

THE OLD YEAR'S VISION.



HE Old Year was just ending as I drew
My easy-chair before the blazing fire;
Resolved to wait the moment that the New
Should be rung out from distant village spire.
And, as the dancing flamelets rose and fell
I dwelt on visions of the vanished year,
Till o'er my being stole a subtle spell,
And e'en the fire's radiance seemed less clear.

And then methought I stood within a hall,
Vaster than mortal ever saw before,
All lined with endless volumes—each and all
Marked with some surname, and a number o'er.
I stood in silent wonder, till my eyes
Fell on a series, small and darkly bound;
While on each volume, in familiar guise,
The letters of my name were what I found!

I seized upon the nearest—pulses stilled.
As through its leaves I glanced in breathless fear.
Each day a page; each month a chapter filled,
While every volume held a finished year,
And oh, what misery! what burning shame!
Flowed o'er me as I saw my fruitless life
Opened impartially to Conscience' blame,
Its wasted hours, its sighs, its petty strife!

I counted! up the volumes; forty-two!
And now another must be added there!
Alas! to think how its good deeds were few;
How many of its pages worse than bare!
My tears fell fast; and on the instant came
The chiming of the dreaded midnight bell
To seal my doom. I knelt for very shame
And shuddered at each sounding of the knell.

Sadly I prayed—besought for added time
To cease from evil, and to learn the right;
When lo! with dying echo of the chime,
My eyes were dazzled by a glorious light;
And near me stood a Messenger of Grace
Turning a blank white record swiftly o'er;
"It lies with you," he said, "to let me trace
A fairer year in number forty-four."

INCIDENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

A SCOTCH minister was taken to task for having had only one added to the church in a whole year, and he only a lad. "True," was the reply, "but I have great hopes of the lad." The lad was Robert Moffatt, afterwards the missionary to whom the whole Church of Christ is to-day a debtor.

A MOHAMMEDAN traveller, whose narrative is quoted by Mr. Mill in his "British India," once saw a man standing motionless with his face towards the sun. The same traveller, having occasion to revisit the same spot several years afterwards, found the same man in the very same attitude. He had gazed on the sun's disk till all sense of external vision was extinguished. By this means he thought he was securing "absorption into the Supreme Being."

It is a great thing to find a man. Several men were grading around a new parsonage, the parson and his wife standing in the door watching them. Noticing that they all deferred to one young man, and as a matter of course followed

his directions in the grading, the pastor remarked to his wife, "There is a leader of men. I must use him in church work." So he set him at work on a committee in a society, and in positions of trust and responsibility, thus opening to him opportunities of labour, and utilizing his talent for the church and the world, instead of "sitting down on him," causing him to fight for a place to stand on, driving him into obscurity, and then wondering why good men were so scarce, or why they took so little interest in the work of the Lord.

THE story is told that a little son of an infidel found a Bible, and was reading it with such absorbing interest that he was lost to all things else—even the fear of his father's anger. The latter discovered him and asked, sternly, "What book are you reading?" The boy looked up abstractedly and said, "*Father, they crucified Him!*" The unbeliever stood still. The arrow of conviction had gone deep into his soul. In vain he reasoned the Bible was not true. Whatever he might say with his lips concerning Jesus Christ, something within kept saying, "They crucified Him." The torment of a convicted soul increased, the burden of sin lay heavier and heavier upon him, and he longed for peace of mind and rest of soul. "They crucified Him" was all the answer the man could get, and at last it came as a message of forgiveness, because he accepted Jesus as his crucified and risen Lord and Saviour. "For Christ sent me * * to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." I Cor. i, 17, 18.

THERE are not a great many Churchmen who know that in the interior of Patagonia, far up the Chubut, there is a little colony of Welsh Churchmen striving to win their bread as men did in the days of old, in agricultural and pastoral occupations. They have been for some time building themselves a little church, which, according to the last intelligence received from them, was at the point of completion, and which, it was hoped, would be opened by Bishop Stirling of the Frankland Isles. The little structure which these hardy folk have built for themselves is of brick, and sufficiently large to accommodate about one hundred worshippers. Its bell is the ancient bell of St. Rhedyw, Llanllyfin, which will, in this isolated corner of the world, ring out the call to the faithful few, which in days gone by pealed through the valley and over the mountains of the land of their birth, bidding their forefathers to the worship of God. A pleasing bell indeed, and with associations that make it a priceless treasure in the eyes of the little band of Welsh exiles in the interior of far-off Patagonia.—*Church Bells*: