

to our younger charges we wish a very merry Christmas in their new homes, whether in Ontario or in the great, rich West, and throughout the New Year we hope we may hear of them that they are well, happy and good. We know they all have their faults and their trials, and the New Year has its ups and downs in store for them. They are called to face the stern realities of life at a rather tender age, and the people they are with are not always considerate, and sometimes forget that old heads cannot be found on young shoulders. There are harsh, exacting masters and nagging, scolding mistresses, just as there are careless, lazy, unfaithful boys; but we hope throughout the year our little lads will do their duty loyally, and if any one feels himself unjustly treated or is dissatisfied or unhappy, let him confide his troubles to us, and so far as in us lies we will stand by and befriend him. And we would have our little lads ever to remember that they have a Friend, the best of all friends, always near; that His arm is around them; that His loving protection and all-wise providence is over them and ordering their concerns, and that His promise is to them, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye."

We cannot forecast what the new year may have in store for our work in Canada, but we seem to be sailing through very calm water from the old year to the new. We have scarcely a name on the sick list, the Homes in Toronto and Winnipeg are almost untenanted, our older boys are well employed, and we seem to be sharing to the full in the general return of prosperity that the country is enjoying. In our great family, that now equals in number the population of a Canadian city, we are almost entirely free from sickness, crime, intemperance, pauperism or vagrancy. It may not always be so. We claim for our boys no exemption from the sins and failures and misfortunes common to all who are

born in the same position and live under the same social conditions, but we simply state the fact as it at present exists, and we do so with deep thankfulness of heart. Gratifying as it is to us to have such a record to show as a proof of the success of the work, we do not think it at all difficult to account for. Idleness and want of occupation are the parent of half the vices and irregularities in the careers of men and boys, and from these our boys are spared, from the circumstances of their lives. They are not at present likely to fall a prey to any of the evils that arise from indolence and too much leisure, and whatever else may be said against them, it can never be laid to their charge that they eat the bread of idleness. We are not infrequently exercised lest boys, especially those who are not very robust in health, should, at certain busy seasons of the year, be overworked and their strength overtaxed; but it would be a very rare and remarkable case in which a boy drifted into bad habits from want of occupation to keep him from them. An idle man is said to be "the devil's play-fellow," but if so, the enemy of mankind has happily very few playmates among the readers of *UPS AND DOWNS*, and hence it is that in reviewing our year's work we can congratulate ourselves upon the phenomenally small number of "sick, lame, or lazy" among our ranks.

We have indeed had a remarkably successful and satisfactory season's work, and we can look back upon the year that is closing with a sense that "goodness and mercy have followed us." Certainly we have had difficulties to contend with of a very serious character, and discouragements and causes for anxiety; but they have been immeasurably outnumbered and compensated for by the increasingly manifest tokens of the value of the work and its permanent and far-reaching results. We should indeed be strangely apathetic and wanting in faith, hope and charity if we could watch these results without having our hearts