



[Canadian boys and girls are invited to make this corner their own. The editor of this department is anxious to come in touch with the young people from Victoria to Halifax. She would like them to write her brief accounts of their home life, on the prairie or in the big cities, among the mountains or down by the sea. Their letters will be published, and their questions answered in as far as possible.]

A BRIGHT NEW YEAR.

"A year to be glad in, not to be bad in;
A year to live in, to gain and to give in;
A year for trying, and not for sighing;
A year for striving and hearty thriving;
A bright New Year. Oh! hold it dear,
For God who sendeth, He only leadeth."

My little readers will soon hear all about those good resolutions for the New Year. I wonder if many of you have not already made a few? It is an easy thing to make many good resolutions, but quite a difficult undertaking to keep even one. Most people fall into the error of making too many and end by not keeping any of them, except, perhaps, for a short time.

Choose some good habit which you do not possess and make up your mind you are going to acquire it. Do not promise too much for yourself, but persevere in what you arrange to do. For instance, supposing one of my little friends is a sleepy head and wants to become an early riser. Do not get up at an unearthly hour for a few mornings and find the time so long on your hands that you decide it is "no go," and soon fall back into the old habit. Arrange a reasonable hour to rise, and then occupy the time gained in some profitable and definite way — accomplish something — have something to show for your good resolution.

Suppose a boy made up his mind not to spend so much money in candy as he had been doing and threw the money saved into the bay, would you not think him foolish? Yet time is more valuable than gold.

Now here is something I want each of you to do for me, and in after years you will realize you have been doing something for yourself. Commit to memory the verse you will always find at the top of our page. Do not learn it "off by heart" and then not think of it again. Make it your own; find out *for yourself* what it means, and now and then repeat it when the book is not within reach. Our memories should be stored with the purest and best, for at some time or other we shall be left with no other company than our own thoughts, and it depends upon ourselves what kind of companions they will make.

You will think Cousin Maud some old man whom your friend, Faith Fenton, has asked to give you a little sermon every month, so I had better stop my preaching, but, dear children, do make *one* good resolve and stick to it until the year is old, and then it will likely stick to you.

OUR STORY.

"Opening pages, white and fair,
Ready for pictures rich and rare,
Drawn and colored with tender care,
To brighten the lives around."

Sunshine touches for shadowy ways,
Smiles to scatter their golden rays,
Loving words—into lonely days,
Bringing a cheering sound."

Father and mother had gone to midnight service this particular New Year's Eve, and Bessie sat idly dreaming beside a bright grate fire, watching the red coals, though really not seeing the coals, but a beautiful castle in the red glow. Bessie was about fifteen, and did a good deal of dreaming with her eyes open.

She was so busy studying her castle and imagining herself in the midst of it that she was not conscious of anyone entering the room, and was much startled when a gentle hand touched her shoulder and a gentle voice whispered, "Come with me."

Bessie looked up and saw a very old man standing beside her. He had long white hair and beard, and, although his smile was kind, he looked very sad and careworn.

Bessie was sure she had never seen him before, yet his face and tones seemed very familiar to her. She did not dream of distrusting him, and without a particle of fear



A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

she arose and followed him. They had not taken six steps when Bessie found herself in a dimly lighted room in which she had never been before, but it, too, seemed strangely familiar to her. She had not long to wonder, when the old man turned to her and said: "I am the Spirit of the Old Year, and before another hour shall have gone from you forever. Before I go I want to show you your book for the past year. Yes, I know you did not know it, but each year adds a book to the library of your life. Now, here is this year's volume." As he spoke he placed a large book on a small table before her.

She began to leaf through the book, which consisted of a series of pictures. Not a word of explanation was needed, the pictures spoke for themselves. She recognized herself in every page, and remembered most of the incidents represented.

The old man said: "Those dark pictures are caused by selfishness, and if you notice the darkest page in the book represents you when you were having the most pleasure, but the pleasure was gained at another's expense, hence the dark outlines."

Bessie looked closely at the picture, and soon the memory of the scene came back to her. She had never seen herself in a true

light before, and a warm blush covered her face. She sadly turned over the remaining pages and noticed with shame that the bright pages were few and far between. How little she had done for others. Yet Bessie was no more selfish than the average girl, she had simply been trying to have "a good time."

She had just finished her book when the clocks began to strike the hour of midnight. The old man spoke once more, but his tone, were scarcely audible:

"Try and make a brighter book next year." As she turned to look at him he had almost faded from her sight, but from the folds of his long garment came forth a beautiful little child, and Bessie knew him to be the Spirit of the New Year. She took the bright new book he offered, and as she turned over the pure white pages and looked on the hopeful, happy face of the child, a great feeling of gratitude for the New Year filled her heart, that another year was hers to fill with thoughts and deeds more spotless and less selfish. As she turned the stainless leaves, a great desire was hers to fill it with fairer records than those she had beheld in the blotted pages of the book which the Old Year had taken away.

Pushing aside the window curtain, Bessie looked up into the starry winter sky, realizing something of how beautiful a girl's life might become, what service she might render to help make the world a pleasanter place, and breathed a silent prayer for help to make her life of more use to others.

The editor, who is as fond of the little folks as I am, has sent us a contribution this month, which she petitions may go into our page, "just for a laugh," she says.

"But I have been talking a little gravely to my children," I tell her.

"Then all the more reason why we should close up with a smile," she makes answer. "I'm sure Boy Blue's resolution was a good one for us all. We are all hungry for something. I believe the world is half-starved."

When the editor begins to moralize, I always yield the point:—so here is her rhyme.

COUSIN MAUD.

A WISE RESOLVE.

"You see," said Jack, "at New Year
A fellow ought to say
He's sorry for the past, and will
Be better in some way."

"Leastways, the preacher said so;
And I told mamma that I
Would get up when she called me,—
That's the hardest thing to try."

"I'll be as patient as I can,"
Said flashing dark-eyed Nell.
"I'll practice all my scales each day,
Nor grumble once," vowed Bell.

Then Boy Blue looked up gravely
From his blocks upon the floor;
"I think,"—he spoke with thoughtful air,—
"I'll try an' eat some more."

FAITH FENTON.