

Winter Days.

Old Winter comes forth in his robe of white,
He sends the sweet flowers far out of sight,
He robs the trees of their green leaves quite,
And freezes the pond and the river;
He has spoiled the butterfly's pretty rest,
And ordered the birds not to build their nest,
And banished the frogs to a four months' rest,
And makes all the children shiver.

Yet he does some good with his icy thread,
For he keeps the corn seeds warm in their bed,
He dries up the damp which the rain had spread,
And renders the air more healthy,
He taught the boys to slide, and he flung
Rich Christmas gifts on the old and the young,
And when cries for food from the poor were wrung,
He opened the purse of the wealthy.

We like the spring with its fine, fresh air;
We like the summer with flowers so fair;
We like the fruits we in autumn share,
And we like, too, old Winter's greeting;
His touch is cold, but his heart is warm;
So, though he brings to us snow and storm,
We look with a smile on his well-known form,
And ours is a glad some meeting.

What Odd Jobs Did.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

BY A. W. WHITNEY.

"It is the Lord's will, wife, and we can but submit," said Nathan Holloway sadly. "I have prayed long and earnestly that he would provide some way for us out of this great trouble; but he knows best, and he will be with us even when we have to leave the old home. I hope they won't come to notify us to-day—the first day of the New Year—and yet, I suppose we might as well look this in the face first as last."

"O Nathan!" said his wife, as she fell on her knees by the side of the chair to which for months he had been confined, "if you were well and strong, I should not mind leaving the dear old place so much; but I know how hard it will be for you, as you are, to make another place seem like home."

"Wife," said her companion, laying his hand fondly on her head, "with you by my side any place will seem like home. Do I not know how you have struggled and toiled so that we might stay here even until to-day? Where should we have been now, had you not so bravely taken things into your own hands? I feel badly about Walter, for I had hoped to give him a good education; but as God has seen fit to render me so helpless, it cannot be now, and we must try to find something for the boy to do. But, wife, we will not tell him of it to-day. Let us make it a happy day for him, so that when we are gone he may remember with pleasure the last New Year's Day he ever spent here."

"Yes, Nathan, I've"—

"There, wife, I see lawyer Turner coming up the lane. You had better go now. I did hope they would let us feel that the old place still belonged to us to-day—but God knows best."

"Nathan, I wish you would let me stay and see the lawyer with you."

"No, no, wife. I can stand this better alone."

His companion rose, pressed her lips to his brow, and left the room without a word.

"Happy New Year!" said the lawyer, as she met him at the door. "Happy New Year!" he repeated, as he entered the room where the invalid was awaiting him.

"Awkward," he muttered, as though to himself. "It don't seem right to wish a man that when you've come to turn him out of doors, as you might say."

During this speech he had been fumbling over a bag of papers he had brought with him.

"Suppose you know what brings me here, Mr. Holloway?" he added, helping himself to a seat.

"Yes," was the reply; "you have come to notify me that the mortgage is to be foreclosed at once."

"I see you have kept track of dates and so forth. I don't often attend to such matters on holidays, but laid aside my rule for once, and made a special case of this. I understand you are not prepared to pay."

"No, I am not prepared to pay."

"Pity you have not some friend to borrow the money from. Five hundred is a small sum to give up such a fine place for."

"I could not ask any one to lend me money when there would be no prospect of my ever being able to pay back the loan."

"Wise, very wise. But your grandson might be able some day to pay it for you."

"Walter is but a lad," was the reply; "and it would be long ere he could do it. Nor would I be willing to burden his young life with a heavy debt. No, the old place must go."

"And yet," said the lawyer, writing on one of the papers he had with him, "I am told it was for his father, to pay off some of his debts, that the place was first mortgaged. I don't see why, when his conduct almost ruined you, you took upon yourself the support of his child."

"That is all a thing of the past now. You know my son is dead."

"True, the original mortgage was two thousand, and you have paid up all but five hundred." Again he busied himself with his pen. "Suppose you would have paid it all if you had not been disabled?"

"I hoped to be able to do so, but God, in his all-wise providence, has seen fit to order things otherwise. When do you propose to offer the place for sale?" The old man's voice was very sad.

"It will not be necessary to offer it publicly," was the lawyer's low reply, "for I have privately found a future owner for the place, and it is that which has brought me here now."

"When does he wish to come into possession?" asked the old man, thinking more of that than of the price that had been offered.

"I think he would like to come into possession to-day," said the lawyer, writing busily again. "I have brought all the papers with me."

"To-day! To-day!" said the old man, starting

"Yes! Many people, you know, like to start things with the beginning of the New Year. Will you look over that paper?"

Nathan Holloway took the paper handed him with trembling fingers, for it was a shock to him to think of passing over, that very day, the old place to a stranger; but, though his eyes grew dim at first, he bravely steadied himself until he could read the words that would pierce his heart like knives. A frightened look passed over his face. A moment later he handed the paper back, saying, sadly:—

"You have made a mistake, and given me the wrong paper."

The lawyer looked at it a moment, and then returning it, said:—

"No; if you examine it, you will find it properly made out and signed."

"But it is a release of the mortgage, and is of no use when I have no money to pay it."

"But suppose some one else has paid it for you?"

"There is no one to do that."

"On the contrary, there is; for it has been paid, and the release was made out yesterday."

"What does this mean?" asked the old man, excitedly.

"It means," was the reply, "that your grandson, who is but a lad indeed, has paid off the mortgage, and he now sends his grandparents the release as a New Year's offering."

"Walter! Walter! How!"

"Listen, Nathan Holloway! Two days ago your grandson, he tells me he is but thirteen, came into my office. He is a bright looking lad, and I have once or twice sent him on errands, and given him a trifle for it. It seems now, that, for the last year, he has spent his holidays, and all of his spare time, in running errands and doing odd jobs, for which he has received small sums of money, all of which he has carefully saved, so that when I opened the bag he brought me, I found these small sums had mounted up until they had made one hundred and twenty-five dollars and fifty cents. He had heard, he said, that his grandfather must sell the farm unless he could pay some money he owed by the first of the year. He asked me if what he had given me was enough to pay it; and I told him yes—that the farm would not be sold now, and that I would come down myself and tell you so to-day."

"But"—began the old man, in a faint voice, and trembling again.

"Wait a moment—I have more to say. Never mind where the rest of the money came from. It has all been paid. What I have to say is this: I am generally considered a hard old bachelor. Perhaps I am. Circumstances may have conspired to make me seem so; but I have a vivid recollection of my younger days. I know what it is to begin life with a clog and a weight dragging me down; I know what it is to fight and struggle against adverse circumstances. I have seen life in some of its hardest phases; and since I have been what the world calls wealthy, I have been called stingy and mean. But your grandson strikes me as one to whom I could lend a helping hand, feeling confident I would not regret it in the future. I will undertake to see that he is well educated, will send him to college, and give him a start in life. As for you and your wife, you may live here as long as you need a home on earth, and you shall want for nothing. It was to tell you this that I have set aside my ordinary custom, and have attended to business on New Year's day. There, I am afraid, I have told you too suddenly, after all," and he went over to the side of the old man, who was trembling in a manner that alarmed him.

"No, no," was the reply. "Call my wife! call my wife! Oh! I could bear trouble without her—but not this, not this!"

"Oh, Nathan, Nathan!" cried the wife, when she had been summoned, "what is it?" And once more she fell on her knees by his side.

"It is joy, wife, joy! Tell her please,"—turning to the lawyer. "I can't—it chokes me."

Once again the story was told of what a grandson's love had done, and, as he finished, the lawyer saw the tearful face of the wife raised to that of her husband. Then, as both heads were bowed, he stood reverently by, for he knew that prayers of thanksgiving were ascending to the throne of grace. Even when he clasped their hands in token of farewell, there was no word spoken. Their hearts were too full for utterance. It remained for the grandson, who came shyly in not long afterward, to bring them to a full realization of the change in their prospects.

Was it a happy New Year's day? Ask any one of them, now that ten years have passed away, and they will all reply alike, "that it was the happiest in all their lives."—*S. S. Times.*

EVER follow that which is good.