

That was all they could get him to say then. Just a week later he walked into the nursery with a package in his hands. And from that package he took out some photographs and handed one to each of his nephews and nieces. And such photographs! In the foreground stood Ned and Carl, regarding each other threateningly and with fists tightly clenched. Near them was Connie, her pretty features so disfigured by frowns as to be hardly recognizable, while even Baby Bessie's plump face had as many puckers and wrinkles as an old dame of eighty.

For some time the children regarded their likeness in silence. Then Bess spoke with a quivering voice:

"Uncle Jack, I don't like to look that way." "Bless your heart, I'm glad you don't!" said Uncle Jack, taking her up in his arms. "But you see you did look that way only last Saturday, little one. It's good for people to sometimes see themselves as others see them."

The four photographs were placed in a row upon the nursery shelf, and thereafter when any one of the four owners was tempted to indulge in pouts or frowns or unpleasant looks, a single glance in the direction of the mantel would prove an effective check. For the children decided that what seems so very bad in a picture cannot be very good at any time. And on the whole that seems a sensible conclusion.—Selected.

Bringing in the New Year.

"I had a dream which was not all a dream." Methought a herald, standing by my side, In fullest panoply accoutred, cried— When he three trumpet-blasts had rung out clear— "The Year is dying—hail the Coming Year!" With that I saw, receding fast away In the dim distance, phantom-like and grey, A figure which most strangely seemed to be, Diversely seen, each one's epitome; So that it bore the impress of the seal That each had set on it of woe or weal. Some sighed to lose it, others gaily trolled, As though from off their hearts a stone had rolled. And with the ever-growing, rosier light Burst on the scene a child exceeding bright, Led by two figures. I could plainly see, The herald being interpreter to me, That these were Peace and Plenty, bringing in The blithe New Year, with loud-acclaiming din. Full many a quaint device and emblem rare The kindly herald showed me outlined there; From which I learned at least one lesson clear— How each should strive to form the infant year; That if, through him, should be the creature moulded, By some among the germs of good unfolded— Some idol from his seat of glory hurled, Some sin upborn, amid the heartstring curled. To make a purer, so a happier, world. Thus we, in part, the Golden Age may see— Not past, but in the future that's to be; For he who works aright can never fail To catch some glimpses of the Holy Grail. Thus far my herald-guide—then, waking me With voice of thunder, cried—So mote it be! —J. L.

THE QUIET HOUR.

The Responsibilities of Life.

MARGARET I. STRODE.

What a vast amount of meaning is embodied in that one short word, Life. Its presence is everywhere apparent, from the giant oak that towers so majestically above us, to the smallest flower that lifts its head to receive the falling dewdrop and be kissed by the morning sun. In the air we breathe and the water we drink are myriads of living, breathing creatures. "What is life?" Is it the only chief essential to our existence, the mere transit from the cradle to the grave? Ask the Sage, and he will answer, "Wisdom, knowledge, and power." Seek the busy workman at his toil, whose brow is deeply furrowed by care; and his reply will be, "Labor, never-ceasing labor." Go ask the gay votary of fashions and pleasures; and for answer receive, "Life is vain, its pleasures deceitful." Behold the merry, light-hearted schoolboy, with the fresh blood bounding through his veins, and he will tell you, "Life is hope, with promise of fruition." Question the patriarch, whose head is white with the snow of many winters, and quick will come the response, "Life is what we make it." And thus we find that as a feeble infant, pure and sinless, we first inhale the breath of life, and for a short time are dependent upon the love and care of those who nurtured us, but in the years that follow it is ours to make or mar.

There are those who have reached the years of discretion, strong in their manhood's prime, shunning alike the pleasures of sin, and the "ways of the righteous," but selling their lives for what? Gold? Is all that is good and noble in their characters to be sacrificed upon such a base altar? As the years roll on their minds become calloused, having no time or thought for anything else save

to worship at the shrine of mammon, but "what shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul?" Christ tells us that "Life is more than meat," and was He not in "all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin?" It is a sad sight to witness the evening tide of one grown old in sin; the shadows of night are deepening without one ray of light to brighten the gloom, friendless and forsaken, a whole life wasted for time and eternity.

"Forenoon, and afternoon, and night— Yes, that is life; make this forenoon sublime, This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer, And time is conquered, and thy crown is won."

How peaceful and serene the life of a true Christian? With what strength and courage he meets and bears the many trials and crosses! Firm and steadfast is the step that follows the "Master." There will be no terror depicted on that face as the last enemy, "Death," approaches; instead, the countenance beams with a sweet and holy joy, in the full assurance of a glorious resurrection, and the "crown of life eternal."



BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR.

The Old Year's Blessing.

ADELAIDE PROCTOR.

I am fading from you,
But one draweth near
Called the Angel-guardian
Of the coming year.

If my gifts and graces
Coldly you forget,
Let the New-Year's Angel
Bless and crown them yet.

For we work together;
He and I are one;
Let him end and perfect
All I leave undone.

I brought Good Desires,
Though as yet but seeds;
Let the New-Year make them
Blossom into Deeds.

I brought Joy to brighten
Many happy days;
Let the New-Year's Angel
Turn it into Praise.

If I gave you Sickness,
If I brought you Care,
Let him make one Patience,
And the other Prayer.

one? Is it fair and unblemished as it should be? If so, the retrospect should make us very happy, for each of us has had a share in making it what it is; but if that gem is not as pure as we would choose to offer, may we not learn by its flaws how to make the next more perfect? The flaws and blemishes may be the result of our failing to do our parts as we should, for all must work together in order to make a beautiful, harmonious whole.

This is only an allegory, my dears,—one of the curious fancies that throng through your old uncle's mind, and never more often than when his thoughts are with his dear boys and girls; yet, often from fables we may draw salutary lessons. I often wish I could know you all personally, and then I fall to musing as to what your lives are, whether congenial or otherwise, etc. I have but poorly illustrated my ideas of what our lives should be, and so will give you a sweet little poem that expresses my thoughts for me.

The writer of these beautiful lines is, or was, a worker in a knitting mill, thus proving that lowly occupations have no power over truly noble minds and hearts, and that the lowliest in life may be the richest in spirit.

Where I brought you Sorrow,
Through his care, at length,
It may rise triumphant
Into future Strength.

If I brought you plenty,
All wealth's bounteous charms,
Shall not the New Angel
Turn them into Alms?

I gave Health and Leisure,
Skill to dream and plan;
Let him make them nobler—
Work for God and Man.

If I broke your Idols,
Showed you they were dust,
Let him turn the Knowledge
Into heavenly Trust.

If I brought Temptation,
Let sin die away
Into boundless Pity
For all hearts that stray.

If your list of Errors
Dark and long appears,
Let this new-born Monarch
Melt them into tears.

May you hold this Angel
Dearer than the last—
So I bless his Future,
While he crowns my Past.

No Night There.

LIFE, we've been long together,
Thro' pleasant and thro' stormy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear,
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time!

Say not, "Good Night," but in some
Brighter clime
Bid me "Good Morning."
—Mrs. Barbauld.

UNCLE TOM'S DEPT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,

At the birth of the dear Christ-child, in the lowly manger at Bethlehem, God gave to his people a new and beautiful golden cord upon which to string the gems he wished them to gather during their lives. Our ancestors, hundreds of times removed from us, began this glorious task; their children and children's children down to the present have continued it, and yet it is not completed. We, too, have done a share, but our task is not over—it will only end with our lives.

Let us glance at this wonderful chain of jewels. Jewels? Yes, jewels they should all be, and dazlingly beautiful are many of them; but alas! some are dark and gloomy, resembling more a common clod of clay than a gem fitted to be offered to the Master's hand when the chain shall be completed. And some of the diamonds have flaws in them, and some of the pearls are blemished, but never now can these defects be remedied; once upon this golden cord these gems can never be changed. How careful, then, should the collectors be, that none but worthy ones be placed upon it.

You wonder, perhaps, some of you little ones, what this golden chain and those jewels mean, and what they have to do with you and me? The golden cord is the thread of Time, and counting the gems already strung on it, we find they number eighteen hundred and ninety-five, so we may understand that each one represents a year, and the top-most jewel is the year just past. Is it a beautiful