

familiar,' I said, as I gave him a chair, which he drew close beside the sleeping child.

"You know my father," he answered, "and you have heard of the boy who left home seven years ago. I am the son of Reuben Stephens."

"The familiar air puzzled me no longer, but with the solution it disappeared. This fair-browed, blue-eyed man, of open countenance and pleasant smile, bore no resemblance to the father whose grim visage I studied so often from the pulpit. This was a face tender with feeling, one that women, beholding it, would love, that children would caress.

"He told me his story—a very common one; of indulged childhood and wilful boyhood; of disobedience and debt; of the cold bitter words of a father, and the hot angry words of a son; of threats uttered and fulfilled; of a passionate parting.

"I wrote twice afterward," he said, "when a better spirit moved me; but my letters were returned unread. And after mother's death, of which my father sent me brief legal announcement, I ceased all attempts to conciliate him.

"We live in a distant city, but recently a casual traveller brought us word of him; how solitary his life; how aged he has become. And my wife, who is a lover of peace, broke down my pride and has persuaded me to try again. 'We'll take the boy,' she says, mother-like. 'He can't resist him.' So I have left her at the inn while I came over to you.

"I know the old customs, and remember how many times I have joined in letting the New Year in. The door is always bolted now, they say; but it used not to be so. And as we've arrived on this particular night, we thought, wife and I, that perhaps there might be a chance of 'letting the New Year in' at the old home once more."

"The bells chimed the half-hour after ten before our talk came to an end. Then I left him, and crossed the graveyard to the church, noting as I passed, the gleaming headstone that marked the spot where rested the body of the little woman whose heart had fretted itself into stillness for the boy who had just returned.

"The solemn watchnight service was rendered with prayer, with plaintive hymn, with silence that meant more than speech, until over the bowed heads rang out the welcome of the bells.

"In the vestry, a little later, a few brief words sobered the jubilant young people assembled, and they slipped quietly away to await my coming, beyond the garden of the solitary red brick house. With the last stroke of the clamoring bell the young father joined me, holding in his arms the child, now wide awake,—a fair-haired little fellow about five years old. He chattered merrily about the bells, and the stars, and the 'grand-dad' he was going to see.

"The rusty bell rang clamorously through the house, and we saw the light within one shuttered window shift to and fro. A step along the hall, the jarring of a bolt, and the door was flung open. The light from a suspended lamp fell full upon my face.

"What foolery is this, sir," said Reuben Stephens, impatiently, "you know I do not—"

"He stopped suddenly, for out of the darkness and over the threshold stepped a tiny, fair-haired boy. His eyes darkled with sleepiness, his cheek shone rosy from the enveloping plaid. With childish fearlessness he walked up to the grim elderly man, and in clear voice full of glee, said his little lesson:—

"Grand-dad, I've letted the Noo 'ear in."

"The stern face looked dazed for a moment, but the knotted hand lifted itself unconsciously to rest upon the boy's fair hair.

"In an instant a second figure crossed the threshold and, kneeling, flung one arm around the child: a man's eyes sought the furrowed face, and a man's voice said:

"Father, we've let the New Year in."

"I saw a face quivering with emotion; I saw hands clasped as if they would never loosen again; then I turned away.

"Over the hedge I heard the whispers of the young people, who were waiting my coming.

"Sing, children, sing," I cried, and they broke into a carol:

We've shut the Old Year out, friends,
With its folly, its loss, its sin.
But with love imbued, and with hope renewed
We've ushered the New Year in.

"And singing, we passed down the road to 'let the New Year in' to other homes."

UNDER THE HOLLY BOUGH.

We are not going to say very much about the individual careers of those forming our "portrait gallery" this month. We think that the face of each of our thirteen friends tells something of the owner's story; of a sound, healthy body, a contented happy mind—both at work amidst congenial surroundings. From John Nzipo, in his twenty-ninth year, and who will soon engage in active missionary work, for which he has been preparing himself for the past seven years, down to our thirteen-year-old little friend, John Barr, who has been bravely at work for two years past, we can very heartily and thankfully say of all, they are not "slothful in business," and they possess much of that diligence which "maketh rich."

If our younger friends will but show the same determination of purpose, the same earnest desire to live up to the highest ideals of Christian duty, which have characterized the life of John Nzipo from the day he first determined that his work in life should be to carry the Gospel to his countrymen in Zululand, their future cannot fail to be one of much peace and happiness. All cannot enter the foreign mission field, but each can in his own daily life so exemplify the duty he owes to God, to his fellowmen and to himself, as to become in fact a very useful missionary, scattering seed which, under God's care, will blossom into very healthful fruit.

We now leave our friends to enjoy what we trust will be a very happy Christmas; and we would say to them and to all our boys, in the words of an old Christmas carol:—

"Ye who have loved each other,
Sister and friend and brother,
In this fast-fading year;
Mother and sire and child,
Young man and maiden mild,
Come gather here;
And let your hearts grow fonder,
As memory shall ponder
Each past unbroken vow:
Old loves and younger wooing
Are sweet in the renewing
Under the holly-bough."

"Ye who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother
In this fast-fading year;
Ye who, by word or deed,
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come gather here.
Let sinned against and sinning
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now;
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the holly-bough."

REFUTED.

In the Toronto *World* of November 27th appeared a lampoon which testified to the artist's creative skill rather than to his sense of justice and consideration for those of his fellow-creatures whose early life had been denied the pleasures and advantages which had doubtless surrounded his own childhood. To what extent

a man may probe and torture one or one thousand fellow-beings "in defence of a principle" is a matter of taste so long as the law be not transgressed. The *World's* artist availed himself of this privilege to the full, and doubtless felt no small degree of satisfaction as he thought of the publicity that would be given to his handiwork. Possibly he overlooked the fact that his genius—of which he possesses a considerable share—was, in this instance, being used to cruelly hurt the feelings of some seven thousand young people who share equally with him the right to exercise whatsoever gifts God bestowed on them in making an honest livelihood in this bounteous portion of the British Empire. We sincerely trust that this was so, and that thoughtlessness alone was responsible for such deplorable prostitution of gifts of a high order. We were not without a friend, however, to take up the cudgels on our behalf. His Honour Judge Ardagh, of Barrie, Ontario, has for many years taken a keen interest in the work of Dr. Barnardo's Institutions. He has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the methods adopted by Dr. Barnardo in his work of child helping, and surely the people of Canada will listen to the voice of one of their country's judges, speaking of what he has seen and learned by experience and research, rather than be guided by the rabid denunciations of irresponsible sensation-mongers. Judge Ardagh has on more than one occasion in the past come forward and completely refuted libellous statements which have been made against the Homes and Home Boys and Girls. These occasions are remembered with very deep gratitude, and no less heartily do we thank Judge Ardagh for having written the following letter which appeared in the Toronto *World* of November 29th:—

DR. BARNARDO'S CHILDREN.

Editor *World*:—Permit me to enter an earnest protest against the lampoon that appeared in your paper on the 27th inst. against Dr. Barnardo and his homes for orphans and waif children in London.

I appeal to you not to allow your influential and widely-read paper to be made the medium of circulating what I can positively assert is not accurate. The inuendo contained in the picture I have referred to is one that is calculated to do even more mischief than columns of letter press, as it catches the eye and conveys to the mind in a moment what any amount of reading might fail to do, and it is most likely that very many will see and scan this picture who have no time to read more than purely general news.

I am in a position to speak "by the books," as it were, in this matter, as during my last visit to London I carefully inspected Dr. Barnardo's homes. At his request I addressed a little band just about to be sent off to Canada, and I can assure you that they compared very favorably with any similar number of boys that might be collected anywhere in this country. The fact that these boys are all bespoken before they arrive in Canada speaks volumes.

In one of his late reports Dr. Barnardo was able to state that, after specially communicating with the Minister of Justice at Ottawa, less than two per cent. of his young people sent to Canada (more than 7,000 in all) were failures. This statement is one that can easily be disproved if untrue.

Permit me to quote, shortly, from a late report of these homes. Among the principles laid down governing the emigration part of his work, we find the following: "Only the flower of my flock shall be emigrated to Canada; those young people, namely (1) who are in robust health, physical and mental; (2) who are thoroughly upright, honest and virtuous; and (3) who, being boys, have been industriously trained in our own workshops, or who, being girls, have had careful instruction in domestic pursuits."

I affirm, with all confidence, that the importation of these children is a benefit to Canada. It is a source of great regret to me to see many who might help forward this Christ-like work of Dr. Barnardo, if not substantially, yet by a kind and encouraging word, doing all in their power to hinder it. I know of no work for the benefit of humanity, in the present day, that is more worthy of support than this. I send you, with this, the last annual report of these homes, and if, after a careful and dispassionate perusal of it, you find yourself unable to say anything for this work, I appeal to you not to say anything against it till you have weighed well the whole evidence.

JOHN A. ARDAGH.

Barrie, Nov. 28.