

The Old Year.

Another year has gone,
With swift and noiseless tread
Winter and spring have glibbed on,
Summer and autumn sped
Each season with its joys and pain,
And they will never come again.

I mourn its wasted time,
If I could live it o'er,
Its sad mistakes I'd try to shun,
Its wrongs would do no more.
But, no; the loss none can repair,
'Tis gone forever, the old year.

This only can I do
Be sorry for the past,
And at my loving Saviour's feet
My weary burden cast
He will blot out sin's crimson stain,
And strengthen me to try again.

And as a bright new year
Comes with its hope and joy,
I'll seek to live aright, and all
My hours for God employ
And this new year will try to live
That it a record fair may give.

OUR PERIODICALS:

| The best, the cheapest, the most entertaining, the most popular. | Yearly | Sub'n |
|---|--------|-------|
| Christian Guardian, weekly. | \$1.00 | |
| Methodist Magazine and Review, 90 pp., monthly illustrated. | 2.00 | |
| Christian Guardian and Methodist Magazine and Review. | 2.75 | |
| Magazine and Review, Guardian and Onward together. | 3.25 | |
| The Wesleyan, Halifax, weekly. | 1.00 | |
| Sunday School Banner, 32 pp., 8vo., monthly. | 0.60 | |
| Onward, 8 pp., 4to., weekly, under 5 copies. | 0.60 | |
| 5 copies and over. | 0.40 | |
| Pleasant Hours, 4 pp., 4to., weekly, single copies. | 0.30 | |
| Less than 20 copies. | 0.25 | |
| Over 20 copies. | 0.24 | |
| Sunbeam, fortnightly, less than ten copies. | 0.15 | |
| 10 copies and upwards. | 0.12 | |
| Happy Days, fortnightly, less than ten copies. | 0.15 | |
| 10 copies and upwards. | 0.12 | |
| Dew Drop, weekly (2 cents per quarter). | 0.07 | |
| Berean Senior Quarterly (quarterly). | 0.20 | |
| Berean Leaf, monthly. | 0.05 | |
| Berean Intermediate Quarterly (quarterly). | 0.06 | |
| Quarterly Review Service, by the year, 2c a dozen; \$2 per 100; per quarter, 6c a dozen; 60c per 100. | | |

THE ABOVE PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto
C. W. COOPER, S. F. HICKEY,
116 St. Catherine St., Montreal
Wesleyan Book Room,
Halifax, N. S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JANUARY 1, 1898

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JANUARY 9, 1898.

Earnestness of purpose.—Eccl. 9. 10

WISE MEN'S COUNSELS.

Solomon is reputed to be the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes. He was the wisest man God ever made. Hence, what he says is worthy of observation. The sayings of some men are soon forgotten. The sayings recorded in the Bible will never be forgotten.

EARNESTNESS COMMENDED.

The word "might" embraces this. We should never do anything if we cannot do it with our might. Whatever is worth doing should be done to the best of our ability. Nobody succeeds who does not work with earnestness.

SUCCESS.

Nobody, no matter what his avocation may be, feels pleasure in labouring if he does not succeed. He soon becomes disheartened, and begins to ask, "Why is this?" The want of earnestness in labour is the great cause of thousands not succeeding. The scholar will never graduate with honour if he does not apply himself with diligence to his studies. The same remark will admit of universal application.

WHATSOEVER.

This word may mean your secular calling, or the duties pertaining to your church relationship. Every person should find out what trade or business he is best fitted for, and having found it, should then apply all his energies to succeed in that calling. None should live an idle, lazy life. Having nothing to do is the sure way to find the path of ruin. Satan finds something still for idle hands to do.

WORKING CHRISTIANS.

The great want at the present day is

working Christians. Too many resemble the Syrian general, who was not willing to perform humble duties. They want the higher office. A sexton in one of the writer's circuits resigned, and when asked the cause of his going so said, "He had not been well used, seeing he was not appointed class-leader." The late H. W. Beecher once hired a horse for a few hours' drive, and the owner assured him that the animal was good for any labour to which he might be put. The preacher said, "I wish he was a member of my church."

REASONS FOR EARNESTNESS

There is no work etc., in the grave. The present state of being is the only working period we shall have. Hard work kills nobody. It is worry and fretting that shortens life. We hear a great deal about "hard times." Many make their own hard times, because they want to solve the problem, how to obtain a livelihood without work.

UNIVERSAL APPLICATION.

Let every one resolve to obey the advice of Solomon. Always act as though you heard the voice of Solomon calling aloud, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," etc.

"THE BEST OF ALL"

Many things struck the little country girl as strange on her first visit to Philadelphia, especially the silent "blessing" at table; but after the strangeness had worn off, and Nellie no longer stood in awe of the aunt, until then almost a stranger, she asked questions as fearlessly as of her own dear mother, from whom she found herself separated for the first time.

And so, after wondering many times why her uncle and aunt bowed their heads before eating, but said not a word, she made bold to say:

"What makes you shut your eyes 'n' look down 'fore you eat! You don't say anything like my papa does when he asks blessing."

"Why, dearie, that is our way of asking blessing on our food, and returning thanks for it," was the gentle reply.

"But you don't say anything!" said the child, as if thinking aloud, which suggested the following question:

"Have you thanked your uncle for the book he ordered sent on his way to the office this morning, darling?"

With a half-grieved look on her face the child said:

"How could I, auntie, when I haven't had a chance?"

"But, dear, haven't you thanked him in your heart?" asked the aunt, in tender tones.

"Oh, yes, auntie, lots 'n' lots of times! When I look at my book I think how good he is, 'n' when I see him coming I'll run 'n' meet him 'n' tell him so."

"That is right," replied the aunt, looking pleased at the evident gratitude of the child. "Your uncle will be gratified to know he has given you pleasure. But God knows when we are grateful to him, even if our lips do not move."

"Oh, I see," said the child, after a slight pause, "you thank God in your hearts for food just as I do uncle for the book, don't you, when you drop your head 'n' don't say anything?"

"Yes, dear, and do you not thank him too?" kindly queried the aunt, but the child hung her head and did not reply, and no more was said on the subject until the next day, when they were again alone, Nellie said, half shyly:

"I thanked God, too, when you said silent blessing this morning, auntie."

"What did you thank him for, darling?" was the glad query.

"Oh, for food 'n' clothes, 'n' everybody I love! 'n' for Jesus, the best of all!"

I wish every child who reads this would feel as did Nellie, that of all our blessings Jesus is "best of all."

A NOBLE ACT.

Two little children, a boy and a girl, wandering from home, were caught in a snowstorm and lost their way. The distracted parents, accompanied by kind neighbours, went out to search for them. After a long, weary search, the two children were found lying side by side on a snowy slope, their slender forms rigid, and their young faces fixed by the frost in the repose of death.

The girl was wrapped in the boy's coat, but the pitiless wind had pierced her heart, as well as the kind heart of the little hero who strove to shield her from its fury. The coat folded so carefully about the little sister he loved so tenderly, and his own breast bare to the bitter blast, told of the courage, the generosity, the self-sacrifice, the loving solicitude of the heroic youth.

APPLES OF GOLD.

A young girl was passing her aged great-aunt one day, when she suddenly stopped, laid her hand gently on the white head beside her, and said, "How pretty and curly your hair is, Aunt Mary! I wish I had such pretty hair!"

The simple words brought a quick flush of pleasure to the wrinkled face, and there was a joyous quiver in the brief acknowledgment of the spontaneous little courtesy.

Few of us realize the dearth of such attentions which he old suffer. Many of them have been persons of consequence in their prime. As illness and sorrow gradually weaken their spirits, they retire into the background. They are no longer pursued by the honeyed words which interest or affection once heaped upon them. Too often they linger on in more or less cheerless obscurity until they die. Even if they are surrounded with what are called "the comforts" of life, they lack the sweet stimulus which comes from social appreciation.

"I was astonished to find what an interesting person that old lady is who lives at Mrs. D.'s," remarked one lady to another. "She seems to be an aunt or a great-aunt of Mr. D.'s, but she has always sat back in a corner when I have been there, and I never supposed she knew anything in particular. Yesterday Mrs. D. appealed to her several times. It seemed to draw her out. She is remarkably intelligent, and has had wonderful experiences of life."

"Did you think to tell her how much you had enjoyed talking with her?"

"No, that didn't occur to me."

The knowledge that her words and personality had so favourably impressed her visitor might have given the quiet old lady a pleasure which would lighten many weary hours. "There is no tonic like happiness."

A young man said to his mother: "You ought to have seen Aunt Esther to-day when I remarked casually, 'What a pretty gown you have on to-day, and how nice you look in it.' She almost cried, she was so pleased. I hadn't thought before that such a little thing as that would be likely to please her."

"I never expect to eat any cookies so good as those you used to make, mother," said a bearded man one day, and he was shocked when he saw her evident delight in his words, for he remembered that he had not thought to speak before for years of any of the thousand comforts and pleasures with which her skill and love had filled his boyhood.

PATTY'S NEW YEAR.

BY ELIZABETH CUMINGS.

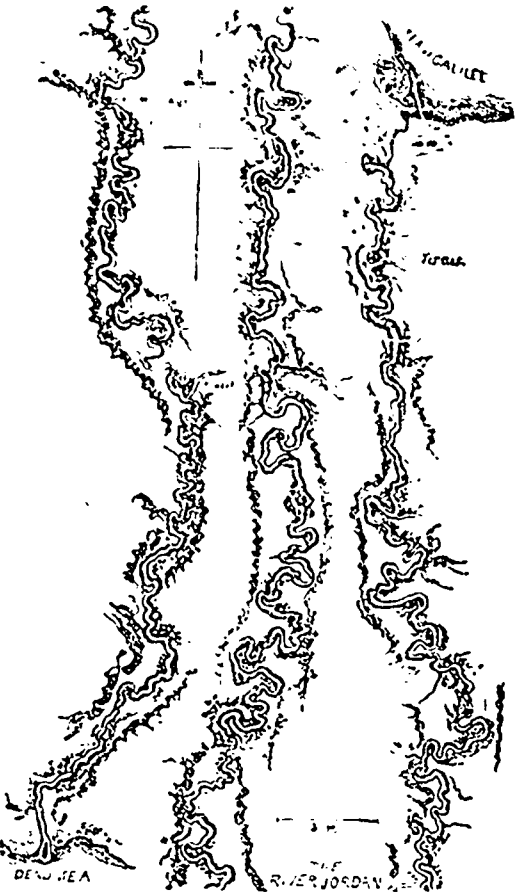
"I hope I'll not be lonesome." There was a little catch in Patty Dent's voice, and she pressed her papa's arm hard. "Gran'ma Howard is so deaf."

"Try to make somebody happy," said Papa Dent, smiling, and as if trying to make people happy were very easy. But as the cars whizzed Patty away he too hoped she would not be lonesome at Thornycroft with only Grandpa and Grandma Howard and Towzer for company. Towzer was a very knowing setter, and he gained courage thinking of him. Moreover, it could not be helped. Baby Dent had something "catching." Patty must go away though it was the last day of the year.

It was very cold, but as Patty dressed she saw a brave blue-jay hopping about in the great elm by her window, and when he sang out at her, "T-whittle," she laughed, and it was a very bright-faced little girl who cried, "Happy New Year!" to Grandpa and Grandma Howard, and Jane Ann, the cook, and Eliakim Putrell, the hired man. But after the chocolate and muffins, and Grandpa grew dizzy over The County Eagle, a heavy feeling began to come in Patty's left side, and she sighed heavily.

If Grandma Howard could not hear well she could see, and she saw that sigh and guessed the reason of it. "Did you bring your skates, Patty love?" she asked, and when Patty nodded, she continued, "The river is frozen so it is smooth as a mirror. Wouldn't you like to take New Year's greetings for me to three dear old friends of mine who live just a little way down on the other shore in three brick houses side by side?" "I'd like it splendid," cried Patty, and Towzer, who loved her dearly, wagged his plummy tail, for he guessed he would be allowed to go along.

Three tired old faces were looking out at the river on which skaters had begun to gather. Old lady Van Brunt had



neuralgia jabbing around where her teeth used to be. Old lady Marshall had rheumatism in her feet and could not step. Old lady Noxon was as well as usual, but her pretty white head shook all the while, for she had creeping palsy. Each old lady felt sad, very sad, and said to herself, "No one in the world thinks about me." But when suddenly in the midst of the sleety, blue river a little figure all crimson and brown skimmed into view, attended by Towzer Howard, each one bent forward and forgot herself. "Grandma sends her love and best wishes," said Patty shyly when she was ushered into Mrs. Van Brunt's parlour. "And I too wish you a happy New Year."

"Muff!" echoed Towzer from the front steps, where he sat on a scratchy mat. "You dear, dear child!" cried old lady Van Brunt, forgetting all about her neuralgia, and she ran into her dining-room where, in a long old-fashioned sideboard, she found most delicious pound-cake hearts. Patty somehow felt she must stay just the same length of time at each house, which was both kind and wise. Mrs. Marshall's Ann, a very black woman, brought out cookies that melted in the mouth, and Mrs. Noxon had crullers equally dainty. Each old lady felt cheered up. Mrs. Marshall was not able to go out that afternoon, but she told Ann "she felt it in her bones she'd have company to tea," and had herself dressed in her best. Her bones were right.

Mrs. Van Brunt and Mrs. Noxon came about four o'clock, and at five the three had jam and tea and cake and grew so merry telling stories of old times, Ann in the kitchen chuckled for sympathy and said to Moses, the hired man, "Jis' you listen at dem pilgrims!" Patty spent the afternoon making a scrap-book for Sammy Putrell, Eliakim's little boy, and that night she told her grandma she'd had a "delightful day." The next morning she wrote her papa all by herself. So please excuse the spelling—Patty was only seven.

"Jan. 2, 189—"

"Dear Papa:
"I'm not lonesome. I'm too bizzzy. My love to you all.
"Patty."
"P.S.—I guess if your bizzzy enuf your never lonesome."

AN OBJECT LESSON.

Every wrong act leaves a scar. Nail a board to a living tree, and the nail-hole—the scar—remains. A parent once used this illustration as an object lesson. "John," said a father to his son, "I wish you would get me the hammer."

"Yes, sir."
"Now a nail and a piece of pine board."

"Here they are, sir."
"Will you drive the nail into the board?"

"It was done."
"Please pull it out again."

"That's easy, sir."
"Now, John," and the father's voice dropped to a lower key, "pull out the nail hole."

Little Clarence—"Pa, if a man from Portugal is a Portuguese, is his little boy a Portugoaling?"