

## LETTER FROM REV. MR. KIRBY.

Dear children of the Palm Branch :

A Happy New Year to you all. Now don't forget on the first of January to write 1899. How often we forget to do that, and make a blot on the page of the new year. A New Year! How clean and pure it comes to us! Not a blot or blunder is to be seen on its clean life. We look over the year gone and almost feel like weeping to think it came to us so clean and pure and now leaves us all spoiled by our wicked thoughts, and words, and acts.

I think the best thing to do is to go to Jesus at the very beginning of the year and ask Him to help us, and I know He will, for He has said : "Those that seek me early shall find me." Early in life, and early in the New Year. Let us try it, and depend upon it, if *He* becomes our guide and helper, we shall manage to get through 1899 with very much more happiness and very much less sin.

Old Janus, from which the month of January is named, has two faces, one looking back and the other looking ahead. This is all right for the month that opens a new year, and should teach us to look back over the past to repent of the wrong, and to find out its mistakes that we may remedy them, and its good deeds that we may repeat and improve them.

But, dear me, its awful for a girl or boy to be two-faced! We don't want to be double-faced any more than we want to be double-minded—"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," says the Bible. Let us rather, be decided, settled, and determined in the right way. I do like those words which tell us that some early Christians were "taken knowledge of that they had been with Jesus, and learned of Him." Oh my! think of having Jesus for a teacher! "Learn of me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Rest! Why that's just what I want. Rest of conscience, rest of intellect. Rest of heart! Rest of hope! And then at last "Sweet Rest in Heaven."

I read a letter from the Superintendent of the Mission Bands yesterday, and I think she is doing perfectly right to ask you to plan for next year, and try and reach your ideal.

It will help you to plan wisely if you ask yourselves these questions, viz :

Would I like to be in the position of the girls and boys who never heard of Jesus?

If the knowledge of Jesus is so much to me, and has done so much for me and this country, would it not be a good thing to send this same gospel and help heathen children to our enjoyment?

Then what can I do to help to send this Gospel?

"My Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,  
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign."

Will you deny yourself some pleasure for Jesus this year? If every child would deny themselves some of the candy they buy, and give to the Mission Band the money, we

would send over the world hundreds of missionaries and thousands of Bibles.

Find your happiness in doing good, and then you will have A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Yours in His name,

W. J. KIRBY.

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A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION.  
OR HOW A PRAYER WAS ANSWERED.

New Year's morning was very bright and pleasant, but the girls were rather sober as they came down the street. Each one had a generous allowance from well-to-do parents, and their Sabbath-school teacher had spoken to them about giving a certain sum each month for foreign missions and they were discussing the question as they walked along. "I don't see how I can," said Nellie. "My money never holds out until the end of the month now."

"Miss Ellis said that if each of us would pledge ourselves to give five dollars a year it would support a girl at the mission in China where her sister is. But I'm sure I don't know how I can. I do have to buy so much new music," argued Bessie.

"I wish we might," said Grace. "But I have so many things to get this year. Another year we must try to."

"What on earth has Eva in her cart?" said Nellie, as they came in sight of the bridge.

"Happy New Year! Happy New Year!" called the girls and Eva in a breath.

"Why, where is your family Eva, and who is this!" asked Bessie, looking kindly at the pale, pinched little child bundled into the small cart.

"Oh, it is Mrs. Riley's little girl. She's three years old and she can't walk a step 'cause she's got the crickets, or something, and I'm going to take her to ride every nice morning."

"She is more fun than the kitten and doll, you think?" asked Grace.

"No," said Eva gravely, "but I made some good *restolutions* this morning, just like other folks. I told mama I wanted to love Jesus and be a better girl, and she said that when we really loved Jesus we were willing to work for him, and if we were not, we were just make-believe Christians, and when we make good *restolutions* we ought to begin right there to carry them out. She hoped I'd begin to-day to be a real Christian girl, and not a make-believe, and so I've begun," she added, smiling radiantly up into the faces of her three friends.

The girls helped Eva give the little crippled baby an extra long ride, and each one kissed her with more than usual tenderness when they left her at the door.

They walked along silently without looking at each other for a few minutes. Then Nellie said huskily :—

"Girls, I'm going to give my five dollars, and not be a 'make-believe' Christian."

"I will, too," whispered Bessie, putting her arm through her friend's.

"And so will I," added Grace, "and with Jesus's help, I'll never be a 'make-believe' Christian again."

Miss Ellis, in China, wrote a long letter to those girls, but I can only stop to tell you one sentence, this—

"How strange and wonderful that our Father should allow you three girls, away off in America, to help Him answer Fairy Blossom's prayer."

Mary S. Hitchcock, in C. M. F.