

The Old Year.

The moon is shedding her ray
Through a mist as though of tears,
For the old year is fading away
With all its hopes and fears.

Slowly the hours creep by,
With steady, relentless pace,
For the old, old year must die,
And the new one take its place.

And when the midnight hour
Shall strike, like a funeral bell,
From some unseen church tower,
'Twill the death of the old year tell.

And bury the days that are past
In the silence of the tomb,
The hours all wasted and lost
Will fade away in the gloom.

Perhaps 'twas a year of sadness,
Of disappointment and pain;
But the new year may bring us gladness,
As the sunshine after rain.

—Lilian M. Mellor.

What Sacraments Are.

1. Reliable pledges of God's good will to man.
2. Assuring tokens of grace given at a definite time.
3. Visible media or channels through which God invisibly pours Divine influence.
4. "Quickening or vitalizing" the soul, and lighting the lamp of Faith therein, i.e., when the Divine Life is begun by new birth in Holy Baptism.
5. "Strengthening and confirming" the soul and trimming the lamp afterwards, i.e., by supplying fresh oil of Divine Grace in Confirmation and Holy Communion.

How to View Ourselves.

We shall view our characters more truly, much more safely, when we view them in their defects, and faults, and infirmities, than when we view them only on the side of their good qualities. The custom of viewing our virtues has a strong tendency to fill us with fallacious notions of our own state and condition. Let us leave our virtues to themselves. Our business is with our sins. They who are truly humble-minded have no quarrels, give no offence, contend with no one in wrath and bitterness; still more impossible is it for them to insult any man, under any circumstances. In reading the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, I should say of them that the one had just come from ruminating upon his virtues, the other from meditating upon his sins. Mark the difference: first, in their behaviour; next, in their acceptance with God. The Pharisee is all loftiness, and contemptuousness, and recital, and comparison; full of ideas of merit, he views the poor Publican, although withdrawn to a distance from him, with eyes of scorn. The Publican, on the contrary, enters not into competition with the Pharisee, or with any one. So far from looking round, he durst not so much as lift up his eyes; but casts himself—hardly, indeed, presumes to cast himself—not upon the justice, but wholly and solely upon the mercies of his Maker: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." We know the judgment which our Lord Himself pronounced upon the case: "I tell you this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other." The more, therefore, we are like the Publican, and the less we are like the Pharisee, the more we come up to the genuine temper of Christ's religion.

Not Failure.

The real failures in life are not those which are registered in commercial agencies and reported as bankruptcies, nor those whose marks are the decay of earthly fortune, descent in the social scale, the breaking down of worldly prosperity, or any of those signs by which men rate one another. A man may fail in these ways, and, as heaven sees him, his path may be like the shining light, growing in brightness all the time. His heart may remain pure and his hands clean through all his

earthly misfortunes. He may be growing all the while in the element of true manhood. In the autumn days the stripping off of the leaves uncovers the nests of the birds; and for many a man the stripping away of the leaves of earthly prosperity is the disclosing to him of the soul's true nest and home in the bosom of God. We cannot call that life a failure which, though losing money and outward show, is itself growing every day nobler, stronger, Christlier.

The Habit of Complaining.

Somebody has truly said that the real art of living is making the best of things. So let that be the basis of daily life. Cultivate cheerfulness, don't be ever blaming fortune and fate; meet the petty ills that hourly arise bravely, brightly. So met, they are half defeated, and will wholly vanish before the twin magicians, hope and patience.

The habit of complaining easily grows; it reduces everybody to a state of despondency and depression, and unfits one for the daily battle of life. And this vice—for vice it is—is a boomerang; it not only acts upon others, but it returns and reduces its victim to a pitiable, fretful condition, till there is no sweetness in life.

"Complaint is a confession to failure," said a wise writer.

No one would willingly confess defeat, and yet the woman who complains does all unwittingly; she proclaims aloud that she is overweighed by her responsibilities; that she is unable to meet the calls upon her tact and patience; that life's worries are too many for her; in a word, that she has failed—a humiliating confession indeed!

Be Yourself.

Be yourself. That rightly and broadly considered, is the central message of all religion. Every chord of Christianity resounds with that note. Be yourself, your highest and best self. Whatever the environments in which you live, be yourself, and you will find that from the strength and purity of that spiritual self-hood, as energized in its elements by the powers of God, will issue all that is really good for you, and of those about you. Be yourself, your highest and best self, and you will realize with a clearness that cannot be denied, and with a certainty which cannot be shaken, that, whether you are rich or poor, whether you stand high or low in the estimation of mankind, whether you take this or that place in the judgment of the world, yet there is nothing that men can give you, and nothing that men can take away. It is on what you are eternally in your soul and inner being, and not on the changing circumstances and vicissitudes of life which lie beyond your control, that your prosperity depends. Your true self and its true reward both are in your own hands, and all else is but vanity. It is for you, and for you alone, to decide, by your fidelity to truth, and your devotion to duty, whether you will or will not take here and hereafter one of those first places in the kingdom prepared by the All-Father for those that love Him.

Self-Examination is not Penitence.

How are we to seek for penitence; what must we do? In one sense the answer would be: by the practice of self-examination. Well, certainly it is needful; certainly to know what our sins are, is necessary in order for true sorrow for them. But that is very far indeed from being all our duty. Self-examination at certain times, fixed and earnest, is a very needful spiritual discipline, but it is not penitence. And, indeed, it is a very dangerous mistake, fallen into, one fears, by some people, that a minute of self-scrutiny will take the place of sincere contrition. To know oneself at all is in the highest degree a difficult, and, when all is done, is, in this world, a most imperfectly effected work; but to know oneself truly is impossible, without something more, without Divine assistance, which must be earnestly sought in prayer. Without earnest prayer for contrition—diligent, heartfelt, prolonged—you may succeed in cataloguing your sins, as you would catalogue the books in your library, or file the bills in your

office, but you are no farther towards the broken and contrite heart which "God will not despise." —Canon Knox-Little.

Humility.

Humility is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted, or vexed, or irritated, or sore, or disappointed. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing that is done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed and despised. It is to have a blessed home in myself, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is troubled.

Hints to Housekeepers.

Wormwood boiled in vinegar and applied as hot as can be borne on a sprain or bruise is an invaluable remedy. The affected member should afterward be rolled in flannels to retain the heat.

When the hands are dirty with household work they may be thoroughly cleaned by using a mixture of salt and vaseline, which must be well rubbed in and then washed off with ordinary soap.

The juice of one lemon in rice that you are cooking will whiten it and make it cook much nicer. The acid seems to keep the grains separate. Never stir rice with a spoon; just shake the pan in which it is cooking if necessary to stir it.

pancakes.—A very delicious sweet pancake is made by taking one pint of sweet milk, four eggs, two tablespoons powdered sugar, two tablespoons melted butter, one teaspoonful Royal baking powder and flour for a moderately thin batter. Beat the eggs, whites and yolks separately. Stir the butter, sugar and one cup of flour (into which the baking powder has been mixed) into the yolks and add the milk. Add the whites of eggs last, stirring briskly. Bake in thin, small cakes, buttering each one as it comes from the fire; place flour in a pile with any kind of jelly between, and powdered sugar over the top.

CHOCOLATE CREAMS.—To the white of an egg, mixed with as much water, add enough confectioner's sugar to make a dough-paste that can be worked with the fingers into small balls. Grate six tablespoonfuls of sweetened chocolate, melt it, without water, in a cup on the stove, and when smooth and thick dip your balls of sugar-paste into it and then let them dry on waxed paper. They may have to be dipped several times before they are satisfactory.

FRUIT CAKE.—This cake will keep for several years, if wrapped in buttered paper and kept in an air-tight can. The writer puts fruit cake in a ten-pound lard pail, and puts sealing wax around the lower edge of the cover. Make a batter by creaming together one large coffee-cupful of butter and two cupfuls of granulated sugar. To these add one cupful of New Orleans molasses and five well-beaten fresh eggs, one cupful of sweet milk, to which has been added one-half teaspoonful of soda. Sift together several times five cupfuls of flour, one teaspoonful of salt and one teaspoonful of baking powder. Stir together until perfectly smooth; then mix in gradually the following fruits: Three cupfuls and a half of seeded raisins, two cupfuls and a half of currants, two cupfuls of finely-cut citron, one and one-half cupfuls of cocoanut, one teaspoonful each of cloves, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg and ginger. Line a medium-sized sheet-iron pan with buttered paper, using two layers at the bottom. Bake slowly for nearly two hours. Cover with paper to prevent burning. When cool, if the paper sticks, dampen, and it will come off easily. When perfectly cold, put into an air-tight can. This cake should be at least a month old to be good, and it grows better with age.

DATE CAKE.—One cupful of molasses, one teaspoonful of soda, beaten with the molasses until light; one-half teaspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of melted drippings, one-half cupful of warm water, and flour enough to make rather a thick batter. Add last one cupful of chopped dates, which have been dusted with flour. Bake in a sheet.—Elizabeth.