

The Quiet Hour.

WHAT DOES THE NEW YEAR BRING?

The clock struck twelve in the tall church tower,
And the old year slipped away,
To be lost in the crowd of phantom years
In the House of Dreams that stay
All wrapped in their cloaks of gray.

Then swift and sweet o'er the door's worn sill
Came the youngest child of Time,
With a gay little bow and a merry laugh,
And a voice like bells a-chime,
Challenging frost and rime.

He found there was plenty for him to do.

The strong and the weak were here,
And both held out their hands to him,
And gave him greetings dear,
The beautiful young New Year.

"You must bring us better days," they said,

"The Old Year was a cheat."
Which I think was mean when the year was dead:

Such fate do dead years meet,
To be spurned by scornful feet.

"I bring you the best a year can bring."

The newcomer stoutly spake,
"The chance of work, the gift of trust,
And the bread of love to break,
If but my gifts you'll take."

The noblest thing a year can lay
In the lap of you or me,
The brave New Year has brought this day,

It is Opportunity,
Which the wise are quick to see.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

Of course, I wish you all a glad New Year, but I am not at all sure that I want to pass on to you a greeting I saw yesterday on a New Year's card, which was to the effect that the well-wisher desired the coming year to be entirely free from sorrow. We don't want to stand still or go backward during the next twelve months, do we? And it seems to be strangely true that much of our best spiritual gain is wrung from pain. You may have heard of the boy who objected to the hard task of learning the alphabet, saying that it was "no use going through so much to gain so little." And he might easily think so, if he thought the acquaintance with the letters of the alphabet was all he would gain by his work. But just think of the world of literature—infinite in its extent—to which the alphabet used to be the door, in the days when we learned to read in the old-fashioned way. So we should remember, when the days bring pain as well as pleasure, that by learning this hard alphabet of pain we may find our way into a realm of joy, which will stretch out before us when the alphabet is almost forgotten.

So I don't wish you a year wholly free from pain, but one in which you may go bravely on from strength to strength, taking without shrinking whatever gifts the days may bring—"The chance of work, the gift of trust, and the bread of love to break." Though you may see difficulties or sorrows standing right in the way to meet you, never fear but that the chance is given to you to have a right happy New Year.

Lillian Whiting says: "The business of man's sojourn here is to develop spiritual powers. Whatever circumstances and conditions conduce to this end are fortunate, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable they are. Whatever hinders this development is unfortunate, no matter how alluring to the senses. To live in Communion with God is richness of life, is to find perpetual joy, peace and love; it is to radiate happiness. One may miss pleasures—and pleasure; but happiness is the Divine atmosphere, and we may live in it, if we will. Pleasure appeals to the senses alone; but happiness appeals to the spirit, and it is created by love and good-will. Perplexities and trials, far from making impossible the ideal life, really create for it opportunities of

growth and development. Probably the perpetually recurring vexations, disappointments and misfortunes are the divinely-appointed mechanism to develop the higher qualities. How does one acquire patience, serenity, generosity, save through their exercise in meeting trials and sorrows. These obstacles are as essential to spiritual development as the practice of the scales to the development of the skill of the pianist."

Let us take for our inspiration, as we start the New Year, the grand counsel given to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage!" We should go forward expecting success, for to start out with the expectation of failure makes the arm and heart weak and cowardly. Even if we should make many mistakes, it is possible to press failures and sins into our service, and "change stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones." True repentance includes the picking of one's self up and trying again.

"Then begin the journey onward,
Knowing naught of fear,
Keeping sunshine in the heart
Throughout the glad New Year."

When the three chosen disciples failed to stand by their Master, failed to help and cheer Him with their prayers and sympathy, He did not overwhelm them with useless reproaches, which could only have crushed the heart out of them. No, He encouraged them to make a fresh start, in the conviction that there was hope for higher action on their part in the future. "Rise, let us be going!" He said to them, and the inspiring words ought to have power to help us to-day. We, too, have failed to watch and pray with all the energy needed, but let us not waste time in useless regrets. We are not told to go forward alone. With him for a companion, we can dare to mount the steep ascent to Jerusalem. Though the cross may be in the path, it is only a difficulty to be surmounted, not an end to the journey.

"From glory unto glory! Be this our joyous song,
As, on the King's own highway, we bravely march along!
From glory unto glory! O word of stirring cheer,
As dawns the solemn brightness of another glad New Year."

Why should we be discouraged? Failure is impossible to those who are working for and with God. They may seem to fail, but what the world calls failure God may call victory—and His judgment is the all-important thing. No matter how small the labor of love may be, it is valuable in His eyes, even though it be only the giving of a cup of cold water.

The great gift of the New Year is "Opportunity"—don't let us toss it carelessly aside. But—Opportunity for what? What do we want the opportunity for? If our chief desire is to grow rich in the things which are transitory in their very nature, then let us strive to be actuated by a nobler motive. This year may bring us lasting gain, enriching us with an increase of love, joy and peace—but we shall not have these things forced upon us, we must seek them with all earnestness, we must really desire them when we pray for them, we must be ready to accept God's ways of giving them to us. They are not like dead jewels, which must be hung on the outside; they are more like the warmth and life of the blood, the precious affection of the heart, the treasured sight of the eyes. They come from within, are parts of the very life, and react in increased fullness of life. Even God cannot make them ours, unless we rouse ourselves to the effort of growing.

And that is one great Opportunity laid before us—the opportunity of GROWING. In spiritual attainment, as in natural development, it is true that those who already have, will gain more, so that they "shall have more abundance." Do you think that is unfair? Think how it runs through every department of life. A good farmer studies his farming paper, and constantly learns more; while a poor farmer is very apt to stand still, working on in the old ruts, and quite behind the age he lives in. A good housekeeper is constantly on the watch for suggestions, gets a recipe here and an idea there, and so is con-

tinually becoming a better housekeeper. Because she is doing her work well, she always wants to do it better. I find that now I am a Settlement worker, a large amount of information along social lines comes right in my way, and I can hardly help absorbing some of it. Because I know something of the work, I can't avoid the necessity of learning more. So it is in practical Christianity. Those who are only Christians in name, may succeed in keeping out of its mighty influence, to some extent, but a real Christian instinctively reaches out for, and digests, the spiritual food that comes his way, even as a plant—if it is alive and planted in suitable soil—assimilates nutriment from soil and atmosphere.

What we reach out for most eagerly and persistently, that we are pretty sure to attain. People may wonder why God sometimes allows His saints to be poor or sick. If they are continually pleading for holiness, He knows that they really want holiness—perhaps He sees that poverty or sickness will best secure the result they desire. Would they be glad if He gave the lesser gift, knowing that it might impair the beauty of the higher? Surely not.

"I Do not wish thy
Life all joy and song;
That, Friend of mine,
Were but to wish thee wrong.
For sorrows oft are angels
In disguise,

"In mercy sent to search
And make us wise—
To raise our earthly hearts
To things above.
God only chastens us in
His great love.

"But this my prayer:
'God give thee what is best
To win thee to Himself,
And make
Thee blest.'"

HOPE.

The Young People's Department.

BRINGING HOME THE COWS.

When potatoes were in blossom,
When the new hay filled the mows,
Sweet the paths we trod together,
Bringing home the cows.

What a purple kissed the pasture,
Kissed and blessed the alder-boughs,
As we wandered slow at sundown,
Bringing home the cows!

How the far-off hills were gilded
With the light that dream allows,
As we built our hopes beyond them,
Bringing home the cows!

How our eyes were bright with visions,
What a meaning wreathed our brows,
As we watched the cranes, and lingered,
Bringing home the cows!

Past the years, and through the distance,
Thrills the memory of our vows.
Oh, that we again were children,
Bringing home the cows!

—Charles G. D. Roberts.

JAMIE SOUTAR'S SECRET.

From "Days of Auld Lang Syne."

"Doctor, ye've been an honest man in the pulpit an' oot o't a' thae years, an' yir warks hev gone before your words. A'll tell ye my secret before a' Dee; ou ay, I ken I'm deen', and I'm rael pleased.

"Ye'll no mind that forty-five years syne I worked a whole winter near Kildrummie, goin' and comin' night and mornin'. I met a lassie there, and I came to love her once and forever. No that I would have spoken to her, for I've been an ill-made, ill-tempered body all my days, and she . . . she was as gude as Marget Hoo, though different. What mair can man say?

"The day my wark was done I said good-bye to her, and that might have been the end, but I turned sudden, and saw the look on her face. She could have taen her pick of all the lads round

Kildrummie, but no man can lay doon the law to love; she took me, that had nothing but a faithful heart, and we gied our word ane to the ither for life. . . and death, as a man and women should after Christ's coming.

"We couldna be mairrit till the summer, and we agreed to write no letters to set the folks' tongues going; we wanted to have our ain secret. So we trusted to meet once a week at a stile in the woods between here and Kildrummie, and we hed . . . seven evenings together; that was all we ever saw of one another in this world.

"It was the month of May in an early spring that year, and the leaves were out in their bonnie first green, and the lambs were still with their mither in the field. All nature was glad with us, and blessed our love.

"The gate has fallen to pieces lang syne, and the gaps built up with a dyke, and the trees are cut down, and the hawthorn rooted up, but it's the same place to me. I can see the tree where we sat, and the primroses at our feet, and the sun shining on her face, and the look in her eyes; I can see her wavin' her hand to me on the road after we parted, and the glint of her gown through the firs the last night.

"When I came next day she wasna there, and I hoddit among the trees for a ploy, but it was lang waitin', for she didna come, and I gied home with fear in my heart.

"It might be that she couldna get away, I said to mysel' as I worked at a dyke, but the dread was hangin' over me, and when there was nobody at the stile the next night, I could bide no longer. I set off to her house, and every turn of the road I looked for Menie. Once my heart loupit in my breast like a birdie in its cage, for a woman came along the road from Kildrummie, but it wasna Menie. When I saw her brother with his face to Drumtochie I kent, before he said a word, that he was seekin' me, and that Menie was dead. Never a tear came that day to my een, and he telt me, standing in the middle of the road where it begins to go down the hill.

"It was her throat, and the doctor was feared from the first day; the night she didna come, she was delirious; she said, 'Jamie, Jamie,' ower and ower again, and wanted to rise. About day-break she came to herself, and knew our faces. 'I'm deen'!' she said, 'and I didna keep my tryst last night. It's ower late now, and I'll no see him on earth again. Tell James Soutar that it wasna my blame I failed, and give him my Bible,' and, after a while, she said, 'I'll keep the tryst with him some day,' and that's all."

"Her brither gied me the book and waited, expectin' me to say something, but I had no words, and he left me on the road, countin' me hard of heart; I was all that night—at the stile.

"Doctor, will ye oblige me by goin' to that cupboard and bringin' me my Sabbath hat?"

Jamie took off the ring of crepe, thin and faded with the years, and held it a moment in his hand.

"Put it in the fire, Doctor, where I can see it burn; I've worn it forty-four years last spring, but I'll no need it again, for I'm gaein' out of mornin' soon.

"Here's her Bible," and Jamie brought it from a shelf in his box-bed; "gin ye come to my coffin, will ye see it be put in. There's nothin' else I want to carry with me to the ither side, and I'll just bid ye good-bye, Doctor."

NURSING.

Dr. McCallum, of London, warns girls against the craze for the nurse's profession, and especially against training in U. S. hospitals, where, it is said, 50 per cent. of the Canadian graduates are broken in health by the severity of the work tax imposed upon them. There is a movement in some of the hospitals now, to reduce the term from three to two years. Physicians say the course it is pretended to teach nurses is an impossible one, and it is better to turn out practical, physically able graduates at the end of two years than to send them forth worn out and broken down at the end of three. In short, that any woman who cannot learn to obey the physician's instructions in two years ought to seek another vocation. It is