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WELCOME AND TO SCHOOL

Vol. VII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 28, 1889.

[No. 26.]

Taking Them Home.

A NEW YEAR'S SKETCH.

He chuckled, as he harnessed the horse, and was so happy over his own thoughts that he did not feel the cold.

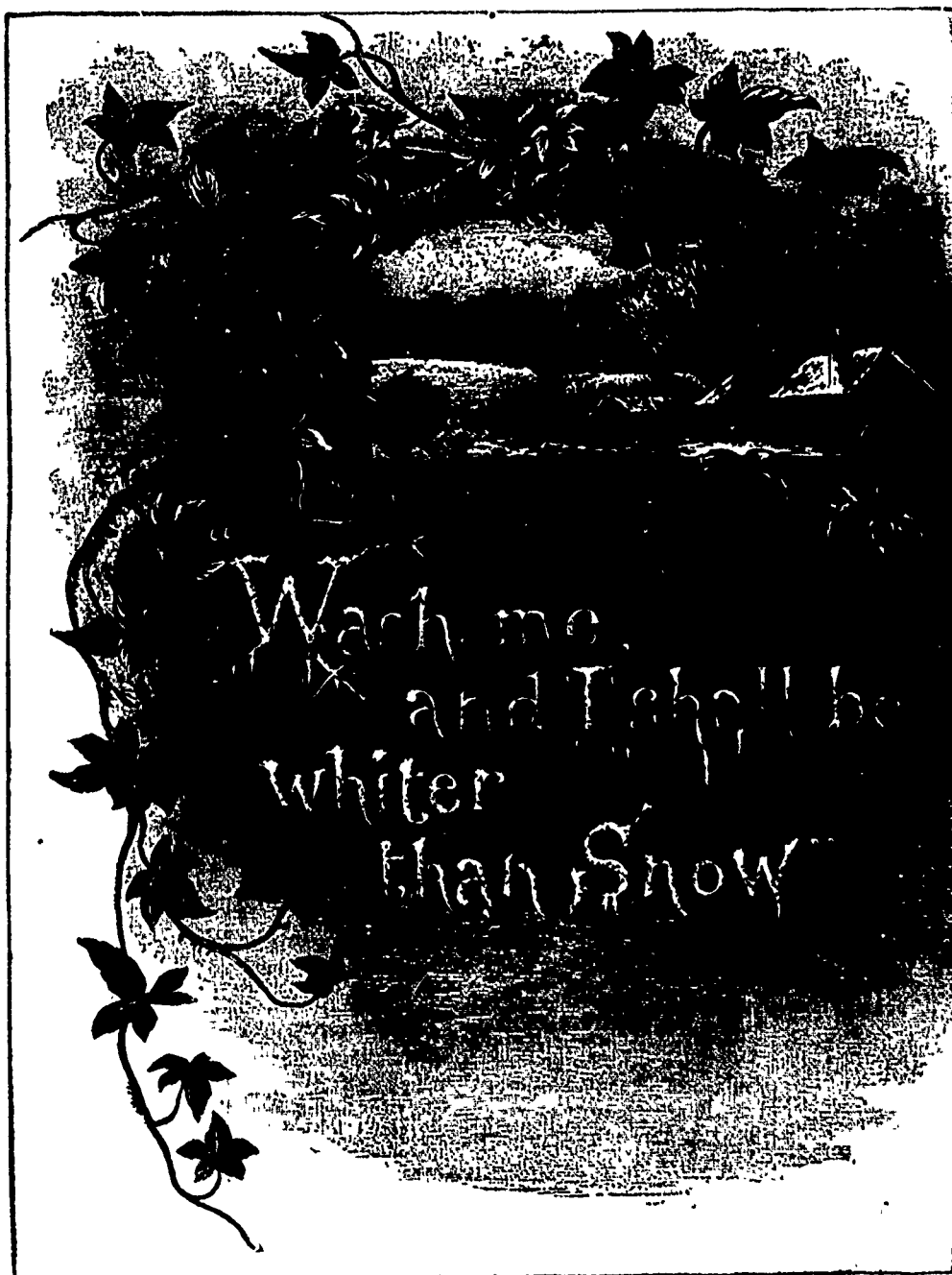
"Stand over!" he said to old Ned. "If you knew what you was going on, and was a horse of sense, you'd stand on two legs. It is the nicest job you've done this many a day. Oh, yes, pretty doves, you may well coo! You will have a friend to pet you, now. Ned, stand still! I'm in a hurry, and you mustn't fidget around so. Never mind if it is cold. Whoa, I say! It is New Year's, and you shall have an extra peck of oats to celebrate on as soon as we get home. There now, we're ready. Go ahead."

It was Ezra Thompson, the hired boy at Mr. Preston's, who was so full of talk this New Year morning. Something had happened that filled him with delight. To think, too, that it had all grown out of a remark that he made one morning when the family all came out to see the new kitchen and milk-room, and Mrs. Preston had said: "I wonder what we can do with that old milk-house now. It seems like a friend, it has served us so many years."

Ezra had served them for several years, and felt very much at home, so he spoke his thoughts. "It would

make a nice little house for somebody. Wish the widow Jones had it instead of that old shell she lives in."

That had actually been the beginning of it. He did not know Mrs. Preston heard him, for she turned toward the little house at the foot of the snowy lawn; and said not a word for at least five minutes; then she said: "I don't know but that is a good idea of yours, Ezra. I'll think about it."



A PRAYER FOR NEW YEAR.

Now, Mrs. Preston was one of those blessed women who always think to some purpose. That was three weeks ago. You should see the old house now! A partition had been made in it—making two of the cunningest rooms! The plain board walls had been covered all over with thick paper, and then with pretty wall-paper of a delicate tint. The floors had been covered with soft green and brown carpeting. In one corner stood a mite

they knew nothing about it!

Who was widow Jones? Well, she was just the nicest, neatest, most cheery old lady who was ever bent up with rheumatism, in this world. The Prestons knew her well. She had been a nurse in their family years before, and had come back, after a long absence, very poor, to suffer in the town where she used to be young and happy. If you could have seen the horrid little wretch of a stove

of a cook-stove, shining brightly, both with polish and the bright fire that glowed in it. A bit of a table was set for two; and Ezra knew, whether any one else did or not, that a lovely New Year's dinner was sizzling in the oven. The other side of that partition was a bedstead and a bed, spread in white, such as Ezra knew the widow Jones had never slept on in her life. An easy chair sat by the bed, and another larger one occupied the warmest corner of the other room.

These were only a few of the cheery and pretty things that had found their way from the Preston garret into the old milk-room. Besides, Ezra had amused himself evenings in putting up all sorts of conveniences, in the shape of cupboards and shelves and hooks and nails. He never had enjoyed anything in his life as much as he did the fixing up of the house.

All the Prestons had become interested, and helped as hard as they could. Bridget, in the Preston kitchen, was cooking the little turkey that was to furnish the widow Jones and her granddaughter with their first dinner in their new home.

Now the crowning joy was coming. Ezra and Ned were going after the victims of all this fun, and

over which the bent old lady crouched, and the bright-eyed granddaughter scolded, you would have chuckled, I think, as Ezra did, when he drew up before the door and tied Ned, and came bustling in.

"Out to dinner!" the old lady repeated thoughtfully, as Ezra gave his invitation; "I don't know about it. We ain't a mite of anything in the house, to be sure; and Mrs. Preston is good—just as she always was; but if she wouldn't a-minded sending us a bite of something here, I don't know but it would be better. You see, Jennie dear, it is so dreadful cold, and this will be such a freezing place to come back to; and the snow will drift in, and give you lots of work. Yes, I know the old stove smokes, poor thing! It's worn out, but it's a good deal better than none."

But the bright-eyed Jennie was bent on going out to dinner, no matter how much trouble it gave her afterward. "And you'll help me, wont you, Ezra, if the snow has drifted in bad?"

"Yes," answered Ezra, chuckling again; "if the snow drifts into your house to-night, I'll sweep it all out for you." And he told Ned, as he untied him, that he would like to see any snow drift into their house—he just would.

Ah, what do you think they said or did or thought, as they slipped into the Preston yard, around the snowy carriage-drive, away out past the carriage-house, and Jennie, tucked among the robes, laughed a silvery laugh, and said: "Why, Ezra Thompson, are you taking us to the barn?"

But Ezra made no answer just then, only to jump out and take the wizened-up widow Jones in his strong arms, and carry her into the little new room, the door of which opened by some magic that young Harry Preston understands, and set her down in her own cushioned rocker; then he answered the bewildered Jennie, who had clambered out after him:—

"No, Miss Jenny Jones, I'm taking you home!"

The Epworth League.

A SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION.

There is a quaint little market-town situated in the northern corner of Lincolnshire, England, the name of which is familiar to every Christian, the wide world over, and dear to all Methodists, for Epworth was the birthplace of John Wesley.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the religious life of England was in a very sluggish state, and when, on the 17th of June, 1703, the home of the Wesleys was blessed with the advent of a "little stranger," the people of the peaceful town never dreamed that through all the ages the name of their township would be indissolubly linked with one of the most marvellous religious awakenings of the century.

Well, now two hundred years have passed, and now, in this new land of promise, the people who in mockery and derision were called Methodists, Ranters, and Wesleys, have grown to be, as in the Old Land, a most powerful—if not the most powerful—branch of the Church militant, and yet they are not satisfied, and the cause of their dissatisfaction is troubling all Christian Churches, "How to retain the young people."

Numerous organizations have from time to time been formed, having in view work for the young in connection with the Church, and success has in some degree attended these efforts, but no regular organization embracing the whole of the younger Methodists has hitherto existed in this Dominion.

John Wesley once declared that he desired "to form a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Christ," and the General Conference of the Church appointed a committee to consider the propriety of forming such a league of the young

people. It was decided to form a society to be called

"THE EPWORTH LEAGUE."

1. The object of the Epworth League is to promote an earnest, intelligent, practical, and loyal spiritual life in the young people of our Church, to aid them in constant growth in grace, and in the attainment of purity of heart.

2. The Epworth League of the Methodist Church shall be the general or parent society, with which all local leagues or young people's societies shall be in affiliation, and to which they shall be auxiliary, provided they desire to accept the relationship and its conditions. It shall be governed by the Sunday-school Board of the Methodist Church, whose officers shall also be the officers of the League.

The work of the League is divided into six departments, each under the charge of a committee. The departments are:—

1. Christian Work; 2. Literary Work; 3. Social Work; 4. Entertainment; 5. Correspondence; 6. Finance.

The heads of the departments, together with the president, constitute the Council, or Executive Committee, for the management of the League. A series of reading courses for the League has been prepared. These courses embrace the Bible; the doctrines, history, biography, and religious life of Methodism; travel, art, science, etc. They are not required, but are recommended to the members.

The colour of the League is a white ribbon, with a scarlet thread woven into it.

The needs of those who are too young for membership in the League, are provided for in "The Junior League, preparatory to the Epworth League." This is admirably adapted to the boys and girls, and may be organized in any church.

No fee of membership is required by the general League, and no assessments are made upon the local branches; but each local branch is at liberty to establish a fee of membership if it desires.

A great meeting of Methodists was held in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, to publicly inaugurate the League. Hon. J. C. Aikins presided; and on the platform were Rev. Dr. Withrow, Rev. Dr. Potts, Mr. E. Gurney, Rev. Dr. Stafford, Rev. J. McD. Kerr, Mr. Jas. L. Hughes, Rev. Dr. Devart, Ald. Boustead, Rev. Le Roy Hooker, Rev. J. Gray, Rev. D. G. Sutherland, LL.B.

Among the audience were a large number of active workers in the Methodist Church; whilst a great number of letters were received from sympathizers unable to attend.

Short speeches, which in no case exceeded the ten minutes' time limited, were delivered by the gentlemen on the platform, in which the necessity for and objects of the League were clearly set forth.

The Rev. D. G. Sutherland, LL.B., moved, and Ald. Boustead seconded, a resolution in favour of the establishment of the League, which was unanimously agreed to.

A collection in aid of the funds was liberally responded to, and the singing of the doxology, closed a most successful and enthusiastic meeting.

Mr. Wesley's Personal Appearance.

JOHN WESLEY is thus described by the Rev. John Sampson, who knew him well:—

"The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature was of the lowest, his habit of body at every period of his life the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise; and, notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, and his appearance, until a few years of his death, vigorous and muscular. His

face, for an old man, was one of the finest we have seen; a clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that could be conceived, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his age, and impressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure.

"Few have seen him without been struck by his appearance; and many who have been prejudiced against him, have been known to alter their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence. In his countenance and demeanour there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity; a sprightliness which was a natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, was accompanied with every mark of most serene tranquillity. His aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration."

New-Year Thoughts.

HARK! 'tis the peal of midnight bells!
The Year is dead—awake from dreams,
From dust of penitential pains;
Lay by his hapless, hopeless schemes,
His withered blossoms on his breast,
And turn to greet the coming Guest.
Come in thou white one, feast and song,
And words of cheer to thee belong
Upon thy festal day.
Come in, nor note upon the floor
The tapers nor the half-closed door
Whence that which shall be never more,
But now is borne away.

The hour is late and soon shall run
Swift heralds from the eager sun
To greet the glad New Day,
And Phoenix-like from ashes rise
Sweet faith to paint the rosy skies,
And wake fair joy that lightly lies
In clasp of penance gray.

Awake—the looked for one is here—
Take thy pure gift, a spotless year,
And listen while they sing—
The happy children of his train,
The days that know nor spot nor stain,
And learn thy lesson once again
In message that they bring.

Fair is the hour that thou wast born,
Thou sweet New Year; for as the morn
Broke o'er the misty hill,
I dreamed that low Sandalphon bent,
His white wings with the morning blent,
And all the earth was still.

His white wings with the morning blent,
And through the solemn space there went
A solemn sound of prayer.
And unseen blessings to the earth
Came with the moment of thy birth,
And spoke his presence there.

A glad New Year, a sweet New Year,
A wealth of joy, a dearth of fear,
I speak of you, my friend.
A dream like mine to bless the day,
Sandalphon's wings to light thy way,
His presence at the end.

Wine on New Year's.

THOUSANDS of tables will be spread with refreshments on New Year's Day. Not in one city only, but in many, the custom of making friendly calls will be observed. Ladies are not disposed to abandon the practice of setting a table, although it is a pleasure rather than otherwise to find, on calling, that no refreshments are offered.

Wines and other intoxicating drinks ought to be dispensed with universally, totally, and forever. "Happy New Year!" needs no help from the exhilarating cup. Hundreds of young men, and many young women, are made drunk on that day by the social use of wine. Every consideration of taste, of civility, of good sense, of religion and morals, should enforce the duty of withholding intoxicating drink from those who call on New Year's Day.

A New Year's Poem.

Does the New Year come to night, mamma?
I'm tired of waiting so;
My stockings hung by the chimney side
Full three long days ago.
I run to peep within the door at early morning's
light,
They're empty still! Oh! say, mamma,
Does the New Year come to-night?

Does the New Year come to-night, mamma?
The snow is on the hill,
And the ice must be two inches thick
Upon the meadow rill.
I heard you tell papa, last night,
His boy must have a sled
(I did not mean to hear, mamma),
And a pair of skates, you said.

I prayed for just those things, mamma,
I shall be full of glee!
And the orphan boys in the village school
Will all be envying me.
I'd give them toys and lend them books,
And make their New Year glad;
For God, you say, takes back his gifts
When little folks are bad.

And won't you let me go, mamma,
Upon the New Year's day,
And carry something nice and warm
To poor old Widow Gray?
I'll leave the basket near the door,
Within the garden gate.
Will the New Year come to-night, mamma?
It seems so long to wait.

The New Year comes to-night, mamma,
I saw it in my sleep:
My stocking hung so full, I thought—
Mamma! what makes you weep?
But it only hold a little shroud—
A shroud and nothing more,
And an open coffin, made for me,
Was standing on the floor!

It seemed so very strange, indeed,
To find such gifts, instead
Of all the toys I wished so much,
The story books and sled.
And while I wondered what it meant,
You came with tearful joy,
And said, "Thou'lt find the New Year's suit—
God calleth thee, my boy!"

It is not all a dream, mamma—
I know it must be true;
But have I been so bad a boy,
God taketh me from you?
I don't know what papa will do
When I am laid to rest,
And you will have no Willie's head
To fold upon your breast.

The New Year comes to-night, mamma;
Put your hand beneath my cheek,
And raise my head a little more,
It is so hard to speak.
You need not fill my stockings now,
I cannot go and peep;
Before the morning sun is up
I'll be so sound asleep.

I shall not want the skates, mamma,
I'll never need the sled;
But won't you give them both to Blake,
Who hurt me on my head?
He used to hide my books away,
And tear the pictures, too;
But now he'll know I forgive him,
As then I tried to do.

And if you please, mamma, I'd like
The story-book and sled
To go to Frank—the drunkard's boy
You would not let me hate.
And, dear mamma, you won't forget,
Upon the New Year's day,
The basketful of something nice
For poor old Widow Gray?

The New Year comes to-night, mamma—
It seems so very soon,
I think God didn't hear me ask
For just another June.
I know I've been a thoughtful boy.

And made you too much care,
And may be for your sake, mamma,
He does not hear my prayer.

There's one thing more. My pretty pets,
The robin and the dove,
Oh! keep for you and dear papa,
And teach them how to love.
The garden hoe, the little rake—
You'll find them nicely laid
Upon the garret floor, mamma,
The place where last I played.

I thought to need them both so oft,
When summer comes again,
To make my garden by the brook
That trickles through the glen.
I thought to gather flowers, too,
Beside the forest walk,
And sit beneath the apple trees,
Where once we sat to talk.

It cannot be. But you will keep
The summer flowers green,
And plant a few—don't cry, mamma—
A very few, I mean,
Where I'm asleep. I'd sleep so sweet
Beneath the apple tree,
When you and robin, in the morn,
May come and sing to me.

The New Year comes! Good-night, mamma,
Lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord—tell poor papa—
My soul to keep—if I—
How cold it seems! How dark—kiss me—
Mamma, I cannot see.
The New Year comes to-night, mamma—
The Old—Year—dies—with—me.

A Hint for the New Year.

AMONG the good resolutions of the New Year, there is one we would commend to young men and young women to make and to keep—we mean a resolution to read something every day.

We do not refer to such as spend their evenings in dissipation or in frivolity, and scarcely know what it is to have a thoughtful moment in their lives; but to those who work at the shop, or in the store, or in laborious professional offices, and still would be ashamed to be thought wanting in intelligence—to all such we would say, devote an hour if you can; but give regularly some portion of time every day, to thorough, systematic reading. If it be but half-an-hour, you will still be wonderfully surprised to find how much you can acquire by resolutely devoting even that short time to self-cultivation.

Reading in this way, you will be apt to read carefully and slowly; and one book read thoroughly is worth a dozen skimmed over or run through. Not the man of great reading leaves upon others the impress of what he acquires, but the one who reads carefully, and who digests what he reads.

Reading as acquired in this way—in intervals—is certain to last you longer than where the mind is stretched for hours, and the brain becomes weary. The minute you are tired, or have to work to fix attention, close your book and rest.

There is nothing, next to the neglect of religion, more deplorable than the profitless way in which young men pass their time. Young man, in the banker's office, or the shop, or in professional life, what are you doing with your time? Are you acquiring nothing beyond a knowledge of business, or of dissipation? Are you laying up no treasury of knowledge from which you may draw when the swiftly flying years shall bring you to middle age, and even old age?

The wisdom of past ages, and the all-living present, can in these days be had in our libraries and taken to your homes. Are you drinking from these fountains, or are you running along in the ruts of your own narrow thought? Are you get-

ting a firm hold on men? A. you knowing human nature any better? Are you losing your prejudices, or are you becoming more and more satisfied with yourself? Is your horizon widening or contracting?—and are you growing or are you shrinking? Wake up and rouse yourself! Distrust the adequacy of your own knowledge; put your opinions on the basis of an enlightened, intelligent judgment; leave off your introspection; get out of old ruts; get such truth as you want, and see its every phase; and incorporating heaven's sunlight in your soul, you will have a heartier, happier nature—the world will be better for your living in it; and whether or not your bank account is what you would have it be, you will have the rich harvest of a cultivated mind, a cheerful heart, and a breezy nature, which will give as well as receive; and for you, when grey hairs have come, and the years have gathered over your head, you will possess that which no one can rob you of, and your autumn of life will be rich in a golden harvest.

The Old and New Year.

BY PROF. J. G. ROBINSON.

THE dear old year, with all its cheer,
Is drawing to its close;
And with a sigh we say "Good-bye!"
And "Sweet be thy repose!"

Thy toils and cares, thy songs and prayers,
Thy victories and defeats,
Are on the roll of time's great scroll,
Which memory repeats.

To age or youth who love the truth
And walk in virtue's ways,
Sweet memories come from duty done,
To hallow future days.

And, without fear, the glad new year
We welcome in its place;
With songs of joy our sweet employ
To greet its youthful face!

May faith and hope have freer scope,
To make it more sublime
Than all the past, and hold it fast
To mission more divine.

And when at last its days have passed,
And sinks its setting sun,
May not a tear greet the new year
When its grand work is done.

A Capital Suggestion.

THE following letter appears in a recent number of the *Christian Union* :—

"I am glad to see suggestions, from time to time, as to various methods of 'Fighting the Saloon'; but it seems to me strange that the plan of using the school-houses for places of meeting and recreation in the evening and on Sunday has never been broached.

"The school-houses belong to the people; they are scattered throughout all parts of every city and town; they are usually unused or but partially used in the evening, and never used on Sunday, and yet no one proposes to put them at the service of the large numbers of the people who, because they have no place of resort after work hours, lounge in saloons or on street corners.

"Surely it is a waste of opportunity, which might be saved if only some one took up the matter in earnest.

"JOSEPHINE SHAW LOWELL."

[Why not? No better place for reading-rooms; no better place for singing-schools, for boys' clubs or girls' clubs. The city school-house ought to be the thoroughly popular institution that the country school-house is. Every city school-house should have its gymnasium, just as every country school-house has its playground.—EDS. UNION.]

The Last Day of the Year.

This year is just going away,
The moments are finishing fast;
My heart, have you nothing to say
Concerning the things that are past?
Now, while in my chamber alone,
Whom God will be present to hear,
I'll try to remember and own
The faults I've committed this year.

O Lord, I'm ashamed to confess
How often I've broken thy day;
Perhaps I have thought of my dress,
Or wasted the moments in play;
And when the good minister tried
To make little children attend,
I was thinking of something beside,
Or wishing the sermon would end.

How often I rose from my bed
And did not remember my prayer,
Or if a few words I have said,
My thoughts have been going elsewhere.
Ill temper, and passion, and pride,
Have grieved my dear parents and thee,
And seldom I really have tried
Obedient and gentle to be.

But, Lord, thou already hast known
Much more of my folly than I,
There is not a fault I can own
Too little for God to descry;
Yet hear me and help me to feel
How wicked and weak I must be,
And let me not try to conceal
The largest and smallest from thee.

The year is just going away,
The moments are finishing fast;
Look down in thy mercy, I pray,
To pardon the sin that is past;
And as soon as another begins,
So help me to walk in thy fear
That I may not with follies and sins
So foolishly waste a new year.

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Home and School.

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 28, 1889.

NEXT YEAR'S PAPERS.

THE series of Sunday-school papers for 1890 will exhibit marked improvement on any yet issued. Better cuts and better ink will mark mechanical progress.

A series of fine biblical cuts, illustrating the whole of the lessons in the Gospel of Luke throughout the year, will add greatly to the value of the papers.

A story of great interest, by the Editor, "Life of a Canadian Parsonage," will be a conspicuous feature in Pleasant Hours for the year.

Other short stories, and articles of interest, will appear; and much attention will be given to the new "Epworth League," including Epworth League stories, which will prove an attractive feature.



JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

Auf Wiedersehen.

THE Germans have a custom when they part, of saying *Auf Wiedersehen*, "Until we meet again." So say I now to all the boys and girls who read the HOME AND SCHOOL. I hope that its visits during the year have indeed given many pleasant hours to the one hundred thousand young folk whom I have had the privilege of addressing from time to time. And I hope the pleasure has been mixed with profit, and that you are wiser, better, stronger in purposes of good and wise resolves than ever you were before.

With most of our readers this is a sort of turning-point. Most of the subscriptions to this paper end with this number. It is possible that some—I hope a very few—of the subscribers may not renew for the coming year. But most of them, I trust, will continue to belong to the HOME AND SCHOOL family. And therefore, when I say "Good-bye" in this last number of 1889, I say also *Auf Wiedersehen*—May we meet again during all the months of 1890.

The paper will be better than ever. Missionaries of our Church will tell the thrilling stories of the strange scenes of heathen lands, which, I hope, will quicken your sympathies with the grand missionary work of our Church.

We will have Temperance Stories, Facts and Figures, Choice Poetry, Ingenious Puzzles, Lesson Notes and Explanations, Handsome Engravings, and everything that is good. And now, once more—*Auf Wiedersehen!*

The Epworth League in Barrie.

We have organized an Epworth League in the following manner:—Those who enrolled themselves as members, elected by ballot a president and two vice-presidents; also a head for each of the following departments, viz.: Christian work, social work, entertainment, correspondence, and finance. The persons thus elected formed a cabinet, and nominated a committee of three or five members to co-operate with the head of each department. In this manner about thirty persons are placed in office, and are made to feel a special responsibility for the success of the League. The department of Christian work includes young people's prayer-meetings, cottage prayer-meetings, the spiritual welfare of the members, Sabbath-school interests,

tract distribution, etc. Social work includes all social entertainments, systematic visitation of any members who are sick, looking after strangers who may appear in the Sabbath congregation, and giving special attention to any young people who may be members of the congregation, but from home. The department of entertainment embraces the musical and literary programme for each meeting, and arrangements for lectures or public entertainments. The department of correspondence includes the recording and the corresponding secretaries. The department of finance looks after the admission fees of members, or of public entertainments, and holds and disburses funds as the League may direct. At our first regular meeting last week, sixty-four members were enrolled, and we expect large additions at subsequent meetings. Our League is to meet fortnightly, on Monday evening, in the lecture-room at the church; and in the same room, on the alternate Monday evening, the pastor conducts a service for the special benefit of the young people. Thus each Monday evening is occupied; on each Wednesday evening the general prayer-meeting is held; and each Friday evening is occupied with choir practice and cottage prayer-meetings—leaving Tuesday and Thursday evenings free for social visiting, preparations for the League, or home duties. Our young people are united and earnest in this work, and we are expecting good results.—*Guardian*.

Littell's Living Age. The numbers of *The Living Age* for the weeks ending November 2nd and 9th, contain, *The Triple Alliance*, and *Italy's Place in the Contemporary Review*; Sir Philip Francis, *Temple Bar*; Russian Characteristics, *Fortnightly Review*; Gibraltar a Hundred Years Ago, *Chambers' Journal*; Buda-Pesth, *Saturday Review*; Rome in 1881, *Nineteenth Century*; In the Forests of Navarre and Aragon, by the Rev. John Verschoyle, *Fortnightly Review*; Madame Recamier, *Temple Bar*; Reminiscences of Deau Garnier, *Athenaeum*; Among the Boulders, *Spectator*; etc.

For fifty-two numbers of sixty-four large pages each (or more than 3,300 pages a year) the subscription price (\$8) is low; while for \$9.00 we will send *The Living Age* and *Methodist Magazine* for a year, both postpaid. Address WILLIAM BRIGGS, Methodist Publishing-House, Toronto.



WINTER TRAVEL IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Farewell to the Old Year.

BY SARAH DOUDNEY.

FAREWELL, old year, we walk no more together;
I catch the sweetness of thy latest sigh,
And, crowned with yellow brake and withered heather,
I see thee stand beneath this cloudy sky.

Here in the dim light of gray December
We part in smiles, and yet we met in tears;
Watching thy chilly dawn, I well remember
I thought thee saddest-born of all the years.

I knew not then what precious gifts were hidden
Under the mist that veiled thy path from sight;
I knew not then that joy would come unbidden
To make the closing hours divinely bright.

I only saw the dreary clouds unbroken,
I only heard the splash of joy rain,
And in that winter gloom I found no token
To tell me that the sun would shine again.

O dear old year, I wronged a Father's kindness;
I woul' not trust him with my load of care;
I stumbled on in weariness and blindness,
And lo, he blessed me with an answered prayer!

Good-bye, kind year, we walk no more together,
But here in quiet happiness we part;
And from thy wreath of faded fern and heather
I take some sprays and wear them on my heart.

The Opening Gates of the New Year.

BY THE REV. E. A. RAND.

AMONG the old Roman deities was one that had two faces—Janus. He had this advantage, that he could look two ways—before and behind. The gates of heaven were supposed to be in his care, and, consequently, the gates here on the earth were imagined to be in his charge. It is thought that he may have received his two faces from the fact that a door faces in two directions; and so this heavenly door-tender could, without turning, watch the ways leading to his post of duty.

From Janus comes the name of the first month of the year. He had many temples at Rome. The leading temple was called Janus Quirinus. When the doors of this temple were open, it was a sign of war. The shutting of the doors signified peace. The spirit of war was supposed to be then boxed up—safe behind bolt and bar.

That evil spirit, though, was out of doors the most of the time. The Romans rather loved to crack other people's heads; and if any one in return gave a little rap, back flew the gates of Janus Quirinus, and the spirit of war went abroad, thundering over the land in the tramp of Rome's heavy legions.

Sometimes this interesting old deity, Janus, had four faces, and then his name was Quadrifrons. The temples of Janus Quadrifrons had four equal sides, each side having a door and three windows. The four doors represented the four seasons. The three windows symbol-

ized the three months in each season. If it be handy to have two faces, the possessor of four was at a great advantage. No enemy coming from any direction could possibly surprise such a four-faced being.

Janus Quirinus, Janus Quadrifrons, and all the Januses, long ago went to "the bats and the owls." Their images are a part of the world's castaway crockery heaps; and they will not be asked again to fool intelligent men and women.

And still, can we not learn a lesson from the fanciful being that kept all the gates of heaven and earth? We would not forget it this month of January, that is named after the old door-keeper. May we stand on the threshold of the New Year looking two ways. May we look back, sorry for our many shortcomings, willing to see where we failed, and penitent for all failures. May we look ahead, watchful against errors, earnest to see, and take, and keep the path of duty. Such a reasonable Janus as this may there be found in every bosom.

The Christmas Tides.

A BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF WORD PAINTING.

It is now some eighteen hundred years since the world began to count its Christmas-tides. If chronology had not blundered, we might call the present year by its actual numeral; but it is out by three or four years in the annals of our Christian era. However, we are certainly verging fast toward the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of Christ. Far back in time, but near by familiarity, seems that epoch—that point which divides the past into ancient and modern. As long ago as stretched the ages of Assyrian and Egyptian dynasties—twice as long as the rule of Rome—and still the story is as "household" to us as the things which happened yesterday.

Who can conjure up, at a word, its scenes? Jerusalem! Nazareth! The long file of camels striding over the dark desert by night, towards the solitary star glittering so suddenly, and with such mystery, to beckon their swarthy lords from the orient hills! Who has not made, from all the old

and new masters, his own picture of the wayside inn at Bethlehem? The crowding pilgrims, the patient cattle, the traffic, the dust, the tumult; and, in the midst of all, the Christ and his Hebrew mother! And how quietly we receive, on the strength of a story made for all times and peoples, "the adoration of the wise men."

We never wonder to find those grave and reverend seniors clad in early Italian or mediæval costume, presenting, on bended knee—a salutation unknown to the East—jewels and confessions of the manufacture of the "streets of jewellers" at Florence, or the Don Platz of Cologne.

What, if under porticos, which the Romans only built, horses are waiting which the Magi would not ride; and the Madonna smiles upon the wistful travellers in a Greek "peplus," her features, and the features of her Divine child, profoundly European? What of all this? We are no more disconcerted than to know that the three wise men died and were buried at Aix-la-Chappelle.

We listen to the tale like children, who hear an undermeaning in every word of their narrator's story. Beyond and behind it all, is that eternal revelation—that ineffable message of love—which is the heart and soul of the religion which sprang from the manger and blossomed on the cross. World's wisdom falters in the presence of that truth which the best of us can only half comprehend. Tell it as ye will, Signori, the painters! Tell it as ye list, Monsignori, the preachers! At this season of Christmas, we shall listen as to our children, who say that on the Christmas-eve the dark-eyed oxen talk together in the stall, and the bird, who stained his breast red with chirping on the cross, sings all the night long in the fir thicket.

What might not be, indeed, in the picture or reality, on the anniversary of the night when the shepherds tended their flocks by Jordan, when they heard—or seemed to hear—out of heaven, that voice which frightened Pan from his Greek forests and Appollo from his Oracles!

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Divine ambassage! August and awful utterance! Sounding down to all time and language, the diapason of the harmony of heaven and earth!—Selected.

A Harmless Delusion.

If there was ever such a thing as a blessed delusion, it is that which little children entertain in respect to that mysterious personage who goes under the various names of Knecht Rupert, Saint Nicholas, Kris Kringle, and Santa Claus.

We can see no possible harm arising from it, and it adds tenfold to the pleasure of the Christmas season and the value of the gifts received.

We have no sympathy with the hard-hearted, dry-as-dust sort of people, who say that it is childish and nonsensical, and that it is wrong to fill the minds of the children with such visionary ideas. Let the children have their Santa Claus as long as they can—they will discover the truth of it soon enough.

Among the happiest memories of our own childhood, are those associated with Christmas-eve, when we cherished the belief that while we slept, Santa Claus came down and brought us just what we most desired. The mystery of his coming, the witchery of the whole night, marked each recurring Christmas as the best and happiest day of all the year.

We cannot remember when the enchantment of the season was first removed, but this we know, that the day has lost its keenest pleasure—its rarest delight—since Santa Claus was materialized.

The Passing Year.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

By the glimmer of green and golden,
The leap and the sparkle of spray,
By the heart of the rose unfolded
To the breath of the summer day,
By the shout and song of the reapers,
Binding the ripened sheaf,
By the bloom on the fragrant cluster,
By the fall of the loosened leaf,
By the feathery whirl of the winter,
And the deep waves' hollow sound,
By the moan of the wind in the forest
When the night was gathering round,
By the sweet of the honey of lilies,
By the fields all brown and sere,
Through the march of the changing seasons,
We measured the passing year.

By the baby's step on the carpet,
By her earliest broken word,
And her laugh as she ran to meet us—
Merrier never was heard—
By the time when she said, "Our Father,"
With two little hands held up,
And the flower-face softly bending
Like a blossom's brimming cup;
By the day she was parched with fever,
And spent with the stress of pain,
By the hour we gave thanksgiving
That baby was well again,
By the hide and seek of her dimples,
And the start of her April tear,
By the grace of our darling's growing,
We measured the passing year.

By the love that is tried and precious,
And needful as daily bread,
By the fond hands clasped in ours,
As the chequered path we tread,
By the glow of the household faces,
And the hush of the household peace,
By the beautiful wifely presence,
That gives to care surcease,
By the looks that are ever tender,
The kiss that is always true,
By the small familiar sayings,
And the work we daily do,
By board and loaf and flagon,
And the coming of kindred dear,
The home's unwritten story,
We've measured the passing year.

By the brave things thought or spoken,
By the true deeds simply done,
By the mean things crushed and conquered
And the bloodless battles won,
By the days when the load was heavy,
Yet the heart grew strong to bear,
By the days when the heart was craven,
Lacking the strength of prayer;
By the hour that crept slow footed,
And the hour that flew on wings,
The time when the harp was silent,
The time when we swept the strings;
By the dearth, the dole, and the labour,
The fulness, reward, and cheer,
By the book of the angel's record,
We measured the passing year.

By the joy of the Christmas carols,
And the solemn shade of the cross,
By the breaking dawn of Easter,
And the gain that follows loss;
By the name of the world's Redeemer,
And the sins we trample down,
By the light that shines above us,
Though the darkling cloud may frown;
By the silent voices calling,
By the dear remembered eyes,
By the heaven which ever beckons,
Beyond these earthly skies;
By credos grand and steadfast,
Banishing doubt and fear,
By the Christian's hope and comfort,
We've measured the passing year.

A vast deal of what is called teaching is only talking—talking about something, rather than teaching something. Hearing a recitation is not teaching. The lesson must not be merely "heard," it must be "taught."

Teachers' Department.

The Link between the Church and the Sunday-School.

In the relations of the Sunday-school and the organized Church, there is often a "missing link," which is greatly needed. The Sunday school is the place in which the Bible is studied, and religious impressions are made. The Church is the organized body of believers in Christ. There is need in many schools of a link to unite these two institutions, by furnishing the means whereby those who have learned the truth in the Sunday-school shall become, by a living experience, members of the Christian Church.

There are thousands of young people who grow up in our Sunday-schools, and finally grow out of them, without becoming members of the Church. The reasons for this result are various. It may be because the Church and the Sunday-school are conducted as separate institutions, by different sets of workers; because no effort is made by parents, teachers, superintendents, or pastors, to induce the scholars to attend the Church services, and become interested in the Church work, or because the teachers are lacking in the religious life, and do not present an earnest Christianity to their pupils.

But we venture the opinion that one reason why many of our scholars are lost to the Church, is because the "evangelistic" or "revival" methods of the Church are not directed as they should be, towards the members of the Sunday-school.

A church holds a series of revival meetings in the winter—perhaps employs an evangelist—and makes a mighty though sporadic endeavour after the salvation of souls. But all the meetings are held in the evening, when but few of the children of the Sunday-school, or even the young people who are attending school, can be present. All the energies of the Church are spent in attracting the non-church going men and women, or the few unconverted church-goers, while the boys and girls of the Sunday-school are left unnoticed.

There are multitudes of our young people who are well informed in the Bible, yet never come into contact with spiritual experience. They hear none of the testimonies in the class-meeting, and none of the exhortations of the prayer-meeting. Religion is constantly brought before them in the abstract, but never in the concrete. They are not far from the kingdom of heaven, but nothing is done definitely to bring them into the kingdom.

We urge that, in our revival methods, we aim more directly at reaching the young people who are under our influence in the Sunday-school.

First of all, let us have spiritually-minded teachers and superintendents, who will work in the revival spirit all the year, and aim for the salvation of their scholars. Next, let there be on one Sunday of each month a shortening of the general exercises of the school, and a warm prayer-meeting with short prayers, living testimonies of personal experience, an earnest exhortation, and an opportunity to make public decision for Christ. Bring the revival service into the Sunday school, if we cannot bring the Sunday-school to the revival service.

We would suggest that the primary department be either dismissed before this prayer-meeting or be kept apart from it. Perhaps some of the youngest scholars in the intermediate department, just advanced from the primary, might also be sent home. Their readiness to respond to the pastor's invitation may deter the older scholars, and another meeting might be held especially for the little children, and adapted to their needs.

There is another important duty. As soon as our young people are awakened to an interest in personal religion, they should be brought immediately under the influences of the Church's training. They should hear the testimonies of Christians in the class-meeting, and learn to express their own experience. They should take part in the young people's prayer-meeting, and, as soon as suitable, in the Church prayer-meeting also. They should be set at work in all the spiritual activities of the Church.

By this means, or by others, the Sunday-school may become, even more than it is now, a source of supply to the membership and the religious power of the Church.—*S.S. Journal.*

The Old Year's Blessing.

I AM fading from you,
But one draweth near,
Called the Angel-guardian
Of the coming year.

If my gifts and graces
Coldly you forget,
Let the New Year's Angel
Bless and crown them yet.

For we work together;
He and I are one:
Let him end and perfect
All I leave undone.

I brought good desires,
Though as yet but seeds;
Let the New Year make them
Blossom into deeds.

I brought joy to brighten
Many happy days;
Let the New Year's Angel
Turn it into praise.

If I gave you sickness,
If I brought you care,
Let him make one patience,
And the other prayer.

Where I brought you sorrow,
Through his care at length,
It may rise triumphant
Into future strength.

If I brought you plenty,
All wealth's bounteous charms,
Shall not the new angel
Turn them into alms?

I give health and leisure,
Still to dream and plan;
Let him make them nobler—
Work for God and man.

If I broke your idols,
Showed that they were dust,
Let him turn the knowledge
Into heavenly trust.

If I brought temptation,
Let sin die away
Into boundless pity
For all hearts that stray.

If your list of errors
Dark and long appears,
Let this now-born monarch
Melt them into tears.

May you hold this Angel
Dearer than the last—
So I bless his future,
While he crowns my past.

A LITTLE girl of three explains the Golden Rule to her older sister: "It means that you must do everything I want you to, and you mustn't do anything that I don't want you to."

Does the heart ache with sorrow at times? Tell it to Jesus! How the heart is soothed when children tell their sorrows to mother! Just so will Jesus soothe the heart of sorrow that reveals itself to him.

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.

The New Year.

The frosty night wind hurries on
The strangers' lagging feet,
And, for a moment, in the hush
The Old and New Year meet;
And one goes back to God again,
And one stays on for joy or pain.

And he who stays looks for thy face
And finds thee in the night,
And with swift arms encircles thee,
And claims thee his by right;
And no one else can come so near
To thee as he, the Stranger Year.

He will abide his time with thee—
His own till death do part;
Therefore receive him tenderly
And take him to thy heart,
Not grudgingly, as one who must,
But generously with love and trust.

Be not afraid to give thyself
Into his guiding hands;
For he will lead through day or dark,
To rough or pleasant lands,
And he will give thee fight or rest,
The shine or shade, as shall be best.

Respond to every word of his
With faith that does not fear;
Another speaks to thee through him,
For God is in the Year;
Oh, love him, for he comes to bless
Thy life with good and happiness.
—Marianne Farningham.

Alfred the Great.

A THOUSAND years ago, a royal lady, in one of the rush-strewn halls of her rude English palace, one day read aloud to her children from a written book of Saxon poetry.

One of that group was a boy named Alfred, who eagerly listened to the stories his mother read. Holding out the book in her hand, she promised to give it to whichever of her sons should first learn to read.

Though twelve years of age, and the son of a king, Alfred had not yet been taught to read. Such, however, was his desire to gain the prize, that he at once set to work to master his letters.

Steadily persevering in his task, while his brothers were at play, he was ere long able to read the book, and with great joy he received it as his reward. That boy afterwards became King of England. He is known as Alfred the Great.

At the age of twenty-three he became king. During the greater part of his reign, he was engaged in fierce struggles with the Danes and other Northmen, who invaded the eastern counties of England.

In 878 these invaders arrived in such large numbers, that the people fled before them. Deserted by his subjects, Alfred was obliged to hide himself from his enemies. Disguised as a common soldier, he took refuge in the humble cottage of a cow-herd.

One day, while sitting polishing his bow and pointing his arrows, the peasant's wife set him to watch some cakes she had put before the fire to bake. Returning shortly afterwards, she found him lost in thought, and the cakes burning on the hearth. Scolding him for his supposed carelessness, she

told him that he was good at eating cakes, but bad at turning them.

The good woman was very much alarmed when she afterwards learned that she had scolded her king; but Alfred rewarded both her and her husband for their kindness to him in his time of need.

Having again collected his followers, Alfred determined to attack the Danes. Disguised as a harper, he visited their camp. The soldiers crowded around him, and were delighted with his playing and singing. He saw all the defences of the camp; and, from the leader's talk with his friends, he found out all his plans.

Two days afterwards, Alfred and his little army attacked the Danes with such force that they swept all before them, and Alfred was once more the master of his kingdom.

Alfred was always very kind to the poor, and he set aside an eighth of his income to supply their wants. On one occasion, when he had been defeated by his enemies, he retired to a castle in an out-of-the-way place.

Here a beggar called, and asked for alms. On inquiry, the king was told that his followers were away endeavouring to obtain a supply of food, and that there was but one loaf in the castle.

Taking the loaf in his hand, the king broke it in two, and gave the beggar one of the halves, saying that not one of his people should starve while he had a crust to divide with them.

A THING to be thankful for is that God so sifts our prayers that only the right ones are answered. If all the foolish ones were granted we should have unspeakable suffering.

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