

The Book of the New Year.

The book of the new year is opened—  
Its pages are spotless and new;  
And so, as each leaflet is turning,  
Dear boys and girls, beware what you do!

Let never a bad thought be cherished,  
Keep the tongue from a whisper of guile,  
And see that your faces at windows  
Through which a sweet spirit shall smile.

And weave for your souls the fair garment  
Of honour, of beauty, and truth;  
Which will still with a glory enfold you  
When faded the spell of your youth.

And now, with the new book, endeavour  
To write the white pages with care;  
Each day is a leaflet, remember,  
To be written with watching and prayer.

And if on a page you discover  
At evening a blot or a scrawl,  
Kneel quickly and ask the dear Saviour  
In mercy to cover it all.

So, when the strange book shall be finished,  
And clasped by the angel of light,  
You may feel though the work be imperfect,  
You have tried to please God in the right.

And think how the years are a stairway  
On which you must climb to the skies;  
And strive that your standing be higher  
As each one away from you flies.

THE OLD ORGAN

OR

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

By Mrs. O. F. Walton.

CHAPTER X.—"NO PLACE LIKE HOME."

THE next morning, some of the lodgers in the great room below remembered having heard sounds in the stillness of the night which had awakened them from their dreams and disturbed their slumbers. Some maintained it was only the wind howling in the chimney, but others felt sure it was music, and said that the old man in the attic must have been amusing himself with the organ at midnight.

"Not he," said the landlady, when she heard of it; "he'll never play it again, he's a dying man, by what the doctor says."

"Just you go and ask him if he wasn't turning his old organ in the middle of last night," said a man from the far corner of the room. "I'll bet you a shilling he was."

The landlady went upstairs to satisfy his curiosity, and rapped at the attic door. No one answered, so she opened it and went in.

Christie was fast asleep, stretched upon the bed where his old master's body lay. The tears had dried on his cheeks, and he was resting his head on one of old Treffy's cold, withered hands. The landlady's face grew grave, and she instinctively shuddered in the presence of death.

Christie woke with a start, and looked up in her face with a bewildered expression. He could not remember at first what had happened. But in a moment it all came back to him, and he turned over and moaned.

The landlady was touched by the boy's sorrow, but she was a rough woman, and knew little of the way of showing sympathy, and Christie was not sorry when she went downstairs and left him to himself. As soon as the house was quiet he brought a neighbour to attend to old Treffy's body, and then crept out to tell the clergyman.

Mr. Wilton felt very deeply for the desolate child. Once again he committed him to his loving Father, to the Friend who would never leave him nor forsake him. And when Christie was gone he again knelt down, and thanked God with a very full heart for having allowed him to be the poor, weak instrument of bringing this soul to Himself. There would be one at least at the beautiful gates of "Home, sweet home," watching for his home-going steps. Old Treffy would be waiting for him there. Oh, how good God had been to him! It was with a thankful heart that he sat down to prepare his sermon for the next day, on the last verse of the hymn. And what he had just heard of old Treffy helped him much in the realization of the bright city of which he was to speak.

Mr. Wilton looked anxiously for Christie, when he entered the crowded mission-room on Sunday evening. Yes, Christie was there, sitting as usual on the front bench, with a very pale and sorrowful face, and with heavy, downcast eyes. And when the hymn was being sung the clergyman noticed that the tears were running down the boy's cheeks, though he rubbed them away with his sleeve

as fast as they came. But Christie looked up almost with a smile when the clergyman gave out his text. It was from Revelation vii 14, 15. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God."

"To-night," said the clergyman, "I am to speak of 'Home, sweet home,' and of those that dwell there, the great multitude of the redeemed. It is a very holy place, there is no speck on the golden pavement, no evil to be found within the city. The tempter can never enter there, sin is unknown; all is very, very holy. And on the white robes of those who dwell there is no stain; pure and clean and spotless, bright and fair as light, are those robes of theirs. Nothing to soil them, nothing to spoil their beauty, they are made white forever in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God."

"Oh!" said the clergyman, "never forget that this is the only way to stand before that throne. Being good will never take you there, not being as bad as others will avail you nothing; if you are ever to enter heaven, you must be washed white in the blood of the Lamb."

"St. John was allowed to look into heaven, and he saw a great company of these redeemed ones, and they were singing a new song, to the praise of him who had redeemed them. And since St. John's time," said the clergyman, "oh, how many have joined their number! Every day, every hour, almost every moment, some soul stands before the city gates. And to every soul washed in the blood of Jesus those gates of pearl are thrown open; they are all dressed one by one in a robe of white, and as they walk through the golden streets, and stand before the throne of glory, they join in that song which never grows old—'Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.'"

"And, my friends," said the clergyman, "as the holy God looks on these souls he sees in them no trace of sin, the blood has taken it all away; even in his sight they are all fair, there is no spot in them. They are faultless and stainless, perfectly pure and holy."

"Oh! my friends, will you ever join their number? This is a dark, dismal, dying world; will you be content to have your all here? Will you be content never to enter 'Home, sweet home'? Oh! will you delay coming to the fountain, and then wake up, and find you are shut out of the city bright, and that forever?"

"One old man," said the clergyman, "to whom I was talking last week is now spending his first Sunday in that bright city."

A stillness passed over the room when the clergyman said this, and Christie whispered to himself, "He means Master Treffy, I know he does."

"He was a poor, sin-stained old man," the clergyman went on, "but he took Jesus at his word, he came to the blood of Christ to be washed, and even here he was made whiter than snow. And two nights ago the dear Lord sent for the old man, and took him home. There was no sin-mark found on his soul, so the gates were opened to him, and now in the snowy dress of Christ's redeemed he stands, 'faultless and stainless, faultless and stainless, safe in that happy home.'"

"If I were to hear next Sunday," said the clergyman, "that any one of you was dead, could I say the same of you? Whilst we are meeting here, would you be in 'Home, sweet home'? Are you indeed washed in the precious blood of Christ? Have you indeed been forgiven? Have you indeed come to Jesus?"

"Oh! do answer this question in your own heart," said Mr. Wilton, in a very earnest voice. "I do want to meet every one of you in 'Home, sweet home.' I think that when God takes me there I shall be looking out for all of you, and oh! how I trust we shall all meet there—all meet at home!"

"I cannot say more to-night," said the minister, "but my heart is very full; God grant that each of you may now be washed in the blood of Jesus, and even in this life be made whiter than snow, and then say with a grateful heart, 'Lord, I will work for thee, love thee, serve thee all I can.'"

"Till in the snowy dress  
Of thy redeemed I stand,  
Faultless and stainless,  
Faultless and stainless,  
Safe in that happy land!"

And then the service was over, and the congregation went away. But Christie never moved from the bench on which he was sitting. His face was buried in his hands, and he never looked up, even when the clergyman laid his hand kindly on his shoulder.

"Oh!" he sobbed at last, "I want to go home: my mother's gone, and old Treffy's gone, and I want to go too."

The clergyman took Christie a little brown hand in both of his, and said, "Christie, poor little Christie, the Lord does not like to keep you outside the gate; but he has work for you to do a little longer, and then the gates will be opened, and home will be all the sweeter after the dark time down here." And then with other gentle and loving words he comforted the child, and then on his way he prayed with him, and Christie went away with a lighter heart. But he could not help thinking of the last Sunday evening, when he had hastened home to tell Treffy about the third verse of the hymn.

There was no one to-night to whom Christie could tell what he had heard. He waited a minute outside the attic door as if he were about to go in, but it was only for a minute, and when he walked in all fear passed away.

The sun was setting, and some rays of glory were falling on old Treffy's face as he lay on the bed. They seemed to Christie as if they came straight from the golden city, there was something so bright and so unearthly about them. And Christie fancied that Treffy smiled as he lay on the bed. It might be fancy, but he liked to think it was so.

And then he went to the attic window and looked out. He almost saw the golden city, far away amongst those wondrous, bright clouds. It was a strange, glad thought, to think that Treffy was there. What a change for him from the dark attic! Oh! how bright heaven would seem to his old master!

Christie would have given anything just to see for one minute what Treffy was doing. "I wonder if he will tell Jesus about me, and how I want to come home," said Christie to himself.

And as the sunset faded away and the light grew less and less, Christie knelt down in the twilight, and said from the bottom of his heart,

"O Lord, please make me patient, and please some day take me to live with thee and old Treffy, in 'Home, sweet home.'"

(To be continued.)

UNCLE JOSIAH'S BEDTIME.

BY MRS. J. P. BALLARD.

SUCH headaches as Uncle Josiah had! And such doctors! Their efforts left the patient worse instead of better. At last, however, a young doctor gave Aunt Polly a prescription which he said was sure to help if not cure.

Uncle Josiah was a strict temperance man. Not a drop of ardent spirits, as a beverage, had ever passed his lips. He was a man firm of principle—strong and unyielding where his well-trained conscience was concerned. The doctor's prescription was egg-nog. Aunt Polly was to prepare and administer it to Uncle Josiah at his bedtime, when sleep would follow and the headache disappear.

Very grateful the remedy proved, prepared under Aunt Polly's skilful hand. She was generous to a fault, and perhaps mixed a thimbleful more than the prescribed proportion of whiskey in the nightly draught.

As the headache was a very real fact, Uncle Josiah's conscience did not forbid him to give the remedy a fair trial. His usual time for retiring was ten o'clock. When he was in bed Aunt Polly carried to him the fragrant, steaming cup.

One night about two weeks after he began taking the nightly stimulant, Uncle Josiah grew restless about a quarter to ten o'clock, and said:

"Polly, I feel pretty tired; I think I'll go up now and be ready for my medicine and sleep."

"Well, Josiah, it's only a quarter of ten; but you do look tired, and I'll prepare it now."

The next week, one rainy night, as the clock struck nine, Uncle Josiah left his old arm-chair, a bright fire, and his cheerful wife. He was "quite tired out, and would have his nog now."

"What makes you so tired to-night, Josiah?"

"Well, working about the factory all day, I suppose, Polly;" and he drained his nightly remedy, and went off to sleep.

One week later Uncle Josiah's bedtime came at a quarter to nine o'clock. He went upstairs, but just before Aunt Polly was ready for him, he called down, "Polly!"

"Well, Josiah."

"Don't bring up that stuff! I'm coming down."

"Coming down" I thought you were ready for bed!"

"So I was, Polly, but I'm coming down to be with you till ten o'clock, and I shall never take another cup of nog."

He came down, fully dressed, and added "Polly, do you know why I have been getting tired so early of late? It was just because I was in a hurry for that medicine; and when a man begins to relish whiskey as I have been getting to do, there's a serpent lurking near. We'll both sit up till ten o'clock and then sleep the sleep of the just. Not another drop shall pass my lips, Polly."

And he kept his word.—*Youth's Companion.*

Old Christmas.

BY MARY HOWITT.

Now, he who knows Christmas,  
He knows a carle of worth;  
For he is as good a fellow  
As any upon earth.

He comes warm cloaked and coated  
And buttoned up to the chin;  
And soon as he comes a-nigh the door  
We open and let him in.

We know he will not fail us,  
So we sweep the earth up clean,  
We set for him the old arm-chair,  
And a cushion whereon to lean.

And with sprigs of holly and ivy  
We make the house look gay,  
Just out of old regard for him,  
For 'twas his ancient way.

He comes with cordial voice,  
That does one good to hear;  
He shakes one merrily by the hand,  
As he hath done many a year.

And after the little children,  
He asks in cheerful tune,  
Jack, Kate, and little Annie,  
He remembers them every one!

What a fine old fellow he is!  
With his faculties all as clear  
And his heart as warm as daylight  
As a man in his fortieth year!

What a fine old fellow in truth!  
No tone of your gaping elves,  
Who, with plenty of money to spare,  
Think only about themselves.

Not he! for he loveth the children,  
And hol'ay begs for all,  
And comes with his pockets full of gifts,  
For the great ones and the small.

And he tells us witty old stories,  
And singeth with might and main,  
And we talk of the old man's visit  
Till the day he comes again.

Good luck unto old Christmas  
And long life let us sing  
For he doth more good unto the poor,  
Than many a crowned king.

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLVE.

If it is a question in anyone's mind whether one is better or worse off for having made a resolution that proved too difficult for him to keep, let him modify his aims a little, and make perfectly practical attempts, did this certain wise little boy

His Sunday-school teacher distributed slips of paper to her scholars, and asked each to write thereon a New Year's resolution. He decided to make a resolve which he would be able to keep, and to secure the prize offered to the boy who, at the beginning of another year, should have come the nearest to keeping it.

He wrote: "Resolve. That I will try to be a year older by next year."

Words of kindness we have spoken  
May, when we have passed away,  
Heal, perhaps, a spirit brok'n,  
Guide a brother led astray.

J. Hazen.

FRANK (the day after Christmas):  
"Papa, wouldn't it be just as well if mamma'd put just a little sack of paregore in all the Christmas things, to save trouble of taking it all next day?"