

sheep folds. They will even steal away the joyousness of Christmas and of New-year's Day, and get children to quarrelling over their presents! Barfaced robbers! They ought to be whipped out of every house in the land.

If you would be happy you must fight this giant and all his crew with all your might. LOVE must be your sword. It has two edges—love for Jesus, and love for all your friends. Your shield must be faith—a good hearty laugh, but always wear a long face.

That is not the way to improve the passing years; we should rather call that a misimprovement. The fact is, that the happiest people in the world are those who are making the very best of life. They play, they laugh, they leap, they have a good time, but they do these as a relief to the more serious work of life, and consequently they work better. Instead of making a business of play, they make it a help to work. That is what play is for, and it is all that it is good for.

Let us try to get all the good we can out of this new year, from its beginning to its close. We ought to be better, wiser, and happier every year we live. When we work let us work with all our might; when we play let us play heartily. Work and play will then help each other, and both will help us.

God alone can enable us to live right. We should therefore ask His blessing on our life, and be careful not to do anything on which we cannot ask His blessing. Then we shall lead honourable and just lives. Let us pray, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

#### The Promise of the New Year.

BY KATHARINE L. STEVENSON.

FATHER, a new year waits before my door;  
And I—so weak and helpless—how am I  
To meet its still smile, or to lift my eyes  
To that calm brow on which my fate is writ?  
I may not question, for its lips are sealed;  
I cannot read—Thy hand has marked the lines,

And no eyes human may Thy writing trace.  
I do not know what gifts it gives to me—  
What boon or blight; what bliss beyond compare;

What anguish which shall all my being rend.

I do not know what paths it bids me tread,  
Nor whether they shall lead to light or gloom.

Ah me! it wears a quiet face, and yet  
Full well I know that others of its band  
Have come to me with smiles, with joyous mirth,

And then have led me into dark, far lands  
Where deep gloom reigns. I tremble and start back,  
Fearing to take my strange guest by the hand

And bid it welcome. Ah! it waits not words.

Already has it entered at my door  
And calls me forth to follow. Must I go?  
Is there no chart to lead me on my way?  
No mystic spell which shall the future show—  
No help, no guide, no counsellor? Hark!  
What words fall sweet upon my listening ear?

"Fear not!" Alas! how can I cease to fear?  
"Fear not, for I am with thee, O my child!  
Be not dismayed—I am thy God. My strength

Shall, in thy weakness, show; to thy great need

My mighty help is given; when thy feet slip  
My hand shall thee uphold; yes, My right hand,  
Strong in My righteousness. Why do you fear?

Need you a stronger friend, a wiser guide?"

Father, I take Thy promise, and I go  
Unknowing, but unfeared, on my way.  
Already is the New Year's face aglow  
With promise of Thy presence and Thy peace.

Since Thy strength's mine, I surely cannot faint;

Since Thy help's given, I need no other aid;  
Thy hand upholding me, I cannot fall;  
And whether joy, or grief, or life, or death  
Come to me in the days which lie before,  
I fear not; for they come alike from Thee.  
O heart, the very clouds which dim thy sky  
May prove the chariot of Thy coming,  
Lord!  
Then, even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come!

#### Turning a New Leaf.

BY LILLIE MONTFORT.

It was the last day of the year, eighteen hundred and thirty nine, and there had been a week or two of bitterly cold weather, with a heavy fall of snow. This morning dawned bright and beautiful, and the sunlight played on the long icicles that hung from the roofs, and brilliantly illuminated the snow-laden branches of the trees. It had not at present much dissolving power, but as the sun reached the zenith there would no doubt be a rapid thaw. So said James Turner, who in woollen comforter and gloves was industriously sweeping the snow from his doorway, and making a path by which himself and neighbours could cross over to the village shop. I suppose it is really very rude to look in at people's windows, and yet, I should like you to take a peep in at Mr. Turner's cottage window and admire Little Johnnie; he is sitting on a footstool near a fire, and, indeed, everything about him is bright.

There was no one else in the room, but that did not signify. Having finished his sweeping, James Turner opened the cottage door and asked,

"Where's your mother, Johnnie?"

"Upstairs, father," was the reply.

"Never mind, I'm going to send poor little Tim in to have a warm at that fire, Johnnie."

"All right, father," said Johnnie. "Send him along."

Little Tim came in shivering, with ragged clothing and bare feet; he was of the same age as Johnnie, but much smaller in size, and very pale and fragile-looking. His eyes sparkled when he saw the comfortable-looking Johnnie, and he exclaimed,

"O how nice it is."

"Come along, Tim," said Johnnie. "Here is plenty of room. O my! how cold you are. Put your hands on my porringer, and that will warm them proper."

Tim accepted the invitation, and it must be confessed that when he held the outside of the porringer his eyes fell longingly on the bread and milk it contained.

"Have you had your breakfast?" asked Johnnie.

"No!" said Tim sadly, "my mother has nothing for me this morning."

"O my!" said Johnnie again. "Well, never mind, eat that up quick."

And poor little Tim emptied the porringer, and basked in the warmth of the fire until strange questions suggested themselves, and, child-like, he asked them.

"Where do you get your milk?"

"We buy it of Old Styles. Where do you get yours?"

"We never have any. My mother never has any penny for it. I wonder why some people have money and others have none?"

Johnnie was puzzled now, but at last he said thoughtfully,

"I know why you have no money; it is because your father has not turned over a new leaf."

Tim looked puzzled now, but Johnnie continued:—

"A good long while ago I had no

socks or shoes, and my mother had no money, and father was often cross with her; but one day we had such a jolly supper that I wondered about it, and I asked if we should ever have another as good, and father said, 'Yes, Johnnie, plenty of them for I have turned over a new leaf,' and since then we have had fires and milk, and pudding, and clothes, and I have a Sunday suit in the cupboard. 'To-morrow we shall have a New Year's gift, and it is to be a clock, and it all comes from father turning over a new leaf.'

Just then Mrs. Turner came downstairs, and with true kindness spoke to little Tim, and then asked Johnnie if he had given Tim any pictures to look at.

"No, mother," said Johnnie, "we have been having a serious talk."

Mrs. Turner looked amused, but she asked,

"What has Johnnie been saying to you, Tim?"

"He has told me about the new leaf, and I shall ask my father to get one."

"Poor little fellow; it will be a happy thing for you if your father will alter. God help you all this winter."

Mrs. Turner found some clothes that her own little son had outgrown, and they were plenty large enough for her neighbour's child, and the little boys were both delighted with the change in Tim's appearance, but as Mr. Turner was coming home to dinner now, they sent Tim to his mother, to tell all his wonderful story, and to give her a new shilling as Mrs. Turner's New Year's gift.

That same night Tim Raglan, the elder, came home earlier than usual, and apparently in good spirits.

"To-morrow will be New Year's day, mother," he said jocularly. "Will you stand treat?"

"I wish I could," she said; "but, Tim, come and show yourself to father."

Tim came willingly, and his clothes were felt and admired, until nobody could say any more about them.

"Ah!" said Tim the father, "some people do get on. I remember when Jem Turner's wife had an empty cupboard, and no money for firing."

"Yes!" said little Tim. "Johnnie told me about it, and he says they have plenty now, because his father turned a new leaf."

"What does he mean by that?" asked Raglan, but his countenance showed that he knew well enough what it meant.

"Couldn't you turn a new leaf, father?" said the little boy, looking with pleading eyes into his father's face. "It would be nice to have bread and milk for breakfast in a nice hot porringer. Why, father, Johnnie says they buy their milk of Old Styles, and it's just delicious. Could you turn a new leaf, father?"

"I am afraid not," said the man huskily, and he hastily left the room and the cottage.

Mrs. Raglan feared he was gone off to the public-house, and scolded little Tim for letting his tongue run so fast, and so at the close of what had been to Tim a wonderful happy day, he crept to his comfortless bed, sad and heavy-hearted. Poor Tim! his last conscious thought was, "I wish father would turn over a new leaf."

About an hour afterwards there was a gentle knock at Mrs. Raglan's door, and to the poor woman's joyful surprise she found it was Mrs. Turner.

"I thought you would like to know

your husband is in our house and having a chat with mine. Your good times are coming. I've brought you a few sticks for your fire, and a little bit of tea; now you cheer up, and when we send him in you make him as comfortable as you can. God help you."

Poor Mrs. Raglan was unable to speak, but she speedily lighted her fire and put on the kettle, and then slipped over to the shop and got a loaf and a rasher of bacon, changing her new shilling for the purpose. And sure enough Timothy Raglan returned to his cottage in a penitent state of mind. Very timidly he spoke of his resolution to turn over a new leaf, but he had made it, and James Turner had promised to help him in every possible way.

He found it hard sometimes, but he said he prayed to God for grace to keep his vow, and every day it was easier, and now he could not live without prayer, neither could he go without his comforts very willingly, but the new leaf is still new, and he means to keep it.

Well! to finish my story. Let me tell you little Tim woke up and smelled the bacon cooking and in a great hurry jumped out of bed and called out,

"Mother! they are cooking the New Year's dinner in at Johnnie Turner's."

"Poor little chap!" said Raglan, "Come here Tim and hear the glad news. I am going to turn over a new leaf."

On his father's knee little Tim sobbed out his thankfulness and thought how soon his home would be like Johnnie's, and what a good thing it was to have a new leaf to turn.

#### Resolutions for 1886.

*I hereby solemnly covenant, as God shall help me—*

Never to neglect my morning and evening prayers.

Always to speak kindly to every person with whom I am associated.

Always to speak well, and never ill of any absent person.

To endeavour to lead at least one person to the Saviour during the present year.

To strive to attend one devotional meeting during the week.

My dear young Friends: The New Year is one of the times when we should gird on our armour afresh and renew our vows.

Will you cut out these resolutions; or, better still, copy them and sign your names to them, and place them in your Bibles and endeavour to keep them all the year through?

If at any time you should fail, remember you have an Advocate with the Father. Ask Jesus to forgive you, and commence again. Then shall the New Year prove to you—

Another year of progress, another year of praise,

Another year of proving His presence all the days;

Another year of service, witness for His love;

Another year of training for holier work above.

A MOHAMMEDAN publisher in Delhi, India, proposes to begin a woman's periodical. It is designed for the zenana women, and the prospectus says it will discuss the following subjects: Bad customs and their reformation, female education, housekeeping, rights and duties of the wife, moral precepts, the training and duties of children, chastity, industry, etc.