing!"

"But, why not?" pursued the little tempter, "I should think you could have anything you wished for?"

"Why?" asked Elsie opening her big brown eyes wide.

"You little goose," said Tressie, "do you mean to tell me you don't know your father's rich?"

"My father rich!" said Elsie, shaking her brown curls back from her face, "indeed he's not rich."

"O, but he is," persisted Tressie. "Why he couldn't live here in this big city in a hotel with all you children and not have lots of money. Besides, he's been sick so long and had the doctor coming every day, and then it's war time now and everything costs a lot. I 'spose he doesn't tell you everything because you're so little," she added as a final argument.

Elsie sat pondering a minute and then said, "Well, I'm sure I don't know. Anyhow it doesn't matter."

"Yes, but it does matter, too. He is rich, I tell you, and you ought to have lots of candy without wishing for it. I 'spect 'cause he's sick he doesn't know how much you want it, else he'd give you some money."

"No, he wouldn't" sighed Elsie, longingly. "Father never gave me any money in all my life for anything. He always gets us children what we need and that's all," and the little girl's thoughts wandered back to the dear old home among the mountains of Virginia so far from even a small town. How well she remembered the times when her father had gone to town and she and Frances, her elder sister, had begged him to bring home some candy and he had returned with a little package of peppermint candy which he divided among the little ones so that each one received half a stick.

Suddenly the impatient voice of Tressie broke upon her reverie: "Well, how long are you going to sit there saying nothing? I tell you," she said, "go ask your father for a nickel and let's have some candy. I never wanted candy so bad in my life!"

"Nor I, either," responded Elsie, "but I can't ask father, he's too sick. Besides it wouldn't do any good anyway."

"O, yes it would, if he wasn't sick. My father always gives me money when

I want it, only now he's not home or mamma either, so I've no way to get it. But say, I tell you what to do," she said, lowering her voice while her black eyes sparkled with her brilliant thought, "you just go and take a nickel and then tell your father about it when he gets well."

"But that would be stealing," said Elsie as she anxiously studied Tressie's face. Now Tressie had been left much to her own devices all her life, as her father and mother had charge of the big hotel and the little girl's ideas of right and wrong were strangely mixed. "O, no, it wouldn't," she promptly answered, "You see you don't dare disturb your father now nor your mother either, 'cause she's watching him. So you just go and get a nickel and then tell him when he gets well."

Elsie sat still a long time, but after a few more remarks from Tressie, who argued that her father was rich and would never miss it anyway, and if he knew how much they wanted some candy he'd be glad to give it to them, she got up and went slowly upstairs, thinking hard all the way. But she did not think how grieved her mother would be to know that she was being led into sin nor how displeased God would be but only how very much she wanted some candy and how selfish her father had been never to get her any.

Mr. Clinton, his wife and four children, had come from the south three weeks before and Mr. Clinton had been ill with typhoid fever ever since, so there had been no opportunity to secure a home. He had sold his large farm and come north that he might give the children a better education. It is true he was a reserved and thoughtless man in many respects, and yet he was strictly moral and provided well for his family. He never petted the children, he never invited little confidences and yet he loved them. In mother's ear always they poured their joys and sorrows, but now for so long she had been shut in the sick room caring for father that the little ones were left much to their own devices.

Softly Elsie stole into the apartment adjoining the sick room, flew to the closet, opened the door, slipped her hand quickly into her father's pocket and closed her little fingers on a coin.

Once gotten it took but a second to fly down stairs and join Tressie impatiently waiting without. Her eager eyes asked the question and Elsie nodded her head and together they walked across the street to the enticing bakery and then Tressie said, "You go on in and I'll wait for you here."

Somewhat reluctantly Elsie entered the store, laid her money in the hand of the cheery-faced woman and told her what kind of candy she wanted.

"And do you want all your money in candy?" queried the woman, looking curiously into the little girl's flushed face as she nodded, Yes. Wider and wider the child's eyes opened as the woman heaped the candy upon the scales. Suddenly it flashed upon her that she had taken much more than a nickel, but in her ignorance she knew not how much. Still the woman was piling the candy on until it appalled Elsie and she sickened at the sight. O! how much money had she taken? How could she ever tell her father?

Quietly, however, she let the woman put the candy in a large sack, and smilingly tell her to call again. Then she fled across the street, flung the candy into the lap of Tressie, who now sat on the steps and ran up the back stairs without a word. On the first

dark landing she sat down and covered her face with her hands.

"O, what have you done, Elsie Clinton!" she moaned while the hot tears trickled through her fingers. "You stole from your own father and you don't dare tell anyone. Oh, oh, oh!" she sobbed, rocking to and fro in her grief.

She sat thus a long time and then the supper bell rang and she knew she must be at the table or Frances would be searching for her. She hastened to her room, washed her tear-stained face and went down to the large dining-room. The others were already at the table and waiting for her.

When Frances raised her head after the lowly murmured grace and looked around their little table, Elsie's brown eyes did not meet her clear, blue ones. "O," she thought, "Frances is so pure and good she never thinks of doing bad things and I amost as old as she is, too."

All through the meal the little girl sat silent eating little and keeping her eyes on her plate. Frances was too busy attending to the wants of the small brothers to notice anything amiss with Elsie, who was a quiet little thing at best.

After supper Elsie went again to the back stairs, ashamed to go up to their rooms, too angry with Tressie to wish to meet her teasing black eyes. O, how miserable she was. And soon it came bedtime.

She could never bear to think afterwards of how for a week she climbed into bed before Frances came without kneeling to pray—and how she lay all through those long dark nights thinking how shocked Frances would be if she knew and how mother would look—and what is she should get sick and out of her head and tell the dreadful thing, for her one thought seemed to be that no one should know.

The strain began to tell on the delicate child, her face grew wan and pale and the large eyes seemed larger still because of the dark rings about them. How she suffered—sometimes deciding she would tell mother and have it all over and then just as firmly determine it must never, never be known.

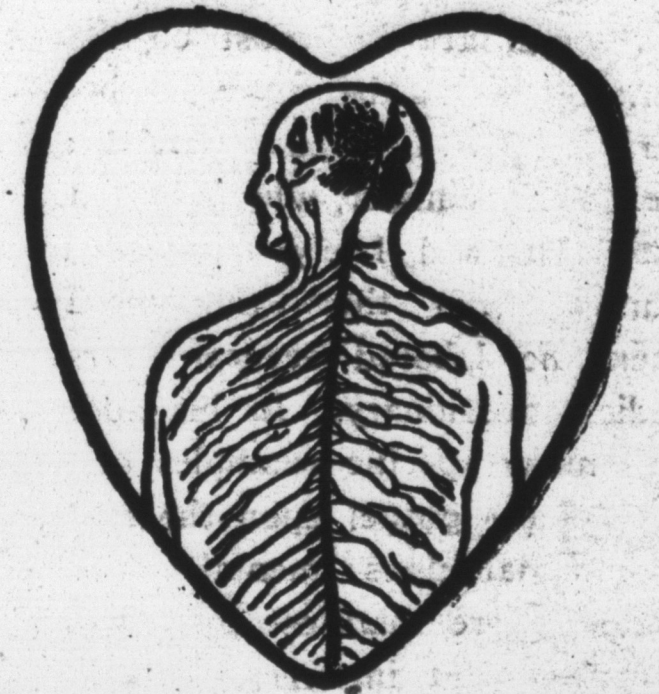
She never played with Tressie nor told stories with Frances these days, but pretended to be interested in a large book which she held on her lap as she sat on the back stairs by herself. But whenever anyone came suddenly upon her she started violently and the hot color surged over the pale cheeks and the large, mournful eyes dropped quickly to the book. O, these were dreadful days indeed to the little wrong-doer. Surely it must end soon.

At last father grew better and mother had more time for the children. She soon noticed that Elsie never met her gaze and even seemed to shrink from her caresses. She saw that the little girl had something on her mind which she ought to tell, but she thought it best to let her alone for a while.

Saturday night the children were gathered around their mother as she taught them the Sabbath school lesson for the following day and explained the meaning of the Golden Text, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

She observed that Elsie's face was downcast and flushed and that hot tears were on her cheeks as she kissed her good-night. For some time after the children had gone to bed the mother sat quietly by the open window while the soft, summer breeze stirred the curtains and cooled her brow. Presently she heard the light steps for which she had been listening and in a

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second a little white-robed figure was kneeling at her side pouring out the whole story, never sparing herself and saying little of Tressie's part in the shameful affair, and all the while the slender body shook with deep sobs.

Mother listened and forgave but made no excuse for the sin and then together they knelt and asked the Heavenly Father's forgiveness, and then alone Elsie went in and retold the story to her father, who, when she had finished, passed his arm around her and kissed her tear-wet face and sent her to bed.

When mother slipped in an hour later to see how the children slept, she found Elsie sleeping peacefully, the brown curls tossed back on the pillow and the sweet lips wreathed in a happy smile.—*United Presbyterian.*

HOW TO HAVE YOUR OWN WAY.

I have a secret which I would like to whisper to the boys and girls, if they will put their ears down close enough. I don't want father and mother to hear, for it would be a surprise to them.

You have long wanted your own way. You have become tired of hearing mother say, "Come right home after school," "Don't be late," "Be sure to tell the teacher." It is "no this" and "Don't do that" all the time. You are sick of it, and would like to have your own way.

Well, put your ear down while I whisper the word "Obey."

Oh, you think I am making fun! No, I am not. I know a boy who decided to do just what his father said. He never offered excuses, never tried to get out of work, until finally his father came to trust him perfectly. His father said: "I know that Harlie will do what is right." When he went out at night, or to school, or to play, his