

The New Year.

The close of the old year is a time of serious thought to any one who ever thinks at all. It is the closing of one volume of life, with all its history of success and failure. If there are blots and stains and blank pages, we cannot help them now. The diary is closed and put away, and a new volume is put in our hands to be filled page by page. Shall it be better or worse than the last?

Almost every one begins the new year with good resolutions. That is all very well as far as it goes, but the trouble is that having made the resolutions we sit down content with them. We sometimes hear it said that "to resolve is everything!" In truth, to resolve is nothing unless those resolutions are carried at once into action.

I am going to propose a New Year's motto for every girl and boy who reads this paper. It is very short but it means a great deal. "Be faithful."

"What is it to be faithful?" I asked a little girl not long ago. Her answer was given after some consideration, "it is to do as you agree, and to do your best every time." I thought it a very good reply.

Too many—grown people as well as children—are like the younger son in our Lord's parable. They say, "I go, sir," but they go not (St. Matt. xxi. 18). John promises to get the kindling wood ready for his mother. He does it perhaps for a week, and there is an end of it. Norah takes a class in sewing school. She goes two or three times. Then it becomes an old story. A little excuse serves to keep her away. Then her place is vacant and the class is scattered.

The unfaithful person often does not realize that he is unfaithful. Dick promised one winter to keep my walks free from snow, for which I was to pay him a certain sum. He did very well for a little while. Then he began to slight his work, to come when snow was light and leave it when it was heavy. Finally I had to engage some one else. But Dick came for his pay all the same, and was very much surprised and injured that he did not get it. He remembered the days he had worked and forgot the others. An unfaithful person is a perpetual vexation and disappointment.

Be faithful then in all things. Do your work well, both at home and in school. Put your whole heart into it, even when it is distasteful, and see how much better it will go. Above all, be faithful in your religious duties—your prayers and Bible reading and Sunday-school lessons.

"Be faithful unto death," says our Lord "and I will give thee a crown of life."

Does God Send Trouble?

A little girl was one day sitting apparently lost in thought. There was quite a line across her young forehead, and a look in her clear eyes which her mother, seated at a little distance engaged in needlework, anxiously observed.

"What is the trouble, Minnie?" she asked at last.

"Mamma, does God send trouble?" replied the child, answering her mother's question by another.

Now, Mrs. Vivien knew this presented a difficulty which had puzzled wiser heads than her little girl's, and often found it occurred to children; so she tried to make her reply very clear and simple.

"He surely does," she said; "but even when trouble does not come directly from Him, He permits and overrules it for our good. Too often, however, we bring trouble upon ourselves by wrong-doing; and even when sin is confessed and forgiven, it results in sorrow and shame. I shall try to make this plainer by examples. You remember the beautiful story of the poor widow with whom the prophet Elijah dwelt. When her child died, he cried unto the Lord, and said, 'O Lord my God, hast Thou brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, in slaying her son?' The Lord here showed, as well as when the destroying angel slew the first-born in Egypt, that His was the right to take the life He had given. In the case of Job, we see the trouble brought by Satan allowed by God. Now look at Joshua vii. A man of Israel took some precious spoil which he was forbidden to touch, and Israel fled before their enemies on account of this sin. It was put away by a terrible judgment on the family in the valley of Achor (or trouble)."

Of course there was a great deal in this which Minnie Vivien could not all at once understand; but if other children will try to do so, or get their parents or teachers to explain, it will clear away a difficulty that often presents itself to young minds.

Kitty's Birthday.

Kitty was busy. Her mamma had said to her: "You may have just what you like for dinner to-morrow, dear, because it is your birthday."

In this home the birthdays were made "happy days," especially for the one whose birthday it was. All tried to make that one happy.

But Kitty had never ordered a dinner before. When she was done she brought to her mamma a piece of paper like this:—

BILL OF FARE.

September 24.

Bread,
Butter,
Lima Beans,
Mashed potatoes,
Milk,
Tomatoes,
Apple Pie,
Batter Pudding.

"That will do very well," said her mamma, when she had read it.

Kitty helped to get dinner. She brought in the tomatoes, set the table, sliced the apples for the pie. She was so old now.

And she went riding, and swung in the hammock, for they lived in the country and it was a pleasant day; and there were some games on the lawn, and she read a while in her new books, nestled comfortably in a great arm-chair.

The new books were birthday presents, to make the day's happiness stay longer. One was a lovely book about a little girl and her sister, and another was "Mother Goose Melodies."

Kitty herself was going to be a poet.

Then there was a plate of prettiest china ware, for her own use at the table; and a cup with a slip of paper inside, on which was written, "From mamma."

The cup had on it these words, in gilt letters: "Forget me not."

"And I never will!" said Kitty softly, speaking to herself.

The Child-Dyke.

In Holland the ground is so flat and low that two or three times the sea has rushed in over parts of it and destroyed whole towns. In one of these floods, about 200 years ago, more than 20,000 people were drowned. In some of the towns that were flooded not a creature survived. In other parts hundreds of people were out in boats, trying to save as many lives as possible; and on a little bit of an island what do you think they found? Why, an old cradle, with a baby asleep in it, and an old cat curled up at her feet, all safe and sound.

Where the little voyagers came from, and to whom they belonged, no one could tell; but in memory of them this little island was called "Kinder-dyke" (child dyke), and it goes by that name to this day; and this story of a remarkable instance of God's providence is told to thousands of little people all over Holland.—Selected.

Tommy's Diary.

One day Tommy saw his mother writing in a little book, and he asked her what she was doing.

"I am writing in my diary," she answered.

"I want a diwy, too, to wite in," said he.

"But you cannot write," said his mother.

"You can wite it for me," said Tommy.

It was pretty near Christmas, and very likely Santa Claus heard what Tommy said, for when he came down the chimney on Christmas morning, he left in his stocking with the other things a little book marked "For Tommy."

That very night when his mother tucked him in his little crib, Tommy said, "I dess I'll wite in my diwy before I doe to seep,—mamma, you wite it."

His mother took the little book, brought her pencil and said: "Well, what shall I say? To-day is Friday. I'll wite the date and then you tell me."

Friday: she wrote, and then Tommy said:—

"Santa Claus was naughty. He did bring me a hoss, and his tail did pull wite out." Then Tommy dropped off to sleep. The next night and for several nights he continued to ask his mother to "wite in his diwy." She did so, and each night, after she had written the date, this is what he told her to say:—

Saturday: "Me had a barf, and de soap did get in my eye. Me did open my mouf and squeam."

Sunday: "Me did not want to doe to turch, but me went, and my new tippet did tickle my ear."

Monday: "Kitty did play wid my hoss's tail. Me did slap de kitty. Mummer said I must not."

Tuesday: "My 'ittie tishter hass a new toof. See did bite me hard."

Wednesday: "It did rain, and de rain did hop up and down, and de window wass all over winkles."

Thursday: "Me did play on de side-walk and eat my apple. Anoder boy did take it and did bite it all up. Me don't want to keep a diwy."

—Strive that your prayer be not more languid than it is for the momentary relief from pain of husband or child,—when it is uttered for the multitude of those who have none to love them—and is for all who are desolate and oppressed.—Ruskin.

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