

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## A New Year.

BY MARGARET E. SANOSTER.

Just at the turn of the midnight,  
When the children are fast asleep,  
The tired Old Year steps out by himself,  
Glad of a chance to be laid on the shelf,  
And the New Year takes a peep

At the beautiful world that is waiting  
For the honours that he will bring;  
For the wonderful things in his peddler's  
back,  
Weather, all sorts, there will be no lack,  
And many a marvellous thing.

When the children awake in the morning,  
Shouting their "Happy New Year,"  
The Year will be started well on  
his way,  
Swinging along through his first  
white day,  
With the path before him clear.

Twelve long months for his  
journey;  
Fifty-two weeks of a spell;  
At the end of it all he'll step out  
by himself,  
Glad of a chance to be laid on  
the shelf,  
At the stroke of the midnight  
bell.

## LOST AND FOUND.

BY MARY MURRAY.

"Are you crying, Molly?"  
Tommy asked from his little cot.  
Molly raised her head from  
under the clothes. "I want  
muvver, Tommy, I do want  
muvver so much. I'm very lone-  
some," and her voice died away  
in a faint wail.

"Don't cry, little Molly, I'll  
come in your bed and muvver  
you," Tom said, sliding to the  
floor, and passing the uncurtained  
nursery window. "God has  
hung out his lamp, Molly," he  
said solemnly. "He knows we  
feel lonesome, perhaps mother's  
told him."

Molly tumbled out of her cot,  
too, and stood beside him, angel-  
like in her white nightgown,  
looking with bright, rapt eyes at  
the sailing moon. But soon her  
former trouble returned, and  
great tears rolled down her  
cheeks.

"I want muvver," she sobbed.  
Tommy took her golden head  
in both his arms and pressed it  
hard to his breast. "There,  
I'll muvver you," he said, bravely  
trying to keep back his own  
tears. "Let's get into your  
bed, Molly, and I'll tell you  
something. I'll never hit you  
again, Molly—mother didn't like  
us to quarrel."

"I'm not crying about that,"  
Molly said, scrambling back into  
her cot, "cause I know it was  
only play. But my dolly's broke  
her arm, an' I don't know what  
to do for her."

"Poor little Molly," Tom said,  
stroking her hair as he had seen  
his mother do. "Stop crying,  
and I'll tell you something—something  
very nice."

Molly choked down her sobs, and sat  
up in bed, with Tom's arms around her,  
and the broken doll on her knee. "What  
is it, Tommy?" she asked.

"Gran'pa told it me," said Tom. "It's  
about Moses."

"Little baby Moses in the bulrushes?"  
Molly asked, eagerly. She loved the  
picture in the great Bible they looked  
at on Sundays.

"Yes; Moses when he was a man. It's  
not all about Moses, though; it's a plan  
of mine, Molly, to get mother back  
again."

"Oh! Tommy, how nice!" Molly cried,  
clapping her hands in joy.

"Yes; I've thought about it a lot, Molly,  
and we'll do it to-night," said Tom.  
"You can come, too."

"Where?" Molly asked excitedly.

Gran'pa told me as we walked home  
from church last Sabbath—you were with  
nurse, you know, last Sabbath morning—"

"Yes, Tommy."  
"Well, we passed a big holly tree, and  
gran'pa told me it was called 'Christa  
thorn,' and that God showed himself to  
Moses in a burning holly tree. And I've  
thought, and 'thought, and thought," he  
said, earnestly.

"Yes, Tommy," said Molly.  
"Well let's go and ask God to send  
mother back. P'raps he'll hear us bet-  
ter there, and I can find the way."

"Won't it be cold, Tommy?" Molly  
said, shivering.

"God'll warm us. And maybe he'll  
burn up the tree, like he did for Moses,"

ments as the shadows they cast on the  
frozen snow, had left the house far be-  
hind, and hand-in-hand were speeding  
rapidly in the direction of the holly tree.  
It was not long before they reached it,  
but not before Molly had fallen and  
bruised her knee badly and become wet  
with the snow. Tommy cheered her as  
well as he could with the manful cour-  
age of seven years.

"I am sure God will hear our prayer,  
Molly," he said. "See, here is the holly.  
We must kneel down and cla— our  
hands."

"Do you think God will light it at  
once?" Molly asked in awe-struck tones.

"No, we must wait a bit," Tom said,  
and side by side they knelt under the

again." And then he bent down and  
kissed Tommy to comfort him, for the  
little boy was crying. Never before had  
Tommy felt how much his grandfather  
loved him, for the old clergyman had  
half-forgotten how to show his affection  
until to-night, and the little boy stole  
his hand into his, and squeezed it tightly.  
Molly had fallen asleep in her grand-  
father's arms, and they walked in silence  
back to the house. Lamps were blazing  
in the windows, and the hall door was  
wide open, sending out a stream of golden  
light into the night. As they entered, a  
girl came running forward to meet them.  
"Father, thank God you have found  
the children!" she cried, warmly. "I  
have only just arrived, and when I went  
upstairs their beds were empty. Is this  
Molly?" and she began to kiss the sleep-  
ing child.

Molly awoke, and clasped her round the  
neck, blinking sleepily into the beautiful  
face bending over her.

"Is it muvver come back?" she whis-  
pered.

A great tear splashed down on her face.  
"No, my darling, I am only your aunt,"  
the girl answered sadly.

Tommy came forward and took her  
hand.

"God has sent you till we go to  
mother," he said, reverently.

## The Old Year.

BY E. A. D.

"Mother," said Esther May,  
Dro it was New Year's Day.  
"The picture which you hung,  
Upon my bedroom wall,  
I do not like at all;  
It shows the new year young,  
And beautiful and gay,  
The old year bent and gray,  
His visage lined with care—  
So different are the pair  
Who pass each other by,  
That I could almost cry."

"How should the old year look?  
Now, let me understand!"  
The mother said, and took  
Gently her little hand.

"He ought to look more wise,  
And clearer in the eyes;  
About him he should wear  
A glad, triumphant air,  
Like one who has done well;  
His breast should not be thin,  
But ought to rise and swell,  
And just when enters in  
The new year, he should smile,  
Encouragingly, while  
He calls: 'Come, have no fear,  
Follow on, little new year,  
For I have gone before,  
And opened many a door.'"

"Ah, truly, you are right,"  
Answered the mother mild,  
'And always in your sight,  
May it be thus, my child,  
Each year that onward goes,  
Seeming but to disclose  
Some farther hope, some door,  
Discovered not before."

"Now, what is that noise?" said the  
glad New Year,  
"Now, what is that singular sound that  
I hear?  
As if all the paper in all the world  
Were rattled and shaken and twisted and  
twirled?"

Oh, that, said the jolly old earth, "is  
the noise  
Of all my children, both girls and boys,  
A-turning over their leaves so now,  
And all to do honour, New Year, to you."

In the Transvaal and Swaziland Dis-  
trict the Wesleyans have some forty-  
three missionaries and assistant mission-  
aries, 100 paid agents, and ten times that  
number who render gratuitous service.  
The chapels and other preaching places  
number 426, whilst the membership, in-  
cluding those on trial, is 12,200, with  
nearly 8,000 children in the schools—  
Recorder.



LOST AND FOUND.

he answered, firmly. "Don't be afraid,  
Molly, I'll take care of you."

Molly began to cry. "I'm frightened,  
Tommy," she whispered, "and I'm wery,  
wery cold."

"Oh, we'll put on our clothes first, I'll  
dress you, Molly. And maybe God'll  
help poor Dolly's arm, too, if we ask  
him."

"Do you think he will? I'll take  
dolly with me," Molly answered. They  
had soon dressed themselves and crept  
down the dimly-lighted staircase into the  
hall. Sounds of singing came in faint  
waves from the kitchen, for it was  
Christmas Eve; but no one noticed the  
children's exit, for their grandfather was  
visiting a sick parishioner, and their  
nurse had gone to the kitchen to enjoy  
herself with the others.

In a few minutes, the two little figures,  
almost as black in their mourning gar-

snow-hidden boughs. As they waited,  
the moon hid behind a cloud, and a few  
feathery flakes of snow began to fall.

"Lord, we're waiting, please," Tommy  
cried. But no answer came, save the  
chill wind hurdling and creaking through  
the boughs, and shaking down snow on  
the suppliant little ones, so they shut  
their eyes tightly and waited a while  
longer, half dreading and half hoping to  
open them. The sound of approaching  
footsteps fell on their ears, and Tommy  
rose jubilantly.

"It is coming now, Molly," he cried.  
It was only their white-haired grand-  
father returning from his visit. He  
lifted Molly in his arms, his eyes filling  
with tears at the thought of their faith-  
ful request, as they explained their plan  
to him.

"Hush, my darlings," he said tenderly.  
"In God's own time you will be together