

## The Waning Year.

I **W**ANING not now the waning year,  
I call not back the vanished past,  
No vain regrets shall vex me here,  
Nor doubts perplexed to hold me fast.  
Enough that from myself I turn,  
Still conscious of my sin and wrong—  
That thoughts of love within me burn,  
And move my heart to song.

O love supreme, love manifest  
In the vast world that round me lies;  
That knowing what for each is best,  
In wisdom grants, or else denies;  
O'er sun and stars, o'er land and sea,  
Rules undisturbed with ceaseless care,  
Yet condescends to compass me,  
And with my weakness bear.

The hurray, years may come and go—  
My heart with joy or sorrow fill;  
Yet evermore 'tis mine to know  
That I am close environed still.  
Forgotten not, though I forget;  
Still guarded, though I wayward be—  
Dear Lord, this is thy love, and yet  
How poor is mine for thee!

No king whom armies close surround  
Sits on his throne as firm and sure;  
No state with power and blessings crowned  
Can hold its subjects so secure.  
O sweet persuasion, that to-night  
Assures what is, and is to be—  
That life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,  
Can take my Lord from me.

O rest of faith—the gift of love—  
That dies not with the dying years;  
How brighten now the heavens above,  
How fair this lower world appears  
No marvel that from self I turn,  
Though conscious of my sin and wrong;  
That thoughts of love within me burn,  
And move my heart to song.

## "Faithful Children."

"FAITHFUL children;" or, "Children who believe." One day I met a little girl, six years old, who had had an illness from her birth, which weakened her mental powers. I offered her something, and the dear little creature took it with a smile that showed she trusted me. The Gospel of Jesus is so simple that even those who are not sharp-witted can believe and be saved.

I knew, many years ago, a half-witted youth who used to go about singing bits of bad songs that he had unhappily learned. Boys pelted him with stones, and shouted after him: "Silly Dick!" And poor Dick would swear at them, run after them, and try to hit them. One Sunday he went to a Methodist chapel, heard a simple, lively sermon, in which the preacher told the "old, old story;" and Dick believed, and was converted. He now gave up his bad songs, and learned scraps of Gospel songs. Naughty boys still teased him; but he went quietly on his way saying: "Lads, ye couldn't do soa." I visited poor Dick on his death-bed, and found him very happy. The last time I saw him he was thin, pale, and singing. Calling me by name, he said, with a bright smile:

"I'm going to heaven, and the angels won't call me 'Silly Dick,' will 'um?"

Now, if poor Dick could believe, cannot you? If any one asks me how soon a child may begin to believe Jesus, my answer is:

"As soon as he can believe his mother."

"Faithful children" love Jesus. Surely you can love him! Tiny girls love their dolls, and grieve over them if they are injured. Little boys can love pet birds or rabbits, and will cry if they die. All children can love their fathers and mothers. Now if boys and girls can love a pet animal, and much more their parents, can they not love most of

all the Lord Jesus, who died for them, and loves them beyond all human love!

"Faithful children" obey Jesus. Now, you know, you can obey at home if you like. You ought not to be—you need not be—"unruly." Jesus gives children no hard commands—he simply says: "Follow me," as children can follow.—  
*Early Days.*

## New Year Customs in Olden Lands.

BY LEIGH YOUNGE.

"Ring out, wild bells, across the snow,  
The year is going—let him go;  
Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring out the false, ring in the true."

"THIS shall be unto you the beginning of months, and on it ye shall keep the feast-day," was the command to the Hebrews in the centuries long gone.

And so the beginning of the months, or New Year's day—as in our English tongue we call it—has ever, among all nations, been regarded as a time to be set apart.

The Jew, Mahomedan, Christian, Buddhist, Chinese, and Roman, although differing as to the time from which they reckoned the beginning, all agreed as considering it as the season of seasons, and celebrate it by religious ceremonies, as well as festal rejoicings, differing as widely as their differing faiths.

The early fathers of the Church, in reprobation of the immoral practices of the pagan festivities, prohibited to Christians all rejoicing, and directed that the year be opened with prayer, fasting, and humiliation. The result of this mandate was a combination of the two—the early morning being reserved for the religious exercises, while the evening hours were given up to revelry.

The Hindus call the first day of the year, "The day of the Lord of Creation." It is sacred to the god of wisdom, to whom they sacrifice kids and deer, while they keep the festival with illuminations and general rejoicing.

The Chinese begin this year at the time of the spring equinox, and the festival with which they usher it in is one of their most splendid celebrations. All the people, including the Emperor, mingle together, and unite in thanksgiving for mercy received, and prayer for a genial season and an abundant crop. On that day all the shops are closed, and for several days no business is done, save the selling of candies, sweetmeats, and nuts.

The families collect in their houses on New Year's day, and make offerings to their household gods, of rice, wine, fruits, incense, and sweets of every description. After the "gods" have consumed the spiritual essence of the offerings, then the people are at liberty to enjoy the more earthly remains.

This ceremony concluded, feasting and fireworks make the order of the day. Red is a symbol of joy, and the presents of coins that are received must be strung on a red band to bring good luck.

The festivities are kept up for fifteen days, and end with the Feast of Lanterns, when every variety of style and shape that the imagination can conceive, or the skilful fingers of a Chinaman construct, is fashioned out of paper and bamboo, and made to do duty as a lantern. They are round, flat, square, oval—men, animals, and monsters; the angolic face of a cherub, or the grinning features of a fiend—the more grotesque the better; some roll over and over on the ground, while the light within scintillates like a kaleidoscope; others, shaped like houses and coaches, trundle along the ground.

Those of us who have been in Chinatown, in

San Francisco, on the Fete Day, will never forget the odd, wild, and interesting spectacle which the streets present. And if the reproduction, five thousand miles away from home, is so amusing, we can but wonder what it would be on its native heath, and if we ever have the good fortune to fulfil the desire of our heart, and put a girl's around the world, we shall time our sojourn in Canton to take in the Feast of Lanterns.

In the Middle Ages, when books were few, and travel—except to the crusading countries—little known, an adventurous voyager, Marco Polo, went abroad "strange countries for to see," and penetrated to the court of the Khan of Tartary, and has left us his experiences, "writ in a large book." Somewhat the same reputation he has left behind him which clings to Herodotus, the father of history. But we are not of the number of the iconoclasts, who would tear down all ornamentation, and leave only the framework of the great building which the ages have been erecting since the foundation of the world. What would history be without its tales and myths? So we pore over the malevolent genius of the fairy tale.

In the time of Numa Pompilius the day was dedicated to Janus, the double-faced deity, who faced the future while he looked back upon the past. And it was with somewhat the same idea that now, in many nations, the bells are solemnly tolled as the old year is departing, and thus ring out more joyously as the new year is ushered in.

And we, with the same end in view, hold our midnight watch-meetings, when we review our deeds of the past, which are behind us, and face the unknown new year, of which we know but this: that "Our Father is its King." And as we enter upon its untried paths, with their uncertain joys, and it may be certain pains, let us look upward in happy trust and confidence, sure in the knowledge that, whatever of change the New Year may have in its keeping—

"It can bring with it nothing  
But God can bear us through."

## Now.

How many attendants upon our services are passing through the last year of their lives! In the spring, or the summer, or the autumn they will die. Some of them have a foreboding of the event; disease has already made known its presence by symptoms which cannot be disguised and cannot but alarm. Most of them, however, expect many years to roll before they shall be numbered with the dead. How many are now passing through periods of special religious feeling who will never be moved again as they are now. They fancy that at any time they can turn to God and find the blessed peace of Christ's disciples. Whereas he said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in but shall not be able." There are chains of habit, perverted will, and insensibility which are harder than adamant and stronger than iron. How many Christians have an opportunity to lead friends to the Saviour who will never have another privilege of influencing those whom they may reach now. Of some it is sure that they will be called away by death; the unsaved will die, and those who might have saved them will die. Others will forever drift out of the range of spiritual contact. Mystic, and often ephemeral, are the chords of moral influence. How many ministers are closing their terms of pastoral service never to renew their labours among the same people. What do these stern, and unalterable facts teach? One lesson to all. Now, NOW is the time for work. Now, NOW is the day of salvation.—*Epworth Herald.*