

who "was acquainted with grief," and whose gospel demands earnest lives from those who embrace it. Is it not time for earnest Christians to call a halt on these wordly methods for raising money for church support and to fall back upon the scriptural plan of free will offerings.—*The Church News.*

Family Department.

THE COMING YEAR.

(*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*)

What is the New Year bringing to us,
Hid in the white, white mist,
Should we have the courage to seek it,
If what were to come, we wist?

What if the road be cold and cheerless,
Never a star to help us on,
Never a single gleam of sunshine,
Never a smile till the year was done.

List to the passing bell now ringing,
See the old sweet year is dead,
Have you no tears? he was so faithful,
Have you never a tear to shed?

What if he brought you many a sorrow,
What if he sang a sad, sad song,
Then he taught you a useful lesson,
Taught you to see both right and wrong.

You, who weep so sadly for him,
Fearing to face this untried year,
Ah, you say, you did so love him,
Much he brought you fair and dear.

And this great and awful future,
Sorrows and tears are in his hand,
All will brighten as you near it,
Step forth bravely thro' the land.

If the way be dark and lonely,
Look, the stars shine overhead,
Never daunted, still press forward,
Till the "New Year" too is dead.

The Circumcision, 1894.

LOUIE.

The Story of a Short Life.

BY JULIANA HORATIO EWING.

CHAPTER I.

"Most annoying!" said the Master of the House. His thick eyebrows were puckered just then with the vexation of his thoughts; but the lines of annoyance on his forehead were to some extent fixed lines. They helped to make him look older than his age—he was not forty—and they gathered into a fierce frown as his elbow was softly touched by his little son.

The child was defiantly like his father, even to a knitted brow, for his whole face was crumpled with the vigor of some resolve which he found it hard to keep, and which was symbolized by his holding the little red tip of his tongue betwixt finger and thumb.

"Put your hands down, Leonard! Put your tongue in, sir! What are you after? What do you want? What are you doing here? Be off to the nursery, and tell Jemima to keep you there. Your mother and I are busy."

Far behind the boy, on the wall, hung the portrait of one of his ancestors—a youth of sixteen years. The painting was by Vandyck, and it was the most valuable of the many valuable things that strewed and decorated the room. A very perfect example of the master's work, and uninjured by time. The young cavalier's face was more interesting than handsome, but so eager and refined that, set off as it was by pale blue satin and falling

hair, he might have been called effeminate, if his brief life, which ended on the field of Naseby, had not done more than common to prove his manhood. A coat-of-arms, blazoned in the corner of the painting, had some appearance of having been added later. Below this was rudely inscribed, in yellow paint, the motto which also decorated the elaborate stone mantelpiece opposite—*Lætus sorte mea.*

Leonard was so fond of that picture. It was known to his childish affections as 'Uncle Rupert.' He constantly wished that he could get into the frame and play with the dog—the dog with the upturned face and melancholy eyes, and odd resemblance to a long-haired cavalier—on whose faithful head Uncle Rupert's slender fingers perpetually reposed.

Though not able to play with the dog, Leonard did play with Uncle Rupert—the game of trying to get out of the reach of his eyes.

"I play 'Puss-in-the-corner' with him," the child was wont to explain; "but whichever corner I get into, his eyes come after me. The dog looks at Uncle Rupert always and, Uncle Rupert always looks at me." . . . "To see if you are growing up a good boy and a gallant young gentleman, such as he was." So Leonard's parents and guardians explained the matter to him, and he devoutly believed them.

Many an older and less credulous spectator stood in the light of those painted eyes, and acknowledged their spell. Very marvellous was the cunning which by dabs and streaks of color had kept the spirit of this long-dead youth to gaze at his descendants from a sheet of canvas and stir the sympathy of strangers, parted by more than two centuries from his sorrows, with the mock melancholy of painted tears. For whether the painter had just overdone some trick of representing their liquidness, or whether the boy's eyes had brimmed over as he was standing for his portrait (his father and elder brother had died in the civil war before him), there remains no tradition to tell. But Vandyck never painted a portrait fuller of sad dignity, even in those troubled times.

Happily for his elders, Leonard invented for himself a reason for the obvious tears.

I believe Uncle Rupert knew that they were going to chop the poor king's head off, and that's why he looks as if he were going to cry."

It was partly because the child himself looked as if he were going to cry—and that not fractionally, but despite a struggle with himself—that, as he stood before the Master of the House, he might have been that other master of the same house come to life again at six years of age. His long, fair hair, the pliable nervous fingers, which he had put down as he was bid, the strenuous tension of his little figure under a sense of injustice, and, and above all his beautiful eyes, in which the tears now brimmed over the eyelashes as the waters of a lake well up through the reeds that fringe its banks. He was very, very like Uncle Rupert when he turned those eyes on his mother in mute reproach.

Lady Jane came to his defence.

"I think Leonard meant to be good. I made him promise me to try and cure himself of the habit of speaking to you when you are speaking to someone else. But, dear Leonard" (and she took the hand that had touched his father's elbow), "I don't think you were quite on honor when you interrupted Father with this hand, though you were holding your tongue with the other. That is what we call keeping a promise to the ear and breaking it to the sense."

All the cavalier dignity came unstarched in Leonard's figure. With a red face, he answered bluntly, "I'm very sorry. I meant to keep my promise."

"Next time keep it well, as a gentleman should. Now, what do you want?"

"Pencil and paper, please."

"There they are. Take them to the nursery, as father told you."

Leonard looked at his father. He had not been spoilt for six years by an irritable and indulgent parent without learning those arts of diplomacy in which children quickly become experts.

"Oh, he can stay," said the Master of the House, "and he may say a word now and then, if he doesn't talk too much. Boys can't sit mumchance always—can they, Len? There kiss your poor old father, and get away and keep quiet."

Lady Jane made one of many fruitless efforts on behalf of discipline.

"I think, dear, as you told him to go, he had better go now."

"He will go, pretty sharp, if he isn't good. Now, for pity's sake, let's talk out this affair, and let me get back to my work."

"Have you been writing poetry this morning, father dear?" Leonard inquired, urbanely.

He was now lolling against a writing-table of the first empire, where sheets of paper lay like fallen leaves among Japanese bronzes, old and elaborate candlesticks, grotesque letter clips and paper-weights, quaint pottery, big seals, and springs flowers in slender Venetian glasses of many colors.

"I wrote three lines, and was interrupted four times," replied his sire, with bitter brevity.

"I think I'll write some poetry. I don't mind being interrupted. May I have your ink?"

"No, you may not!" roared the Master of the House and of the inkpot of priceless china which Leonard had seized. "Now, be off to the nursery!"

"I won't touch anything. I am going to draw out of the window," said Leonard, calmly.

He had practiced the art of being troublesome to the verge of expulsion ever since he had had a whim of his own, and as skilfully as he played other games. He was seated among the cushions of the oriel window seat (colored rays from coats of arms in the upper panes falling on his fair hair with a fanciful effect of canonizing him for his sudden goodness) almost before his father could reply.

"I advise you to stay there, and to keep quiet. Lady Jane took up the broken thread of conversation in despair.

"Have you ever seen him?"

"Yes; years ago."

"You know I never saw either. Your sister was much older than you; wasn't she?"

"The shadows move so on the grass, and the elms have so many branches, I think I shall turn round and draw the fire-place," murmured Leonard.

"Ten years. You may be sure, if I had been grown up I should never have allowed the marriage. I cannot think what possessed my father—"

"I am doing the inscription! I can print old English. What does L., diphthong Æ. T. U. S. mean?" said Leonard.

"It means joyful, contented, happy.—I was at Eton at the time. Disastrous ill-luck!"

"Are there any children?"

"One son. And to crown all, his regiment is at Asholt. Nice family party!"

"A young man! Has he been well brought up?"

"What does—"

"Will you hold your tongue, Leonard?—Is he likely to have been well brought up? However, he's 'in the service,' as they say. I wish it didn't make one think of funkeys, what with the word service, and the liveries (I mean uniforms), and the legs, and shoulders, and swagger, and tag-rags, and epaulettes, and the fatiguing alertness and attentiveness of 'men in the service.'

The Master of the House spoke with the pettish accent of one who says what he does not mean, partly for lack of something better to do, and partly to avenge some inward vexation