

over which the bent old lady crouched, and the bright-eyed granddaughter scolded, you would have chuckled, I think, as Ezra did, when he drew up before the door and tied Ned, and came bustling in.

"Out to dinner!" the old lady repeated thoughtfully, as Ezra gave his invitation; "I don't know about it. We ain't a mite of anything in the house, to be sure; and Mrs. Preston is good—just as she always was; but if she wouldn't a-minded sending us a bite of something here, I don't know but it would be better. You see, Jennie dear, it is so dreadful cold, and this will be such a freezing place to come back to; and the snow will drift in, and give you lots of work. Yes, I know the old stove smokes, poor thing! It's worn out, but it's a good deal better than none."

But the bright-eyed Jennie was bent on going out to dinner, no matter how much trouble it gave her afterward. "And you'll help me, wont you, Ezra, if the snow has drifted in bad?"

"Yes," answered Ezra, chuckling again; "if the snow drifts into your house to-night, I'll sweep it all out for you." And he told Ned, as he untied him, that he would like to see any snow drift into their house—he just would.

Ah, what do you think they said or did or thought, as they slipped into the Preston yard, around the snowy carriage-drive, away out past the carriage-house, and Jennie, tucked among the robes, laughed a silvery laugh, and said: "Why, Ezra Thompson, are you taking us to the barn?"

But Ezra made no answer just then, only to jump out and take the wizened-up widow Jones in his strong arms, and carry her into the little new room, the door of which opened by some magic that young Harry Preston understands, and set her down in her own cushioned rocker; then he answered the bewildered Jennie, who had clambered out after him:—

"No, Miss Jenny Jones, I'm taking you home!"

The Epworth League.

A SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION.

There is a quaint little market-town situated in the northern corner of Lincolnshire, England, the name of which is familiar to every Christian, the wide world over, and dear to all Methodists, for Epworth was the birthplace of John Wesley.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the religious life of England was in a very sluggish state, and when, on the 17th of June, 1703, the home of the Wesleys was blessed with the advent of a "little stranger," the people of the peaceful town never dreamed that through all the ages the name of their township would be indissolubly linked with one of the most marvellous religious awakenings of the century.

Well, now two hundred years have passed, and now, in this new land of promise, the people who in mockery and derision were called Methodists, Ranters, and Wesleys, have grown to be, as in the Old Land, a most powerful—if not the most powerful—branch of the Church militant, and yet they are not satisfied, and the cause of their dissatisfaction is troubling all Christian Churches, "How to retain the young people."

Numerous organizations have from time to time been formed, having in view work for the young in connection with the Church, and success has in some degree attended these efforts, but no regular organization embracing the whole of the younger Methodists has hitherto existed in this Dominion.

John Wesley once declared that he desired "to form a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Christ," and the General Conference of the Church appointed a committee to consider the propriety of forming such a league of the young

people. It was decided to form a society to be called

"THE EPWORTH LEAGUE."

1. The object of the Epworth League is to promote an earnest, intelligent, practical, and loyal spiritual life in the young people of our Church, to aid them in constant growth in grace, and in the attainment of purity of heart.

2. The Epworth League of the Methodist Church shall be the general or parent society, with which all local leagues or young people's societies shall be in affiliation, and to which they shall be auxiliary, provided they desire to accept the relationship and its conditions. It shall be governed by the Sunday-school Board of the Methodist Church, whose officers shall also be the officers of the League.

The work of the League is divided into six departments, each under the charge of a committee. The departments are:—

1. Christian Work; 2. Literary Work; 3. Social Work; 4. Entertainment; 5. Correspondence; 6. Finance.

The heads of the departments, together with the president, constitute the Council, or Executive Committee, for the management of the League. A series of reading courses for the League has been prepared. These courses embrace the Bible; the doctrines, history, biography, and religious life of Methodism; travel, art, science, etc. They are not required, but are recommended to the members.

The colour of the League is a white ribbon, with a scarlet thread woven into it.

The needs of those who are too young for membership in the League, are provided for in "The Junior League, preparatory to the Epworth League." This is admirably adapted to the boys and girls, and may be organized in any church.

No fee of membership is required by the general League, and no assessments are made upon the local branches; but each local branch is at liberty to establish a fee of membership if it desires.

A great meeting of Methodists was held in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, to publicly inaugurate the League. Hon. J. C. Aikins presided; and on the platform were Rev. Dr. Withrow, Rev. Dr. Potts, Mr. E. Gurney, Rev. Dr. Stafford, Rev. J. McD. Kerr, Mr. Jas. L. Hughes, Rev. Dr. Devart, Ald. Boustead, Rev. Le Roy Hooker, Rev. J. Gray, Rev. D. G. Sutherland, LL.B.

Among the audience were a large number of active workers in the Methodist Church; whilst a great number of letters were received from sympathizers unable to attend.

Short speeches, which in no case exceeded the ten minutes' time limited, were delivered by the gentlemen on the platform, in which the necessity for and objects of the League were clearly set forth.

The Rev. D. G. Sutherland, LL.B., moved, and Ald. Boustead seconded, a resolution in favour of the establishment of the League, which was unanimously agreed to.

A collection in aid of the funds was liberally responded to, and the singing of the doxology, closed a most successful and enthusiastic meeting.

Mr. Wesley's Personal Appearance.

JOHN WESLEY is thus described by the Rev. John Sampson, who knew him well:—

"The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature was of the lowest, his habit of body at every period of his life the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise; and, notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, and his appearance, until a few years of his death, vigorous and muscular. His

face, for an old man, was one of the finest we have seen; a clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that could be conceived, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his age, and impressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure.

"Few have seen him without been struck by his appearance; and many who have been prejudiced against him, have been known to alter their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence. In his countenance and demeanour there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity; a sprightliness which was a natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, was accompanied with every mark of most serene tranquillity. His aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration."

New-Year Thoughts.

HARK! 'tis the peal of midnight bells!
The Year is dead—awake from dreams,
From dust of penitential pains;
Lay by his hapless, hopeless schemes,
His withered blossoms on his breast,
And turn to greet the coming Guest.

Come in thou white one, feast and song,
And words of cheer to thee belong
Upon thy festal day.

Come in, nor note upon the floor
The tapers nor the half-closed door
Whence that which shall be never more,
But now is borne away.

The hour is late and soon shall run
Swift heralds from the eager sun
To greet the glad New Day,
And Phoenix-like from ashes rise
Sweet faith to paint the rosy skies,
And wake fair joy that lightly lies
In clasp of penance gray.

Awake—the looked for one is here—
Take thy pure gift, a spotless year,
And listen while they sing—
The happy children of his train,
The days that know nor spot nor stain,
And learn thy lesson once again
In message that they bring.

Fair is the hour that thou wast born,
Thou sweet New Year; for as the morn
Broke o'er the misty hill,
I dreamed that low Sandalphon bent,
His white wings with the morning blent,
And all the earth was still.

His white wings with the morning blent,
And through the solemn space there went
A solemn sound of prayer.
And unseen blessings to the earth
Came with the moment of thy birth,
And spoke his presence there.

A glad New Year, a sweet New Year,
A wealth of joy, a dearth of fear,
I speak of you, my friend.
A dream like mine to bless the day,
Sandalphon's wings to light thy way,
His presence at the end.

Wine on New Year's.

THOUSANDS of tables will be spread with refreshments on New Year's Day. Not in one city only, but in many, the custom of making friendly calls will be observed. Ladies are not disposed to abandon the practice of setting a table, although it is a pleasure rather than otherwise to find, on calling, that no refreshments are offered.

Wines and other intoxicating drinks ought to be dispensed with universally, totally, and forever. "Happy New Year!" needs no help from the exhilarating cup. Hundreds of young men, and many young women, are made drunk on that day by the social use of wine. Every consideration of taste, of civility, of good sense, of religion and morals, should enforce the duty of withholding intoxicating drink from those who call on New Year's Day.