

Hitherto.

[FOR THE NEW YEAR.]

STANDING in the early dawning
Of another opening year,
Oh! look backward with thanksgiving,
And look forward without fear!
For it may be richer blessings
Are laid up for you in store
Than you ever even hoped for
In the old years gone before;
And if trials, cares, and sorrows
Are out Father's will for you,
He will help, as He has helped you
Hitherto.

It may be through many dangers
You may pass, but not alone—
One who knows the way will lead you,
In His footsteps plant your own.
If the road is smooth and easy
Follow closer still your Guide,
It is on the smoothest places
That the feet are apt to slide.
You will never lose the pathway
If you keep Him well in view,
He will lead as He has led you
Hitherto.

In the shadow and the sunshine,
Joy and sorrow, pain and health,
In all times of tribulation,
And in every hour of wealth,
In the meetings and the partings,
Rest and labour, peace and strife,
In the valley of the shadow,
In the Everlasting Life,
Yes, for ever and for ever
He will be the same to you,
He will love as He has loved you
Hitherto.

Noah Stephens' New Year.

BY ANNA B. WOOD.

NOAH STEPHENS was a miser. The spirit of avarice, born in him, was strengthened by cultivation. From his earliest boyhood he had struggled to earn money, not to use, but to hoard. His earnings from picking berries and from odd jobs were carefully put in a tin box, and the spending money, which most boys would have used lavishly, remained untouched by him. When any of the silver pieces became tarnished, he would rub and scour them, and exult over his little property. It was his cherished dream to become a rich man, and the best energies of his life were devoted to accumulation of wealth. At fifty years of age he was the possessor of half a million of dollars, gained entirely through economy and industry, combined with fine business ability. He gave sparingly to the church of which he was a member; he paid his bills promptly and was honest in his transactions; but he knew not the meaning of the word philanthropy, for his soul was too narrow to contain any love for his fellow-men. He had bank and railroad stock, government bonds, and houses in the city and country. The more he possessed, the more his greed of gain increased.

One morning, as Noah Stephens sat in his office, Mrs. Ruth Ames came in. She was an old school-mate of Mr. Stephens, and was highly regarded by him. Mrs. Ames was a woman of culture and influence, whose precious deeds were a bright and shining light everywhere. She was a member of the Woman's Relief Society.

After a few moments' conversation, she said, smilingly, "Mr. Stephens, God has blessed you in all things; times are hard, winter is coming on, and there is a great deal of suffering in our town. You have thousands of dollars more than you can use; will you give me a little to relieve the unfortunate?"

He frowned, shut his lips tightly together, but said nothing.

"So many apply to our Relief Society for help," said Mrs. Ames, "that

we find it difficult to meet the demands. Here is a list of cases wanting immediate aid."

She took out a paper and was about to read several names, when Mr. Stephens interrupted her: "Don't want to hear anything of that kind! People needn't come to want if they work; lazy folk must expect to go cold and hungry, and drunken, shiftless people deserve to suffer. I earned my own living from a boy; nobody ever gave me a cent. I don't believe in helping an idle class; it encourages them in greater indolence and improvidence."

Mrs. Ames looked down upon her paper. "Do listen to me, Mr. Stephens," she said entreatingly. "Here is Joe Brintnell with a broken leg. His mother is sick, and his father who was a carpenter, fell from the house he was building, and was killed. Can a boy with his leg in splints and bandages take care of himself?"

"How did he break his leg?" asked Mr. Stephens.

"He fell from a loaded waggon."

"Is David Brintnell his uncle?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Then let his uncle help him; he can do it."

Mrs. Ames read another name from her paper: "Mrs. Martin, paralyzed, aged seventy. She needs coals and groceries; an excellent woman, in great want; her religion alone sustains her."

"Let her go to the almshouse. Heaven is just as near her there as anywhere," said Mr. Stephens contemptuously.

Mrs. Ames read on: Mrs. David Lee, a widow with six children and no means. You know her—an industrious, hard-working woman. Don't you think she deserves help?"

"Well, perhaps so," returned Mr. Stephens coldly. "Let the church help her."

"Noah Stephens," said Mrs. Ames, "you and I are old friends, and that gives me the right of plain speaking. Your hair is becoming sprinkled with gray, the signs of time are on your face, a few more years and you will be numbered with the dead. You can carry nothing with you. What will become of all the money you will leave behind?"

He made no reply.

"To whom much is given, much will be required," continued Mrs. Ames, in a solemn tone. "You are a member of the church, Noah Stephens, and you profess to be a follower of Christ. Think of what I have said!"

Mr. Stephens spoke not, and there was a long pause.

"The light of your earthly lamp will soon be out," she continued earnestly, with eyes fixed full upon him. "Will you let it go out in darkness? Oh, I hope God will not appoint a discipline of pain and trial to bring you to your senses in order to make you see what a worthless thing your hoarded gold is, when you might comfort and bless so many. Good morning, Mr. Stephens."

She left the counting-room and went her way, and Noah Stephens pursued his own thoughts. Her plain speaking was far from agreeable to him. He did not like the wholesome truths to which he had been forced to listen.

The day wore away, and when twilight was coming on, Mr. Stephens

rose from his easy chair and prepared to go home. He put on his warm overcoat, hat and gloves, and walked rapidly down the street.

It was a bitter cold night; the sidewalks were crowded with hurrying people, and the jingle of sleigh-bells sounded constantly in his ears. There was a sheet of glare ice in his path just before reaching his house, and as he went over it his foot slipped and he fell violently to the ground. He tried to rise, but sharp pains darted from his leg throughout his body. In a moment half a dozen people, who had seen the accident, were on the spot to give him assistance. Mr. Stephens grew white and dizzy from pain, and the pitying people carried him home and laid him on his bed. Dr. Howe was summoned immediately. His leg was broken, and the physician pronounced his injury a serious one. His leg was put in splints and bandages until the broken bone could unite, and he would have to lie quietly several weeks.

Poor Mr. Stephens! He was unused to suffering, and to be thrown helpless upon his bed in a moment was a trial almost beyond his power of endurance.

One night he could not sleep. It was the last night of the year. He heard the clock strike eleven. The old year was fast going out; a new year would soon be ushered in. Noah Stephens began to think. He did not want to think; there was nothing pleasant in his reflections, but there was nothing else for him to do. He thought of Mrs. Ames' words, which had come again and again like unwelcome visitors: "Will you let the light of your earthly lamp go out in darkness? Oh, I hope God will not appoint a discipline of pain and trial to bring you to your senses, to make you see what a worthless thing your hoarded gold is, when you might comfort and bless so many."

Again and again he asked himself if he was like what Mrs. Ames had said. Was he avaricious? Was he hard-hearted? What was to become of his money? He was worth half a million of dollars; he could not take it with him, but he must account to God for its use. Hoarded money! He began to see it in the light of a dangerous thing. It might stand in the way of his eternal happiness.

"Gold, gold, gold, gold,
Bright, yellow, hard, and cold."

Was he a miser? He did not like the word. There was pain in his broken limb, pain in his head, and pain in his heart. He hardly knew which caused him most suffering.

Morning came; it was New Year's day, bright and sunny. Mr. Stephens sent a message to ask Mrs. Ames to come to him, and to bring the list of names she had read to him. She obeyed the summons immediately, and soon sat by his bedside Mrs. Ames kindly enquired how Mr. Stephens was, and then waited for him to speak.

After a moment's pause, he said: "The plain truths you told me in my office that day, have proved a blessing to me. For one month I have not been able to take a step, and have suffered intensely. My thoughts have been busy, and daily your words have returned to my mind. I have thought it over and over, and now I see how mistaken I have been. You said you hoped God would not appoint a disci-

pline of pain and trial for me, but you see He has; and I am thankful for it, for without this suffering and your plain speaking, I should never have realized how much good I could do with my means. I made a resolve last night to do everything I can for the sick and poor. Now that I have suffered myself, I realize that others do. Will you please read that list again, and let me help you aid them?"

Once more Mrs. Ames read from her paper the name of Joe Brintnell.

"Joe Brintnell?" said Mr. Stephens.

"Is he the one with the broken leg?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Ames.

"Poor fellow!" continued Mr. Stephens. "How hard it must have been for him! I have had every comfort, and it was all I could endure, but he must have lacked many things he needed. Here is some money for him, which I will give you to expend as you think best. You see how changed I am. Six weeks ago I should have considered my money thrown away; but now I know I could not make a better use of it."

A look of pleasure came over Mrs. Ames' face as she took the money, and Mr. Stephens continued: "You said there was a widow with six children who were in great destitution. You know best what she needs, and if you will give me a list, I will have the things sent to her immediately. I wish to keep my resolve. Mrs. Ames you have spent your life in doing good; I have spent mine in making money. How much richer you are in the sight of God than I!"

Mrs. Ames put into his hand a paper containing several names and the necessities of each, and took her leave.

New Year's Day passed rapidly away. What a happy, useful day it was to Mr. Stephens! He sent money to individuals, and donations to his church, the relief societies, the society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Orphan Asylum, Home for the Destitute, etc.

Never before had his thoughts been turned so completely upon others. Strange to say, in caring for and blessing the unfortunate, his own physical suffering was almost forgotten. Several thousands of dollars were sent forth on errands of mercy.

During the next week Mr. Stephens received many calls from the people whom he had helped, and many expressions of thanks and gratitude fell from their lips. That memorable New Year's day was the birthday of a new and brighter life. When he recovered his health and returned to his place of business, his counting room wore a different aspect. It was no longer a place where he was to invent schemes to gain money to hoard. The worth of money lay in its use, and no man during the subsequent years of health and prosperity which followed, knew better how to spend it wisely and well than Noah Stephens. May he live to enjoy many more Happy New Years!

"Pa, is English a dead language?"

"Why, no, my son; English is the most living of all languages." "Well, pa, I'm mighty glad to know that; I've heard so often about English having been murdered."

"What can I do for you to induce you to go to bed now?" asked a mamma of her five year old boy. "You can let me sit up a little longer," was the youngster's reply.