

NEW YEAR'S HYMN.

“**F**EAR that lies before us,
What shall thy record be,
As thy short months roll o'er us,
And swift thy moments flee?
Now thou art fair and spotless
As childhood's opening hour,
Thy bud so pure and stainless,
Say! what shall be thy flower?”

“Thou bring'st now hope to cheer us,
New visions fair and bright,
Of higher aims and conquests,
And purer, clearer light,
New strength for fresh endeavour,
New purpose, firm and high,
New dreams of holy pleasures
Which wait us in the sky.”

“So, year by year, in mercy,
To us it hath been given,
To climb from our past failures
Up one step nearer heaven.
To strive each year our journey
Upon our pilgrim way
That each new fair to-morrow
Be better than to-day.”

“Lord, grant us grace to serve Thee
In serving each and all;
Our hearts keep warm and trustful,
Protect us lest we fall;
And if this year's last moments
On earth we may not see,
We know no harm will reach us,
For we shall be with Thee.”

WINTER IN NORWAY.

This is a characteristic Norwegian scene. During the long cold winter, wolves and foxes prowl around the settlement to such a degree that the Government offers a reward for their heads. The people, therefore, try in every way to catch or kill them. One of the most successful ways is by means of a trap, concealed beneath the snow, as in the picture. Poor fox, I feel sorry for him, beset by dog, and trap, and gun, and men, and boys. In the background are seen the queer barns, or stabburs, as they call them. A magnificent book on Norway, with elegant illustrations, has just been published by the London Tract Society. The editor of the PLEASANT HOURS has succeeded in getting several of these cuts, and will print them in an article on Norway and its People in an early number of the *Methodist Magazine*.

FIRST STEPS.

How nice it was in the baby to begin to walk on New Year's Day! The children said that to one another a great many times. “So cunning,” and “So queer,” and “Just as though he knew it was the day for beginning things.”

“Why?” asked Nell, “what do you begin on New Year's Day?”
“O, resolutions and things,” Josie said. “I always decide on New Year's to take new starts, and be different, you know.”

“And the day after New Year's you take to break the resolutions, don't you?” The children laughed, but the mother said: “Don't make light of Josie's resolutions; it is a great deal better to try, even if you fail, than it is to think nothing about it and make no effort to do right.”

She sighed as she spoke. There was a shadow in this mother's life that made her end many things with a sigh.

“He copied father!” said Josie, going back to the baby. “Didn't you notice how earnestly he watched this morning, when father was pacing off the length of the library? Little Will looked at his feet all the time, and then he crept up by a chair and tried

it. I believe that was the first time he thought of walking.”

Then they laughed again, but the mother sighed, and the father, who was holding out his hands to the baby, looked at her gravely.

“Mother has her sober look on,” said Fannie. “What are you thinking mother? That baby will walk into mischief as fast as he can?”

“No,” she said, smiling now. “I was only thinking how sure the little sons and daughters are to copy father and mother, and how careful we ought to be to take the right steps.”

Father did not stay long, after that. The children gathered around him, begging that he would come home early to let them have a nice New Year's evening together, but he did not promise, and after he had kissed them all, and gone away, the mother looked graver than before.

“I don't like New Year's Day,” said Josie, “and I don't think men ought to go calling without their wives. When I have a wife I will take her along.”

And then the mother felt that Josie was growing old enough to understand the meaning of the shadow in their home. New Year's Day, and New Year's calls were temptations to her husband. He came home late, and gloomy, if not positively cross, and his breath smelled strongly of wine, and he spent the next day in bed, with a throbbing headache. It was not simply once a year that these experiences came, either; they were growing more frequent of late. Would the sons in this home copy their father's steps? This was the heavy shadow that so often darkened the mother's heart, and was already creeping over the children.

The New Year's dinner was on the table—an extra dinner, for the shadow on the mother's heart was not allowed to show much in her life—and baby was fastened into his high chair, and the noisy merry group were about to sit down, when their father's step was heard in the hall.

Mother's face grew pale. Father never dined with them on this day; his round of calls was not completed in time, and besides, he always stayed away from the children's eyes when he had been drinking wine. Had the dreaded hour come when he had fallen too low to remember this?

She half arose to go and meet him, then sat down again. He came into the dining-room, steady step, clear eyes, smiling face. The glad children fluttered around him. “Did you come home to take dinner with us, father?” and “O, father! are you going to stay?” This was a treat, indeed! Business held him during the usual week days, and fashion on New Year's, so the dinner-table saw little of this father. “I've come to stay,” he said, kissing his wife, and then the baby. He left a glad light in the mother's eyes, for there was no smell of wine about him.

“Well, sir,” he said to the baby, “have you forgotten how to walk, old fellow?” Then the eager children:

“O, father, he has been practising all day. And we all think he is copying you, for he tries to take long steps, just as you did this morning.”

“I must take care how I step,” said the father, and he looked over at his wife. “Shall I teach him to copy father?” he asked her.

But she could not answer, and her

eyes filled with tears. O, if she only dared to have her babies copy him in all things!

“I have brought you a New Year's present,” he said, and he leaned forward and pushed across the table a slip of paper.

“Is it a check,” said the eager children, peeping from every side.

“Yes,” he said, smiling; “it is a check on a Resolution Bank, and I mean to keep it honoured. I've been copying Josie to-day, and making resolutions. Josie, my boy, we won't break them to-morrow, nor the next day, will we? If the baby is going to copy us, we must be careful.”

Then the mother, through her tears, read the check, and said “Thank God!”

I, the undersigned, do solemnly promise never to taste again anything that can intoxicate, so help me God.
Signed this New Year's Day, 1884.

JOSIE WARD HOWE

“O, but father, said Josie, “perhaps you will have to taste it, for medicine, you know.”

And when the mother heard his decided answer, “I never will, my boy,” she said again “Thank God.”

So the baby was not the only one who took a first step that day.—*The Pansy*.

CHARMING GIRLS.

The most charming woman in Queen Victoria's court, a few years ago, was one whose features were homely and whose eyes were crossed. The secret of her attraction lay in a certain perpetual freshness, in her dress, turn of mind and her temper.

Jane Welsh Carlyle, when an old, sickly, ugly woman, could so charm men, that a stranger meeting her accidentally in a stage coach followed her for miles, post haste, to return a parasol which she had dropped. The charm lay in her bright vivacity of manner, and the keen sympathy which shone through her features.

Margaret Fuller also possessed this magnetic sympathy, in spite of her enormous egotism. Men and women, the poor and the rich, felt themselves drawn to open their hearts and pour out their troubles to her. Yet Margaret was an exceptionally homely woman.

The popular belief among young girls is that it is only a pretty face which will bring to them the admiration and love which they naturally crave. No books, it is said, have a larger sale than those written that give rules for beauty, recipes to destroy blot or freckles, and to improve the skin or the figure.

Now, no recipe will change the shape of a nose, or the colour of an eye. But any girl by daily baths, and wholesome food, and by breathing pure air, can render her complexion clear and soft. Her hair, nails and teeth can be daintily kept. Her clothes, however cheap, can be fresh and becoming in colour. She can train her mind, even if of ordinary capacity, to be alert and earnest; and if she adds to these a sincere, kindly, sunny temper, she will win friends and love as surely as if all the fairies had brought gifts at her birth.

But it is no use for a woman whose person is soiled and untidy, and whose temper is selfish and irritable at home, to hope to cheat anybody by putting on fine clothes and a smile for com-

pany. The thick, muddy skin and sour expression will betray her.

“John,” said an artist the other day to a Chinaman who was unwillingly acting as model, “smile. If you don't look pleasant I'll not pay you.”

“No use,” grumbled the washerman. “If Chinaman feels ugly all the time, he looks ugly,” which is true of every other man and woman in the world as well as of John Chinaman.

Hawthorne's weird fancy that our secret weakness or sin should hang like a black veil over our faces between us and other men, is true in fact.

Every hidden propensity or vice, every noble trait or feeling, leaves its marks on the features, the expression, the eyes. Day by day and hour by hour, line after line, here a little and there a little, it is recorded on the face as on the tablet, and when we reach middle age there is the story of our lives plainly written, so that he that runs may read. It is not cosmetics, nor rouge, nor depillatories, girls, that will make your faces as you grow older; but the thoughts and words and deeds that have given you the ugliness of Hecate, or “the lineaments of gospel books.”—*Youth's Companion*.

CONQUEROR'S BAND.

“**T**HE world's a battle-field, boys,
Beyond's the promised land;
The war is all around, boys—
Who'll join the Conqueror's Band?”

There's wrong to trample down, boys,
That right may rule the land;
The trumpet calls to arms, boys—
Who'll join the Conqueror's Band?”

Hearts true as steel we need, boys,
High purpose and strong hand;
Each mind and eye alert, boys—
Who'll join the Conqueror's Band!”

Then if we're true and brave, boys,
The foe will sink as sand,
And high will swell the song, boys,
Led by the Conqueror's Band.

THE TRUE SOLDIER.

THREE boys were talking of the work which they hoped to do when they grew to be men.

Said Harry, “I want to be a doctor, like Uncle George, and help folks to get well when they are sick.”

“I want to be a merchant,” said Arthur, “and have a great store and make myself rich. I can help a great many people if I have plenty of money.”

“I don't want to be a doctor or a merchant,” said Walter. “Let me be a soldier, a real soldier, not a play one?”

Aunt Fanny was standing in the window and heard the talk. She smiled at Walter.

“God grant that you may indeed be a real soldier, my boy,” she said.

“Why, Aunt Fanny! I thought that ladies were always afraid of war,” said Walter.

“The real soldier,” said Aunt Fanny, “will fight with other weapons than guns and swords. He will fight sin and wrong-doing with the weapons which God will give him. He will never run before the enemy, because he will know that God is on his side. He will be brave and strong and true, because he will be sure that the great Captain is looking at him, and is ready to reach out his hand to save him from defeat. Such a soldier I hope you will be.”