

# HOME SCHOOLS

### The Dying Year.

Yes, the Year is growing old,  
And his eye is pale and bleared !  
Death, with frosty hand and cold,  
Plucks the old man by the beard,  
Sorely, —sorely !

Through woods and mountain passes  
The winds, like anthems, roll ;  
They are chanting solemn masses,  
Singing, " Pray for this poor soul,  
Pray, —Pray ! "

Here he stands in this foul weather,  
The foolish, fond Old Year, [heather,  
Crowned with wild flowers and with  
Like weak, despised Lear,  
A king, —a king !

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,  
And the forests utter a moan,  
Like the voice of one who crieth  
In the wilderness alone,  
" Vex not his ghost ! "

Then comes with an awful roar,  
Gathering and sounding on,  
The storm-wind from Labrador,  
The wind Euroclydon,  
The storm-wind !

Howl ! howl ! and from the forest  
Sweep the red leaves away !  
Would the sins that thou abhorrest,  
O Soul ! could thus decay,  
And be swept away !

For there shall come a mightier blast,  
There shall come a darker day ;  
And the stars, from heaven down-cast,  
Like red leaves be swept away !  
Kyrie, eleyson !  
Christe, eleyson ! \*

—Longfellow.

### How to Have a Merry Christmas.

To really enjoy Christmas and have no regrets is one of the fine arts. Our notion is that there should be a complete vacation of business. This means not only not to go near the shop, store, or study, but not to let the shop, store or study come near to us. Many think they are not attending to business when the mind is on it all the time. Put it away. Take the advice of old Thomas Tusser, who wrote more than three hundred years ago a poem called "The Farmer's Daily Diet," in which is this couplet :

At Christmas play and make good cheer,  
For Christmas comes but once a year.

But mere cessation of business is not all that this day calls for; there should be mirth, not the sort of which Solomon said, "The end of that mirth is heaviness," but what he was thinking of when he said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." If you are very conscientious, as all should be, and wonder whether Christians

\* These words mean, "Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us."

should ever be mirthful, remember Christ at the wedding in Cana, in Galilee, and His presence at feasts made in His honour. Happy confusion is order for Christmas day.

It is a day for hospitality. Christ is the everlasting symbol and example of the purest hospitality. Remember friends with presents and Christmas cards, especially those who have seen

gard to the means of the giver or the utility of the gift. One of our contemporaries, in a passage which we quote elsewhere, protested against it last week. The *Evening Telegram* had an editorial on "The Right NOT to Give." We endorse these protests. Poor men's children are now discontented and unhappy if they do not have more and costlier presents than rich men formerly

glittering Christmas decorations do not reveal the Christ-child; they hide Him. Take a little time alone from the outer mirth to commune with thine own heart, and ask, What would this world be if Christ had never been born in Bethlehem? True, pure thought will fit us to hear the angels sing. We have looked among the poets for a sentiment with our own lives. We find nothing sweeter than the following opening stanzas of Miss A. A. Proctor's sonnet, entitled "A Desire:"

O, to have dwelt in Bethlehem  
When the star of the Lord shone bright;  
To have sheltered the holy wanderers  
On that blessed Christmas night!  
To have kissed the tender way-worn feet  
Of the Mother undefiled,  
And, with reverent wonder and deep delight,  
To have tended the Holy Child.

Hush! such a glory was not for thee;  
But that care may still be thine;  
For are there not little ones still to aid  
For the sake of the Child divine?  
Are there no wandering pilgrims now,  
To thy heart and home to take?  
And are there no mothers whose weary hearts  
You can comfort for Mary's sake!

### Christmas Greetings.

INSTEAD of the old method of giving presents to scholars in the Sunday-school at the holiday season, the practice is now common of distributing attractive chromo cards, with a greeting from the school. Sometimes these cards contain a reminder of the hour of the school sessions and the church services, with a request for punctual attendance. Sometimes they contain a text of Scripture or a verse of a hymn.

A Virginia school issues this year a circular slip, with an illustrated heading in pleasing tints. On one side is a Christmas story in verse. On the other is an invitation to the Christmas services in the following form:

MY DEAR SCHOLAR: Under the blessing of divine Providence our school has been sustained and prospered through another year, and we take great pleasure in wishing you "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." Upon next Sunday morning, we expect to have a Christmas Concert Exercise, and other interesting services, and would like you to enjoy them with us. Come, let us spend the last Sabbath morning of the old year together in our school. With gratitude for the past, and hope for the future, let us enter upon the new year with new purpose of heart to make it one of the brightest and best in our history.

With kindest regards and best wishes,  
JOHN SMITH, Teacher.



THE DYING YEAR.

better days. The wretch who in prosperity will surround himself with luxuries, and forget those who helped him to rise, but who are now poor and lonely, deserves to see a skeleton peering over his shoulder as a handwriting on the wall.

It is time to protest against the mania for giving presents without re-

thought themselves able to give. Give, for Christmas day without gifts is a misnomer, but give wisely. Give according to your means; give useful things.

Devotion also should mark the day. Do not depend upon the pageantry of the Church. The elaborate music, the flowers, the congeries of expensive and