

A PSALM FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE.

BY MISS MULLOCH.

FRIEND stands at the door,
In either tight-closed hand
Hiding rich gifts, three hundred and three
Waiting to strow them daily o'er the land
Even as seed the sower.
Each drops he, trends it in and passes by;
It cannot be made fruitful till it die.

O good New Year, we clasp
This warm shut hand of thine,
Loosing fore-ever, with half sigh, half grasp,
That which from ours fall, like dead fingers'
twine.
Ay, whether fierce its grasp
Has been, or gentle, having been, we know
That it was blessed; let the Old Year go.

O New Year, teach us faith!
The road of life is hard,
When our feet bleed and scourging winds us
scathe,
Point thou to Him, whose visage was more
marred,
Than any man's; who saith
"Make straight paths for your feet"—and to
the opposit—
"Come ye to Me, and I will give you rest."

Let hang some lamp-like hope
Above this unknown way,
Kind year, to give our spirit freer scope
And our hands strength to work while it is
day.

But if that way must slope
Tombward, O bring before our fading eyes
The lamp of life, the hope that never dies.

Comfort our souls with love,
Love of all human kind;
Love special, close—in which like sheltered
dove
Each weary heart its own safe nest may find;
And love that turns above
Adoringly; contented to resign
All loves, if need be, for the Love Divine.

Friend, come thou like a friend,
And whether bright thy face,
Or dim with clouds we cannot comprehend,
We'll hold our patient hands, each in his
place,
And trust thee to the end,
Knowing thou leadest onward to those
spheres
Where there are neither days, nor months,
nor years.

THE FIRST SNOW.

WHAT fun and frolic the first snow
brings. How the boys love to plunge
into it and make snowballs and play
all manner of pranks. We hope,
however, that none of the young
readers of PLEASANT HOURS could be
guilty of the meanness of the two boys
we see running off in the picture.
They have knocked down poor little
Tommy Green, and broken his slate,
and given him a great deal of trouble.
Now how angrily his mother shakes her
hat at the boys; while his little sister
tries to console him, and his wee
brother tries in vain to put together
the broken slate; while over head the
beauty and purity of the new fallen
snow seems to rebuke the strife and
clamour these bad boys have caused.

GUARDING THE TONGUE.

A CHINESE proverb says that a word
once spoken cannot be brought back
with a coach and six horses. And so
it is with speeches that are sometimes
uttered in conversation. Many a silly
thing has been spoken in a thoughtless
moment, which the speaker perhaps
soon forgot, but which, though light as
the sea-froth, made an impression as on
enduring rock. In the estimation of
the more thoughtful persons who heard
the remark, the speaker was ever
afterward held in lower esteem.

If we want to be happy we must
always try to do what is right.

WHAT THE ODD JOBS DID.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

BY A. WESTON WHITNEY.

"It is the Lord's will, wife, and we
can but submit," said Nathan Holloway
sadly. "I have prayed long and
earnestly that he would provide some
way for us out of this great trouble;
but he knows best, and he will be
with us even when we have to leave
the old home. I hope they won't
come to notify us to-day, the first day
of the New Year, and yet I suppose
we might as well look this in the face
first as last."

"O Nathan!" said his wife, as she
fell on her knees by the side of the
chair to which for months he had been
confined, "if you were well and strong,
I should not mind leaving the dear
old place so much; but I know how
hard it will be for you, as you are, to
make another place seem like home."

"Wife," said her companion, laying
his hand fondly on her head, "with
you by my side any place will seem
like home. Do I not know how you
have struggled and toiled so that we
might stay here even until to-day?
Where should we have been now, had
you not so bravely taken things into
your own hands? I feel badly about
Walter, for I had hoped to give him a
good education; but as God has seen
fit to render me so helpless, it cannot
be now, and we must try to find some-
thing for the boy to do. But, wife,
we will not tell him of it to-day. Let
us make it a happy day for him, so
that when we are gone he may remem-
ber with pleasure the last New Year's
Day he ever spent here."

"Yes, Nathan, I've"—
"There, wife, I see lawyer Turner
coming up the lane. You had better
go now. I did hope they would let us
feel that the old place still belonged to
us to-day, but God knows best."

"Nathan, I wish you would let me
stay and see the lawyer with you."

"No, no, wife; I can stand this
better alone."

His companion rose, pressed her
lips to his brow, and left the room
without a word.

"Happy New Year!" said the
lawyer, as she met him at the door.
"Happy New Year!" he repeated as
he entered the room where the invalid
was awaiting him.

"Awkward," he muttered, as though
to himself. "It don't sound right to
wish a man that, when you've come to
turn him out of doors, as you might
say."

During this speech he had been
fumbling over a bag of papers he had
brought with him.

"Suppose you know what brings
me here, Mr. Holloway?" he added,
helping himself to a seat.

"Yes," was the reply; "you have
come to notify me that the mortgage
is to be foreclosed at once."

"I see you've kept track of dates,
and so forth. I don't often attend to
such matters on holidays, but laid
aside my rule for once and made a
special case of this. I understand you
are not prepared to pay."

"No, I am not prepared to pay."

"Pity you have not some friend to
borrow the money from. Five hun-
dred is a small sum to give up such a
fine place for."

"I could not ask any one to lend
me money when there would be no
prospect of my ever being able to pay
back the loan."

"Wise, very wise; but your grand-
son might be able some day to pay it
for you."

"Walter is but a lad," was the
reply; "and it would be long ere he
could do it, nor would I be willing to
burden his young life with a heavy
debt. No, the old place must go."

"And yet," said the lawyer, writing
on one of the papers he had with him,
"I am told it was for his father, to
pay off some of his debts, that the
place was first mortgaged. I don't
see why, when his conduct almost
ruined you, you took upon yourself
the support of his child."

"That is all a thing of the past now.
You know that my son is dead."

"True, the original mortgage was
two thousand, and you have paid up
all but five hundred." Again he
busied himself with his pen. "Sup-
pose you would have paid it all if you
had not been disabled?"

"I hoped to be able to do so, but
God in his all-wise providence has seen
fit to order things otherwise. When
do you propose to offer the place for
sale?" The old man's voice was very
sad.

"It will not be necessary to offer it
publicly," was the lawyer's low reply,
"for I have privately found a future
owner for the place, and it is that
which has brought me here now."

"When does he wish to come in
possession?" asked the old man, think-
ing more of that than of the price that
had been offered.

"I think he would like to come
into possession to-day," said the law-
yer, writing busily again. "I have
brought all the papers with me."

"To-day, to day!" said the old man,
starting.

"Yes, many people, you know, like
to start things with the beginning of
the New Year. Will you look over
that paper?"

Nathan Holloway took the paper
handed him with trembling fingers, for
it was a shock to him to think of pass-
ing over, that very day, the old place
to a stranger; but, though his eyes
grew dim at first, he bravely steadied
himself until he could read the words
that would pierce his heart like knives.
A frightened look passed over his face.
A moment later he handed the paper
back, saying sadly:

"You have made a mistake, and
given me the wrong paper."

The lawyer looked at it a moment,
and then returning it said:

"No; if you examine it, you will
find it properly made out and signed."

"But it is a release of the mortgage,
and is of no use when I have no money
to pay it."

"But suppose some one else has
paid it for you!"

"There is no one to do that."

"On the contrary, there is; for it
has been paid, and the release was
made out yesterday."

"What does this mean?" asked the
older man excitedly.

"It means," was the reply, "that
your grandson, who is but a lad indeed,
has paid off the mortgage, and he now
sends his grandparents the release as
a New Year's offering."

"Walter! Walter! How!"

"Listen, Nathan Holloway! Two
days ago your grandson—he tells me
he is but thirteen—came into my
office. He's a bright-looking lad, and
I have once or twice sent him on
errands, and given him a trifle for it.
It seems now, that, for the last year,

he has spent his holidays and all of
his spare time in running errands and
doing odd jobs for which he has re-
ceived small sums of money, all of
which he has carefully saved, so that
when I opened the bag he brought me,
I found those small sums had mounted
up until they made one hundred and
twenty-five dollars and fifty cents.
He had heard, he said, that his grand-
father must sell the farm unless he
could pay some money he owed by the
first of the year. He asked if what he
had given me was enough to pay it,
and I told him yes, that the farm would
not be sold now, and that I would come
down myself and tell you so to-day."

"But"—began the old man in a
faint voice, and trembling again.

"Wait a moment, I have more to
say. Never mind where the rest of
the money came from. It has all
been paid. What I have to say is
this: I am generally considered a
hard old bachelor. Perhaps I am;
circumstances may have conspired to
make me seem so, but I have a vivid
recollection of my younger days. I
know what it is to begin life with a
clog and a weight dragging me down;
I know what it is to fight and struggle
against adverse circumstances. I have
seen life in some of its hardest phases,
and since I have been what the world
calls wealthy, I have been called stingy
and mean. But your grandson strikes
me as one to whom I could lend a
helping hand, feeling confident I would
not regret it in the future. I will
undertake to see that he is well edu-
cated, will send him to college and
give him a start in life. As for you
and your wife, you may live here as
long as you need a home on earth, and
you shall want for nothing. It was
to tell you this that I have set aside
my ordinary custom, and have attended
to business on New Year's Day.
There, I am afraid I have told you too
suddenly, after all," and he went over
to the side of the old man, who was
trembling in a manner that alarmed
him.

"No, no," was the reply; "call my
wife, call my wife! Oh! I could bear
trouble without her, but not this, not
this."

"O Nathan, Nathan!" cried the
wife, when she had been summoned,
"what is it?" and once more she fell
on her knees by his side.

"It is joy, wife, joy! Tell her,
please,"—turning to the lawyer. "I
can't, it chokes me."

Once again the story was told of
what a grandson's love had done, and,
as he finished, the lawyer saw the
tearful face of the wife raised to that
of her husband. Then, as both heads
were bowed, he stood reverently by,
for he knew that prayers of thanks-
giving were ascending to the throne of
grace. Even when he clasped their
hands in token of farewell, there was
no word spoken. Their hearts were
too full for utterance. It remained
for the grandson, who came shyly in
not long afterward, to bring them to
a full realization of the change in their
prospects.

Was it a happy New Year's Day?
Ask any one of them, now that ten
more years have passed away, and
they will all reply alike that it was
the happiest in all their lives.—S. S.
Times.

It is wonderful now much we owe
to people who will not let us do as we
please.