

### A Thought for the New Year.

I SAT alone with my conscience,  
In a place where time had ceased;  
And we talked of my former living  
In the land where the years increased,  
And I felt I should have to answer  
The question it put to me,  
And to face the answer and question  
Throughout an eternity.

The ghosts of forgotten actions  
Came floating before my sight,  
And things that I thought were dead things  
Were alive with a terrible might;  
And the vision of all my past life  
Was an awful thing to face;  
Alone with my conscience, sitting  
In that solemnly silent place.

And so I have learned a lesson  
Which I ought to have learned before,  
And which, though I learned it dreaming,  
I hope to forget no more.  
So I sit alone with my conscience,  
In the place where the years increase;  
And I try to remember the future,  
In the land where time shall cease.  
And I know of the future judgment,  
How dreadful so'er it be,  
That to sit alone with my conscience  
Will be judgment enough for me.

—London Spectator.

### What New Year's Brought.

BY EMMA WARD BUMSTEAD.

IN a little log cabin back in the woods dwelt an old man and his grandchildren—Paul, twelve years old, and little Reba, two years younger. They were very poor, but happy, and above all grateful for their many mercies. For although the thatched roof was broken and often let in the rain, and the potatoes had been scanty, still had not the butternuts been more plenty than usual, and the venison they had secured had been a rare treat.

Often as they gathered round the fire the old man would while away the long evenings by telling of some of his early adventures, and the children, never tired of listening, would look with awe at the deer's horns and other trophies which hung over the fireplace.

As they were thus employed one rainy night, a stranger entered—a rough looking man with a gun, and a dog following close at his heels.

"Got anything to warm a fellow up with?" he demanded in a gruff voice.

"Nothing stronger than tea," replied the old man, who, no matter how poor he was, always managed to have a little tea in the house.

"Well, give me a cup of that. Strong d' hear?" addressing the latter half of the sentence to Reba, who had brought out the teapot. So saying, the man put his gun in the corner and sat down in front of the fire, while the dog skulked away under the table.

"Rough weather this," said the old man, trying to draw out the stranger.

"Middling. I've seen worse. How far is it to Flatham Falls?"

"Nigh onto ten mile. Be you going there to-night?" queried the old man.

"Any robbers in these woods?" asked the man, not appearing to notice the last question.

"They never come near us," said the old man, "though I've heard they

prowl round and waylay travellers sometimes."

The stranger sat in deep thought for several moments, till roused from his reverie by Reba, who handed him a smoking cup of tea, which he eagerly drank, and handed back the cup for another. He looked so dark and threatening that Reba involuntarily shrank back, and with trembling hands poured out cup after cup of the strong beverage.

"Guess I'll put up here for the night. You needn't put yourself out. I'll sleep on the floor here," said the stranger presently.

Paul and Reba stole up stairs and lay awake for a long time in the loft overhead until the stranger, overcome by the warmth of the fire, had fallen asleep and was snoring loudly.

When Paul awoke next morning and went into the room below, the stranger had gone, while in the cup which stood on the table was a bright five-dollar gold piece. Paul could hardly believe his senses, and he rubbed his eyes to see if he were not dreaming, but the gold still remained in the cup. He turned it over, when the coin rattled upon the table, and then rolled off on the floor and disappeared down a crack under the hearth.

"Oh, dear, I've lost it!" he exclaimed, while tears of disappointment started in his eyes.

"Why, Paul, isn't the fire made yet? What are you doing on the floor?" asked Reba, coming down and seeing Paul intently working over the bricks.

Before he could answer they heard the sound of horses galloping down the road. Another moment and they had stopped at the door, and before the children could gather their scattered wits, a loud knock came and a man's voice said, "Hurry up there, and undo the door!"

"Grandpa, come quick! Some one's breaking down the door," exclaimed both children in a breath.

While the old man stumbled down the ladder in his haste and unbarred the door, the men were muttering and cursing outside.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"We're hunting for a thief. Have you seen anyone hereabouts?" demanded the foremost one, while the others searched the loft above.

"A stranger came here last night," replied the old man, "but I don't know where he's gone."

"How long ago did he go?" asked the sheriff.

"I left him asleep here and don't know nothing more about him," replied the old man. "He inquired the way to Flatham Falls."

"Tisn't likely he's gone there," responded the sheriff.

"Hold! What's this?" exclaimed one of the men, as his eyes rested on the dislodged brick, and he eagerly examined it closer. "Perhaps we shall find some clue here."

Hastily removing the bricks by

means of a poker, he found the missing half-eagle.

"One of the identical ones," he exclaimed, holding it up to the light. "Where'd you get this?" he demanded.

"Oh, I found that in the cup this morning, and it rolled down there," replied Paul, amazed at the unexpected turn the affair had taken.

"Likely story," sneered the officer, "At any rate, there are no more here," he added, after carefully examining the bricks.

"And you don't know where he's gone?" he asked, fixing a piercing gaze upon each in turn.

"There's nothing to be gained staying here. Let us be going. He's got a good start while we've been fooling away our time," impatiently said one of the men, mounting his horse.

"I'm not sure of that," said the sheriff. "The old man may be in a conspiracy with him. It'll be a sorry day for you if you're hiding any more of this money," he added, addressing the old man, who replied trembling with fear and apprehension, while the children clung to him: "I've told you the truth. I know nothing more about it."

After carefully looking for any hidden place where the treasure might be secreted, and telling the old man that he would have to appear in court, they mounted their horses and were soon out of sight.

"What did they mean, grandpa?" asked Reba, while Paul stood with flashing eyes, gazing at the bend in the road where they had disappeared.

"I don't know, child. But somehow it will come out all right. God knows I am innocent, and he will provide and take care of us."

The days dragged slowly by, and little Reba did not sing as usual while busy about her work, for a dread apprehension hung over them. The sheriff had been there again and searched the surroundings, for the thief had not been caught, and a large reward was offered for the recovery of the treasure.

Christmas came and went, but brought no brightness into the little household, though Paul had made a willow basket and filled it with bright red berries for Reba, and their grandfather had killed a pheasant, which at any other time would have made the day a gala one. They had both gone to the Sabbath-school Christmas tree, but somehow the tree, brilliant with lights and sparkling ornaments and with the fruit and gifts hanging temptingly on the heavily-laden branches, did not look as fascinating as usual, and they were glad to get away from the merry crowd. A year ago they had been the gayest and most light-hearted of all the children.

New Year's Eve had come, and as his custom had been for years, the old man took down his cloak and hat to attend the evening service of watching out the old year.

"Are you going to-night, grandpa?" asked Reba.

"Yes. Maybe we shall find comfort

in the house of the Lord," replied the old man.

Silently the two children prepared to accompany him. The church was well filled and the service had already begun when they reached the door, and as the hymns and testimonies followed each other, bringing comfort to the oppressed and sympathy to the sorrowing ones, their burden seemed to grow lighter. Soon the old man rose and said,—

"I came here very sorrowful to-night, for a dark cloud hangs over me, but the Lord never forsakes his children. 'I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.'"

"Let us pray," said the pastor, and he poured out a prayer of entreaty in behalf of the aged pilgrim, that the Lord would sustain and deliver, clearing the innocent and bringing the right offender to justice.

Peacefully they returned home in the bright moonlight on New Year's morning, strengthened for the coming days. As they were gathered round their simple noon meal, the post drove up to the door and handed Paul a letter for his grandfather, who opened it in eager haste, for letters were rare occurrences, and read that the thief had been arrested in a distant city, and had "confessed where he hid the treasure, and that he left the gold piece in the cup so as to fasten suspicion on the old man and thus give him a chance to escape." "Thank God!" reverently ejaculated the aged man, while tears of thanksgiving coursed down his cheeks.

"Happy New Year!" shouted a boy, coming up to the door, and laying a chicken on the step.

"Happy New Year!" echoed several voices in unison, while neighbor after neighbor, who had heard of the good news, entered with gifts, to congratulate the old man, who was too overcome to speak. Then they sang in united voices, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and silently departed, leaving the children and their grandfather to enjoy the gifts and good-will showered upon them.

Jesus was a child, that children may love him. When he was twelve years old he said he must be about his heavenly Father's business; and Mary found him in the temple.

"What ails papa's mouf?" said a sweet little girl, Her bright laugh revealing her teeth white as pearl. "I love him, and kiss him, and sit on his knee, But the kisses don't smell good when he

Young man, are you spending your time loafing? Are you in the habit of visiting saloons and similar places? Stop! If you keep going that way, and go on loafing, ruin will be the result. Time is of great value. Good books and good work will make you what you ought to be. Follow the good.