

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

NATURE.

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er, Leads by the hand her little child to bed, Half willing, half reluctant to be led, And leave his broken playthings on the floor.

"THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK."

In a little dwelling, half hut and half cottage, having for a background the quiet seaport town of L—, and in front the restless rolling Atlantic Ocean, lived old Joel Saunders, or, as all his sea comrades invariably called him, 'Old Growler.'

Not many troubled Growler about religion; many feared him; and he secluded himself so thoroughly from all places of worship as to seldom come in contact with the ministers.

But as years passed on, Growler was unable to go for the long voyages as of yore, and contented himself with short excursions in a fishing craft, spending the rest of his time on the sands and in the little house, with sometimes the neighbor's children for his companions;

One winter he took a violent cold and reluctantly consulted the doctor, but his verdict cast utter terror into Growler's mind; and the knowledge that only a few short days or weeks remained to him, seemed too terrible to be true; he was dying and going—where? As soon as the minister heard the tidings of Growler's illness he again came to him;

'Were you ever really shipwrecked, Growler?' asked Mr. N—.

'Yes, sir, twice; once in mid ocean, and once we were cast ashore. Ah! many never came home after they two voyages!' he added thoughtfully.

'And where are their souls, do you think?'

'There was dead silence for a few minutes, then he said: 'There was one, a real good fellow, he always used to be at me; but I used to tell him, "Give me a smooth sea, and I'll be content; and when there's breakers, I must rough it;" but now they're going over me, I reckon.'

'But they didn't go over him, did they? when he died.'

'No; I believe he went right to port,' said the old sailor; but I'm afraid I shan't.'

Taking up his Bible, the minister read the account of the all-powerful Master calming the raging sea with his majestic, 'Peace, be still; and Growler listened in wonder.'

'Did he really do it?' he asked at the end.

'Really; and now he is ready to calm your troubled spirit, and give you rest and forgiveness, if you will have it so. Shall we ask him, Growler?'

'Ay, do, he responded; 'may be 'isn't too late even now for such an old sinner as I be. I never thought of such things till I came to lie here, now I can see my sins, black and many; for all I fancied myself better than some.'

After an earnest prayer his friend left, with a promise to call again; and it was too late for that mercy for this prodigal at the eleventh hour?

'Why didn't I think 'twould come to this before, I wonder, when next his friend sat by the rude hammock. 'O, Mr. N., it all comes back to me now, all the times I've jeered at religion, and put it off and off from me. O, do read again!' he added, imploringly.

The minister then read the parable of the wise and foolish builders who built—one on the rock, the other on the sand; and then he repeated a favorite hymn amongst the fishers—"Rock of Ages." Growler listened with deep and terrible emotion struggling in him, then he folded his rough, brawny hands and with child-like faith repeated in a tear-choked voice—

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.'

It was a very quiet conversion, but peace followed the storm of guilt as he said softly,

'He'll let me, He must.' 'Why must?' asked the thankful friend; and he answered, simply, 'Why, didn't you read: "Whosoever cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out?" Whosoever cometh; and I come.'

Growler had many visitors after this; some came to satisfy curiosity, others, if possible, to assist him; but he was too thoroughly changed now not to welcome all with kindness, and at times he timidly let fall a word of warning to some, who, like himself, were well on in life, but were without his new found hiding-place; timidly at first, lest he should be accused of 'preaching,' but, as the few days sped away he grew bolder in telling of his new fortune all around.

'Ah, mate!' he whispered to one who had been his companion on many voyages—'I'm all safe now, I'm hid in the cleft of the Rock—the Rock Christ Jesus. It's a grand thing to feel in there safe from all storms. Messmate, we've travelled together long enough, I don't want to be parted when we get to anchor; won't thee come too?'

A few days after the old sailor gained the haven. Quiet and peaceful were his last hours. He had been watching the mighty waters rolling in on the shore in front of the window, when turning to the watcher by the bed, Mr. N—, he said brokenly:

'Sir, no body ud ever think, to look out there, how 'tis when there's a storm; it's something like when He said, "Peace be still;" it says there was "a great calm;" and who'd think I was the same rough; old Growler, bu. He's said "Peace" to me and I am calm and happy. If there'd been a chance of my doing a bit of work for Him, just to show my love, I'd have done it so gladly; but why—why did I ever put off doing this till now? If I'd thought of it before, what a different life mine might have been!'

'But you did not think so in years gone by, Growler?'

'Think so? Ah! if I had only known this joy, surely I would have turned long years ago; but, sir, I never read the Bible to know at what cost this Rock was cleft for me.'

For a long time neither spoke, then with a last effort, Growler repeated—

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.'

And as the shadows crept farther and farther over the little cottage and over the two within, he asked, 'Is there a storm coming?'

'Perhaps so; but the sun is gone, Growler, that is why it's getting dark.'

'Ay, maybe,' he replied feebly, 'but I—can't—fear the storms, I'm in the Rock.'

And without fear or pain, the long rebellious prodigal went to the forgiving Father, who was even then ready and waiting to receive him home.—Moth. Tract.

BEACONSFIELD'S DEBT TO WOMAN.

Mrs. Disraeli brought to the future Premier not only a considerable fortune, but perfect companionship. She was ten years his senior, and if a passage in "Endymion" is to be trusted as autobiographical, she relieved him of fully half the embarrassment of popping the question. To her influence he always largely ascribed the success of his after life. "Women will do much for you," says Myra to Endymion Ferrars (Disraeli's mask), and certain it is that Benjamin Disraeli believed implicitly that they had done more for him than all other instrumentalities combined. Truth is stranger than fiction, and it is the simple truth that Mrs. Brydges Wyllysams, of Torquay, Devonshire, out of her woman's admiration for his genius, made him heir to her estate, worth some £150,000. She only exacted from him in return his friendship while she lived, and a promise that she should rest after death among the Disraelis at Hughenden. Nor will it be forgotten that to the Queen's high personal esteem for him he owed a series of favors in his conduct of the Government such as Victoria has never shown to any other of the long line of able statesmen who have served as her Prime Ministers.

He was all chivalrous deference to women in general, and all devotion to one woman in particular. Addressing the farmers of Buckinghamshire at a Harvest Home festival, he called his spouse "the best wife in England," and he dedicated "Sybil" to the most severe of critics, but a perfect wife. At every turn in the road along which we trace his path to fame we see standing beside him this enchanting figure of a faithful wife, nursing his ambition, soothing his defeats, and entering

with zest into his ultimately starting triumphs. The story has often been told of her riding with him down to the House of Commons, giving no sign of the acute pain caused her by having her thumbs severely crushed by the carriage door, lest her distress might unnerve him for the great speech which he was shortly to deliver. It well illustrates the fine sympathies that linked them to each other. The vicinage of Hughenden has been full of touching anecdotes of their home felicity. Disraeli purchased Hughenden Manor from the Norris family, and Mrs. Disraeli did with it, while she lived, what she pleased. The handsome mansion was more than half hidden by beeches and elms, and the gardens and conservatories were exceedingly beautiful. In a little basket-carriage, behind a shaggy black pony called Jack, Mrs. Disraeli was accustomed to ride round among her husband's neighbors and tenants, with smiles for her social equals, and an open hand for those of poorer station. At her instance Mr. Disraeli long since built a convenient and well-appointed school house in connection with St. Michael's Church, where they were to be seen kneeling together every Sunday when Parliament was not in session. They both took a deep interest in the laborers' families on their estate, and each cottage was a model of convenience and comfort. It is not surprising that this fond couple should have been regarded as something more than common clay by the simple country folk thereabout.

After they had passed through nearly thirty years of life together, thirty years in which his political career had been a well-nigh unbroken succession of defeats, there came a day in 1868, when the Queen offered him a coronet. He declined it, but asked her Majesty to bestow it upon his wife, and she accordingly became Viscountess Beaconsfield. A little over four years later, in December, 1872, she died, and the world knows that what Carlyle said of his Jeanie was true of Disraeli also—"the light of my life has gone out." On foot, with uncovered head, and alone, he followed her remains to the crypt of the little church of St. Michael's, which he soon after restored and beautified in her gracious memory.—Boston Traveller.

"DUST ON YOUR GLASSES."

I don't often put on my glasses to examine Katy's work, but one morning, not long since, I did so upon entering a room she had been sweeping.

'Did you forget to open the windows when you swept, Katy?' I inquired; this room is very dusty.

'I think there is dust on your eye-glasses, ma'am,' she said modestly.

And sure enough, the eye-glasses were at fault, and not Katy. I rubbed them off, and everything looked bright and clean, the carpet like new, and Katy's face said—

'I am glad it was the glasses, and not me this time.' This has taught me a good lesson, I said to myself upon leaving the room, and one I shall remember through life.

In the evening Katy came to me with some kitchen trouble. The cook had done so and so, and she had said so and so. When her story was finished, I said smiling—

'There is dust on your glasses, Katy; rub them off, you can see better.'

She understood me, and left the room.

I told the incident to the children and it is quite common to hear them say to each other:

'Oh, there is dust on your glasses.'

Sometimes I am referred to:

'Mamma, Harry has got dust on his glasses; can't he rub them off?'

When I hear a person criticising another, condemning, perhaps, a course of action he knows nothing about, drawing inferences prejudicial to the person or persons, I think right away, 'There's dust on your glasses; rub it off.' The truth is, everybody wears those very same glasses, only the dust is a little thicker on some than on others, and needs harder rubbing to get it off.

I said to John one day, some little matter coming up that called forth the remark: 'There are some people I wish would begin to rub, then,' said he. 'There is Mr. So and So, and Mrs. So and So; they are always ready to pick at some one, to slur, to hint—I don't know, I don't like them.'

'I think my son John has a wee bit on his glasses just now.'

He laughed and asked: 'What is a body to do?'

'Keep your own well rubbed up, and you will not know whether others need it or not.'

'I will,' he replied.

I think as a family, we are all

profiting by that little incident, and through life will never forget the meaning of 'There is dust on your glasses.'—Observer.

ATTRACTIVE HOMES.

Let us who are mothers and sisters, while we are honestly endeavoring to throw good and lasting influences around the young entrusted to our guidance, not underrate the value of an attractive home.

Most of us have at times been sojourners in houses that looked so prim and precise in all their appointments that we could scarcely breathe freely until we had gone out, and closed the door carefully behind us, almost fearing that the evil spirit of the place would follow us home.

A house where the chairs all stand stiffly against the wall—perhaps covered to keep them from injury—where the sunlight must not come for fear it will soil the carpet, where no papers must be left in sight, and every book must be in its book-case—this is the house where the little ones have to sit still in stiff-backed chairs with the injunction "Don't put your feet on the rounds," and where the little ones wonder what makes the time pass so slowly, and what makes mother so cross. How they wish they could have a jolly time like the little ones over the way, whose mother is always preparing some pleasure for them, if only a cheap picture in a home made frame, or a pretty plant or two for them to admire. All children love to look at flowers, and there are many men and large boys who profess to care for none of these things, yet feel their influence, and only know that home is the best and brightest place of all.

A boy not long since said to his mother, "I don't know why it is, but our rooms look so much better than Mrs. B's. Her house is much finer, and her furniture prettier, but I like the looks of our rooms the best."

In the house he mentioned were no little knock-knacks—no pretty grasses and flowers to brighten up the rooms—nothing but the necessary articles of furniture. 'Tis true that there were handsome vases on the mantel; but most of the time these were very clean and empty, and seemed more like sentinels guarding the room than things for its adornment.

Gather the pretty grasses that abound in the fields—bring in the wild flowers. Search for the vines with bright berries and pretty mosses. Decorate the mantles and brackets with them. Put them on the dining-room table. Even boughs of cedar and branches of evergreen will brighten up a room if we have no flowers. Make home bright, and all will seem more cheerful. The young people will love their home, and the mother's influence will be more powerful for good. Try the experiment and see the result.—Vick's Magazine.

MARY MILLER'S CONVERSION.

In the winter of 1858, God poured out his Spirit upon the town of Pawtucket, in Rhode Island. Many souls were brought to Christ, and God's people rejoiced over the work.

Mary Miller was the young wife of an irreligious man, and they boarded with the husband's mother, who also lived without God. The only other member of the family was the younger son, Edwin. Mary had been trained by pious parents, and many prayers had been offered for her, but away from all religious influence she was as thoughtless as others around her.

Interesting meetings were held in a church near this family's residence, and Edwin from mere curiosity, attended an evening service; but a deeper feeling was aroused, and he resolved to go again, and on the following evening asked Mary to accompany him to the church.

Mary laughingly answered, "Why should I attend a prayer meeting? But a young friend who was visiting her said, "Yes, Mary, let us go, it will afford us some amusement, at least."

This decided the matter, and the three went together to the house of God. The good pastor spoke to each separately, and to Mary he said, "My young friend, do you feel any anxiety about your soul's salvation?"

Very coolly she answered, "No, sir! none at all, and excuse me for saying, I do not wish to feel any such anxiety."

The pastor said no more to her, and the three, at the close of the meeting, came home together, and the young ladies noticing that Edwin seemed sad, were determined, if possible, to erase all serious impressions from his mind.

They jested about the meeting, the good pastor, and religious meetings in general, and at length Mary

laughingly said, "Now let us have a prayer meeting; brother Edwin will please pray with us."

Edwin before this had sat silent and thoughtful, but now he aroused himself, and gravely replied, "Yes, let us pray, for we all need help from above," and to the surprise of the others he knelt and poured out his soul to God.

When he began Mary was more angry than ever before in her life, but when he prayed for her, that "God would forgive her for sporting with religious things, and bring her to himself," she began to feel alarmed, and when the prayer was concluded she was shedding tears which she vainly strove to hide.

She hastened to her room with feelings far different from those when she left it. Her sins rose up to condemn her, and she spent the night in great agony of mind, and the following day suffered so keenly that she resolved to go to see the good minister. She stole away to his house when evening came, but at first was disappointed, for a little meeting had gathered there. But one, after another rose and told what God had done for their souls; and Mary, as she listened, thought, "Surely, such people can aid me," and when the opportunity came she asked for the prayers of those who loved the Lord, and felt some hope arise within her from the very act.

Upon reaching home she immediately sought the retirement of her own room, and there threw herself upon her knees and cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." And he who never turns any empty away answered her prayer, and gave her an assurance of forgiveness of her sins. She united with the Church, and still lives to testify to the fact of God's goodness and mercy toward her. And some years after her own conversion she had the joy of seeing her husband brought to the Saviour.—W., in American Messenger.

FOR GOOD OR ILL.

Only a word! Yet it bore on its holy breath A message that God had given To kindly warn from the ways of death— And a soul was led to heaven.

Only a word! Spoken in scorn by lips that smiled, But a haunting doubt's black shade Was cast in the trusting heart of a child, And a life-long darkness made.

Only a word! Yet there lay in its heart, enshrined Like the gem in a tiny seed, A thought, that fell in an earnest mind, And grew to a noble deed.

Only a word! No more widely the ocean parts Land from land with its ebb and flow, Than one false word severed kindly hearts That loved, in the long ago.

Only a word! The whispered "amen" of a prayer; But it drew, like a swift-winged dove, From the stormy depths of a soul's despair, To the Father's heart of love.

Only a word! Oh, choose it wisely, weigh it well; Send it forth with love and faith; It may be the message one word can tell Will rescue a soul from death.—Advance.

STOPPING TO THINK.

"There goes a man who made his fortune by stopping to think," said a Metropolitan Railway conductor to the passengers who were "bracing up" on the platform, pointing to a stout, vigorous appearing and well dressed gentleman who had jumped off as the car turned a corner. "Wonder what he is thinking of now?" continued the conductor, as the passengers looked and saw the subject of these remarks attentively examining the railway iron on the curves and switches they had just passed over. "Shouldn't wonder if he was planning some improvement that will stop the rattle and bang where the tracks cross each other." In answer to questions the conductor briefly told the following story: A few years ago a young man named John Peck secured a situation as conductor on the Metropolitan Railway, and it chanced that during the first days of his service his car was several times thrown from the track by rails becoming misplaced. One day the end of a rail flew up and became fast in the car truck. He lifted and pushed, jammed his hands and lost his temper in the effort to get the car on the track and the rail in place again, and at night was so disgusted with his work that he threw up his situation. But his experience set him to thinking, and in a few days he called on an officer of the road and stated that he could make a "chair" that would hold the rails firmly together. The officer laughed at his confident assertion, and told him that he had heard similar stories dozens of time. But the ex-conductor exhibited his models and drawings, which appeared so promising that he was told to go ahead and make a trial. The result was a complete success. Today John Peck's patent railway chair, for which he secured his first patent in 1871, his second in 1876, and his third and

last in 1881, is used by all the street railways in Boston and by many of the great steam railways of the United States. John Peck is the man who made his fortune by stopping to think.—Boston Post.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE EXILES.

Numbers of our boys and girls are familiar with that affecting story, "Elizabeth, or, The Exiles of Siberia"—one of the few books which never grow old. Just now, when Alexander II. has so recently fallen by the assassin's hand, all that concerns the Russian nation is of worldwide interest; and we will hope that God will give a milder form of government to a wiser and happier people.

The Russian Government sends those who offend it to Siberia. The journey is a long and painful one. On his arrival the prisoner must answer the following questions: His name? How old? Married or single? Where from? Address of parents, or relations, or friends? Answers to which are entered in the books. A solemn written promise is then exacted of him that he will not give lessons of any kind, or try to teach any one; that every letter he writes will go through the officer's hand, and that he will follow no occupation except shoemaking, carpentering, or field labor. He is then told he is free! but at the same time is solemnly warned that, should he attempt to pass the limits of the town, he shall be shot down like a dog rather than be allowed to escape, and should he be taken alive, shall be sent into Eastern Siberia.

The poor fellow takes up his little bundle, and fully realizing that he has now bidden farewell to the culture and material comfort of his past life, he walks out into the cheerless street. A group of exiles, all pale and emaciated, are there to greet him, take him to some of their miserable lodgings and feverishly demand news from home. The noble by birth get about \$4 dollars a month from the Government for their maintenance, and common people only \$2.50, although many of them are married and sent into exile with young families. Daily an officer visits their lodgings, inspects the premises when and how he pleases, and makes some mysterious entry in his note-book. Should any of this number carry a warm dinner, a pair of newly-mended boots, or a change of linen to an exile lodged for the moment in the police ward, it is as likely as not marked against him as a crime. In fact, should the officer feel out of sorts, the effect of cards or drink—he vents his bad temper on the exiles. Crimes are marked down against the exiles in astonishing numbers, and a report of them sent regularly to the Governor of the Province.

Winter lasts eight months, a period during which the surrounding country presents the appearance of a noiseless, lifeless, frozen, marsh—no roads, no communication with the outer world, no means of escape. In course of time almost every individual exile is attacked by nervous convulsions, followed by prolonged apathy and prostration. They begin to quarrel, and even to hate each other. Some of them contrive to forge false passports and make their escape, but the great majority of these victims either go mad, commit suicide, or die in delirium tremens. Their history, when the time comes for it to be studied and published, will disclose a terrible tale of human suffering and shortcomings not to be found in the history of any other European State.—Scholar's Companion.

ALL WRONG.

"Please father, is it wrong to go pleasuring on the Lord's day? My teacher says it is."

"Why child, perhaps it is not exactly right."

"Then it is wrong, isn't it father?"

"Oh, I don't quite know that; if it is only once in a while."

"Father you know how fond I am of sums?"

"Yes, John, I'm glad you are; I want you to do them well, and be quick and clever at figures; but why do you talk of sums just now?"

"Because, father, if there is all little figure in a sum, it makes it all wrong, however large the amount."

"To be sure child, it does."

"Then, please father, don't you think if God's day is put wrong now and then, it makes all wrong?"

"Put all wrong, child—how?"

"I mean father, put to a wrong use."

"That brings it very close," said the father, as if speaking to himself; and then added, "John, it is wrong to break God's holy Sabbath. He has forbidden it, and your teacher was quite right."

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—Kind Words.