

hear from you. I have great faith in your power of endurance. I please myself by thinking sometimes about the increase of happiness that has come to you—the blessed change that was brought about by the promise you made us, never more to touch or taste the intoxicating cup. And you are keeping the promise, John, are you not? You were so sincere and earnest when you made it. We all wish you well. My father was wondering this morning how you are getting on. With much sympathy and Christian goodwill, yours truly, Lucy W—.

All the pitiful feeling of which I am capable set toward the poor wreck of a man who stood beside me. He had been almost saved, and yet appeared to be altogether lost; he had tried to get out of the slough, and a helping hand had been extended to uplift him. The struggle had ended dismally, and down into the deeper depths of degradation he had sunken once more. I slipped my arm within that of my new but disreputable acquaintance, drew him under my umbrella—it was showery weather—and turned aside from the public road into a quiet country lane. He continued his story:

Yes, as I was saying, up in the North there was always somebody at my elbow to keep me straight. But when the contract the gaffer had there was finished a lot of us was obliged to leave. I came on into this country. It was lonely. At nights I didn't know what to do with myself; the other chaps went to the "King's Head" Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays, to a "free-and-easy." I held out for a bit. Worse luck, Blind Aleck, the fiddler, turns up. I'm powerful fond o' the fiddle, and I knew Aleck when I was a boy. It was more nor I could stand. I mind it well: a wet afternoon last November; it was dark and cold; but as I was passing the "King's Head" I could see the gases was alight, and a fire was blazing in the bar-parlor grate, and the old man drew the bow across the fiddle string, and it pulled. The strain of "Bonnie Annie Laurie" "pulled," I tell you, and I seemed to half know it was hell I was going in to, but it was a merry laughing hell just then, and I couldn't help, I couldn't help.

It was well that we had reached a secluded part of the narrow miry lane, and were some distance from the busier thoroughfare in which we met, for my companion, becoming excited with the telling of his story, had raised his voice, and was speaking with some show of passion.

'Look!' he continued, and he thrust his hand under his crumpled shirt front, and drew forth from where it had been resting, next his skin and pressed to his bosom, a little ivory crucifix. 'They gave me this when I was leaving Whitty—Miss Lucy did. They said I was to wear it, that it would hold me true to my promise, that it would keep me from falling away. It's lost its charm, sir; it's lost its charm.' The voice of the speaker was husky, but charged with emotion. His faith in his fetish had almost gone. 'You don't think there's any good in it, do you?' I was reluctant to answer. It seemed to me, that though that little ivory relic had been invested with a virtue of which it was destitute, I could not speak of it contemptuously without giving pain to the poor fellow, who had so long regarded it with veneration. Yet it was desirable that he should know the truth. I had a Gospel for him; so, after a moment's hesitation, I spoke according to the faith I have—spoke slowly, and perhaps with an impressiveness of manner of which I was unconscious.

'It isn't a Christ like "that," on the cross in ivory, that helps a man; but a living Christ, who is able to enter your heart and abide there. You have heard about the good Saviour, I suppose? He died that he might save, and now he lives to help. He is able to control you, and make you do right, even with everything against you.' I had a most sympathetic listener. I cannot recall much of what I said to him. I know I talked about the grace which is all-sufficient. I remember we prayed, as we stood side by side under the umbrella in the drizzly rain. He got safely past the place of danger; we separated, and have never seen each other since.

Thousands upon thousands are in the same plight as that poor fellow was when I met him—are in moral servitude of a most degrading kind—and it is useless to lecture and reprove them, for they are keenly and painfully sensible of their abject condition, and unless divine energy is applicable to vitalize and intensify the weak will, we might as well hold our peace. But to every

man, down and trodden upon, and under the heel of the oppressor, the Christ of God appeals: 'Bruised and fallen one, you have tried to break your fetters and have failed. Trust Me, and I will help you. I will inspire you with my own mighty and invincible Spirit, and you shall be gloriously free.' I speak of what I know. Multitudes have taken the Saviour at his word; they seemed to have no mind, no will of their own, their nobleness, all but a few traces of it, gone, but they said they would let him save them and he has done so. To-day they are on their feet, the ruling passion, greed, lust, spitefulness, love of gambling or love of drink, is strong as it used to be, but they are stronger: 'more than conquerors through him that loved them.'

## Correspondence

A BRIGHT NEW YEAR TO ALL.

Dear Children,

Now, at the close of the old year, we want to thank you all for the very nice letters you have written to our paper during the past twelve months. It was very interesting to hear about the members of your family, about life on the farm and in the store, and about your pets.

Many important events have happened during the past year which you will remember all your lives, and to which you have often referred in your letters. There was the lamented death of our beloved, Queen Victoria; there was the terrible cutting-off of the life of that great and good ruler, President McKinley; and there was the welcome visit to our own country of Prince George and Princess May.

We do not know what is before us in the coming year, but we earnestly hope there will be many bright and happy events in the history of every country, and few or none of the tragedies that marked this year.

Our own country, Canada, has come remarkably to the fore during the last few years, and a great deal of her success is due to the sturdy, fearless conduct of her sons, whether far away on the battlefield or at home administering the affairs of the people. To have strong sons and daughters, physically, intellectually and morally is the greatest possession a country can have, and knowing she has this she can look out with fearless eyes to the future.

We want you all, dear children, to try your very best to be good and true, and not only to watch your own conduct but whenever you have a chance to lend a helping hand to some poor brother or sister who finds it a hard thing to battle against the temptations of the world. And, then, you must not go about with long, glum faces thinking what a bother it is to be good, but you must put on the very brightest smiles knowing that it is a privilege to be in the regiment of Christ's soldiers, and making other people anxious to enlist in your Captain's service.

You know when the Canadian boys went to fight in South Africa they could not go in any old clothes they liked, but the authorities gave them certain regulation khaki uniforms which they wore as the best protection for the day of battle. So our Captain will not have his soldiers go forth to fight without the best clothing he can devise for their protection, and a list is set forth in Ephesians vi., 13-17, which everyone of you ought to adopt henceforth.

Dear children, during the coming days, 'Trust in God and do the Right.' Your loving friend,

The Editor of the Correspondence Page.

Fallbrook, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl. I live on a farm. We have six cows and three horses. We have two cats and one dog. His name is Prince. I have two sisters and four brothers. I go to school. I am in the part second class. We like the 'Messenger' very much. We have two miles to go to school. We have a pine-grove out in front of the house.

I. E. A.

Manchester, Ont.

Dear Editor,—My auntie who lives next door, takes the 'Northern Messenger,' and I like reading it very much, especially the Correspondence, so I thought I would like to write a little letter for it. I am twelve years of age and have two sisters and one brother. My sisters' names are Birdie and Violet; Birdie is ten years of age, and tried the Entrance when she was nine and just came short a few marks. Violet is six years old and is in part II. reader. Forrie, my brother, is eight years old and likes to send little notes with candies in them, in school, to the little girls. He is in the third reader. We have two horses named Mack and Jack. Jack is blind in both eyes, but papa works him in the elevator. We have one cow and we did have a pretty little white kitten; we have two or three names for it as Kitty, Beatrice and Flora and several others. Papa keeps a store in this village. Birdie and I take music lessons and like it fine. I go to High School and like it very much. I go to the Sunday-school every Sunday. We live near the public school, only a few steps to it. It is about two miles to the High School, but papa drives about every morning and night. We are going to have a concert at the Hall, and the High School is getting it up. Birdie and I are going to play a duet, I expect. Papa teaches the Bible class. Papa and mamma sing in the choir.

VERA MARIE H.

Black River Bridge, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl twelve years old and go to school. I am in the fourth book and like it very much. I have a pet kitten and two birds which sing for me when I play the organ. I live on a farm, seven miles from the town of Picton, on the shore of beautiful South Bay and in sight of Lake Ontario. I have seven brothers, and I am the only girl in the family.

NELLIE J.

Great Burin, Nfld.

Dear Editor,—My ma takes the 'Messenger,' and in looking over the Correspondence I have not seen any letter from Burin, so I thought I would write a few lines. I go to school; it is about half a mile from home. I am in the fourth reader and like my teacher very well. There is a pond close by the school house and we have fine fun there in the winter on the ice.

MACKINLAY H. (Aged 10.)

Soper, N. D.

Dear Editor,—We have taken the 'Messenger' for two years now, and we like it very much. My birthday is on Aug. 22. I have four brothers and four sisters and one little niece.

NETTIE G. (Aged 12.)

Sawyerville, Que.

Dear Editor,—I thought I would write a little letter to the 'Messenger.' I have four cats and one dog and a white duck. I go to school; there are three teachers.

ALEX. M.

Black River Bridge, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I take the 'Messenger' and like it very much. I have six brothers and one sister. I have a black pup and a calf and three ducks for my pets. I like the pup the best. I am ten years old and in the third book. I have a mile and a half to go to school. I live on a farm along South Bay and Black River. We have three horses and three cows and about a hundred hens.

PERCY G.

STORY RECEIVED.

The little story which N. C. sent is not quite good enough to go in the 'Messenger.' If N. C. wants it returned he must send an addressed wrapper to the Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.'

The poem sent by J. M. could not be used.

## A Propos.

In selecting a publication don't let bulk, or cheapness, or premiums outweigh your better judgment. Neither the family food nor the family reading are matters to trifle with. Purity and wholesomeness should be the first consideration in either case. The result will be healthy minds in healthy bodies. Good quality often costs more but is always the most satisfactory in the end.