

The Glad New Year.

Ring, ring, ye gladome bells,
From yonder bell-towers high I
Ring out your joyful strains
From earth to sky I
For, lo, a stranger comes
Kingly and proud,
Upon the blast
He rideth fast,
Peal out your welcome loud I
Ring merrily,
Ring cheerily,
To the great, the coming year,
The glad New Year I

We'll lift with braver heart,
Life's burden once again,
We'll set a nobler part
Among our fellow men;
Hope's flowers again shall bloom
Along life's dusty ways,
And murmurings and sighs
Shall change to prayer and praise.
Faith shall with clearer vision
Look toward the coming days,
When peace shall o'er division
Reign with benignant rays;
When man to man as brother
Shall lend a helping hand,
And God's blessed benediction
Rest on our smiling land I

Ring, ring, ye bells I
Ring loud, ring high I
Peal out your merry cheer
From earth to sky,
To greet the glad New Year,
The over glad New Year I

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Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

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A TALK ABOUT NEW YEAR'S DAY.

BY ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"I do not understand it at all."
"Understand what, Eva, child?"
"About the first of January being called New Year's, Aunt Mary. What was the beginning of it?"

"You can see for yourself, dear, that time had to be distributed or divided in some way adaptable to the purposes of life."

"God did that by the sun, the moon and stars, and the seasons, did he not, Aunt Mary?"

"Certainly; and that is why the solar day and the solar year, which complete the circle of the seasons and the lunar month, are called the natural divisions of time."

"What does solar mean, Aunt Mary?"

"Pertaining to the sun; and lunar pertaining to the moon."

"How about the hour and the week, Aunt Mary?"

"Although of ancient, and very general use, they are not governed by any fixed rules, as are the month and the year."

"But, Aunt Mary, did not God at the creation arrange the week when he rested on the seventh day?"

"That is according to the Mosaic recital;

those who reject that are puzzled to account for its origin."

"Why do people disbelieve the Bible, Aunt Mary?"

"It is in the nature of man to seek for the reason and for the origin of things."

"A great many have puzzled their brains over this, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; since the remote ages kings and princes and many learned men have been engaged in the reformation of the calendar. A great many different methods have been tried and a vast amount of calculation done; but all proved more or less unsatisfactory until Julius Cæsar, a Roman emperor, adopted a system called the Julian method of computing time, commencing with January 1, the year of the birth of our Saviour; hence the abbreviation A.D. Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. This remained until the sixteenth century, although not absolutely correct, and is called the old style."

"And that is what O. S. means. Now, what is N. S.—new style?"

"Our present method; where the surplus time was gathered up once in four years, by Pope Gregory XIII."

"And that is leap year and leap day. I know about that, because my Cousin Gregory was so named because he was born on February 29, and my papa always calls him Pope Gregory thirteenth."

"Do you understand it any better now?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Mary; and I thank you very much. When I am older I shall read up everything I can find about the calendar. But don't you think it is beautiful that all those centuries, when people were studying how to make the years come out even, all God's plans went on just the same, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, and what was the use of anything different?"

"For all business and historical purposes it was necessary to have a correct system; and the perfection to which the mathematicians at length arrived is a stimulus for us all not to be satisfied with anything short of the best."

"I never knew before, Aunt Mary, that every time we name the year, or write it, we tell how long since Jesus was born. I think, now that I know about it, I shall be reminded to do my best always, for his sake."

THE NEAREST DUTY.

BY EDNA H. TURPIN.

"My daughter, my dear child," began Mrs. Leach, when Marion came bonneted and clanked into the dining-room, "surely you are not thinking about going out this morning? Why—"

"Mother," interrupted Marion, fretfully, "it does seem strange that you oppose my doing my duty. I told you yesterday I had promised to take Mrs. Hill a basket of food and some new papers to-day. It would be very selfish for me to sit down here at home, and, being comfortable myself, not to care for the wants of others."

Mrs. Leach's cheek flushed at the reproachful sharpness of her daughter's tone, but she answered quietly:

"My child, I am sorry not to encourage you in a mission of mercy, but I really do not think that it is prudent for you to venture out in this snow-storm. You are still so unwell as to be too susceptible to cold to expose yourself with impunity. Can't you write a note, dear, and let me send it with the basket?"

But Marion's face grew more determined. "If it were a pleasure-trip I had planned, mother, of course I should give it up, but under the circumstances, I feel that it is my duty to go," and she slung the basket on her arm and went out.

It was New Year's morning and Marion Leach had begun the day full of beautiful resolutions and noble thoughts. Every day, she resolved, she would try to do some good deed—and this was the beginning. Her mother's disapprobation weighed on her mind, and the morning seemed very dreary as her glow of enthusiasm faded. She mused bitterly:

"It does seem hard that someone is always ready to thwart my plans of usefulness. I suppose that is a cross I have to bear. Certainly mother was very unreasonable. As if Jamie would do! But I wish I hadn't spoken so sharply."

Mrs. Hill's grateful appreciation of the comforts she carried, however, lightened the cloud which had fallen on her spirits, and she started home feeling happier because she had brightened the poor woman's dismal day. But, alas! she contracted a cold from the exposure and this developed into an acute attack of bronchitis.

One day as she was just beginning to recover, the doctor turned as he was leaving the room to say:

"By the way, Miss Marion, I must not forget to tell you how pleased Mrs. Hill is to hear of your convalescence. She told me about your charity, she grew voluble and tearful in her praises of the kind young lady, an angel—of imprudence, I told her. But she exclaimed that if Miss Marion had died, as heaven be praised she didn't, it would have been as a blessed saint and martyr."

"I am indeed glad," said Mrs. Leach, gravely, "that my daughter bids fair to recover from the illness caused by her neglect of her first duty."

"Neglect of duty! O mother!" cried Marion, bursting into tears. Then she dried her eyes and felt sullenly resentful of her mother's lack of appreciation and injustice as she chose to consider it. But that afternoon, as her mother sat sewing by her bedside, she could not resist speaking on the subject.

"Mother," she said, "how could you say I neglected duty by going to Mrs. Hill's?"

"I did not say merely neglecting duty," answered her mother, "I said neglecting your first duty. It was a duty to care for Mrs. Hill, but, aside from the fact that it was unnecessary for you to go in person"—Marion blushed—"it was not your first duty."

"I don't understand. If it was a duty what question could there be of priority?"

"Let us try to understand," said Mrs. Leach, folding up her work and putting it aside. "Carlyle somewhere preaches his gospel of work from the text: 'Do to-day thy nearest duty.' Now the world is full of shapeless masses of duties, and it is our business to select those which belong to us, and build up our Christian life and character. Your first duty was to care for your own health; it was your duty not only to yourself, but to the God who gave you this delicate body to care for. To us who love and watch over you—even to poor Mrs. Hill, for would you not have been in a condition to help her more substantially had you not incurred the pain and expense of this illness?"

"But, mother, that sounds too selfish. My first duty always to keep comfortable!"

"Not always, dear. Take this as a rule: 'Hesitate not to risk thine own life for another when the chance of saving his is greater than of losing thine own.' But count it madness, not courage, to throw away thine with his.' And whenever we try to substitute another for our nearest duty, it ceases to be a duty at all, and becomes a mere act of wicked self-gratification. Begin your New Year again, my child, by resolving to try to keep to the 'nearest duty.'"

LIVING A DAY AT A TIME.

THE beginning of a new year brings to many people an overwhelming sense of work to be done and burdens to be borne. All the uncertainties, the labours, the possibilities, the disasters of the coming twelve months seem to crowd upon the imagination, and instead of hopeful cheer there comes over us a feeling of discouragement. All of this can be remedied if we remember we need to live but a day at a time. All the man needs who carries his lantern is to get light sufficient for the next step, and the future will take care of itself. If any one of us, even the strongest, were called to face the work of life in a single moment we would fail; but when that burden is broken into fragments, the weakest can carry it if he will. We need to have the disposition which looks hopefully upon the world, that refuses always to see the dark side, run away from its burdens, or sit down under its calamities. We need to have the conviction born of heaven that He will take care of his own. This does not mean that his children shall not bear burdens, carry sad hearts, and

endure great trials; but it does mean that these shall come not all at once, but a day at a time, and that in the midst of a day of these the divine strength shall be sufficient for us. As the manna came to the hungry every morning, so divine strength to bear all the ills of life will come daily to those who seek for it.

Another Year.

ANOTHER year is fading
Into the shadows past,
What if for me, my Saviour,
This year should be the last?
Could I, with joy recalling
The hours and moments gone,
Say I had well employed them,
Nor o'er one failure mourn?

Another year is passing,
And I am passing too—
Passing from earth and earthly scenes
To those earth never knew.
What shall I plead when standing
Before the "Great White Throne"?
Nothing, O Christ, but thine own blood,
Thy righteousness mine own.

Another year is dying,
And time is dying too,
And all things here below, with him,
Are passing out of view.
Passing as swiftly as our thoughts
Flit through our minds, then flee.
Oh, realize by facts like these,
What ought our lives to be?

Another year is adding
To those already dead.
Dead! will they never rise again?
Where, all the actions fled?
We surely yet shall meet again,
This old year and our souls:
His deeds will greet us yet, though now
Oblivion o'er him rolls.

We leave the year with Jesus
To sprinkle with his blood:
Jesus the loving One, who once
As our Sin-bearer stood.
We leave the year with Jesus,
And thus the weight is gone.
We trust the future all to him
Who all its weight hath borne.

THE NEW YEAR.

MANY of us shall quietly lie down to rest on the 31st December, and when we shall awake a new year will be upon us. But we shall find in us the same nature we had before. Our old habits will be as strong, our moral weaknesses as weak, and our temptations just as strong—in early January as in late December. The earth has gone on in its revolution, and the stars have kept their courses: but men and women are no better because of these physical transformations. Those who went to rest with their faces downward, and their hearts against God and the triumph of his truth, are started in the same direction on New Year's morning, while those who are looking upward and climbing the steep that lead to a heavenly life will not be helped or hindered by the advent of the new year. Sometimes those who are living badly apply their New-Year resolutions, and the descent for the time is not so rapid. So, also, the spur of the new year may help one to travel more rapidly on the upward grade; but, as a rule, New-Year resolutions do not change the directions of human life. A new year does not bring to us a new nature, else how many would drop their burdens as the 1st of January comes in. A reliance on divine guidance and divine strength will avail more than good resolutions. Seek the life that needs no New-Year's reforming.

Star of Bethlehem.

O STAR of wonder!
Star of the night!
O star of wondrous beauty-bright!
Onward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to that perfect Light.

"Not until a man knows more than the average man, does he come to realize how little he does know."