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AT LEAST AN HOUR

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. V.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 26 1885.

No 26



THE FIRST SNOW.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

A PSALM FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE.

BY MISS MULLOCH.

FRIEND stands at the door,
In either tight-closed hand
Hiding rich gifts, three hundred and three
Waiting to strow them daily o'er the land
Even as seed the sower.
Each drops he, trends it in and passes by;
It cannot be made fruitful till it die.

O good New Year, we clasp
This warm shut hand of thine,
Loosing fore-ever, with half sigh, half grasp,
That which from ours fall, like dead fingers'
twine.
Ay, whether fierce its grasp
Has been, or gentle, having been, we know
That it was blessed; let the Old Year go.

O New Year, teach us faith!
The road of life is hard,
When our feet bleed and scourging winds us
scathe,
Point thou to Him, whose visage was more
marred,
Than any man's; who saith
"Make straight paths for your feet"—and to
the opposit—
"Come ye to Me, and I will give you rest."

Let hang some lamp-like hope
Above this unknown way,
Kind year, to give our spirit freer scope
And our hands strength to work while it is
day.

But if that way must slope
Tombward, O bring before our fading eyes
The lamp of life, the hope that never dies.

Comfort our souls with love,
Love of all human kind;
Love special, close—in which like sheltered
dove
Each weary heart its own safe nest may find;
And love that turns above
Adoringly; contented to resign
All loves, if need be, for the Love Divine.

Friend, come thou like a friend,
And whether bright thy face,
Or dim with clouds we cannot comprehend,
We'll hold our patient hands, each in his
place,
And trust thee to the end,
Knowing thou leadest onward to those
spheres
Where there are neither days, nor months,
nor years.

THE FIRST SNOW.

WHAT fun and frolic the first snow
brings. How the boys love to plunge
into it and make snowballs and play
all manner of pranks. We hope,
however, that none of the young
readers of PLEASANT HOURS could be
guilty of the meanness of the two boys
we see running off in the picture.
They have knocked down poor little
Tommy Green, and broken his slate,
and given him a great deal of trouble.
See how angrily his mother shakes her
hat at the boys; while his little sister
tries to console him, and his wee
brother tries in vain to put together
the broken slate; while over head the
beauty and purity of the new fallen
snow seems to rebuke the strife and
clamour these bad boys have caused.

GUARDING THE TONGUE.

A CHINESE proverb says that a word
once spoken cannot be brought back
with a coach and six horses. And so
it is with speeches that are sometimes
uttered in conversation. Many a silly
thing has been spoken in a thoughtless
moment, which the speaker perhaps
soon forgot, but which, though light as
the sea-froth, made an impression as on
enduring rock. In the estimation of
the more thoughtful persons who heard
the remark, the speaker was ever
afterward held in lower esteem.

If we want to be happy we must
always try to do what is right.

WHAT THE ODD JOBS DID.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

BY A. WESTON 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 some-
thing 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 remem-
ber 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 sound 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've 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 hun-
dred 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 grand-
son 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 that 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. "Sup-
pose 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 in
possession?" asked the old man, think-
ing more of that than of the price that
had been offered.

"I think he would like to come
into possession to-day," said the law-
yer, 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 pass-
ing 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
older 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's 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 re-
ceived small sums of money, all of
which he has carefully saved, so that
when I opened the bag he brought me,
I found those small sums had mounted
up until they made one hundred and
twenty-five dollars and fifty cents.
He had heard, he said, that his grand-
father must sell the farm unless he
could pay some money he owed by the
first of the year. He asked 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 edu-
cated, 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."

"O 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 thanks-
giving 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
more years have passed away, and
they will all reply alike that it was
the happiest in all their lives.—S. S.
Times.

It is wonderful now much we owe
to people who will not let us do as we
please.

A SONG FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE.

STAY yet, my friends, a moment stay—
Stay till the good old year,
So long companion of our way,
Shakes hands, and leaves us here.
Oh stay, oh stay,
One little hour, and then away.

The year, whose hopes were high and strong,
Has now no hopes to wake;
Yet one hour more of jest and song
For his familiar sake.
Oh stay, oh stay,
One mirthful hour, and then away.

The kindly year, his liberal hands
Have lavished all his store.
And shall we turn from where he stands,
Because he gives no more?
Oh stay, oh stay,
One grateful hour, and then away.

Days brightly came and calmly went,
While yet he was our guest;
How cheerfully the week was spent!
How sweet the seventh day's rest!
Oh stay, oh stay,
One golden hour, and then away.

Dear friends were with us, some who sleep
Beneath the coffin-lid:
What pleasant memories we keep
Of all they said and did!
Oh stay, oh stay,
One tender hour, and then away.

Even while we sing, he smiles his last,
And leaves our sphere behind.
The good old year is with the past;
Oh be the new as kind!
Oh stay, oh stay,
One parting strain, and then away.
—William Cullen Bryant.

SOMEBODY'S SON—A TRACT FOR THE NEW YEAR.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

A RUNAWAY horse was one day seen dashing through the streets of New Haven at a terrific rate, dragging a waggon that contained a small lad, who was screaming with fright. The waggon "brought up" against the sidewalk with a fearful crash. A crowd hurried to the spot. One old lady, with her cap-strings flying, rushed out into the street, although her daughter exclaimed: "Mother! mother! don't get into the crowd; you can't do him any good." Seeing her agitation, a lady who was passing by kindly enquired, "Is he your son?" "Oh, no," replied the true-hearted matron, "but he is somebody's son!"

The good mother was all alive to render a helping hand to save somebody's boy who was in danger of death; but we fear that there is many a matron, and many a daughter in this city, who, during the approaching holiday festivities, will lend a hand to lead somebody's sons right toward destruction! They are already planning a New Year's entertainment, and in their sumptuous bill of fare will be included a liberal supply of champagne, hot punch and brandy. Good friends! before you set forth these stimulating poisons, will you suffer a young man to make one more appeal on behalf of his attempted brethren?

Your hospitality does not require intoxicating liquors on such occasions.

We honour the kindly spirit which, on the birthday of the year, prepares a bounteous entertainment. But the present unhappy system of wine-giving and punch-brewing on New Year's day produces many a sad scene of excess and inebriation. Last year we saw many a quiet mansion turned into a drinking-house. We saw young men enter them with flushed faces and tongues quite too rapid for propriety. We saw a merchant's clerk whetting an evil appetite that has already cost

him a valuable situation. We saw a lawyer of brilliant promise reel toward a home on one of the "avenues," where a fair young wife and aged mother found but little rest through that long, anxious night. He was somebody's son—and somebody's husband, too. Kind reader! you have no moral right to endanger thus the weal of others, and to rob other households of their hopes and their happiness. "Woe unto him who giveth his neighbour drink!"

At all times there are young men in this city who are struggling against evil habits partially formed. A contest is going on within them between conscience and appetite. They see their danger. They begin to realize that if they go much further they shall lose their self-control—they will jeopardize their situation—they will destroy their prospects—and may ruin health, life and their undying souls. These men enter your dwellings on that day with a sore conflict going on between their sense of right and their appetite united to a regard for fashion. If no intoxicating bowl is held out to them they are comparatively safe. But one glass may ruin them. On the summit of a bill in the State of Ohio is a court-house so singularly situated that the rain drops that fall on one side of the roof descend into Lake Erie, and thence through the St. Lawrence into the Atlantic sea. The drops on the other side trickle down from rivulet to river until they reach the Ohio and the Mississippi and enter the ocean by the Gulf of Mexico. A faint breath of wind determines the destiny of these rain-drops for three thousand miles. So a single act determines sometimes a human destiny for time and for eternity. A fashionable young man, partially reformed from drinking habits, was once offered a glass of wine by a thoughtless sister; and in yielding he rekindled a thirst which carried him back into open drunkenness. The hand that should have sustained him laid him low.

But, parents! it is not only somebody's son that is imperilled. Your own, too, are in danger.

The darling who nestled in your own arms may be the victim of the very glass you offer to others. A worthy clergyman of London, while walking the streets, saw a loaded dray coming down rapidly toward a little school-girl who was slowly crossing the road. The foremost horse was just upon her. Forgetting self (for it is a beautiful thought that the better instincts of humanity act like electricity), he rushed into the street—caught the child in his arms—bore her safely to the sidewalk—and, as her bonnet fell aside and she looked up with her pale face to see her deliverer, the good man looked down into the face of his own little daughter! In attempting to save another's child he saved his own. Banish the wine-cup from the social table, and you may unwittingly preserve the son of your bosom from destruction.

Begin the year with a right start! "At the commencement of your journey," wrote the late noble philanthropist, Amos Lawrence, of Boston, "remember that the difference between starting just right or a little wrong will end in the difference between finding yourself in a good position or in a miserable bog. Of all the clerks educated with me in the stores of Groton, Massachusetts, no one but

myself—to my knowledge—escaped the bog; and my escape was owing to my total abstinence. We—two clerks in the store—used to compound an intoxicating drink of rum and raisins every forenoon at a certain hour. It was very palatable, and I began to hanker for it. Thinking that my habit would give me trouble if allowed to grow stronger, I declined, without any apology, to drink with my companions. My first resolution was to abstain for a week—then for a year—then for the five years of my apprenticeship in the store. I did not drink a spoonful or touch a cigar. Now, to that simple fact of starting just right, am I indebted, by God's blessing, for my present position."

Let every young man imitate this example.

O, MY POOR BOY!

"ABOUT the year 1863," says J. F. Sanderson, "I saw a scene I shall never forget. I was walking down the main street of Nashua, N. H., and came in sight of Jim Bright's saloon, a horrible place, from which honest and sober people turned aside with disgust and dismay. As I drew near the door opened, and I saw them lead out a boy of fourteen or fifteen years, who was drunk, sick and helpless. Being unable to walk, he sat down upon the sidewalk, the picture of wretchedness and distress. A number of persons stood around him, laughing at his pitiable condition, and cracking their customary bar-room jokes.

"As I drew nearer I saw a well-dressed, bright, intelligent-looking lady walking up the street. She came along apparently happy and unconcerned until she was opposite the saloon, when she cast a glance at the helpless creature on the sidewalk, and exclaimed in tones that I shall never forget, 'O, my poor boy!'

"It seemed as if a life-time of agony were condensed into that one exclamation, which marked a revelation of such sorrow as she had never known before. She could not leave him in his misery and disgrace. Some of the by-standers helped him up, and the poor mother led away her drunken boy.

"There are places all about us where mere boys are poisoned, debauched, and ruined by the accursed cup. Shall this curse consume forever? Shall mothers rear children to be devoured by this dragon? Or shall men and women who fear God and love righteousness rouse themselves from their slumbers, and seek to banish this dire and bitter evil from the homes and hearts of men?"

"I WILL DIE FOR HIM."

MISS SYBIL CARTER tells this interesting story of a little Chinese boy. She says:

One of my friends won a whole family to love and serve God through teaching a boy twelve years old.

He came to her, starving, in one of the dreadful famines. She gave him rice for several days; when he became a little stronger she began to tell him of our God, who tells us to "be kind one to another;" and day by day she saw he was more attentive to her teaching.

At last he said, "Your God is the God, but if I pray to him my people will persecute me." She told him how

much Jesus had suffered to save us from sinful lives, and showed him a picture of some martyrs who were burning at the stake for the love of Christ, telling him that in all lands people had been willing to suffer even death for the knowledge of so good a Saviour.

The boy looked long, and finally he said, "I love your God, and will die for him if he will only love me."

Time passed. The boy, from being wild and rough in his ways, became so gentle and lovable that all were surprised; at last came a time for the teacher to rest, and he went home in the back country to visit his family. They were very angry when he would not worship the idols, but he stood firm. They gave him his food on a dish with the dogs; still he would not yield. Then he told his mother of the suffering Lord Jesus and of the martyrs, telling her he had seen the picture, and she became so much interested that she said she would go to see the picture, and if it were true she would hear more of the new religion.

The poor woman actually walked forty miles to see the picture, and she was so much pleased with all the teaching that, in a few months, she and the family of seven others were taught about God, received him as their God, and have since stood the storm of persecution as did the boy.

Now, will you not help with larger gifts for foreign missions this year than ever before, as there are so many who need our help?

THE NEW SUCCESSION.

BY PROF. HENRY F. LUGGITT.

THE temple arches of the midnight glow
With diamond splendours o'er the hills
of snow.

A bended Form with wrinkled visage waits
Before the threshold of the starry gates.

With snowy beard and frosty staff he stands,
And backward looks across the dusky lands.

The old light glows and kindles in his eyes,
While past his gaze rare visions sweep and rise.

And while he waits, the soft and mellow chime
Of jangled sweetness from the bells of time

Breaks into song—the gates of midnight swing;
And he is gone!—the young New Year is king.

HUNTING IN AFRICA.

DR. LIVINGSTONE, in his book on Africa, tells how some of the tribes conduct the chase. With logs and brush they construct large pits or traps, into which the wild animals are driven. The natives go round the neighbourhood and start their game, closing in upon them and chasing them towards what appears to be the hunted animals as a friendly shelter, when in reality it turns out to be a death-trap. There they struggle for their lives, but the large number of dexterous hunters who surround the pit soon silence in death the frantic cries of their doomed victims.

How many snares and pit-falls there are everywhere, into which Satan seeks to drive his prey, precious immortal souls! Boys and girls, grown men and women, have to be on their guard, for the enemy is constantly seeking whom he may devour.

THE OLD GRAY YEAR.

WHAT of the year that has past?
 What of its sorrows and joys—
 What of its record at last—
 Shows its pure gold or alloys?
 Surely 'twas sprinkled with sorrow,
 Yet filled with pleasure untold,
 Troubled we'd so promptly borrow,
 Oft turned to "silver and gold."

Look back o'er the vista of life,
 See the dark clouds in the way,
 Yet when we thought troubles rife
 Shone forth not a bright dazzling ray!
 Hope held us firm on our path,
 Faith in the future to come,
 Love calmed the tempest of wrath,
 Spared griefs that come unto some.

Wealth, though it passed by our door,
 Health proved a blessing, complete,
 Worth all the jewels, and more,
 With which all earth's mines are replete.
 Happiness, pleasure untold,
 The smile of our loved ones dear,
 Cheered when the world's winds were cold,
 Blessings on thee Old Gray Year!

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TORONTO, DECEMBER 26, 1885.

CANDID OPINIONS OF OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS.

Many ministers of our Church have had samples of American publications, sent them with the request to procure their introduction into our schools. These are "broad gauge" papers, intended to suit any school of any denomination. They can therefore give no definite doctrinal teaching. The Sunday school periodicals of our own Church are loyal to all its interests and institutions, and are loyal to Queen and country; and their profits, if any, accrue to the benefit of our own Church, especially of its Supernatural Ministers Fund, instead of to the benefit of an enterprising foreign publisher. Many of these foreign papers are published under a specious plea of cheapness. The following candid opinions of several of our ministers, who have made a more or less careful comparison of our own and foreign so-called "cheap" papers, should set that question at rest. By taking PLEASANT HOURS and Happy Days schools can have a paper for each Sunday at half of the rates which are herein shown to be the "cheaper than the cheapest." If any schools are too poor to take these papers, let them make application to the Rev. W. H. W. Throw, Secretary of the Sunday School Board, for a grant from the Sunday-School Aid and Extension Fund.

The Rev. T. W. Jackson writes:—
 Dear Bro. Briggs,—I got samples of four Sunday-school papers sent to me, claiming to be the "cheapest issued." I took the trouble to compare them with our own publications, to see if the claim would stand after a fair investigation. . . The aggregate size of the four numbers referred to, including illustrations and letterpress, is only 1,552 square inches, while ours aggregated 3,016 square inches, the number of letters to the square inch in ours is 110, while theirs is

only 102. That is, this publishing house claiming to be the cheapest, will furnish 3,712,500 square inches of reading matter, having 102 letters to the square inch, for \$3.00, while our publishing house will furnish 4,100,000 square inches for the same money, having 110 letters to the square inch. As to matter, it is so selected in the one that it will not offend any one, the object being to get up a paper that will have a wide circulation, and make it pay the publishers. Ours are loyal to our Church, our country, and our history. They will bear reading, laying aside, and taking up again without getting stale. I am sure Dr. W. Throw is to be complimented on the excellent quality of his papers we have to-day. BETTER THAN THE BEST, CHEAPER THAN THE CHEAPEST. Let me say to the Sunday School Superintendents of the Methodist Church,—"Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here: fast by my mill: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and gather after them."

Send for specimen numbers before ordering elsewhere.

METHODIST MAGAZINE.

(Opinions of the Press.)

The London Quarterly Review says: "The Canadian Church is to be heartily congratulated on its Magazine."

The St. Louis Methodist says:—"The Methodist Magazine is abreast of the most popular literary Magazines. The articles are by scholarly men and good writers."

The New York Christian Advocate says:—"The Canadian Methodist Magazine is exceedingly well edited, and is an honour to our Canadian friends."

The Zion's Herald, Boston, says:—"This is a model denominational periodical, neatly published, catholic in spirit, emphatically religious, and with a moderate subscription price, \$2."

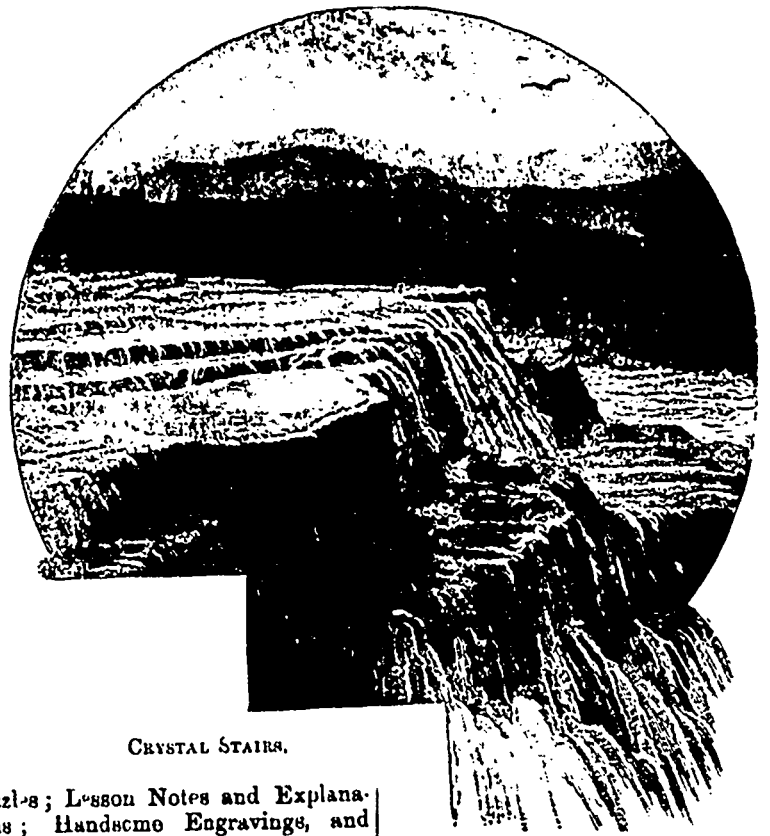
A distinguished Canadian writer says:—"The December issue is simply superb, both in mechanical and intellectual contents, while your prospectus for 1886 is nothing short of magnificent."

A leading Presbyterian minister writes:—"Your Magazine is a credit to the denomination and to our Canadian literature, and I only regret that I lead such a busy life with other matters, that I cannot help in the circulation as I would—however I speak a word for it when I can."

The volumes for 1886 will surpass any hitherto issued. Now is the time to subscribe.

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 PLEASANT HOURS. I hope that its visits during the year have, indeed, given many pleasant hours to the 100,000 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 PLEASANT HOUR family. And, therefore, when I say "good-bye," in this last number of 1885, I say, also, *Auf Wiedersehen*—May we meet again during all the months of 1886. The paper will be better than ever. The Editor will tell some of the most stirring stories of the grand history of our own land, which he hopes will make you all proud that you are Canadians. Abler pens than his will tell the story of early Methodists, whose noble lives it will be well for us all to copy. The Rev. E. R. Young, Dr. Mescham, and other missionaries of our Church, will tell the thrilling stories of the strange scenes of heathen lands, and 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



CRYSTAL STAIRS.

Puzzles; Lesson Notes and Explanations; Handsome Engravings, and everything that is good. And now, once more—*Auf Wiedersehen!*

THE CRYSTAL STAIRS.

BY JOHN T. MOORE ESQ.

LIKE one spark from a blacksmith's forge, is this fragment from the Yellowstone National Park. It is only a small bit of those majestic terraces over which the wonder-working waters of the hot springs have woven a snowy drapery. Those soft flowing folds might be mistaken for a prodigious cataract, but as you approach you listen in vain for the sullen roar of waters.

From the parent spring there is a gentle outflow into an adjoining pool. This pool in turn brims over its shell-like wall into a lower basin, and so on till the stairs are reached. There the water is so diffused that it forms but a shining film, gliding noiselessly over its own delicate handiwork. With lime and magnesia for warp and woof, this coating of transparent varnish gives dazzling brilliancy to the matchless texture.

Walking out upon the partition walls between these pools I stand upon that parapet at the very verge. At my feet there is spread out a world of loveliness that baffles description. Soft and feathery-looking as swan's down, these immaculate tapestries sweep gracefully away over mimic balconies. There to the left is a tributary spring, containing sulphur, arsenic, and iron, whose chromatic touch has tinged some folds with the hues of richest plumage. What a resplendent pedestal! For the most part pearly white as frosted spray. As I gaze upon its rippling splendour, thoughts of silver draperies, of coral thrones, of snowy terraces, are put from me as too feeble. Then I think of the "shining robes of spotless white," and, overwhelmed, I stand—and look—and wonder!

The beautiful cut accompanying this sketch is one of over 60 on the Great West, North West, British Columbia, and Alaska, that will appear in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1886.

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 drinks from those who call on New Year's Day.

LITTLE SINS.

You make light of them now, but they are not to be trifled with; they creep on so stealthily that you scarcely notice them; by-and-bye you will find it impossible to turn them out. I think of the Indian story of the tiny dwarf, who asked the king to give him all the ground he could cover with three strides. The king seeing him so small, said "certainly." Whereupon the dwarf suddenly shot up into a huge giant, covered all the land with the first stride, all the water with the second, and with the third knocked the king down and then took his throne.

Skilful Sure is the title of a forthcoming book by Elinor Gay, containing directions for making fancy articles for fairs, bazaars, or for home use, in a neat, attractive, economical manner. The approximate prices of materials are given. The book contains many very novel ideas, and will be found particularly suggestive to those contemplating "home-made" Christmas or New Year's presents. To be issued in paper covers at 50 cents. (Funk & Wagnalls, New York.)



THE STEAMER CAROLINE GOING OVER THE FALLS.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

BY A. MOORE.

If the wine-cup be proffered, refuse it ;
No matter how tempting, don't use it.
It stings like a serpent and bites like an
adder ;
It cheers for a moment and then leaves you
sadder.

If you have a conscience not dead yet,
Or some common sense in your head yet,
You will fly from this source of vexation and
sorrow,
And thus have your pleasure reserved for
to-morrow.

The lady who offers you wine, sir,
May smile and may look half divine, sir ;
Don't yield to her pressure, nor let her cajole
And wheedle you out of the peace of your
soul.

If the abstinence pledge you have taken,
Then don't let your courage be shaken,
But strengthen your vows by denouncing the
drink
And keeping aloof from the slippery brink,

When you visit your friends be polite, sir,
And act what is truthful and right, sir ;
And show that a man may be cheerful and
merry
Without the incitement of brandy and
sherry.

HOLIDAY BOOKS.

Of all the Christmas and New Years books for young folk that have come under our notice, there are none that for beauty of illustration, and elegance of make up, equal those issued by the Worthington Company, 28 Lafayette Place, New York. Three of these are now before us, which will make any little boy's or girl's eyes sparkle with delight. First, we have *Worthington's Annual for 1886*, a handsome quarto book of 224 pages, with a charmingly illuminated cover. Price \$1.50. The book has a picture on every page, and nearly half of these are large full page pictures. Besides these are a number of beautiful coloured lithographs, on thick paper. The full page pictures, especially, are of a very superior character—real works of art, that will refine and cultivate the taste of the little folk, and older folk too, who are fortunate enough to have them.

Then we have *Worthington's Chat-terbox, Junior*, about the same size, and same general character, with a still handsomer illuminated cover. Price \$1.25. With each picture in each volume there is a short printed description, besides short poems, etc. The pictures are chiefly illustrations of child-life, others illustrate kindness to animals and household pets, others are Christmas and New Year's pictures, or pictures of winter sports and summer scenes.

The most daintily beautiful of all is *Worthington's Ring-a-Round-a-Rosy*, by Mary A. Lathbury. It consists of twelve beautiful coloured plates illustrating the adventures of twelve little girls, and twelve elegant monochrome picture pages, with as many verses describing those adventures. The cover is a perfect garland of beauty. This book is specially suitable for the very little folk who cannot read, and sells for \$2. Mr. Worthington is, we believe, a Canadian. Perhaps that is the reason that, at the top of a large Christmas tree, of which he gives a picture, he places the good old Union Jack. These books are for sale by William Briggs, Toronto.

CHRISTMAS WEEK AT NAVY ISLAND, 1837.

On the thirteenth of December 1837, a mob, described by a Buffalo paper as "a wretched rabble, ready to cut any man's throat for a dollar," under the command of a border ruffian named Van Rensselaer, took possession of Navy Island, about two miles above the Falls of Niagara. Here Mackenzie proclaimed the "Republic of Upper Canada" and invited recruits. Few Canadians joined his standard, but about a thousand vagabonds, intent on plunder, collected together. They were supplied with artillery and stores taken from the United States arsenal. They threw up entrenchments of logs, mounting thirteen guns, and opened fire on the Canadian shore.

Thus the holy Christmas-tide, God's pledge of peace and good-will toward

men, was desecrated by the hateful spirit of bloodshed and war.

Colonel McNab, appointed to the military command of the frontier, soon found himself at the head of twenty-five hundred men—militia, Grand River Indians, and a company of coloured volunteers. An American steamer, the *Caroline*, was actively engaged in transporting men and stores to Navy Island. Colonel McNab, after remonstrance with the American authorities, resolved on her capture. On the night of December the twenty-eighth, Lieutenant Drew, with a boat party, gallantly cut her out from under the guns of Fort Schlosser. Unable, from the strength of the current, to tow her across the river, he ordered her to be fired and abandoned in the rapids. She glided swiftly down the stream and swept grandly over the cataract. In this affair five of the "patriots" were killed and several wounded. The capture of the *Caroline* was strongly denounced by the United States authorities, and it seemed for a time as if it would embroil the two nations in war. It was certainly extenuated, however, by the strong provocation received, and was subsequently apologized for by the British Government. The winter proved exceedingly mild. Navigation continued open till the middle of January. Sir John Colborne reinforced the Upper Canadian frontier, and compelled the evacuation of Navy Island January fourteenth, 1838.

The Wit of Women, by Miss Kate Sanborn, issued ten days ago (Funk & Wagnalls, New York), is already in its second edition. The work is receiving many warm commendations by the press.

We have sent out over two tons of specimens of our S. S. periodicals to all parts of the Dominion from British Columbia to Cape Breton, and to the Island of Newfoundland. We expect from this seed-sowing a large increase of circulation.

GOD'S WORD A MINE

THE wealth of a country does not always lie on the surface. As you are hurried along on the railway, you pass through corn fields and meadows and orchards, and then perhaps you are away among bare and rugged hills, on which almost nothing will grow, and yet beneath these hills there may be rich mines of silver, lead, copper, or iron. The country around Edinburgh and Glasgow is very rich in coal, but you do not see the coal on the surface. In order to get at it, men have to dig deep holes, which are called shafts. If you were to go down one of these shafts, you would see men busy hewing out the coal, and sending it up to the surface. In Wales and Cornwall, again, the hills are pierced with tunnels; and if you went into one of these, you would find it leading you far into the heart of the mountains, and there you would see men busy searching for lead and copper ore.

Now the Bible is likened to one of these mines in which men may find a precious treasure. This treasure does not lie on the surface; it must be diligently dug out. You must, as it were, get into the heart of the Bible, and you must use the lamp of Bible truth to find this treasure. Jesus says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

THERE is a serious aspect to this season—the close of the old year and the beginning of the new. It is a time for looking back on the past—its many mercies and blessings, its shortcomings and failures and sins—and for looking forward into the future. Oh, thank God for all his goodness! Seek his pardon for all you have done amiss, and ask his grace to help you to begin the new year in newness of life. You know not what the year shall bring to you of joy or sorrow, or it may be sickness or death. But put your hand trustfully in God's, and go forward where he leads, and no scath nor harm can happen you. It is a precious treasure. Oh! use its golden moments well, and may it be for each one of you the very happiest year that ever you have known!

It's coming, boys, it's almost here
It's coming, girls, the grand New Year!
A year to be glad in, not to be bad in ;
A year to live in, to rain and give in ;
A year for trying, and not for sighing ;
A year for striving, and hearty thriving ;
A bright New Year, Oh! hold it dear,
For God who sendeth, He only lendeth
The grand, the blessed, the glad New Year.

I wish you happy New Year,
Dear bright-eyed girls and boys ;
May all its days and hours be
Filled full of wholesome joys.

I wish you happy New Year,
With health and true success,
And the best of all good fortune—
The power to aid and bless.

"You ought to acquire the faculty of being at home in the best society," said a fashionable aunt to an honest nephew. "I manage that easily enough," responded the nephew, "by staying at home with my wife and children."

ANOTHER YEAR.

ANOTHER year is fading
Into the shadowy past,
What if for me, my Saviour,
This year should be the last?
Could I, with joy recalling
The hours and moments gone,
Say I had well employed them,
Nor o'er one failure mourn?

Another year is passing,
And I am passing too—
Passing from earth and earthly scenes
To those earth never knew.
What shall I plead when standing
Before the "Great White Throne?"
Nothing, O Christ, but thine own blood,
Thy righteousness mine own.

Another year is dying.
And time is dying too,
And all things here below, with him,
Are passing out of view.
Passing as swiftly as our thoughts
Flit through our minds, then flee.
Oh, realize facts like these,
What ought our lives to be!

Another year is adding
To those already dead.
Dead! will they never rise again!
Where, all the actions fled?
We surely yet shall meet again,
This old year and our souls:
His deeds will greet us yet, though now
Oblivion o'er him rolls.

We leave the year with Jesus
To sprinkle with his blood:
Jesus the Loving One, who once
As our Sin-bearer stood.
We leave the year with Jesus,
And thus the weight is gone.
We trust the future all to him
Who all its weight hath borne.

SWIMMING AGAINST THE CURRENT.

THE three young girls just stepping over the threshold into womanhood—how pretty they were! We thought so, and so did the three young men sitting in the seat just in front of them at the temperance meeting. And yet, in spite of their beauty, only one of them proved brave enough to swim against the current.

The brilliantly-lighted hall was well filled, and the addresses had been earnest and impressive; still, stranged to say, five of our young group evinced no interest in the great object for which all were called forth.

The sixth, Kitty Randolph, seemed quite aroused by something, for her blue eyes shone brightly with a clear, earnest look.

"Are you contemplating putting your signature to that formidable document?" Theresa Morris whispered, roguishly glancing toward a pledge which, in the hands of an elderly gentleman, was making its way toward the group.

"Yes, I have decided to do that very thing. You will, too, will you not?" Kate said firmly.

"Not I, thank you; and, Katie, do not be so foolish as to do such a ridiculous thing. The pledge is meant for regular drinkers—I've heard father say so frequently—it was not designed for young girls like us." Theresa spoke impatiently.

"Theresa, you know very well we do have wine at our house—yes, and so do you."

"Yes, yes; of course," interrupted Theresa; every well-ordered house has its wine. My father would not think of doing without. And, Katie, how would a buffet look without its bottles? Rather forlorn, I should judge."

"Not at all. I intend to coax father to allow me to change the arrangement of ours this very night."

By this time the pledge was passing

through the seat ahead of them—passing through, but receiving no signatures. The three young men laughingly whispered—

"No need of our signing; we never drink."

The pledge reached the next seat. Sue, with a wave of her fair hand, let it pass her; Theresa shook her head scornfully as the gentleman offered it to her; but Kate took it gently and with a firm hand wrote—

"Katie Randolph."

It was New Year. Such a bright exhilarating day! The sun shone until the crystals sparkled like millions of diamonds.

"A beautiful day to turn over a new leaf," Katie Randolph said smilingly to her brother Burt, who came into the cosy parlor to wish her a "Happy New Year."

"I intend to begin a new life to-day, Burt," she whispered softly, as her brother kissed her warmly—"a life whose steps tread upward."

"I wish I could go with you," Burt laughed; "but I will surely slip backward. But to change the subject, there comes some young men—Harry, Frank and Dick. Where is your wine, sister mine?"

"I shall never offer another drop of wine, Burt—never! I have signed the pledge and it wouldn't be consistent."

"This is our first call, Katie," was handsome Harry Holmes' greeting; "you must treat us well."

"Indeed I will. Here, Burt, pass the tray of coffee," Katie said, turning the delicious liquid from the bright silver urn into the dainty cups. "Harry," passing him a delicious salad as she spoke, "here is the dish you love so well."

"But the wine which goes with it I do not see," he answered mischievously. Katie's cheeks flushed as she pointed to her badge and said:

"No, Harry; you'll never see it in this house again. Father has promised me that; and, Harry, father has signed the pledge—my new pledge that I wrote out. Here it is," she said, as Harry followed her into the next room. "Your name would look very manly written just underneath."

"Give me a pen, please," he answered with considerable emotion; and writing his name underneath Mr. Randolph's, he said, "Katie, I think mother will say some time to-day, God bless Katie Randolph! for mother has been worrying some little time about her wavering son—mothers will worry, you know."

"But, Burt, I don't see your name on Katie's pledge. How is that?" Harry asked, as the boy came in search of his sister.

"Why I—I don't know. I thought there was no use; but seeing your name there, I believe I'll follow," and in another moment "Albert Randolph" was written upon the precious sheet.

"Which of you two is the best writer?" asked Harry, carrying the pledge back into the parlor and speaking to his friends.

"Well, I really couldn't say," laughed Frank.

"Would you have any objection to writing your name here?" Katie asked earnestly, as she passed the pledge to the young men. "If you would, we can judge who is the best penman."

Frank and Dick saw the joke—if

one could call a serious a thing as signing the pledge a joke—and wrote their names, Frank thinking, "It cannot do us any harm, and will please Katie."

Ah! Frank, Katie was not the only one pleased when you accepted so quietly that safeguard. A fond mother's heart leaped for joy; a kind father uttered prayers of thanksgiving.

As for Dick, his widowed mother wept tears of gratitude and happiness too deep for words.

"Refuse wine! Why, Dick Davis, what is the trouble with you?" asked Theresa, much mortified because her sparkling wine was politely but firmly declined.

"No trouble at all, Theresa. I've signed the pledge this New Year's morn; so you see I do not dare to drink."

"I shouldn't want to be bound in that way," said Theresa, scornfully.

"Better be bound with a pledge and badge and helps upward, than bound to a glass which drags downward. Eh, Theresa?"—Selected.

AN ANCIENT TEMPERANCE PLEDGE.

ON the blank leaf of an old English Bible which has been transmitted from sire to son through many successive generations, and appears as the property of Robert Bolton, B.D., and preacher of God's Word at Broughton, Northamptonshire, is inscribed the following pledge: "From this day forward to the end of my life, I will never pledge any health, nor drink a whole carouse in a glass cup, bowl, or other drinking instrument, wheresoever it be, from whomsoever it come, except necessity do require it; not to my own most gracious Kinge, nor any the greatest monarch or tyrant upon earth, nor my dearest friend, nor all the goulden in the world, shall ever entorse me. Not angel from heaven (who I know will not attempt it) shall persuade; not Satan, with all his outde subtleties, nor all the powers of hell itself, shall betray me. By this very sinne (for sinne it is, and not a little one) I doe plainly find that I have more offended and dishonoured my glorious Maker and most merciful Saviour, than by all other sinne that I am subject untoe; and for this very sinne it is my God hath often been strange untoe me, and for that cause, and no other respect, have I thus vowed, and I heartily beg my good Father in heaven, of his great goodness and infinite mercy in Jesus Christ, to assist me in the same, and be favourable untoe me for what is past. Amen. Broughton, 10th April, 1637.—R. BOLTON."

A WARNING TO THE YOUNG.

It is often worse to read bad books than it is to keep company with bad boys. Actions grow off our thoughts, and a bad book can in a few minutes damage us forever.

One of England's greatest and best men says that when a boy another boy loaned him a bad book for just fifteen minutes. It sent a deadly dart to his soul. He never could get away from the vile impression made upon his mind by that book in so short a time. He shed many bitter tears over it, and tried to forget it, but the shadow lingered. God forgave him, but he could not tear from his soul the memory of that evil book.

My young friends, if you will hear the voice of age and wisdom, do not read bad, trashy books and papers. They feed unholy, lustful thoughts and lure to dark deeds. They poison the mind and corrupt the morals. They are worse on the soul than liquor is on the brain. If you fill your mind with the rubbish of nonsense and the filth of vile thinking, there will be neither room nor relish for the choice gold of truth and the diamond-dust of pure thought. In the Bible you will find the loftiest sentiments expressed in a clear and captivating style. It is a fountain of pure thought and clear English. Read it much, love it more, and live out its blessed teachings forever.—Pacific Methodist.

THE OLD YEAR.

Alas! ah me! the year is dying;
When first he came in joyous state,
On youth and hope and strength relying,
We formed a hundred projects great,
Resolved and planned; but time was flying,
And winter winds surprised us, sighing—
"Too late! too late!"

What lofty schemes employed our leisure,
The glad New Year should these unfold;
But spring was surely made for pleasure,
And summer's tale was quickly told;
Then autumn filled his horned measure,
But while we revelled in his treasure,
The year grew old.

So must we look, with conscious glances,
On deeds that rise to our distress;
So must we think of wasted chances
For heavenly gain we did possess;
Of misspent hours, of foolish fancies,
Of broken vows, and small advances
In holiness.

Oh, it is well to pause and ponder—
Shall every year thus lightly go?
Shall it be only ours to squander!
No, by the grace of heaven, no!
See, the dim future stretcheth yonder,
And thither, prayerless, shall we wander?
Not so, not so.

Go, rest, Old Year! thy life is ending;
Thy strength is gone, thy glory fled.
Go, rest! while God our way defending,
We the new path before us tread.
Hark! as we listen, meekly bending,
The midnight bells proclaim, ascending,
The year is dead.

CORAL.

CORAL, for a long time thought to be a mineral, then declared to be a vegetable, whose "branches covered with white flowers" were so joyfully described by Marsigli as his new discovery in science, was at length really proved by a French physician, Peyssonnel, to be "only so many little animals or polypi, analogous to those of the Madreporae; and which, like them, were really the builders of the false, stony shrub." Thus was a "question of debate for two thousand years," at length settled by the close investigation of a "simple physician." The waters around the lagoons, or coral islands, are so clear as to reveal the fact that these little workers, like all other animals, have their special enemies, for Mr. Darwin says: "All around the Madreporae Islands, the transparency of the water allows shoals of fish to be seen, principally of the genus Sparus, which feed on the tips of the branching corals, exactly as flocks of sheep browse on the pasture of our meadows."

Young man don't go into that saloon—you are breaking your mother's heart, and will carry down the gray hairs of your father in sorrow to the grave.

THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING.

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 have undone.

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

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 broke your idols,
Showed you 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 new-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.

TAKING THEM HOME.

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."

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 has 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 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 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 grand-daughter 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 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 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 over which the bent old lady crouched, and the bright-eyed grand-daughter 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, won't 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 car-

riage-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 Jennie Jones, I'm taking you home!" —Pansy.

THE LUCKIEST FELLOW.

"Fred Dixon is the luckiest fellow in town; everything he wants he gets; everything he undertakes prospers. Did you hear he has the place at Kelly's, that so many have been trying to get?"

"You don't say so! Why, he is a very young man to fill so responsible a position."

"Yes," added the first speaker, "he always would stand on the top of the ladder in school. Though not the brightest scholar, he managed to carry off the honours upon quitting school, which he did at an earlier age than most of his classmates, because he had to help support a widowed mother and younger brothers and sisters. He only had to ask for a situation, and lo! all other applicants were ruled out, and Fred had the preference."

Boys, "Our Boys," do you know any Fred Dixons? If you do, don't think it is luck that helps him along, gives him the laurels at school, aids him to obtain first class situations, put him in places of trust and honour, where a good name or untarnished character is required. Look back in the pages of his life. See if he was not studious at school, fair and square in all his boyish games, gentlemanly and obliging, honest in all his dealings. Ask his friends if truthfulness, faithfulness to his duty, steadfastness of purpose are not his characteristics. Find out whether he has ever been known to frequent tippling shops, gambling dens and kindred places of vice; whether he spends his spare time in filling his mind with trashy literature, such as is thrown broadcast over our land, in the shape of dime novels. Depend upon it, boys, you will never be "the luckiest fellow in town," unless you earn it by honesty and integrity of character, and fidelity to all your undertakings.—*Christian at Work.*

EVEN in Canada, says the *Hamilton Spectator*, we are accustomed to speak of the Canadian Pacific railway as Canada's greatest work. But a correspondent of the *London Echo* calls attention to the fact that this is very far short of the truth. "Let me tell you," he says, "that it is not alone Canada's great work, but the greatest work ever done under the British flag, or any other flag, or by any other people in any time, unless perchance the Chinese wall might be held to vie with it. Whether it be considered from an engineering, military, or political point of view, it is at least three times as important as any other work in the British empire, or in the United States."

THE BABY'S FIRST WORD.

In a heathen land many thousand miles from America a young Hindu and his bride had just come to know the dear Saviour who died for the sins of the world. Their hearts were full of love, and they could talk of nothing but their new-found Friend. They had one child, a babe just old enough to begin to talk, and in the earnestness of their love to the Redeemer they desired that the first word this little one should utter should be his name—Jesus Christ.

"Not 'father' or 'mother,'" they said, "but 'Jesus.' It is the dearest name on earth. May it be the first word our baby shall speak!"

In a dark heathen country—O, far, far away—Where the servants of Jesus for love of him stay
To tell the poor people God's wonderful love,
And point them the pathway to heaven above,

A youth and the wife he had chosen had heard
And received in their hearts the life-giving word,
Then went on their way their neighbours to tell
Of him who had died to redeem them from hell.

They could think, they could talk, of nothing beside,
But the great love of Jesus, who for them had died;
The story so wondrous, so new, and so sweet
From morning till evening they fain would repeat.

A bright welcome gift with their new life had come,
A fair little flower had bloomed in their home—
A babe to be cherished, and nurtured with care;
For God, not for idols, their child they would rear.

The treasure unfolded in beauty each day;
With cooings and lipings the tiny lips play;
Shall "papa" and "mamma" the little tongue frame?
"No, no! It shall speak first the heavenly name—"

"'Jesus,' dear 'Jesus,' the best name on earth,
The name from us hidden until our new birth;
He came to redeem us, he on us has smiled:
His name shall be first on the lips of our child."

—Selected

LOVE.

In Chicago, a few years ago, there was a little boy who went to one of the mission Sunday-schools. His father moved to another part of the city, about five miles away, and every Sunday that boy came past thirty or forty Sunday-schools to the one he attended. One day a lady who was out collecting scholars for a Sunday-school met him and asked him why he went so far, past so many schools. "There are plenty of others just as good," said she.

"They may be as good, but they are not so good for me," he said.

"Why not?" she asked.

"Because they love a fellow over there," he answered.

Ah! love won him. "Because they love a fellow over there!" How easy it is to reach people through love! Sunday-school teachers should win the affections of their scholars if they wish to lead them to Christ.—*D. L. Moody.*

JUMBO used to eat every day, a barrel of potatoes, a bushel of onions, and 400 pounds of hay.

THE GLAD NEW YEAR

Ring, ring, ye gladsome bells,
From yonder belfries high!
Ring out your joyful strains
From earth to sky!
For, lo, a stranger comes
Kingly and proud,
Upon the blast
He rideth fast,
Peal out your welcorno loud!
Ring merrily,
Ring cheerily,
To the great, the coming year,
The glad New Year!

We'll lift with braver heart,
Life's burden once again,
We'll act a nobler part
Among our fellow-men;
Hope's flowers again shall bloom
Along life's dusty ways,
And murmurings and sighs
Shall change to prayer and praise.
Faith shall with clearer vision
Look toward the coming days,
When peace shall o'er division
Reign with benignant rays;
When man to man as brother
Shall lend a helping hand,
And God's blest benediction
Rest on our smiling land!

Ring, ring, ye bells!
Ring loud, ring high!
Peal out your merry cheer
From earth to sky,
To greet the glad New Year,
The ever glad New Year!
—American Rural Home.

TAKE OUT YOUR TAPE-STRING.

"I am too big to take an insult. Nobody shall call me a liar," says Tim, as he swells and swaggers and struts, as if he were king of all the Bantams, and flourishes fists about as big as two peanuts.

"Bravo fellow!" cries the crowd. John says, "Somebody called me a liar, and I am too big to notice it by a fight," and he quietly walks away.

"Oward!" cries the crowd. Now, who is the bigger of the two? Take out your tape-string to them. The best test of size is to see what will be done when the cry is raised, "Fire! Fire! Baby up stairs, left in its cradle!"

Who will go upstairs the quicker of the two, the king of the Bantams, or the other boy?

Watch when a shriek comes from the wharf, "Boy overboard!" Who will take a cold bath first, Tim or John!

HOW A HOG FOUNDED A CITY.

A traveller says: "I have just returned from the shores of Lake Superior, where I spent some time visiting the copper regions, said to be the greatest in the world. Throughout the rocky, barren Keweenaw Peninsula, good for nothing as farming land, the immense copper deposits have caused large towns to spring up, and they now give employment to tens of thousands of men.

"About eighteen years ago a pig strayed from the drove to which it belonged, and fell into a pit on a spot where the city of Calamit now stands. In rooting about it uncovered a mass of native copper, and thus revealed to the world the scene of the greatest copper mine ever known. As the result of the pig's rooting, humanity is now \$50,000,000 richer in the use of the copper there discovered, and the stockholders, who, aided by the pig, have helped the world to this wealth, have received \$30,000,000 for their trouble."

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B.C. 640-622.] LESSON I. [Jan. 3.

JOSIAH AND THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

2 Kings 22. 1-15. Commit to mem. v. 1.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. 2 Kings 22. 2.

OUTLINE.

1. The Righteous King, v. 1, 2.
2. The House of the Lord, v. 3-7.
3. The Book of the Law, v. 8-13.

TIME.—Josiah's accession, 640 B.C. Main incident, 622 B.C. In Greek history, 39th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 131.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, capital of Judah.

EXPLANATIONS.—*The way of David his father*—"Father" is often used meaning "ancestor." The way means the example. He followed the example of his ancestor, King David. *Shaphan the scribe*—Shaphan the writer or secretary. He was the king's private secretary. *Book of the law*—Some portion of what now forms our Old Testament. It was a roll or parchment which had been covered up and lost in the decay of the temple. *Rent his clothes*—The approved and formal way of expressing grief, anger, or sorrow. The act is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—

1. To be careful of God's house!
2. To be faithful in his service!
3. To be careful of his word!

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Who was Josiah? The best of all the kings of Judah. 2. What is said of Josiah in the GOLDEN TEXT? He did, etc. 3. What good work did he do? He destroyed the idols in Judah. 4. What lost book was found during his reign? The book of God's law. 5. What did Josiah do with the law? He read and obeyed it.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Word of God.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

1. What do you mean by religion? Our whole duty to God our Creator.
2. How may you divide that duty? Into two parts: What we have to believe; and what we have to do.

B.C. 610-599.] LESSON II. [Jan. 10.

JEREMIAH PREDICTING THE CAPTIVITY.

Jer. 8. 20-22, & 9. 1-16. Commit to memory verses 5, 20-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Jer. 8. 20.

OUTLINE.

1. A Weeping Prophet, v. 20-22, and 1, 2.
2. A Guilty People, v. 3-8.
3. A Desolate Land, v. 9-16.

TIME.—Reign of Jehoiakim, perhaps 609 B.C. In Greece, the 42nd Olympiad. Year of Rome, 144.

PLACE.—Same as Lesson I, Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.—*The daughter of my people*—A poetic way of speaking of the nation. *Wayfaring men*—Men, taring, or going along the way; travellers. *Utterly suppliant*—To underplant; to forcibly crowd another up out of his rightful place. *Den of dragons*—An abode of venomous serpents. *Wormwood*—A bitter herb. *Gall to drink*—A bitter fluid secreted by the liver. The two bitterest things to which the speaker could allude, and hence used to signify the bitter punishment which God would send.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—

1. That neglect of opportunity endangers the soul!
2. That the sins of the wicked are an affliction to God's people!
3. That the path of obedience is the path of safety!

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. When did the prophet Jeremiah live? In the last days of Judah. 2. What did he foretell? The fall of the kingdom. 3. By what name is he often called? The weeping prophet. 4. Over what did he weep? His people's sins and God's wrath. 5. What words of Jeremiah concerning his people are given in the GOLDEN TEXT? The harvest is past, etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The wrath of God.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

3. Who is the great Teacher of religion? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer.
4. What do you call his religion? Christianity.

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