

A Happy New Year

To every reader of The Western Home Monthly a Happy, thrice Happy New Year. May it be as full of undiluted joy as your first day was full of good resolutions. For have you not resolved that nineteen hundred and thirteen shall mean more to you than any and all of the years that have passed beyond recall? You have known in your life something of satisfaction and enjoyment but there has also been something of unhappiness and a sense of unrealized opportunity. So this year you would amend it all. You would live life to the full. You would find the Blue Bird.

Little school boy, with thoughts of manhood welling up in your young heart, and with hopes of future happiness making your glad hours still more joyous, you want to know what I mean by the Blue Bird, and what it has to do with a Happy New Year. Hear, then, the story of Ilyltyl and Mityl, the children of an honest wood cutter. They had a wonderful dream one Christmas Eve, and their dream is the story of a search for the Blue Bird which is a symbol of happiness and the secret of the universe.

After being placed in bed the children are awakened by music and laughter, and getting up they look through the windows into the house of the rich man across the way, and make merry in watching his children as they dance and feast. They take it as a matter of course that Christmas happiness is only for the children of the wealthy. Suddenly the room fills with light and the fairy enters. She explains to the children that the things in their own home are just as wonderful and beautiful as the things across the way, only that people do not see. They look only at the outside—at appearances. She marvels that the children cannot see beauty in her appearance, that they cannot see the glory in the sky, the woods, the streams, and that they cannot hear the grass sing. So she gives them a magic diamond, with which they may see all things in time and space, and bids them go in search of the Blue Bird. Immediately the water of the tap changes into a woman with flowing robes, fire leaps out of the grate and whirls in giddy motion around the room, the sugar changes to a tall giant with fingers made of sugar-sticks, the bread jumps from the pan and becomes a great puffy monster ridiculous in his crust-colored suit, the dog and cat become able to talk, but the former retains his affection and the latter his cunning and treachery. And so, with all these as their daily companions and guided by Light, the children go out on their quest.

They visit the Halls of Memory and meet their grandparents and their lost brothers and sisters. Here they learn that love never dies, and here they find a beautiful Blue Bird which they carry back to Light only to find that it has turned black on reaching earth. The joy of memory is, therefore, not the happiness that endures on earth.

So they next go to the graves and walk among the dead. They are told that at midnight the dead will arise and walk about. But when the hour strikes, there is a glorious burst of light. The graveyard becomes a flower garden and Ilyltyl exclaims to the frightened Mityl "Why, there are no dead!"

They pass on into the Halls of the Future and see the children yet unborn, but here they find not the Blue Bird, and so they next visit the Halls of Night. Into the caves of sorrows and miseries, into the dens of sickness and sufferings they go, but no bird is there; they hear the stars sing for joy and see the planets dance in their round, but the object of their quest is not there. At last Ilyltyl opens the great door which holds back the secret of things. There is a rush of wings and countless Blue Birds, the secrets that are yet unrevealed to mankind, fly from tree to tree. So the children return with some of these to Light, only to find that they have all died in their hands, for they belong not to the happinesses that will endure on earth.

Last of all a visit is made to the great Hall of Happiness. The Luxuries are visited at their feast, but the Blue Bird they do not know, for it has never been on their table. However they profess to have something just as good since it is most rare and costly. Then the little Happinesses troop in—the Happiness of the Green Fields, of the Blue Sky, of Running Barefoot in the Dew, of Pure Air, of Fresh Water and they laugh when the children enquire about the Blue Bird, and ask them why they do not use their eyes. Then in come the great joys—the Joy of Doing Good, the Joy of Being Just, and the greatest of all—Maternal Joy, which the children find out to be none other than their own mother clothed in the most beautiful of garments—their own Kisses and Kind Words. And while the children wonder why the greatest joy is not akin to laughter, but close to tears, they are transported back to their own old home. The dog and cat lose the power of speech, the water, milk, bread and

fire are restored to their places and in the early morning the two children, asleep in their beds, are awakened by their mother who wishes them a "Merry Christmas" and bids them arise.

Then comes confusion for the good mother cannot understand the child dream. At this stage enters a poor neighbor to borrow a few sticks of wood and to say that her dying child wishes to have Ilyltyl's dove that he keeps always in the cage. The two children go to get it and find that it has become blue. They have scarcely got over their wonder when the neighbor returns with her child, saying that a miracle was performed at sight of the bird. Happiness is written in every look. The mother, the children, the neighbor, and her child are all transformed, but only for a moment. For in looking at the bird the two children allow it to escape. The sick child is frantic, the mother is grief stricken, but Ilyltyl comforts them with the assurance "Never mind I will catch him for you again"—and in the play he turns to the audience and says "If any of you good people should find him will you not return him to us?"

Yes, little man, there is a story here for you and for all of us. The happiness of this year is to be found in the use and appreciation of opportunities right at your own door. The way to enjoy is to begin to do good. You remember that other story of Sir Launfal who handed a crust to a beggar but it became fine wheaten bread, and the water in a broken cup became wine in a chalice. The way to happiness is through

Winter Bells

When Winter wraps the world in white,
And silent lie the snowy dells,
'Tis sweet to hear amid the night
The cadence of the fairy bells;
They seem to set the winds astir
With eerie music soft and low,
And gently shake the modest fir
Clad in its garb of spotless snow.

They tinkle 'neath the watchful stars,
Whose beams upon the whiteness fall.
And as they near the meadow bars
What recollections they recall!
The trysting tree which Summer knows,
And clothes in hues of living green,
Stands out against the sky and throws
Its lordly shadow o'er the scene.

Winter bells that tell of mirth!
Thy music fills the heart with joy
And makes a paradise of earth—
A lovers' year without alloy;
Across the fields there seems to come
The music which of pleasure tells,
And every hearth and every home
Rejoices at the winter bells.

I hear them echo where the snow
Lies softly on the frozen ground,
And where December's winds are low,
I list to catch their merry sound;
A maiden at the lattice waits,
For swiftly through the moonlit dells,
Toward her heart's wide open gates,
A lover rides behind the bells.

unselfish devotion to the needs of others. And, my little man, get it down into the fibre of your being that the only way to win life is to lose it, the only time worth living is the present. And so let every hour be full of service, so that you may attain your own happiness and increase the joy of all around you.

Mother, you have more than your share of sorrow, but you may know more of joy than any other if you but seek it in the right quarter. The highest instincts you possess clamor within you for satisfaction. You must love and be loved. So long as the world lasts you will find your highest joy in husband and in children, and it is vain to seek it in any other source. So if you want the Blue Bird there is only one place where you may find it and that is at your hearthstone. If in the past you have been disappointed because material prosperity has been denied you, turn this year for solace to him whom God has given you as protector, and to those He has given you as a holy charge. And verily you will find your happiness as you minister to the needs of others. There is no other way.

Man of business, you have been seeking happiness in the accumulation of wealth, but you will never find it there. Indeed, you have said this more than once yourself. Have you not often told me, "I don't care for money, it is no satisfaction to me; but I like the work of making it." My dear man, you are not far from the Kingdom. Even little Ilyltyl could not keep the bird of happiness and hold it to his bosom. He had to let it go that he might catch it again. But then his bird was blue and yours is not, for money was never minted that had other than a metallic lustre, and never enough was coined to fill the recesses of the human heart. There must be something more. So open the floodgates and let your wealth pour out for the alleviation of misery, the dissemination of truth and beauty, the expression of many-sided goodness and the stream washing through your heart will clean away all that is impure and unholy and leave you clean in your own sight and in the sight of God. Then shall you enter into the Kingdom of Joy, and you shall understand what is meant by this saying that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Get all you can, make all you can, on one condition that you give all you can. Thus shall you fulfil your highest mission and realize your highest satisfaction.

Teacher in the lonely schoolhouse! Yours is an uninviting work perhaps, and not a work that the world appreciates as perhaps it might, but next to motherhood your office is the highest in this land. For yours it is to lead the children into green pastures and beside the quiet refreshing streams. In the year to come you will deal gently with the young natures that are entrusted to your keeping. You will introduce them to the kings and queens of earth, and bring them up in the fear of Him who is the King of Kings as well as the Friend of all children. And through your ministry you will enter the gates which guard the secret of Happiness. The love you expend on your little flock will be returned upon yourself and it shall comfort you not only now but evermore. "For in the coming years, when you are fast asleep under the green grass they will delight to recall the experiences of childhood, and as they review your kindness in dealing with their many faults and your patience in ministering to their many weaknesses, they will say 'Ah! it was good for us to be there, for in those days were built three tabernacles, one for ourselves, one for our schoolmistress and one for Him who is the teacher of all teachers and the master of all schoolmasters.' And believe me, that unless His spirit which is the spirit of gentleness and patience and love be in your work then your Latin is but sounding brass and your Greek but a tinkling cymbal."

So to all in every walk of life there is a law of living which, if observed, ensures peace, happiness and joy. As the editor wishes happiness to the readers of The Western Home Monthly, he trusts that in the heart of each there may be the joy which comes from fuller service, and that the homes, the offices and the schools of this Great Western Land may be blessed by the presence of that kind spirit which lovingly persuades those who are willing, to search diligently for all that is true and beautiful and good.

Lord Strathcona's Message

Once again The Western Home Monthly is privileged to be the medium of the New Year's message to the people of the Canadian West from the Empire's grand old man—Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, who, on August 6th last, celebrated his 91st birthday, and whom the Canadian people are still honored in having as their High Commissioner in the Capital of the Empire. It is a message which rings true with the sterling wisdom and the faith and the vision which have made Lord Strathcona's career such an inspiration and such an outstanding achievement in modern history. A splendid vitality is his—the gift of the Scottish hills. His perseverance, his sagacity were gifts, too, of the Scottish blood, but his "Far vision" is the endowment of genius which knows nothing of the bounds of nationality. As a matter of fact no one career has been able to contain him. People have forgotten to think of him as captain of the greatest Fur Trading Company in history, in thinking of him as the leading spirit in the organization of the Canadian Pacific Railway, as a philanthropist of superb generosity, as the head of many of the world's greatest financial institutions, and as a conspicuously constructive statesman. Western Canada has abundantly justified his faith in its possibilities, and that he may be granted years to see still greater and greater developments of its progress and prosperity, and to give many more New Year messages of wise optimism and buoyant faith to the people of this country is the hope in which all Western Canadians will heartily join.