

truthfulness, but in this instance it was true both in substance and in fact, for Netherborough was to have a railway, nay more, it was to have it without the asking. The great Railway King, George Huddleston, Esq., M.P., had said it, and 'where the voice of a king is, there is power.' In the excited state of the share-markets of that period, speculating thousands said of him, as another crowd of simpletons said of Herod, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,' and the voice had said, 'Netherborough shall have a railway!'

His Railway Majesty never let the grass grow under his feet in those palmy days of his prosperity. In an incredibly short time the Bill had passed both Houses of Parliament; the necessary land-purchases had been made, the contracts had been signed, and on this never-to-be-forgotten day, the 15th of June, 18—, the first sod was to be cut in the field where the Netherborough Station was to be erected, amid ceremonials, festivities, and rejoicings such as Netherborough had never before known.

Old Aaron Brigham, who was quite as excited as his juniors, wandered to and fro among the clusters of curious gossipers who enlivened the streets that morning.

The group of idlers, whose customary gathering-place was at the 'Church Corner,' abutting on the market-place, stood expectant of the old man's greeting; a motley cluster of men with dilapidated characters, whose idle hands were thrust as usual into the pockets of their equally dilapidated garments—votaries of John Barleycorn, every man of them, and every man bearing on his reddened face and ragged raiment the tokens of their debasing servitude to that enslaving tyrant of the town.

'Weel, weel, weel,' said Aaron, pausing as he passed. 'I've never seen nowt like this, lads. To think that I should live to see t' iron hoss come canterin' ower t' Shiphams hills, an' galloping under t' Springwell hills, an' nowt to stop it. An' t' Toon Close is to be level' as flat as the back o' my hand, an' a railway station is to be built on it. Steam-injuns are goin' to snort an' whistle, an' scream, an' play all sorts o' cantrips where I used to play at rounders well-nigh fourscore years since. To think that I should live to see the day! Folks say that wonders never cease. I think surely they're only just beginnin'.'

'Nay, Aaron, nay; not so fast, owd friend. It hasn't come to that, yet.'

The speaker was Tommy Smart, a loafing 'laborer,' who did not labor except under strong compulsion, and whose smartness was most apparent when somebody asked him to have a glass of ale. A strong, good-looking, and capable man was Smart when he was at his best, which was sadly seldom; and utterly weak, ill-looking, and incapable, when under the influence of the 'curse o' Netherborough,' which, alas, was almost all the time.

'It'll tek some time,' continued Smart, before what you say can happen. 'Big jobs like new railways can't be done like magic, Aaron; an' mebbe you won't live to see it through. You're a very owd man, you see.'

'Thoo's quite right, Tommy,' said the old man, 'but I expect to see it through for all that. I isn't quite as strong on my pins as I used to be, but I'm worth a good many dead 'uns yet. Not that I'm at all afeard o' goin' when my time comes. I put that matter into Good Hands mair than fifty years back, an' I can afford to leave it there. They're well-kept that God keeps, and I isn't likely to seek a change. Can thoo say as much, Tom Smart?'

'There, tak' thy change oot o' that, Smart,' said Joe Hepton, with a laugh. 'Still, you know its true, Aaron. You are gettin' owd.' 'Gettin'?' Nay, I've gotten owd, an' very owd, but I'll tell yo' what, I'm younger than either of you.'

As the old veteran spoke, he stood upright, struck the end of his stick firmly on the ground, and faced the two men, as if confident that then and there the life within him was sounder, livelier, and wholesomer than theirs.

The cheers of the bystanders gave the old patriarch a unanimous vote, though both Smart and Hepton were his juniors by near fifty years. The old man continued with a dry humor peculiar to him:

'Lads! they don't sell good medicine at the "Red Cow," an' it's you that get's milked, not

it, both o' money, an' meals, an' manhood, an' what's left meks even the joys o' John Barleycorn a mighty poor brew. I may live to see t' new railway oppen'd, or I may not, but, at any rate,' he continued, looking meaningly at the bibulous Smart, 'I shall tek' nowt into my inside that puts me to a disadvantage. I reckon that the railway will be finished in a couple o' years, an' I expect that strong ale will hap some o' you up under yon churchyard grass, before my time comes. Hey, poor lads, I do wish you would tak' a turn an' mend!'

'Why, you are a wonder,' said Tommy Smart, willing to conciliate, 'there's no mistake about that. You must ha' some magic mixture that keeps you goin'.'

'Right you are,' said Aaron, with a happy smile on his weather-browned face, 'an' I'll tell yo' what it is. It's made up o' cowl water an' broon bread, honest work, an' a good conscience afore God an' man. That's the prescription, Tommy. I'll mek' yo' a present on it. It's a magic mixture that will keep you goin', an' keep yo' from goin' to the "Red Cow," or to any other spot where the devil's mixture is always on the tap.'

'That's right, Aaron, that's right. Talk to him for his good. Tommy Smart's a good deal too much of a toss-pot. It will be a good thing well done if you can get him to take a turn and mend.'

The words were spoken by a new-comer, who had appeared upon the scene in time to hear old Aaron's final sentences. His words were greeted by the by-standers with a burst of laughter and applause. There was nothing very witty in what was said; but it was said by Mr. Norwood Hayes, and as that gentleman was decidedly the most popular man in Netherborough, whatever he said was to be received with cheers.

A tall, shapely, even handsome, man, was Mr. Norwood Hayes, eminently intelligent as well as attractive in face and feature. He held a good position in the town as a corn-factor, an agricultural implement maker, and was also great in parochial affairs.

Aaron Brigham did not appear to receive the support of Mr. Hayes with any great amount of gratitude, judging from the quiet way in which he 'looked him over,' and the equally quiet way in which he replied.

(To be continued.)

## What the New Year Brought.

(Josephine E. Toal, in the 'American Messenger'.)

It was almost midnight. Eunice stood listening at the window. She had turned out the light and thrown up the shade. How pure and white the snow-covered fields looked in the moonlight! Like the first unsoiled page of the New Year, she thought.

'I wonder what the New Year has in store for me,' she said. 'Will it be some great happiness, or will it be a great sorrow? Or will it be only little pains and pleasures?'

The first stroke of a bell sounded clear on the still night air, and then the music of many chimes came ringing across the fields. Eunice turned from the window and knelt by her bed.

'Dear Father,' she prayed, 'make me ready for what Thou dost send. Give me grace to bear the trials that may come with the new Year, and wisdom to meet its perplexities.'

In the breakfast-room on New Year's morning Eunice lingered for a little talk with Grandfather. Turning the leaves of an illuminated calendar, she spoke aloud the question which had been in her thoughts the night before, 'What will it bring to me?'

'Whatever you choose,' said the old man.

'What do you mean, Grandpa? I am not a fairy godmother to bring by magic whatever I may wish.'

'Perhaps not; but remember the years are what we make them. Eunice, child, don't look to circumstances for happiness. Happiness comes first from within. The magic wand is unselfishness. Don't forget, my child.'

The door-bell rang and Eunice flew to answer it, returning with the morning mail.

'Here's your paper, Grandpa, and a letter for me. From Jennie, I know. Such a pretty seal—ten pages—just like her—how nice!' and Eunice settled herself on the couch to read it.

There was silence for a few moments and then she burst forth.

'O, Grandpa, it's the loveliest piece of good fortune! Jennie is going to Washington with her father and mother, and she invites me to go with them. They'll stay until Congress adjourns. All my expenses paid! The capital will be lively this winter, and there'll be no end of good times. Isn't it a rare chance? So much for the New Year! I'll write to-day and accept the invitation.'

Later, as she watched the sun setting in a great red sea of cloud, her brother Fred came in.

'Another letter for you, Sis! I was around by the post-office,' and he tossed her the missive. Eunice glanced at the post-mark and opened the letter a trifle indifferently. She read:

My dear Niece: Your Aunt Sabine is real poorly, I am afraid sometimes she won't get better, she's been sick so long. You know she took a great notion to you when you was here two years ago, and she talks about you often now. It would do her a heap of good to see you again. I thought maybe you'd come down and stay a spell, say through the dead of winter. So that's what I'm writing for. She don't know about it. I wanted to sort of surprise her. Hoping you will come soon, I am your affectionate uncle,

JONAS PARKS.

'Well, I am sure I can't go,' she said to herself. 'Jennie's letter came first and I've accepted the invitation. To be sure, I haven't posted the letter yet, but Jennie will be disappointed if I refuse.'

She stood for a few minutes absent minded, tearing the envelope into bits. After a while she said half aloud.

'I suppose Uncle Jonas will be disappointed, too, and it won't make so much difference to Jennie. Any of the girls would go to her gladly. But, oh, dear, it's such a chance, and I do want so much to go! Oh, I can't give it up!'

'Oh, I am so miserable! So miserable, when I meant to be so happy! And I've tried to remember what Grandpa said, that happiness comes from within.' In spite of herself, tears of disappointment and vexation wet her cheeks. She dashed them away and sat down in the little rocker for a good think.

'Unselfishness is the magic wand,' The words rang in her ears. Had she been—was she—selfish? Had she been looking to her own pleasure for happiness? Resolutely Eunice cross-questioned herself while the long hand of her watch went round more than once, but when at last she rose to brush her hair, the

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