

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

NO RETREAT.

I cried, "Life's temptations are many, I will turn and flee away, For I have no strength to resist them, I will leave them if I may."

HER LAST WORDS.

In the recent terrible colliery accident in England, by which so many families were bereaved, one little story came to light which conveys its own lesson.

A tender-hearted woman, who went round among the bereaved homes on a mission of consolation, found a wife whose grief seemed to her of a different nature from that of the others.

The visitor could not bear to go away to leave her to her silent anguish. She lingered beside her and tried to comfort her.

"You mean that you could bear it better, if you had children to take up your thoughts?"

"No, no!" the wife cried, in a sort of despair: "nothing could help me now. Nothing ever can help me; but I could have borne it all, if I'd only spoke him fair at the end."

And then, at last, the story came. They had been married a year, she and Jim; and they both "had tempers;" but Jim, he was always the first to make up because he had the best heart.

It began because breakfast wasn't ready and the fire wouldn't burn; and they had said hard words, both of them. But at the very last, though breakfast had not been fit to eat, Jim had turned round at the door, and said—

"Gie me a kiss, lass. You know you love me, and we won't part in ill blood;" and she had been in her temper still, and answered—

"No, I don't know as I do love you," and had let him go, with never a kiss and never a fair word; and now—And there she stopped, and awful, tearless sobs shook her; and the visitor could only say—

"Do not grieve so hopelessly; perhaps he knows what you feel now." But the mourner's ears were deaf to all comfort, and the wailing cry came again and again—

"Oh, if I had only spoke him fair at last!"

It is not a common story, this. We quarrel with those we love, and part, and meet and make up again; and death is merciful, and waits till we are at peace; yet how possible is just such an experience to any one of us, who parts, with some dear one in anger, or who lets the sun go down upon wrath!

But it is always the noblest nature, the most loyal heart, which is the first to cry, "I was wrong; forgive me."

A USEFUL LIFE.

A New York daily, a week or two since, contained a singular incident of a burglar entering the room of Miss Gilbert, and, on her quietly intimating that he had made a mistake in thus disturbing a friend, was immediately subdued, told a story of poverty, received a basket of provisions, gave the address of his family, and went on his way rejoicing.

interest was awakened years ago, when young and residing in Chicago, by the beckoning of a hand through the grated cell window of the old prison of that city. A sad face met her view as she approached, and a sad voice asked for something to read.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S CHRISTMAS.

Queen Victoria, since the death of her husband, Prince Albert, has always spent Christmas at Osborne, on the Isle of Wight. The following narrative shows how she passes the holiday season: On Christmas eve and Christmas morning, carols are always sung in front of Osborne house, and the poor of Osborne receive substantial gifts from her Majesty in the way of beef and clothing.

A GREAT ARTIST'S EDUCATION.

It is not altogether unusual for an artist or an author's work to be the subject of a brother's comment in criticism or biography; and, if one sister is asked, as I have been, to record the happy and successful early career of another, she will be ready, for the sake of a task so pleasant, to set aside the feelings of family diffidence, which might make her as modest in respect of her sister's fame as if it were her own.

HOMICIDAL IMPULSE.

The terrible tragedy enacted in New York, harrowing as its details are, must be regarded from information as to the facts as an incident in the progress of slowly developing insanity or of nervous exhaustion rather than in any other light. At the same time, the case of Mrs. Seguin illustrates the care that should be taken in surveillance of the nervously diseased or prostrated after the first symptoms of despondency and settled depression have once set in, for, according to all medical experience, as surely as night follows day just as surely outbreaks of maniacal cast or of morbid impulse follow sooner or later in the wake of these prodromata.

abounds in cases of the same class. Sometimes it is a husband fondly devoted to a beautiful wife, but haunted by an ever-present longing to kill her, that leaps into sudden activity whenever an opportunity is presented. Sometimes it is a father that loves, but is impelled to kill his child; sometimes a mother; but as a matter of curious interest, the impulse is general in aspects; the patient is simply tempted to kill somebody, male or female, friend or enemy, as opportunity may offer.

A SIGNIFICANT STORY.

A wealthy banker in one of our large cities, who is noted for his large subscription to charities, and for his kindly habits of private benevolence, was called on one evening, and asked to go to the help of a man who had attempted suicide. They found the man in a wretched house, in an alley, not far from the banker's dwelling. The front room was a cobbler's shop, behind it, on a miserable bed in the kitchen, lay the poor shoemaker, with a gaping gash in his throat, while his wife and children were gathered about him.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE CHILD JESUS.

"I wonder what the Lord Jesus really did when he was a child?" said Willie, one Sunday evening just before Christmas. "So do I," said Katie, "and I wish the Bible had told us more about him—whether he went to school or not, whether he ever played, or whether he was always quiet and thoughtful."

THE STUBBORN BOOT.

"Bother!" was all Jack Chatterby said; his breath came quick, and his chest was red; He flourished his elbows and looked about; While over and over his "bother" he heard.

FRONT SEATS.

But let us look at the thing in the light of common sense. The closer and more compactly people are seated in a meeting the quicker and more potential is their sympathy. It is easier for the leader to get the meeting fairly started when there is not a wide intervening vacancy between himself and others.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

"I have no doubt that in a great many ways Jesus was like other boys, only we can never think of his being idle or disobedient, or anything else wrong. Very likely he did work at Joseph's trade, for the people called him the carpenter's son; and St. Mark tells us that once they asked, 'Is not this the carpenter?'"

possible without the constant comment and explanation which a reader is able to supply, better than any other teacher, to his hearers. He undertook the whole education of his daughter, giving up his time, and of course denying himself much that otherwise his cultivated nature would have enjoyed, for the sake of conscientiously fulfilling his self-imposed task.

Of my father's friendship with Charles Dickens little need be recorded here, except that it was unusually affectionate; and that it was Charles Dickens who introduced him to the lady who became his second wife and the mother of the battle-painter. He was the confident of the engagement, the life of the wedding, and with Mrs. Dickens, the companion of the closing month of a long wedding journey.

About seven or eight years later he met my parents again; this time they were living, with their two little girls, within sight of the snow-capped peaks of the Apennines, in an old palace, the Villa de Franchi. A great billiard-room, hung with Chinese designs, was Elizabeth Thompson's first school-room; and there Charles Dickens, upon one of his Italian visits, burst in upon a lesson in multiplication. It was the first and almost the only time I ever saw him. In dim remembrance, he abides as a noisy, very rosy, very energetic, and emphatically English personality, though his person itself is quite forgotten; and the fact that nine times nine are eighty-one has remained in the girls' minds as one of the most unmistakable by the clap of hands and the cordial shout with which he proclaimed it.

The two children never went to school, and had no other teacher than their father—except their mother for music, and the usual professors for "accomplishments" in later years. And whether living happily in their beautiful Genoese home, or farther north among the picturesque Italian lakes, or in Switzerland, or among the parks of Surrey (the family having a more than Bedaween fondness for liberty of movement), Elizabeth's one central occupation of drawing was never abandoned literally not for a day.—St. Nicholas.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

"Mamma, if the baby cries so much and won't let us have any good time, I should think you would give her away."

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"I don't wonder that everybody loved Jesus when he was a child," said Willie, "for he must have been so good. But then it was easy for him to be good, and it's very hard for us."

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

"Yes; but, Willie, you know that he who was once a child and had to pass through all the temptations of childhood, knows how hard it is to be good; and if you ask him, he will help you so that you may be like him, and as you grow you may also increase 'in favour with God and man.'"

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Harder and harder the fellow worked, Vainly and savagely still he jerked; The boot half on would dangle and flap— "Bother!" and then he burst the strap.

Redder than ever his hot cheek flamed: Harder than ever he fumed and blamed: He wriggled his heel and tugged at the leather, Till knees and chin came bumping together.

"My boy," said I, with a voice like a flute, "Why not—shew—try the mate of that boot, Or the other foot?" "I'm a goose," laughed John, As he stood in a flash, with his two boots on.

In half the affairs Of this busy life (As that same day I said to my wife) Our troubles come From trying to put The left-hand shoe On the right-hand foot.

Or, vice versa, (Meaning reverse, sir) To try to force, As quite of course, Any wrong foot In the right shoe Is the silliest thing A man can do.

—Heath and Home.

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"And don't we know anything else about the Lord when he was a child?" asked Polly.

"Yes, there is another text which surely you will remember, that tells us what he did after Mary had found him discussing with the doctors in the Temple."

"He went home with Mary and Joseph, and did what they told him," Willie said.

Katie had found the place in St. Luke, and read: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but his mother kept all these things in her heart, and Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man."

"And so," said aunt Kate, "though we know hardly anything else about the Lord's childhood, we do know that he was always obedient and gentle, setting an example to the boys and girls of Nazareth, and not only to them, but to all children."

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SUSIE'S LITTLE SISTER.

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