

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Vol. XIII.]

TORONTO, JANUARY 7, 1893.

[No. 1.

GOING TO CHURCH IN THE OLDEN TIME.

THIS picture represents a not uncommon occurrence during the early settlement of New England. The Pilgrim Fathers and founders of the British Colonies which, in loving remembrance of old England, they named "New England," had to encounter many dangers and many difficulties. Indians lurked in the forest, and as the farmer went forth to plough or sow his field he carried his trusty gun and placed it where it could be easily snatched up should the hostile Indians appear. Mother's nursing their babies and performing their household duties were often interrupted by the flash of savage eyes or the gleam of an Indian tomahawk or scalping knife. The early settlers at Plymouth built their first church on the summit of a hill, and placed on its roof two or three small cannon, and made it at once both church and fortress. In our picture the father and his little daughter, on their way to church, first hear the whiz of an arrow through the air and then see it quivering on the ground beside them. Let us all be thankful that in our beloved Canada we can worship God without hindrance "none daring to molest us or make us afraid."

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

We wish to all our readers "A Happy New Year." But your salutation would be more hearty if we could also send to each boy and girl a fine present—skates or a knife, a hood or a doll—for we all like to receive presents, especially from those we love. This we cannot do. But would you not be glad to receive a wonderful seed, which, if you put it in good soil and water and care for it well, will grow up and bear the sweetest flowers and finest fruit ever known, and do so all the year round as long as you live?

Just such a seed has been offered us by the best Friend boys and girls ever had—a seed to lodge in the soil of a true and loving heart. You know very well who that Friend is, and that the seed is not like a carnation-seed or a bulb, but a seed-truth—a life-living word of Christ. And what is remarkable about this one is that you cannot find it in either of the four Gospels among the sayings of Christ, but

long after he had ascended to heaven Paul quoted it as well known to all Christians; and it is the only one thus preserved for us. "Remember," he says, "the words of the Lord Jesus, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

How many a boy and girl is sure to say in his heart, "I don't believe it. That's all talk; it isn't true;" or "I don't care; receiving is good enough for me;" for so our mean and selfish nature always feels. Nevertheless it is true; it must be, for

"in whom was no guile." There is nothing so sweet, so worth striving for, as to be like Christ. Take this thought into the new year and resolve to keep it enfolded closely within your heart as the days go by.



GOING TO CHURCH IN THE OLDEN TIME.

Christ himself says so, not a well-meaning but mistaken man. He pledges himself to make it good to any one who really believes and practises it, even if it were not otherwise true; but it is true in the very nature of things: God has made us; we never can be truly and fully happy till we are like him. The benevolent man is the happy man, and the selfish man is sure to be miserable. How lovely was the life of our Lord, who spent it all in doing good! Would we have been happy in living as we do? What would please him more than to have you take him for your best friend and his life as your model!

Take then this word which comes to us so like a legacy from him as your motto for the year 1893: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Many of our young readers have begun to find how true it is. And every one who takes it into his heart and daily tries to do good and make others happy, as Christ would do in his place, will find the year the happiest of his life. Try it, and tell us at the end of the year whether your motto is true or not. How much it would delight us to learn by-and-bye that you who read these lines opened your heart to Christ at this beginning of the year and began at once to live so as to please him.

A THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR.

THERE is a little command that we wish while yet on the threshold of 1893 to bring home to the minds of our boys and girls. It is, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." This means for you to remember him now. Are you doing so? When the angry words leap to your lips do you press them back—remembering your Creator, and that to be worthy of his care and loving protection is our worthiest aim?

When a hard thought of another comes to you, do you shut it out of your heart quickly, so as to be like him