

* * The Story Page * *

A New Year Vision.

BY EDNA H. TURPIN.

Evelyn sat in her rocking chair before the library fire. She dropped her chin in her hands, and thought. Next day the new year would begin. Such a beautiful, glorious new year she intended to make it! Of course, she would be studious and good tempered; those were the old standard resolutions she was always making and was now resolved to keep. Then there were the special new ones. She would practice her music more faithfully; she would help in the new mission Sunday-school; she would take some brightness—a visit, picture, fruit, or flowers—every day to the little boy at the hospital, whom her Sunday-school class had adopted. So she planned what she would do. Presently she closed her eyes to shut out the fire glow.

At once two strange figures entered the door. Evelyn knew, though she had never seen them before, that they were the Old Year and the New. The New Year came merrily in, fitting on beautiful, rainbow-hued wings. The decrepit Old Year bore, besides all the infirmities of age, a load, two packs, one much weightier than the other.

"Hi!" said the cheery young New Year, "why don't you make your packs even, and put that burden on the left, where it will not press down your wings?"

"I cannot," rejoined the Old Year; "these are the deeds of men, good and evil; place them where I will, the evil ones fetter my wings when I would lift them skyward," and he sighed heavily.

"Poor Old Year!" said the New, sympathizingly.

"Nay, it is you who are to be pitied," said the Old. "I have only a few more steps to take, and I shall rest at my journey's end; but you are so young, so bright, with so long and hard a journey before you, for you have three-hundred and sixty-five milestones to pass. Yet, I must cumber you with these bundles of mine."

"Must?" asked the New Year, and already his countenance began to cloud and his wings to droop.

"Yes," said the Old Year, sorrowfully; "but have no hard thoughts of me, I entreat you. The children of men force me to it. Each gives me a burden which I must pass on to you. Here, for instance, is this girl, sweet-faced and innocent looking, yet see what she has given us to bear."

Evelyn tried to utter an indignant disclaimer, but somehow she could not speak. So she settled back in silence to watch the end of this strange scene.

"I hardly know whether it is worth while to give you these," said the Old Year, taking out a package labeled "Promises." "Here are almost worthless. They break so easily. These are in sad shape."

They opened the packet.

Mem.—To pay old Peter for the chestnuts he bought in the fall. "If the old man had had that money, he might have had a warmer coat, and so been spared the cough he has now."

To carry Miss Leonard the thread and trimmings for my new dress. "Poor Miss Leonard! It had been a sad nuisance for her to wait for these things, when she had turned off other work for this."

To write a letter for Norah to her mother. "How long the poor soul has waited for a letter from America!"

To mend Tom's bill. "It was six weeks ago that he had asked her to do it."

To return the book borrowed from May Allen in the summer. "May's cousin wanted to read the book, but it was out of place."

To match silks for Aunt Lucy. "Dear old invalid! It has been a cross for her hands to be idle so many days."

To feed Tom the first thing after breakfast every morning. "No use to put that down. The little canary died of neglect. And indeed it is hardly worth while to burden you with these. Yet her guardian angel would be grieved if I gave these up in this sad condition!"

Evelyn tried to cry out that she was heart sorry and to beg for one more chance, but again the power of speech failed her. But the New Year seemed to divine her thoughts and said:

"Let me take them. She may keep them yet."

"Well, try her," said the Old Year, but not hopefully.

"Here are things it will be harder to dispose of," and he took out a packet labeled "Habits."

"I haven't time to tell you about them all—the habit of procrastination, the habit of slang, the habit of asserting herself, the habit of exaggerating, the habit of consulting her own ease. When I took them they were smaller, some not habits at all, only inclinations, and I fear they will grow with you. It is so easy for the exaggeration habit to grow to falsehood, and consulting one's ease to expand into selfishness."

The New Year's bright face was sadly overcast as he assumed the burdens. "O, that I might be rid of them!" he moaned.

"I will relieve you faithfully, I will; I am so sorry; I

never thought; I'll do better, indeed I will," Evelyn would have said, when just then mamma called "bed-time!" and Evelyn opened her eyes in surprise.

"I am so glad it was only a dream," she said to herself, "and yet—well, no!—it wasn't all a dream."—Sabbath School Visitor.

Fred and Carlo.

BY FAY STUART.

Little Fred Keith had no brother nor sister to play with, and when company came he was very selfish with his playthings.

One day his father brought home a beautiful collic. "Now, Fred," he said, "Carlo is to be your pet, but you must treat him kindly and not be selfish."

They had grand frolics when they went for a walk together. If Fred threw a stick into the pond Carlo would always swim out and bring it back.

One bright morning in July, Fred went out into the pasture to pick berries. He carried two small pails, in one of which mother had packed a nice luncheon. Carlo trotted along carrying the empty pail in his mouth.

The blueberries hung in clusters on the low bushes, but the sun was hot, and before one pail was filled Fred decided that it was surely dinner time. He sat down in the shade of a tall laurel bush and began to eat a sandwich. Carlo smelled the meat and begged for a piece, but though his big brown eyes were wistful, and he held up both paws, Fred took no notice.

"I'm real hungry and I want it all myself. You can catch a squirrel," he said at last.

The second sandwich was half gone, and Carlo's eyes looked sad. "Carlo has been chasing a rabbit all the morning; perhaps he is as hungry as I am. I guess maybe he can have this ham and cake, and I'll eat the pie."

Carlo barked a joyous "Thank you!" and, somehow, Fred's pie tasted twice as good as usual. Then they ran down to the spring and drank some of the clear water.

When both pails were full they started for home. Faithful Carlo carried one pail so carefully that not a berry was spilled.

The next afternoon Fred took Carlo for a walk in the fields. Grandfather's barn, where he kept his salt hay, stood all by itself in the pasture, and near-by was an old cellar. Fred went to the edge to look over; a stone loosened, and he fell in. He tried for a long while to climb out, but each time he fell back.

Carlo ran round the edge, barking; then he jumped in. Fred was glad that he did not leave him alone. He called for help until he was tired. The sun went down with all his might, but the only answer was an echo from the old barn. By and by he lay down beside Carlo and cried himself to sleep.

When he awoke the moon was shining brightly. He remembered a ginger snap that was in his pocket. "I'll give Carlo half the dear doggy!" he thought. Out came the cookie, and his little blank book with it. Fred shouted with delight as he emptied his pocket. It was full, like all boys' pockets, and sure enough! there was a stubby pencil, and some string.

He tore a page from the book and wrote:

"Dear Mother—I'm in the old cellar and can't get out."

He tied the paper round Carlo's neck. Then he piled up all the rocks until he could reach high enough to help Carlo out.

"Go home, quickly, Carlo," he said, and the dog leaped away.

Lanterns were flashing into dark corners, and all the neighbors were hunting for Fred. Mrs. Keith ran to the door when she heard Carlo's bark. How she did hug him after she had read the note!

"Mother," exclaimed Fred, when he had eaten supper and finished telling the story of his adventure, "I'm glad that I gave Carlo some dinner yesterday. If he had not helped me I'd be in the old cellar now."

"Yes," said his mother, "Carlo is a true friend. I should be very sorry if my little boy were selfish to such a good dog."—The Morning Star.

Special Confidence.

"Aunt Cornelia, I've always thought you were one of the best Christians I ever knew, and I've been wishing I could have a little talk with you and ask you some questions about something that has always bothered me."

"All right, Jack, free your mind and if I can help you any, I will be glad."

"Well, now, I wonder what people mean by 'special providence.' I never had such a thing as a special providence happen to me, I'm sure, and I suppose I'm kind of Christian, too."

Aunt Cornelia laughed as she looked into the bright, boyish face before her, and she said:

"Well, Jack, I have always regarded you yourself as a

very special providence, you've been that to me, any way."

"Oh, Aunt Cornelia, do talk so a fellow can understand. I know of course that Providence takes care of us all the time in a general way, but about this 'special' I don't see."

"Suppose I tell you a story!"

"Good, wish you would," said Jack, for Aunt Cornelia's stories were generally worth hearing.

"During the war, while we were living near Winchester, where father preached so long; we had a good many interesting experiences, of course, and I just now think of one that I believe would make this subject plain."

"All right, let's have it."

"You know father was lame and could only get about the house on crutches, so, of course, he could never go out anywhere except as he rode. So he had a very good horse, one that he had trained himself, until he knew what was wanted of him almost as well as father did. Well, you know, in those days when soldiers came into a place they generally appropriated whatever they wanted, and this was especially true in regard to horses or stock of any kind. Of course, we were all in constant fear that the horse would be taken, and used to wonder much what father would do in such a case. Sure enough, one day some soldiers spied the barn, and riding up to it attempted to open the door. Mother saw them first."

"Gill," she said, "make some coffee and get some ham frying as quick as you can," and out she started toward the barn. The soldiers saw her coming down the path, the feeble, little, old woman, and they fell back a few steps. Mother quietly laid her hand on the latch of the door, and leaning back against it she said in her gentle way:

"What is it, gentlemen?"

"We want the horse you've got in there."

"That is the Lord's horse; you can't have him."

"Never heard the Lord kept horses."

"Well, He keeps this one right here for my poor, lame husband."

"Well, you just get out, because we've got to have that horse. Why, the government says so."

"But you see my husband is a minister, and he is sent for every day often to visit some poor, wounded soldier, and write to his mother and pray with him and close his dying eyes, maybe, and how could he ever go if you should take this horse?"

"Well, we have got to have him."

"But perhaps a man of you may get a bullet in your breast and need the minister yourselves to-morrow."

By this time the ham and coffee were very much in evidence, and mother invited the soldiers in to dine with us. Of course, after a good meal they felt ashamed to say any more about the horse, and rode off without him. This did not occur once only, but again and again did rough, swearing soldiers come and demand that horse.

"Nobody went out to talk with them but mother, and no matter how fierce and determined they were at first, they always turned about and went off as meek as lambs, and when the war was over, father and the old horse were still joking about their errands of mercy as usual."

"Now, Jack, whatever you may call it that kept those lawless men from thrusting aside the little old lady standing guard at the barn door, and taking what they wanted, I call it 'special providence.'"

"Aunt Cornelia, I understand it as I never did before, and I'm very glad I asked you."—New York Observer.

Golden Rule Arithmetic

"Phil," whispered little Kenneth Brooks, "I've got a nice secret to tell you after school."

"Nice?" asked Phil.

"Yes," was the answer, "nice for me."

"Oh," said Phil, and his eyebrows fell.

He followed Kenneth around behind the schoolhouse after school to hear the secret.

"My Uncle George," said Kenneth, "has given me a ticket to go and see the man that makes canary birds fire off pistols and all that. Ever see him?"

"No," said Phil, hopelessly.

"Well, it's first rate, and my ticket will take me in twice," said Kenneth, cutting a little caper of delight.

"Same things both times?" asked Phil.

"No, sir-ee; new tricks every time. I say, Phil," Kenneth continued, struck with the other's mournful look, "won't your Uncle George give you one?"

"I ain't got any Uncle George," said Phil.

"That's a fact. How about your mother, Phil?"

"Can't afford it," answered Phil, with his eyes on the ground.

Kenneth took his ticket out of his pocket and looked at it. It certainly promised to admit the bearer into Mozart's Hall two afternoons. Then he looked at Phil, and a secret wish stole into his heart that he hadn't said anything about his ticket; but, after a few moment's struggles, "Phil," he cried, "I wonder if the man wouldn't