

The Book of the New Year.

THE Book of the New Year is opened,
Its pages are spotless and new;
And so, as each leaflet is turning,
Dear children, beware what you do!

Let never a bad thought be cherished,
Keep the tongue from a whisper or guile;
And see that your faces are windows,
Through which a sweet spirit shall smile.

And weave for your souls the fair garment
Of honour, and beauty, and truth;
Which will still with a glory enfold you,
When faded the spell of your youth.

And now, with the new book, endeavour
To write its white pages with care;
Each day is a leaflet, remember,
To be written with watching and prayer.

And, if on its page you discover,
At evening, a blot or a scrawl,
Kneel quickly, and ask the dear Saviour
In mercy to cover it all.

So, when the strange book shall be finished,
And clasped by the angel in light;
You may feel, though the work be imperfect,
You have tried to please God in the right.

And think how the years are a stairway,
On which you must climb to the skies;
And strive that your standing be higher,
As each one away from you flies.

—Selected.

A New Year's Gift.

BY MISS F. B. WINSLOW.

"What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a
lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part:
What can I give him?—give him my
heart."

THE words were on a Christmas card, and they had a peculiar fascination for Mabel Grosvenor. When they had first come to her, from a friend, on Christmas morning, she could not have said that she fairly understood their meaning. She puzzled over the quaint old English letters, as they ran in and out to accommodate themselves to the design of the card, and finally she placed it among many others—Christmas and birthday cards and photographs of friends—in the lower half of the frame of the mirror which adorned the bureau in her comfortable bedroom. There were many other words among the collection well worthy of notice—choice selections from poets, mottoes of advice from eminent philosophers, loving wishes for happiness for the coming year from dear friends, sent to the girl who seemed to have everything on earth to ensure happiness; and yet among them all, as she came in and out—in gay preparations for pleasure during those Christmas holidays—these words only seemed to burn themselves into the heart and brain, "Poor as I am, poor as I am."

"What can I give him, poor as I am?"

Poor! Why, what girl of her acquaintance had more than she? Her feet sank at every step into rich carpets. Thick satins, furs, and plushes wrapped her delicate form whenever she went out; and as to mental advantages, books and pictures surrounded her; and the best schools and

masters of the great intellectual city had been employed in her behalf, and now, in her dawning womanhood, she stood prepared, it seemed, for almost any sphere of life or society she might choose to enter, and yet, "poor as I am" in the presence of the Christ whom the Christmas season had been bringing nearer and nearer to her heart.

What were all these gifts? When he was in this world, the great earthly possessions of the young man who came to him were as nothing in his eyes; Herod's wealth and Caesar's power had been as dross to this simple peasant of Galilee; the learning and wisdom of the Pharisees and scribes, with their famous teachers, had been utterly rejected by him. Mabel felt to come to him with an offering of earthly gift—money or education only—would be worse than useless. Yes, in anything that made life worth the living, Mabel was poor; and yet there was one gift he never despised—one offering he never rejected: the poorest and the richest of the sons of men could bring this gift to him, sure of his loving acceptance of it, and of his glad appreciation of its value.

On the first day of the New Year Mabel felt that, out of her poverty, this one thing was hers to give, and she began the year with the words of her Christmas card transmuted into a glad personal acceptance.

"What can I give him?—give him my heart."

It was a bright Saturday afternoon of the first week in January, and a shivering girl, slight and tall, apparently about sixteen years of age, stood on the corner of Westminster Street, idly looking into the window of a bookstore. There was a gaunt, hard, tired look about her, young as she was; and as Mabel Grosvenor stepped up, in her bright, fresh clothes, a look of positive dislike and malice came over the girl's face. It was not that the girl knew Mabel, but the evident prosperity of her appearance and bearing grated upon her; the contrast between it and her own seedy apparel becoming all the more apparent to her. As Mabel scanned a list of books in the window, the girl began to wonder how *she* would look in a plush sacque of wine colour, and a hat with two long plumes curled about it; and it was not only the looks—a girl who wore such things must have everything warm underneath, and plenty of food at home—things of which poor Ethel was very much in need.

Just then Mabel turned and looked at her, and Ethel began again to study the Christmas card she had been languidly regarding when Mabel's arrival on the scene attracted her attention. Now, for the whole week, Mabel had been thinking, "To give him one's heart means all—everything; all I can do and be belongs to him. How can I show that I love him? What can

I do to teach other people to love him too?" And when she saw the poor girl standing by her side, she longed to help her in some way. Her poverty would perhaps be easier to bear if she knew of Jesus, and felt sure she belonged to him. So, hurrying into the store, Mabel purchased the card which had been of so much service to herself, and came out to find the girl still standing before the window.

"Do you like the card? Would you like to have one?" she said; and the girl, starting at being spoken to by a stranger, and half inclined to feel offended, was disarmed by the pleasant smile and kind words. They walked along together as Mabel tried to tell her, in a few words, what the words on the card meant.

"Yes, I know. I went to a Sunday-school in the village we lived in before we came here," said the girl.

"How long ago was that?" asked Mabel.

"Oh, 'most a year. Mother came down here to get more work to do, and when we first came we all went to school; and then mother got sick and couldn't sew, and I stayed at home to take care of her."

"And did she get well?" asked Mabel.

"No," said the girl; her reserve quite melted by the interest of the other. "She died in November. A woman in the same house helped us, and I stayed at home to cook and mend the boys' clothes; and then, when the money we had was all gone, I got a place to tend in a store before Christmas. Now that the holidays is over I have no more work to do, and the children can't go to school 'cause their clothes is all worn out. Jim, he is ten, and sells newspapers; and that's all we have.

Here was work for Mabel to do. She went home with the girl, and found the children huddled in bed in a room without a fire. It was easy for her, with a well-filled purse, to provide food and warmth and clothing for this young family, but it was not so easy for her to give time and thought to their needs. Many a concert and art gathering, dear to her heart, were given up to find time for new and absorbing pursuits, which began to grow still dearer to her. She had given her heart to Christ, and time and effort, strength and money, followed as mere accessories to the gift. For Ethel she obtained a place to take care of children during the early part of the day, so that she could return home in time to be with her brothers when school was out.

Encouraged by the real friendship of Mabel, Ethel began to grow into something of health and cheerfulness. There was no reason she could see beyond the one of pleasing the Master, of whom she delighted to speak, which could have induced a girl of Mabel's position to give up time and pleasure for her good; and so, through her,

Ethel learned to love Christ, something of whose character she saw reflected in her friend's life.

They were both connected with a mission-school—one as teacher, the other as scholar. Mabel soon began to find Ethel a valuable assistant in bringing in the girls of her neighbourhood. The young teacher gave herself to them, studied their needs, and helped them as no one had done before. Ere the year was out, she had reason to believe that some of them were leading Christian lives, and helping others to begin in a similar way.

Again the New Year came with its renewed question to Mabel: "What can I give him?" and with it the same old answer: "Son, daughter, give me thy heart." The same heart, indeed—and only that—had Mabel to give; but was it no more of a gift than when, the year before, she had laid it untried upon the altar of her Lord? Yes, more and richer in the lessons it had learned of love for him and work for his children; greater and more fit for an offering to him who went about doing good, in that it had acquired something of the spirit of the life-long example of him who freely gave himself to the needs of his brethren in a complete sacrifice of self.—*Zion's Herald*.

This Year.

OUR new year, this precious new year, what will you do with it? God has given you the beginning of it, and let us hope that you will live to see the end of it. Like all other gifts of God, it is bestowed for a wise purpose. It is not to be trifled away in idleness or in sport, but is to be improved to the greatest profit.

They make a great mistake who suppose that the right improvement of life is necessarily a dull and dreary business; that in order to do this they must give up all enjoyment, and be solemn and gloomy; never play, but always work or study; never have "a good time," as you young folks call your periods of amusement.

This is all a serious mistake. The people who serve God best are ever those who enjoy life most. Take up your little commonplace duties cheerfully; offer every morning all your occupations, both work and play, to God; then each day will be a step toward Heaven, making of this promising young 1888 a truly happy New Year.

WHAT excuse can we urge for the countenance given to the use of ardent spirits on almost every statute book? On one page you will read of heavy penalties denounced against drunkenness, riots, and public disorder; and the next chapter authorizes the retail of the very poison which all admit brings on these outbreaching transgressions. Who can reconcile these glaring contradictions? . . . If men will engage in this destructive traffic, let them no longer have the law as a pillow, nor quiet conscience with the opiate of a court license.