

English Robin's New Year.

On the snowy branch of the holly-bush
A gay little redbreast sings:
"Happy New Year to all, to all," says he,
Oh! loudly his greeting rings
And in the warm nursery, way high up,
From the window-pane looks down
A dear little girl with sunny hair,
And a boy with eyes so brown.

To robin they call, "Ho! ho! little bird,
Why singing so gully, pray?
The snow is so deep, the wind is so keen,
You'll freeze with the cold to-day."
"Icicles hang on the mistletoe bough,
And snow on the meadow lies,
But I fear not the cold this New Year's morn,"
The brave little bird replies.

"For God he is good, and God he is love,
He made the land and the sea;
And the God that sees when the sparrows fall,
Will also take care of me."
Then he eats with a thankful heart the crumbs
That the small white hands let fall,
And sings from his swing in the holly-bush,
"Happy New Year to all, to all!"

TURNING A NEW LEAF.

BY LILLIE MONTFORT.

It was the last day of the year, and there had been a week or two of bitterly cold weather, with a heavy fall of snow. This morning dawned bright and beautiful, and the sunlight played on the long icicles that hung from the roofs, and brilliantly illuminated the snow-laden branches of the trees. It had not at present much dissolving power, but as the sun reached the zenith there would no doubt be a rapid thaw. So said James Turner, who in woolen comforter and gloves was industriously sweeping the snow from his doorway, and making a path by which himself and neighbours could cross over to the village shop. I suppose it is really very rude to look in at people's windows, and yet I should like you to take a peep in at Mr. Turner's cottage window and admire Little Johnnie; he is sitting on a footstool near a fire, and indeed everything about him is bright. There was no one else in the room, but that did not signify. Having finished his sweeping, James Turner opened the cottage door and asked, "Where's your mother, Johnnie?"

"Upstairs, father," was the reply.
"Never mind; I'm going to send poor little Tim in to have a warm at that fire."
"All right, father," said Johnnie.
"Send him along."

Little Tim came in shivering, with ragged clothing and bare feet. He was of the same age as Johnnie, but much smaller in size, and very pale and fragile-looking. His eyes sparkled when he saw the comfortable-looking Johnnie, and he exclaimed, "Oh, how nice it is!"

"Come along, Tim," said Johnnie. "Here is plenty of room. Oh, my! how cold you are! Put your hands on my porringer, and that will warm them proper."
Tim accepted the invitation, and it must be confessed that when he held the outside of the porringer his eyes fell longingly on the bread and milk it contained. "Have you had your breakfast?" asked Johnnie.

"No!" said Tim sadly; "my mother has nothing for me this morning."
"Oh, my!" said Johnnie again. "Well, never mind; eat that up quick."

And poor little Tim emptied the porringer, and basked in the warmth of the fire until strange questions suggested themselves, and, child-like, he asked them: "Where do you get your milk?"

"We buy it of Old Styles. Where do you get yours?"
"We never have any. My mother never has any penny for it. I wonder why some people have money and others have none."

Johnnie was puzzled now, but at last he said thoughtfully: "I know why you have no money; it is because your father has not turned over a new leaf."

Tim looked puzzled now, but Johnnie continued: "A good long while ago I had no socks or shoes, and my mother had no money, and father was often cross with her; but one day we had such a jolly supper that I wondered about it, and I asked if we should ever have another as good, and father said, 'Yes, Johnnie, plenty of them, for I have turned over a new leaf; and since then we have had fires and milk, and pudding, and clothes, and I have a Sunday suit in the cupboard. To-morrow we shall have a New Year's gift, and it is to be a clock; and it all

comes from father turning over a new leaf."

Just then Mrs. Turner came downstairs, and with true kindness spoke to little Tim, and then asked Johnnie if he had given Tim any pictures to look at. "No, mother," said Johnnie; "we have been having a serious talk."

Mrs. Turner looked amused, but she asked, "What has Johnnie been saying to you, Tim?"

"He has told me about the new leaf, and I shall ask my father to get one."

"Poor little fellow! it will be a happy thing for you if your father will alter. God help you all this winter."

Mrs. Turner found some clothes that her own little son had outgrown, and they were plenty large enough for her neighbour's child, and the little boys were both delighted with the change in Tim's appearance; but as Mr. Turner was coming home to dinner now, they sent Tim to his mother, to tell all his wonderful story, and to give her a new shilling as Mrs. Turner's New Year's gift.

That same night Tim Raglan the elder came home earlier than usual, and apparently in good spirits.

"To-morrow will be New Year's Day, mother," he said jocularly. "Will you stand treat?"

"I wish I could," she said; "but, Tim,

was, 'I wish father would turn over a new leaf.' About an hour afterward there was a gentle knock at Mrs. Raglan's door, and to the poor woman's joyful surprise she found it was Mrs. Turner. "I thought you would like to know your husband is in our house and having a chat with mine. Your good times are coming. I've brought you a few sticks for your fire, and a little bit of tea; now you cheer up, and when we send him in you make him as comfortable as you can God help you!"

Poor Mrs. Raglan was unable to speak, but she speedily lighted her fire and put on the kettle, and then slipped over to the shop and got a loaf and a rasher of bacon, changing her new shilling for the purpose. And sure enough Timothy Raglan returned to his cottage in a penitent state of mind. Very timidly he spoke of his resolutions to turn over a new leaf, but he had made it, and James Turner had promised to help him in every possible way. He found it hard sometimes, but he said he prayed to God for grace to keep his vow, and every day it was easier; and now he could not live without prayer, neither could he go without his comforts very willingly; but the new leaf is still new, and he means to keep it.

Well, to finish my story. Let me tell

somebody that can talk like a silver tongue.

"No, Miss Mary said it wasn't that sort, I asked her, she said this tongue was made out of real silver, that came out of the mines, and you know what Miss Mary says goes."

Henry awing himself down to the ground. "I might as well go along," he said.

There was more than one boy at the meeting that afternoon who had come to hear about the silver tongue, and after the hymns and prayers and Bible reading and after the four companies had marched up and deposited their silver and copper bits in four little red boxes, Miss Mary began her story.

"Once there was a little boy who died and went to heaven."

My! How the boys' faces fell! they didn't want to hear a story about a boy who had died. But whether they did or not, Miss Mary kept right on:

"I can't tell you all the joy and gladness and beauty he found there, but before he had been long walking those green pastures, beside the still waters, he met a bright creature, who came up and crowned him with a fadeless wreath.

"I have been keeping it for you," she said, smiling.

"For me?" said the newcomer in surprise: "why for me?"

"Because it was through you that I learned of our dear Redeemer, and trusted in him."

"Where did you live when on earth?" asked the boy.

"I lived in China, in a boat on the river, I had no other home. But I got sick, and my father took me to the foreigner's hospital. It was there I heard of Jesus and his love."

"But I was never there," said heaven's latest comer, "you have made a mistake." He tried to give her back the fadeless crown, but could not stir one of its bright leaves.

"Oh, I know you were not there," answered the Bright One, "you did not speak to me with your lips, but by a silver tongue. Don't you remember saving up your bits of silver until your box was full, and then sending it to a hospital in China? It was your money that kept me there until my body was well, and until my soul was saved by believing on Jesus. And after you had told me of the blessed Saviour by your silver tongue, I went out and told my companions with my lips of the Friend I had found."

"Suddenly, a fair band of angelic ones circled round these two: 'Welcome, welcome,' they cried; 'if it had not been for your silver tongue, we might never have known that Jesus died for us. Welcome to this happy land.'"

The story was ended, and all the little boys were sitting still and quiet. "The Boys' Mission Band will meet on the first Sunday afternoon of next month," said Miss Mary. "Be sure you all come, and don't forget to bring your silver tongues."

FRENCH CHILDREN.

The French boy at his games and pleasures, on the way to school, with his black leather portfolio, dashing through the park on horseback, playing in the gardens at the various French games with his companions—the French boy, poor or rich, scholar or apprentice, in dress and manner a very different being from our own little fellows in Canada.

He wears his trousers short, very full, and drawn in at the knee by an elastic band. His suit is a sailor-suit. His legs, in the coldest winter weather, are often bare. On his head is a cap, over his shoulders is thrown a hooded cape. His suit is covered by a black apron, gathered in around his waist by a leather belt. Such is the schoolboy dashing across the park and boulevard, an especially picturesque figure in a city where all is picturesque.

As to the little girls, they are perfectly charming! With their nurses they sit up and down the avenue, their pretty dresses, flying ribbons, and big hats making bright spots of colour. These are the rich little maidens. Then there are the Jeanes and Maries and Catharines of the people, in soberer clothes, coarse blue stockings, stout laced boots, their dresses covered by the inevitable black apron. Hatless they go, winter and summer, to school, the neat pig-tails bobbing behind as the child carries home a long loaf of bread, or joins her little friends on a bench in the gardens, where the groups sew and chatter as sharply as the sparrows twittering around.

The French children are at once cheerful and sedate, polite and useful—a good combination, it seems to me! Indeed, it is hard to say which are most attractive—the flowers of Paris or the little people, for both make the city streets gay, winter and summer.



THE BIRTH OF JESUS. (SEE LESSON).

come and show yourself to your father." Tim came willingly, and his clothes were felt and admired, until nobody could say any more about them.

"Ah!" said Tim the father, "some people do get on. I remember when Jem Turner's wife had an empty cupboard, and no money for firing."

"Yes," said little Tim, "Johnnie told me about it; and he says they have plenty now, because his father turned a new leaf."

"What does he mean by that?" asked Raglan; but his countenance showed that he knew well enough what it meant.

"Couldn't you turn a new leaf, father?" said the little boy, looking with pleading eyes into his father's face. "It would be nice to have bread and milk for breakfast in a nice hot porringer. Why, father, Johnnie says they buy their milk from Old Styles, and it's just delicious. Could you turn a new leaf, father?"

"I am afraid not," said the man huskily; and he hastily left the room and the cottage.

Mrs. Raglan feared he had gone off to the public-house, and scolded little Tim for letting his tongue run so fast; and so at the close of what had been to Tim a wonderfully happy day, he crept to his comfortless bed, sad and heavy-hearted. Poor Tim! His last conscious thought

you little Tim woke up and smelled the bacon cooking, and in a great hurry jumped out of bed and called out, "Mother, they are cooking the New Year's dinner in at Johnnie Turner's."

"Poor little chap!" said Raglan. "Come here, Tim, and hear the glad news. I am going to turn over a new leaf."

On his father's knee little Tim sobbed out his thankfulness, and thought how soon his home would be like Johnnie's, and what a good thing it was to have a new leaf to turn.—Home and School.

THE SILVER TONGUE.

BY ELIZABETH P. ALLAN.

"Aren't you going to Mission Band this time?" Tom Graves was standing at the foot of a slim young maple tree, calling up to Henry Miley, who was perched among its bare branches.

"No, I'm not going," answered Henry, shortly.

"Better come, Miss Mary is going to tell us something real strange."

"What sort of thing?" Henry came down to the lowest branch to hear.

"It's about a silver tongue."

"Pshaw! That's just a fake. I know what they mean by a silver tongue; it's