

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

"ALL-ALL FOR THEE."

A CHRISTIAN'S NEW YEAR'S PRAYER. All—all for Thee! Dear Saviour, may this...

So sweetly harmonizing thought and action, That none who listen shall a discord hear.

All—all for Thee! Oh, take me now entirely, Re-tune each note with Thine own gentle hand.

I give myself fresh into Thy keeping, To do & suffer as Thou shalt command.

I give my heart: I long to love Thee better Than ever I have done in years before;

I give my will—oh Master, do receive it, It must rebel in any care but Thine;

All—all for Thee! Myself in all my weakness Unfit, alone, the feeblest chord to raise;

Oh Master, by Thy own most Holy Spirit Send heavenly music o'er the earth through me.

So true, so beautiful, so soul-refreshing, That those who hear it may learn more of Thee.

Of Thee, their Saviour, who for them didst suffer, Of Thee, their Friend, who lovest them so well;

Of Thee, their King, who soon will be returning; Lord, may Thine anthems through my whole life swell!

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

BY MISS F. E. WINSLOW.

"What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

The words were on a Christmas card, and they had a peculiar fascination for Mabel Grosvenor.

When they had first come to her from a friend on Christmas morning, she could not have said that she fairly understood their meaning.

She puzzled over the quaint old English letters as they ran in and out to accommodate themselves to the design of the card,

and finally she placed it among many others—Christmas and birthday cards and photographs of friends—in the lower half of the frame of the mirror which adorned the bureau in her comfortable bedroom.

There were many other words among the collection well worthy of notice—choice selections from poets, mottoes of advice from eminent philosophers,

loving wishes for happiness for the coming year from dear friends, sent to the girl who seemed to have everything on earth to ensure happiness; and yet among them all, as she came in and out, in gay preparations for pleasure during those Christmas holidays,

these words only seemed to burn themselves into heart and brain; "Poor as I am, poor as I am."

"What can I give Him poor as I am?" Poor! Why, what girl of her acquaintance had more than she?

Her feet sank at every step into rich carpets. Thick satins, furs and plushes wrapped her delicate form whenever she went out; and as to mental advantages, books and pictures surrounded her, and the best schools and masters of the great intellectual city had been employed in her behalf.

And now in her dawning womanhood she stood, prepared, it seemed, for almost any sphere of life or society she might choose to enter; and yet, "poor as I am" in the presence of the Christ whom the Christmas season had been bringing nearer and nearer to her heart.

What were all these gifts? When He was in this world, the great earthly possessions of the young man who came to Him were as nothing in His eyes;

Herod's wealth and Caesar's power had been as dross to this simple peasant of Galilee; the learning and wisdom of the Pharisees and scribes, with their famous teachers, had been utterly rejected by Him.

Mabel felt that to come to Him with an offering of earthly gift—money or education only—would be worse than useless. Yes, in anything that made life worth the living, Mabel was poor, and yet there was one gift, He never despised, one offering he never rejected; the poorest and the richest of the sons of men could bring this gift to Him, sure of His loving acceptance of it, and of His glad appreciation of its value.

On the first day of the new year Mabel felt that out of her poverty this one thing was hers to give, and she began the year with the words of her Christmas card transmuted into a glad personal acceptance.

"What can I give Him—give Him my heart." It was a bright Saturday afternoon of the first week in January, and a shivering girl, slight and tall, apparently about sixteen years of age, stood on the corner of Westminster Street, idly looking into the window of a bookstore.

There was a gaunt, hard, tired look about her, young as she was; and as Mabel Grosvenor stepped up in her bright, fresh clothes, a look of positive dislike and malice came over the girl's face.

It was not that the girl knew Mabel, but the evident prosperity of her appearance and bearing grated upon her; the contrast between it and her own seedy apparel becoming all the more apparent to her.

As Mabel scanned a list of books in the window, the girl began to wonder how she would look in a plush sack of wine color, and a hat with two long plumes curled about it; and it was not only the looks; a girl who wore such things must have everything warm underneath, and plenty of food at home—things of which poor Ethel was very much in need.

Just then Mabel turned and looked at her, and Ethel began again to study the Christmas card she had been languidly regarding when Mabel's arrival on the scene attracted her attention.

Now for the whole week Mabel had been thinking, "To give Him one's heart means all—everything; all I can do and be belongs to Him. How can I show that I love Him? What can I do to teach other people to love Him too?"

And when she saw the poor girl standing by her side, she longed to help her in some way. Her poverty would perhaps be easier to bear if she knew of Jesus and felt sure she belonged to Him.

So hurrying into the store, Mabel purchased the card which had been of so much service to herself and came out to find the girl still standing before the window.

"Do you like the card? Would you care to have one?" she said; and the girl, starting at being spoken to by a stranger, and half inclined to feel offended, was disarmed by the pleasant smile and kind words.

They walked along together as Mabel tried to tell her in a few words what the verse on the card meant.

"Yes, I know, I went to a Sunday-school in the village we lived in before we came here," said the girl.

"How long ago was that?" asked Mabel.

"Oh, most a year. Mother came down here to get more work to do, and when we first came, we all went to school; and then mother got sick and couldn't sew and I stayed at home to take care of her."

"And did she get well?" asked Mabel.

"No," said the girl, her reserve quite melted by the interest of the other; "she died in November. A woman in the same house helped us, and I stayed at home to cook and mend the boys' clothes; and then, when the money we had was all gone, I got a place to tend in a store before Christmas. Now that the holidays is over, I have no more work to do and the children can't go to school 'cause their clothes is all worn out. Jim, he is ten, and sells newspapers; and that's all we have."

Here was work for Mabel to do. She went home with the girl, and found the children huddled in bed in a room without a fire. It was easy for her, with a well-filled purse, to provide food and warmth and clothing for this young family, but it was not so easy for her to give time and thought to their needs.

Many a concert and art gathering dear to her heart were given up to find time for her new and absorbing pursuits which began to grow still dearer to her. She had given her heart to Christ and time and effort, strength and money, followed as mere accessories to the gift.

For Ethel she obtained a place to take care of children during the early part of the day, so that she could return home in time to be with her brothers when school was out.

Encouraged by the real friendship of Mabel, Ethel began to grow into something of health and cheerfulness. There was no reason she could see beyond the one of pleasing the Master of whom she delighted to speak, which could have induced a girl of Mabel's position to give up time and pleasure for her good; and so, through her, Ethel learned to love Christ, something of whose character she saw reflected in her friend's life.

They were both connected with a mission school, one as teacher, the other as scholar. Mabel soon began to find Ethel a valuable assistant in bringing in the girls

of her neighborhood. The young teacher gave herself to them, studied their needs, and helped them as no one had done before. Ere the year was out, she had reason to believe that some of them were leading Christian lives, and helping others to begin in a similar way.

Again the New Year came with its renewed question to Mabel, "What can I give Him?" and with it the same old answer, "Son, daughter, give Me thy heart."

The same heart, indeed, and only that had Mabel to give, but was it so more of a gift than when the year before she had laid it untried upon the altar of her Lord? Yes, more and richer in the lessons it had learned of love for Him and work for His children; greater and more fit for an offering to Him who went about doing good, in that it had acquired something of the spirit of the life-long example of him who freely gave Himself to the needs of His brethren in a complete sacrifice of self.—Zion's Herald.

THE DEATH OF THE YEAR.

A cloud came out of the golden west, A bell rang over the silent air, The sun-god hurried away to rest, Flashing with kisses each cloud he past.

How brightly the year goes out," they said; "The glow of the sunset lingers long, Knowing the year will be over and dead, Its sad hours over—its sweet hours fled— With service of Etern Song."

How sadly the year came in," they said, "I listened and wondered in dusk of night, To me no year that might come instead, Of the old friend numbered among the dead, Could ever be half so bright."

The sun-kissed clouds grew pale and gray, The bells hung silent in high mid-air, Waiting to ring the year away, In strains that were ever too glad and gay For me—as I listened there.

O, hearts! that beat in a million breasts; O, lips! that utter the same old phrase; I wonder that never a sorrow rests In words you utter to friends and guests In the new year's strange new days!

Is it just the same as it used to be? Have new year's only a gladder sound? Forever and always it seems to me That no new face can be sweet to see As the old ones we have fondly loved!

There is no cloud in the darkened west, The bell is silent in misty air, The year has gone to its last long rest, And how a loved and who knew it best Shall meet it—God!—All the Year Round.

A HAPPY NEW-YEAR!

Friendly greetings, the distribution of presents, and general feasting on New Year's day form a custom of most ancient date. It is generally known that the nations of antiquity did not begin their year at the same time, and it still varies among different nations both in respect of the season at which it commences and of its subdivisions.

Cosmically speaking there is no beginning of the year. The earth holds on her course round the sun, never halting for a second, so that she has no starting-point and no goal. The Egyptians begin their year on the first day of their first month, Thoth, which was fixed by the heliacal rising of the brilliant star Sirius, that is, the time when it is sufficiently distant from the sun to become visible in the morning before sunrise.

This day would answer to our 20th of July, and the time generally coincides with the rising of the Nile, the beginning of the agricultural year. So the Egyptian kept holiday and feasting in the dog-days, his labors being suspended by the overflow of the Nile, which flooded his fields. The Jews began their new year with the new moon of Ab, which was the month of the Exodus and the time for the "Feast of the Passover," a feast which could not have been kept but in the Spring, when lambs and kids are plentiful. The Greeks began their new year in midsummer. It was fixed by the first new moon after the Summer solstice; the eleventh day of the moon was the time of the Olympic games, when all Greece came together. The Chinese begin their year in the month of January, but not always on the same day. New-year's day is a general holiday, when all labor is suspended and feasting and rejoicing everywhere prevail. Every Chinese man contrives to have his house decorated and to treat himself and his family with new dresses. He maintains a strict watch over his conduct and everything that befalls him, being persuaded that whatever he does on that day will influence his conduct during the whole of the year. The ancient Roman year commenced with March, as is indicated by the names, "September, October, November, December," which the four last months still retain. July and August, likewise, were anciently called Quintilis and Sextilis, their present appellation having been bestowed in compliment to Julius Caesar

and Augustus. The first Julian year commenced with the first of January of the 46th year before the birth of Christ and the 708th from the foundation of Rome. The month received its name from the double-headed god Janus, who saw what was behind and before, and was placed between two periods of time, the Old Year and the New Year. On New-year's day, for a good omen, every one was accustomed to handle his tools, or do a little work. "The literary man read a little, wrote a little, spoke a little," etc. All ill-omened actions and words were carefully avoided. The Romans addressed to one another good wishes and cheerful words on this day. "May the new year be auspicious and happy to thee," was the friendly greeting. A branch of a sacred evergreen shrub formed a New-year's gift, with figs, dates, a jar of honey, or a cake made of honey. The giving of these sweet things symbolized good wishes—that the flavor of sweetness might attend the year through its whole course. To wish your friend and neighbor a "Happy New-year" is a most ancient custom, and was practiced by nations which were old before the dawn of the Christian era.—London Methodist.

HOUSEHOLD CUSTOMS IN JAPAN.

When a woman reaches her house, she takes off her sandals, pushes aside the sliding doors of paper, and enters in her stocking feet. The rooms are softly matted but contain no furniture. The houses are built of wood, and among the poorer classes have but two or three rooms. In the kitchen is a large stone box with ashes and burning coals in it. This is called the hibachi, and over it the rice is cooked. There is no chimney in the kitchen; but the smoke goes out either through the broad open door, or through an opening in the roof. After the rice is cooked, it is put into a small, unpainted wooden tub. At dinner-time, the mother brings out a little table, two feet square and one foot high, with dishes and food upon it. The family sit upon the mats, the tub of rice is in the centre, and each one dips into a bowl rice sufficient for himself. They often pour cold tea over the rice, and always eat with chop-sticks. Fish, sweet potatoes, and a pickle are sometimes served with a dinner.

Japanese houses often have but one sleeping-room, which is occupied by the entire family. When guests come, they share it with them. The beds consist of heavy comforters. They are spread out on the mats at night, and put away in the closets during the day. Each person lays his head on a little wooden pillow, constructed with a hollow place in which the head rests. In some rooms in the house is a closet containing a shelf for gods, and upon this shelf stand all the household idols, which have come down as heirlooms of the family from generation to generation.—Christian Intelligencer.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

DARLING'S QUESTIONS. "Where does the Old Year go, mamma, When it has passed away? It was a good Old Year, I wish that it could stay."

"It gave us spring and summer, The winter and the fall; It brought us baby sister, And that was best of all."

"Where does the Old Year go, mamma? I cannot understand." "My love, it goes to join the years Safe folded in God's hand."

"From where will come the New Year When the good Old Year is dead? Now all my birds and all my flowers With the Old Year have fled."

"I do not think that I shall love This New Year at all." "Yes, dear, it too will bring the spring, The summer and the fall."

"Where will it come from, mamma? I do not understand." "It comes from where all coming years Are hidden in God's hand."—Evangelist.

EDWIN.

It was the day before the coming of the New Year, but in little Edwin Eastman's home there was none of the usual bustle and work incident to the preparation for New Year's calls, for up stairs, in a darkened room, Mrs. Eastman watched beside the sick-bed of her only girl, Alice, just four years old.

Edwin was tired of his books and his playthings, tired of wandering through the quiet rooms and watching, through the curtained windows, the hurrying people passing to and fro, and was glad when, after dinner, his mother called him to go to the apothecary for a prescription, as she feared Alice was worse.

Quickly putting on his hat, coat and mittens, he hurried away, and had just turned the second corner when he met his playmate, Walter Cambridge, who said: "You're just the one I wanted to see. Come into the house. Come into the house and try my new game, Go Bang."

"I wish I could, but mother sent me for some medicine." "Only just for a moment! I don't believe your mother is in a hurry for the medicine."

This permission, Edwin went. The new game proved delightful. Then there were all of Walter's Christmas gifts to be examined, and by and by Walter's elder brother came in and told them of a pleasure trip the boys were to take New Year's day. His father was going to let the hired man take a horse and wagon and drive them to Big Hill, about five miles away, and they were to take their sleds and a lunch, and coast for a couple of hours. Walter was to be allowed to go, and Edwin was invited to bear him company. There was much talk over the proposed sport for the next day, and thus it happened that it was almost dark when Edwin started for home, and thought of the pre-cipitation tucked away in his overcoat pocket. He ran as fast as he could to the nearest drug-gist and procuring the medicine, hastened home.

His mother met him at the door with a grave, pale face, and asked anxiously, "What kept you so late, my boy?"

Now Edwin was thoughtless and careless and forgetful, but when he had done wrong he never told a lie about it; so he answered: "I went into Walter Cambridge's house, and forgot all about it."

His mother did not scold him; she never did scold. She only said, sadly, with such a grieved, reproachful look in her eyes, "I'm glad you told the truth, Edwin, but I am sorry I cannot trust my little boy, even to get medicine for his poor sick sister. What if Alice should die for the want of it?"

Then seeing the look of distress her words brought to the child's face, she added, more kindly, "Go get your supper, now. You will have to eat it alone, for your father will not return until late, and I do not like to leave Alice. Bridget will bring me up a cup of tea," then went up stairs to the sickroom and shut the door.

But Edwin did not want any supper, and crept up to his own room and into bed, and after a long time, he fell asleep, and dreamed that the doctor came, inquired in a loud, angry voice where the pre-cipitation was that he had ordered, and that there was no hope now that Alice would live. That medicine might have saved her; now it was too late.

In a few days Alice died, and they buried her in the family plot in Greenwood, beside his baby brother, and when they returned from the grave to the desolate house, Edwin's father turned angrily toward him and said, in a cold, stern voice, "It was all your fault that Alice died. You are no child of mine. Leave this house instantly!"

He cast an appealing glance at his mother, but her face was buried in her handkerchief, and she did not utter one word to persuade his father to let him stay. So he went out in the bitter winter wind and wandered through the streets until night came and he was weary, cold, hungry and heart-sick, and then crept into the shelter of a church porch and lying down, wished that he might die.

"Edwin, dear, it is time you were up! A happy New Year, my son!" Edwin opened his eyes, sprang up, threw his arms around his mother's neck, and covered her lips with kisses.

"Is it really you, mamma? Was it only a dreadful dream?" "I'm your own dear mamma, what did you dream, my darling?" she asked tenderly.

"I dreamed Alice was dead because I did not get her the medicine, and papa sent me away, and I was so cold and hungry, and—and—" the sentence ended in a sob.

"My poor boy! Alice is much better this morning," his mother said, and she took him in her arms and comforted him as mothers know how.

And when I tell you that Edwin did not go to Big Hill that New Year's day, but voluntarily remained at home helping his mother to care for and amuse Alice, who was so much better she could sit up in her crib for a short time and enjoy her playthings, I think you will agree with me that repentance was genuine, and that he will try never to be thoughtless, or careless, or forgetful again.

Deal with another as you'd have Ancher deal with you: What you're unwilling to receive, Be sure you never do.