

## After Christmas.

I HAVE lately heard a secret,  
Heard it, too, from truthful lips:  
Santa Claus, the sly old fellow,  
Makes his "after-Christmas" trips.

I've been told he has discovered  
Many things that cause him pain;  
Discontent and hateful envy,  
Thoughtful love bestowed in vain.

He has seen his choicest presents  
Torn and broken and defaced;  
Santa Claus, though rich and lavish,  
Frowns on wilful, wicked waste.

All unseen, he watched some children  
In their pleasant home at play  
With the very toys he gave them  
On the merry Christmas-day.

Johnny's rocking-horse was splendid,  
Gayly decked in red and gold;  
Katy's doll as fair a creature  
As a child could wish to hold.

Johnny's horse was kicked and battered,  
Just because it couldn't neigh;  
Thought his papa might have bought him  
Two live horses and a sleigh!

Katy wished her doll was larger;  
Wished its eyes were black, not blue;  
Finally grew vexed and threw it—  
Broke its lovely head in two!

Santa Claus looked grave and troubled,  
Shook his head, and went away;  
"I'll remember this," he muttered,  
"On another Christmas-day!"

Then he peered in dismal places,  
Where he was not wont to go;  
Where the hungry, shivering children  
Never any Christmas know.

And his heart was sad and sorry  
That he could not help them all;  
And he thought, in grief and anger,  
Of the broken horse and doll.

As he took his onward journey  
He was seen to drop a tear,  
And I'm certain that he whispered,  
"I'll remember this next year!"

But he has so much to think of,  
And so many things to get,  
Can't the Johnnies and the Katies  
Think of it, if he forget?

## A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

BY MRS. R. H. WOOD.

"A HAPPY New Year, Hal," said Ernest, as he bounded into the parlor full of life.

"I shouldn't think you would wish one a Happy New Year such a morning as this, snowing and blowing, and the last of the holidays, too," grumbled Hal.

"Come, come, Hal, you are out of spirits this morning. I think you have had too many holidays already," said his father, who had heard his reply to Ernest.

Just then the breakfast bell rang, and as one after another came into the dining-room, they were saluted by their mother in her most cheerful manner. She noticed the unhappy look on Hal's face, but, like a wise mother, appeared not to see it.

"To-day," said she, after all had been helped to toast and steak, "begins a new year. We have wished a 'Happy New Year' to each other." Ernest looked into Hal's face, but Hal looked down at his plate. "I wonder if we have any plans for

making this year a happy one. If we have not, I am afraid the days, weeks and months which make up the year will pass and the next New Year's morning will find us about the same as to-day."

"About the same—only more so," said Mr. Renshaw.

"What do you mean by 'only more so,' papa?" asked Emma, a little girl of six years.

"I mean," said Mr. Renshaw, "that if we are happy to-day because we try to make others happy, then we shall be happy to-day, and the next day, and so on, growing happier every year; and if we are selfish and do nothing to make others happy, then every year we shall be more unhappy and make all our friends unhappy."

"O, is that it?" asked Emma.

"Yes, that is just it," said Cousin Robert. "I remember how unhappy I was six years ago. Nothing pleased me long at a time, when Aunt Belle took me in hand and showed me up. I declare, she made me see myself to be so perfectly selfish that I really hated myself and wondered that any one could love me. Then she taught me that to be happy and make others happy, I must be unselfish. It was a good lesson, and I thank her in my heart every time I think of her."

"Suppose you give us the benefit of your instructions, Robert," said Hal, sneeringly.

"That is a good idea," said Ernest, not minding the sneer, "and I'll appoint a meeting—a New Year's experience meeting—in the parlor at eleven o'clock, a.m. All in favor say 'Aye.'"

A rousing eye and merry laughter closed the breakfast interview.

Eleven o'clock found all the children in the parlor ready for the meeting. As Robert came in, Ernest said, "Cousin Robert, we want to hear your experience in working out Aunt Belle's method of making one's self happy, for we all want to be happy, you know."

"It was the last evening in the year 1868," commenced Robert, "that Aunt Belle took me into the study for a real, thorough lesson. I was twelve years old and as selfish as a boy could well be. I had never thought that I ought to do anything to make others happy, but expect all the family to please me. Aunt Belle saw that I was growing into a cross, selfish, unhappy man; so New Year's eve, as we were alone she said, 'Robert, how are you going to open the New Year?' I drawled out that 'I didn't know. I hoped papa would give me a horse. I thought I could get as much comfort out of that as anything.'

"Robert," commenced my aunt—I knew by the tone of her voice that she meant all she was going to say, and I began to grow sulky—but she only said, 'I made a discovery since I've been here. It will not please you much at first, but in the end, if you take up with my advice, it will be greatly to your advantage.'

"What is it?" I asked in an unpleasant way.

"I think I'll not tell you to-night. Come in here in the morning, and while the others are busy, we will have a talk," said my aunt.

"As I loved her very much, I consented, but had it been any one else I should have said, 'I guess not; I'm not coming in here to be scolded.'

"Next morning, as we met at the breakfast table, she gave me such a kind glance of the eye that all the dread of meeting her was gone, and I was ready to take quite all the advice she was disposed to give me. Really, I do think that Aunt Belle is one of the wisest of women, for instead of a long uncomfortable talk in a sad, serious tone, she said,—

"Robert, my discovery is simply this: You need to be doing something for others. Make yourself useful, then you will enjoy all that is done for you, and you will be surprised at yourself to see how happy you are. Try it, and see if I'm not right."

"No doubt you are right," I said, out of politeness to her, not believing a word of what she had said; "but, aunt, there is nothing I can do."

"Watch for opportunities, and report to me the next time I come. Will you, Robert?" asked Aunt Belle.

"Of course I could not refuse, and having promised, I meant to keep my word; and I did not wait long for opportunities."

"Tell me how you began," said Ernest.

"One of the first incidents came in this way. I found, one morning, little Gertie Rawson, the daughter of drunken Bill, as we call him, standing in the edge of the woods, shivering with cold. I asked why she was there, and found that she had been there all night, to get out of her father's way. I tried to coax her to go with me and get something to eat and warm herself, but could not. She was a timid little girl, so instead of going into the woods for chestnuts, as I wished to, I went back to the house, and my mother put bread, cold meat and doughnuts into a basket which I carried to her. The pleasure of this little act of doing something to make another happy, more than compensated for the loss of the chestnuts. From that time I have found many ways of doing something for others, if it is no more than to bring in a basket of kindlings for Bridget when I know she is tired, or by saying 'Never mind,' when she hasn't my lunch ready on time, ironing days. I've seen her look very happy when I said, 'Give me a cold dinner to-day, since papa and mamma are not to be here,' so that she could have a little time to enjoy herself; and really I am happier seeing her enjoy herself than I used to be while eating a hot dinner prepared just for myself. And she says to my mother, 'I had rather work for you for fifty cents a week less than for any one else, because you and the

family treat me as if I had some feelings."

When Robert paused, Emma said, "I think your story is beautiful, cousin Robert. Will you tell us some more some time?"

"Yes, we want more of your experiences," they all exclaimed.

"Well, you begin to practice, and we will have another meeting one year from to-day," said Robert—"a genuine experience meeting, after the old style."—*Zion's Herald.*

## "Try Again To-morrow."

HE came to me with earnest look,  
My bright-faced little brother,  
And shyly showed his copy-book—  
Was ever such another?

I point the faults out one by one,  
As slowly o'er we con it,  
The cramped, uneven, straggling lines,  
The many blots upon it.

He said, and o'er his sunny face  
There fell a cloud of sorrow,  
"I didn't do it very well,  
I'll try again to-morrow."

I felt the hot tears in my eyes,  
Did not God's message reach me,  
As I thought of failures often made  
In lessons he would teach me?

How many a page of life is soiled,  
With sin and shame and sorrow,  
But though I've failed to-day, I am  
To "try again to-morrow."

MILLICENT.

Ufford, Ont.

## THE FINISHED WORK.

"MAURICE, when are you to get your new suit?" asked Mrs. Robertson of her son.

"This evening, mamma. I called at the tailor's to-day, and he said they were quite finished."

"And you believed him?"

"Of course, I did. He wouldn't have said so if it wasn't true, and he never told us a lie," said the boy, in surprise.

Mrs. Robertson turned to a woman who sat working in the room.

"Ah!" she said, "see how this child trusts in the word of a man; and you refuse to believe the dying Saviour, when he says the work of salvation is finished. 'He that believeth not the record that God hath given to us eternal life, hath made him a liar.' Awful thought! Now see if we can learn a further lesson from this child's simple belief in man. Come here, Maurice. Tell the tailor to send home your clothes at once, that I may put some patches upon them.

The boy looked still more surprised.

"Why should you do that, mamma?" he exclaimed. "You would only spoil them. They are finished, you know."

"Even so we cannot add any fancied merit to God's work," replied Mrs. Robertson. "'To him who worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.'"

SILENT deeds are better than unprofitable words.