

# SUNBEAM

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## THE NEW YEAR.

Little children, don't you hear  
Some one knocking at the door?  
Don't you know the glad New Year  
Comes to you and me once more.

Comes with treasures ever new,  
Spread out at our waiting feet;  
High resolves and purpose new  
Round our lives to music  
sweet.

Ours to choose the thorns  
of flowers,  
If we but mind our duty.  
Spend aright the priceless  
hours,  
And life will glow with  
beauty.

Let us then the portals  
ring,  
Heaping high the liberal  
cheer,  
Let us laugh, and shout,  
and sing.  
Welcome, welcome, glad  
New Year.

JEM.

BY E. L. S. THOMPSON.

Only a little boy herding cows from early in the spring until the snows of winter fell. "Jem" everybody called him. If he had any other name, he did not know what it was. He wore a red flannel shirt; the cuffs were torn off. His brown arms and brown hands needed soap-suds as badly as the soiled and ragged shirt.

"I've lived in as many States as I'm years old, an' I'm twelve. Pap (that's my dopted father) is a mover, he is!"

"Does your father work?"

"No, ma'am, he don't! Work makes him sick. He 'lows to rest up awhile, cos' Patty an' I like to work."

"Who's Patty?"

"That's pap's sister. She smokes a pipe an' drinks beer pap gets in a tin bucket. I 'low they'd both be better 'ithout the pipes 'an the beer. Seems like smokin' an' drinkin' makes 'em cross an' ugly; an' Sundays they don't act like 'twas Sunday at all."

"Have you ever been to school?"

Jem's face brightened up at once. "Yes; out in Iowa I lived with Mrs. Bales, an' she sent me for a year. She died, an' Patty, who was in the same house, said sho'd keep me. I went another time 'fore that, but I can't remember how old I was. I can read, but my writin's like hen tracks."

"A boy told me one day to milk the cows and get what I wanted. I wouldn't do it. They're not my cows. I'm awful hungry sometimes, but I never steal. Pap says beer's good for me, but I won't drink it. I know it ain't true, or he'd be decenter than he is. I come out of the 'sylum first, but Mrs. Bales she said my father was a soldier an' my mother a nice woman. I don't forget what she told me, either. I'm goin' to school some day. I'm gettin' awful old, though, and I'm ashamed of my rough ways." Jem's bright brown eyes smiled back at the lady who had given him the dinner.

The very next day she went to see "Pap" and "Patty," who said they were willing to give up the boy if they were paid a certain sum.

When Jem was bathed, his hair cut, and he was dressed in a new suit of clothes he looked so well that three or four persons offered to adopt him. Pap and Patty said "keepin' him at work had been the makin' of him," and that they were going to get him back. Mrs. Lynn had adopted Jem by law, and the Wolleys asked for him in vain. They were going to sell Jem's time to a showman, but they were too late with their wicked plans.

In Jem's travels from State to State he had picked up a variety of knowledge. He knew about birds and

trees and rocks and animals, though he could not give the book names. How fast he learned! From the foot of the class the little herd-boy soon went to the head. God had raised up friends to aid him, and he will make a useful man."

Little Mary was reproving her younger brother for fibbing. "Now, Russell," she said, drawing down her face, and frowning threateningly on the tiny culprit, "dust you remember, never, never, to tell another of your wrong-side-out stories to me."



"A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL."

Jem cracked his whip as the cows started down the bank toward the river. His old blue coat, large enough for a man, and a hat that was down on his ears, made him look like a little old man. He wore no shoes, and his trousers were in a ragged fringe around the bottom. The dinner bucket that he carried had in it only two cold potatoes, a slice of rye bread, an' a piece of bacon. A lady who lived near where he herded cows took him out a tray of warm dinner one spring morning, with a pint tin of sweet Jersey milk. Jem cried for joy.