

January.

SOPHIE L. SCHENCK.

A NEW year smiling comes. It seems that we  
 But yesterday the last one turned to greet.  
 Swiftly the months passed by, and silently  
 We marked it fade, and felt that something sweet  
 Was drifting from us; and we softly sighed  
 As the year, lately new, grew pale and died

O January! first of this new year,  
 What scenes are hidden in thy coming hours?  
 We greet thee with a mingled joy and fear,  
 Knowing thou hast for us both, thorns and flowers;  
 And as we blindly meet each new born day,  
 We ask for guidance o'er the untried way.

Welcome, New Year! Faith bids each heart be strong,  
 For God will order all that comes with thee.  
 To him we leave it, glad to march along,  
 Feeling that what is best alone will be.  
 And as we onward pass, kind wishes fall,  
 That this may prove a happy year for all.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JANUARY 5, 1889.

THE RECORD CLOSED.

ANOTHER year has closed, with its record of events, sorrows and joys, reverses and successes, wrongs and rights, and what has been still exists as an indelible entry in the book of Time. The act of a moment produces the consequences of an eternity, and the word lightly spoken, or the deed unthinkingly done, has effects extending through all time. Our deeds are not for a day, but forever, and, though in real possession of the present, we are inseparably connected with the past and future by silent influences working throughout eternity. The shadow of a life-time may be the result of a slight error of judgment or indiscretion, and, in a moment of unthinking folly, a person may plant thorns in his dying pillow. There is no escaping from the consequences of our conduct, and the reflection of the past light and shade brightens or clouds the aspect of the present.

"Improve mine hours, the space is brief,  
 While in the glass the sand grains shiver,  
 And measure less the joy or grief  
 When thou and Time shall part forever."

At such halting; 'twixt in a life-time, though the occasion is one generally observed with rejoicing, there are not wanting materials for serious and saddening thought, and memory more often strikes a minor chord of sorrow than an exultant one of joy. The thought of friends with whom we surrounded the festive board at similar seasons, who



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA

have since passed that "bourne from which no traveller returns," takes possession of the mind, and a sense of incompleteness is felt at their absence from our gatherings.

To the great majority of the people, however, New Year's day has nothing to do with gloomy reflections and unavailing regrets. The season is welcomed with pleasure, and if there are thousands to whom the day brings no relief from corroding care, those who can rejoice are not in the mood to enjoy the blessings of life any less because there are so many whose misery is intensified by contrast with the joys and pleasures of others. S.S. Teacher.

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 it 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 1889 a truly happy New Year.—Angelus.

*Queer People, with Wings and Stings, and Their Queer Capers.* Illustrated by PALMER COX. Hubbard Brothers, Philadelphia. Price 75 cents.

We wrote a short time ago of Palmer Cox's inimitable book on "Queer People, with Paws and Claws." This is another of the same sort, as full of innocent fun and humour—just the thing for the holidays at Christmas and all the year round. The rhymes are very amusing, but the drawings of the strangely human expression of the creatures portrayed will give no end of innocent delight to young people, from seven to seventy.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.

AND there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lyaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein. Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them. Acts xiv. 8-18.

BORN FROM ABOVE.

SUCH is the alternative translation of the "born again" of the third chapter of John. The change is so great and thorough that only a new birth can fitly image it—from being an heir of hell, to be made a child of God.

On this winter morning the snow is lying thick and soft around and over the landscape. It fell yesterday; it is very pure and very white. But it may become soiled. Day by day impurities will gather in and upon the snow. It is no longer beautiful to look upon. It becomes filthy. Can it ever be cleansed, made white and pure again? Not by washing it, nor by sweeping or dusting. It can only be made pure again by being melted, and exhaled, and rising as invisible mist into the upper air, and gathered into clouds, and softly sent down again pure and clear more—"born from above!" So is the soul, beneath the power of God, drawn upward, purified, and born again, or from above.