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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

OUR PART IN THE NEW YEAR.

BY MARY B. BALDWIN.

There are people who go about the world always carrying with them a sort of measuring line, trying to get at their exact proportion of service, and often giving expression to the idea that they have done their part. They are not inspiring people, are not often even agreeable as friends; indeed they create a kind of disgust and antagonism because one feels that they are constantly setting their achievements and efforts over against those of others.

Such people are not always born with the peculiarity mentioned, but the selfishness that is favourable to its growth is in the heart of every one to a degree, and nothing is easier than to assist in the development by allowing this selfishness to have its way under all conditions.

It is very sad to see young people begin to be careful about spending themselves too much. To hear from sweet lips the words, "I have done my part," is a pang to those who know by experience that nothing great or grand or noble ever comes from a life that refuses to give or to suffer except by measure. The spirit that prompts such an expression, if indulged in long, will harden the heart, blind the eyes, and tie the hands. And, girls, would you believe it: it will change the curves about the rosebud mouth, will fade the beauty from the eyes, will take the attractiveness from the manner, and spoil the young creature entirely who makes up her mind to do only as much of the world's work as she can accomplish without much self-denial.

If such ones would only stop to consider the daily and hourly giving that goes to make the home the place of comfort and of delight that it is; if they would for just one week watch the ministrations of a fond and devoted mother, watch so carefully that none of the signs of self-surrender would be lost to them, they would discover in the study that from the whole-hearted giving flowed not only the happiness that they themselves experience in their young lives, but the blessed satisfaction and joy that wells up in the mother's heart, making a spring from which she drew, in those moments when she felt almost spent, her comfort and strength for new service.

The Master never spoke words that touched with a deeper significance the very springs of motive and their outcome also than these: "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Ah, the true mother never saves her life! She gives and gives, and when at last the tired hands must be folded, the great, loving heart still yearns to make another effort for the dear ones, and sometimes breaks with the longing.

Suppose you try this doing a little more than your part in this happy New Year, girls; it will be an experiment that will pay, and if at the end of the time you do not find that you are living in a larger world than before, it will be a strange circum-

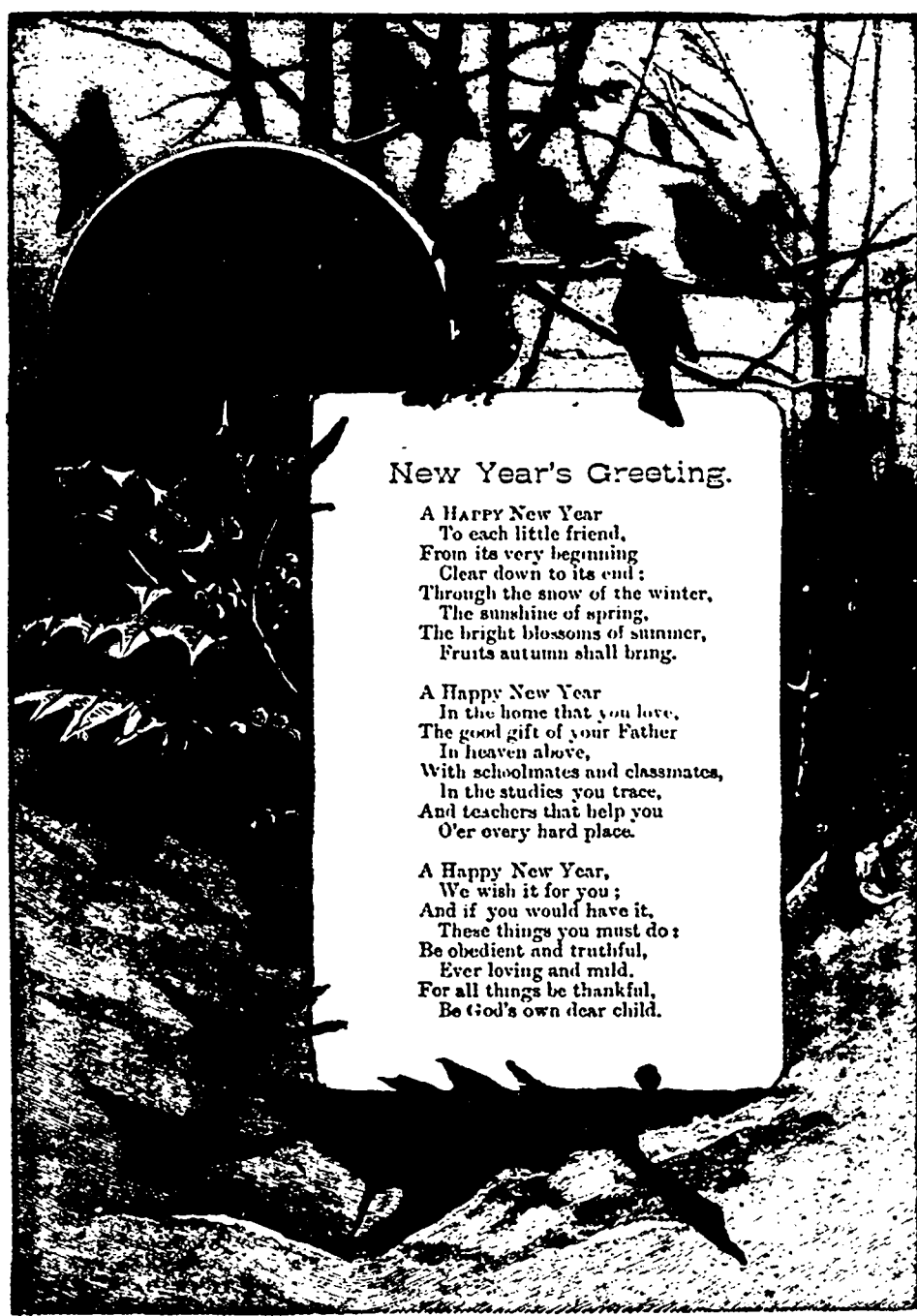
stance, and after you have gained the habit of being generous with your effort, you will begin to despise this keeping back of the best part of one's self, and after a while it will be surprising if you do not recognize the fact that your highest joy comes from giving freely.

year old was a very important witness in a certain lawsuit. One of the lawyers, after cross-questioning the lad severely, said: "Your father has been talking to you and telling you how to testify, hasn't he?" "Yes, sir, he has," was the boy's reply. "Now," said the lawyer, "think me."

SOME NEW YEAR'S DAY CUSTOMS.

The old Romans considered it peculiarly lucky to begin any new enterprise or to enter upon any new office upon New Year's day. All the mechanics began something of their art or trade, and men of letters did the same, as to book, poem, etc. And the consuls though chosen before entered upon their duties this day. After the government was in the hands of the emperor, the consuls were chosen on New Year's day to the capital, attended by a crowd, when two white bulls, never before yoked, were sacrificed to Jupiter Capitolinus. A great deal of music and other perfumes was spent in the temple. The flames, together with the consuls, during the religious solemnity, offered their vows for the prosperity of the empire, and the emperor having taken an oath of allegiance and confirmed all public acts done by him during the preceding year, festivities took place among all classes, and lasted several days. It was a time of universal rejoicing, when presents were exchanged and difference reconciled. The Druids also sacrificed two white bulls, and at the same time the ceremony of cutting the mistletoe was performed. One of the priests clothed in white mounted the tree and cut of the mistletoe with a knife of gold, which was received by another priest standing on the ground in his white robe. The sacrifice was then performed, and prayers were offered to God to send a blessing upon his own gift. The plant thus gathered was supposed to bestow fertility upon man and beast, and to be a specific against all sorts of poison.

It was considered unlucky, in some parts of Germany, to leave any work unfinished; and it was supposed that Lady Berchta—a mythical spiritual being, who has the oversight of sinners was angered by it. The last day of the year is sacred to her, and, if she finds any flax left on the distaff that day she spoils it. There was a curious Oriental custom peculiar to the day, called by the Arabs and Persians "the game of the beardless river." A deformed man, whose hair has been shaved off and his face, ludicrously painted with variegated colours, rides through the streets on an ass, and behaves in the most whimsical and extravagant manner, to the great delight of the multitude that follow him. In this manner he proceeds from door to door, soliciting all persons to give. A similar custom is still found in various parts of Scotland under the name of guizarding. In England, amid the ringing of church bells, ringing out the old year and ushering in the new year, it was customary for the young women of the village to carry from door to door a bowl of spiced ale, an imitation of the "wassail bowl," which they offer to the inhabitants of every house, singing congratulatory verses, generally made by themselves, and suggesting small presents. The young people also exchanged garments, which they called mumming and disguising.—*The Churchman.*



New Year's Greeting.

A HAPPY New Year
To each little friend,
From its very beginning
Clear down to its end:
Through the snow of the winter,
The sunshine of spring,
The bright blossoms of summer,
Fruits autumn shall bring.

A Happy New Year
In the home that you love,
The good gift of your Father
In heaven above,
With schoolmates and classmates,
In the studies you trace,
And teachers that help you
O'er every hard place.

A Happy New Year,
We wish it for you;
And if you would have it,
These things you must do:
Be obedient and truthful,
Ever loving and mild,
For all things be thankful,
Be God's own dear child.

CROSS-QUESTIONING.

It is very careful in courts of law, where witnesses are bound to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that they be questioned and cross-questioned, so that all the facts may be brought out. Sometimes lawyers care more for getting their cases than they do for getting at the truth, and then they try to cross-question and confuse the witnesses. A little twelve

had discovered something, "just tell us how your father told you to testify." "Well," said the boy modestly, "father told me the lawyers would try to tangle me in my testimony, but if I would just be careful and tell the truth, I could tell the same thing every time." Lawyers sometimes find that their cross-questions, call forth unicky answers. This one evidently got more truth than he wished for.

My New Year's Gift.

"Just as I am," thine own to be,
Friend of the young, who lovest me;
To consecrate myself to thee,
O Jesus I come.

In the glad morning of my day,
My life to give, my vows to pay,
With no reserve and no delay,
With all my heart I come.

I would live over in the light,
I would work ever for the right,
I would serve thee with all my might,
Therefore to thee I come.

"Just as I am," young, strong and free,
To be the best that I can be
For truth and righteousness and thee,
Lord of my life, I come.

With many dreams of fame and gold,
Success and joy to make me bold;
But dearer still my faith to hold,
For my whole life, I come.

And for thy sake to win renown,
And then to take my victor's crown,
And at thy feet to cast it down,
O Master, Lord, I come.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 31, 1892.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

How lightly the words are spoken, and yet how much they mean! How few stop to think what kind of happiness they desire for themselves or for their friends, when they offer or answer this cheery greeting. No doubt there is a general wish in the hearts of all for success in the world, for comfort at home. And this is right enough as far as it goes. But how far is that? Only to the end of the year, if our lives are spared, and so on to another year, and another, while life goes on. And then? What then?

Ah, one New Year's day will usher in upon us a last year, a year in which all worldly happiness for us, will be over. A new life and a new world will open before us. And who will assure us as we go down into the valley of death that a "Happy New Year" there awaits us?

Let us give a moment to this thought. Will this be a Happy New Year for us if it should chance to be the one that is to carry us to the shores of our eternal dwelling? Happiness in the next world is what time is given us to attain, and it is now within the power of us all to make sure of entering upon our new life joyfully.

None can make sure that he will prosper in this world, or will enjoy good health, but he can make certain a happy eternity. The scientist says, "The Lord knoweth the days of the unchickled, and their inheritances shall be forever." Precious and beautiful words, but not more beautiful than these. A holy life is the only way to a happy eternity—a life of thankful trust in God; a life of earnest striving to walk in

the ways of God, to do His will on earth as it is done in Heaven; and all the while doing our work heartily and enjoying gratefully the pleasures the divine goodness sends us. This is the way to ensure a Happy New Year and to prepare for a happy hereafter. And it is in this sense that the PLEASANT HOURS to-day wishes all its dear friends and readers a Happy, Happy New Year.

AN EXAMPLE FOR BOYS.

BY MRS. KIDIA CHAPIN.

I WAS at a large concert in New York one evening, when a young man and a richly dressed lady of middle age walked into one of the boxes. Many a woman's glass was levelled at the young man, as he gracefully assisted in removing his companion's wraps. Who was the young man? Edward W. Bok, the editor of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and one of the most successful young men of his time. And his companion? No, my boy, not his sweet-heart or his wife, but his mother. And, from a well-known lady at my side, I learned some facts regarding this young man which I repeat here for the benefit of every boy.

"That young man," said my friend, "is a living lesson to thousands of our New York boys; and many a mother holds up his example to her growing sons. Wherever you see Edward Bok in public, you will find his mother. He is as fond of her as he could possibly be of the sweetest girl in New York. He is to-day famous, successful and makes a princely income. His position, his knowledge and his appearance could win him one of the most desirable wives in all New York, yet he is not married. True, he is only twenty-seven, yet, at all times, his mother is his first, last and only thought. I know the family, and have often been in Mr. Bok's home in Brooklyn. Each week he travels from his Philadelphia office to his home to spend Sunday with his mother and brother. She has everything that a woman's heart could wish for, given her by her son. When she wants anything, she merely drops a little hint to Edward, and in a few days comes a check from Philadelphia for three times the amount she needs. His devotion is really beautiful, and to hear this young man say, 'My mother is a dear little woman. Have you ever met her?' gives you a key to the character of this son, who, at twenty-seven, stands before the public as the most successful young man of modern times."

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, or 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 men 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 lay-

ing up no treasury of knowledge from which you may draw when the swiftly flying years shall bring you to middle 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 getting a firm hold on men? Are 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, cheerful heart, and a breezy nature, which will give as well as receive; and for you, when gray 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.

MARRIED LOVERS.

FOR OLDER READERS.

It is always pleasant to see the g-lantry and thoughtfulness of the young lover manifesting themselves in the husband of threescore and ten. The writer remembers being at a little country railroad station when a white-haired old man and a woman almost as far along in years drove up to the door in an antiquated buggy, to which was attached a horse long past its youth. Shabby as were the old man's turnout and garments, and simple-minded as he seemed, his bearing toward his aged wife was courtliness itself.

"Don't try to git out o' the buggy until I hitch old Ned an' help ye," he said, as he slowly climbed out.

He stumbled backward, and almost fell when helping the old lady out, so that she came to the ground rather heavily.

"Didn't hurt ye, did it, ma?" he asked with tender solicitude; "I don't know what made me so clumsy an' keardless."

Then he brushed the dust from her dress with his red cotton handkerchief, and carefully righted her bonnet that had become awry during the ride to the station.

"Now you set right here, ma, an' I'll see to things," he said, as he led her to a seat in a shady corner of the room and made it comfortable with the shawls she carried. When he returned he said:

"Don't feel any skeery 'bout goin' off alone, do ye, ma? I've wished a hundred times I could go too; but you know we can't both leave home at this time o' the year, an' I am skeered but you'll git along all right. Aaron 'll meet you sure when you git there; an' don't fail to have him drop me a card right off, lettin' me know you're all right."

Just before the train arrived he came over to where I was sitting and asked me where I was "bound fer."

"For M——," I replied.

"Ye don't say!" he said, gleefully. "Well mebbe then ye wouldn't mind lookin' after my wife a little. She's goin' to M——, too; called there sudden by the sickness of our daughter Harriet. She aint never travelled alone none, an' I feel real guilty lettin' her start alone now; but it aint so that we kin both go. I know it aint but forty miles; but I'll feel easier to know that some one 'll tell her when she gets there, an' help her off the train, mebbe. She can't see so very well, an' her hearin' aint none too good."

I gladly agreed to give the old lady all necessary assistance, and the old gentleman was profuse in his thanks. I had taken "quite a load off his mind," he declared.

He kissed his wife good-bye two or three times when the train came in, and stood on the station platform waving his red handkerchief as it moved away, while the old lady's kerchief fluttered from her window in loving response until the station was quite out of sight.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS.

THE old year has rolled into eternity. In looking back most of us find sunshine dominant. There were clouds, but they scattered, dense and impenetrable as some of them seemed.

Our friends—what of them? Could a year have made such havoc in our little circle? Yet so it is, many are gone. They still are dear to us, but, impossible as it had seemed, others have stepped into the vacant places; our work and our pleasures are carried on as before. Is it not humiliating to know how unnecessary we are?

What has this year done for us, or rather what have we made our own of all it brought? Have we triumphed in its battles, and so find ourselves stronger mentally and morally than we were twelve months ago? What has been its indelible stamp upon us? What of it will we carry into eternity? We cannot evade it; the impression is made. We are nobler or baser than the opening of the year found us.

But the new year is here; what shall we do with it? Shall we make resolutions at its opening to be forgotten in a month? Why need they be forgotten? Let us begin each day with a determination to act well our part, and consider what our part may mean. Are we conscientiously doing it when we scowl a "good morning," or freeze the first person that crosses our path? This we may do, perhaps, not as much by what we say as by a felt want of good feeling. Do we realize how much these little things count in our homes and everywhere? Do we realize that sometimes when our selfishness prompts silence a cheerful or kindly word is demanded? Let us give it, and so suppress the old self and add that much to the possible self. May not the self of next year be a real helper on the way by the practical remembrance of the command, "Be courteous."

"Speak a shade more kindly

Than the year before,

Pray a little oftener,

Love a little more.

Cling a little closer

To our Father's love—

Life below shall liker grow

To the life above."

THE STRONGEST DRINK.

BY C. H. STURGEON.

WATER is the strongest drink. It drives mills. It is the drink of lions and horses; and Samson himself never drank anything else. Let young men be teetotalers, if only for economy's sake. The beer will soon build a house. If what goes into the mash-tub went into the kneeding trough, families would be better fed and better taught. If what is spent in waste were saved against a rainy day, poorhouses would never be built.

The man who spends his money with the publican and thinks the landlord's bow and "How do you do, my good fellow?" means true respect, is a perfect simpleton. We don't light fire for the herring's comfort, but to roast him. Men do not keep pothouses for the labourer's good. If they do they certainly miss their aim. Why, then, should poor people drink "for the good of the house?" If I spend money for the good of the house, let it be my own house, and not the landlord's. It is a bad well into which you must put water, and the beerhouse is a bad friend, because it takes your all and leaves you nothing but a headache.

He who calls those his friends who let him sit and drink by the hour together is ignorant, very ignorant. Why, red lions and tigers and eagles and vultures are all creatures of prey, and why do so many put themselves within the power of their jaws and talons? Such as drink and live riotously, and wonder why their faces are so blotched and their pockets so bare, would leave off wondering if they had two grains of wisdom. They might as well look on an elm tree for pearls as to look to loose habits for health and wealth. Those who go to the public house for happiness climb a tree for fish.

It is one thing to be familiar with a saint, and another to be in fellowship with God, saints may be separated from their companions, but God will not cast away his suppliants.

The Old Year And Young Year.

L

SAID the year that was old,
"I am cold, I am cold,
And my breast hurries fast
On the wild winter blast
Of this thankless Decem-ber;
Ah who will remember
As I shivering go,
The warmth and the glow
That arose like a flame
When I came, when I came?
For I brought in my hands
From Utopian lands,
Golden gifts, and the sci- mes
That were fairer than dreams.
Ah never a king
Of a twelvemonth will bring
Such splendour of treasure
Without stint or measure,
As I brought on that day
Triumphant and gay.
But alas, and alas,
Who will think as I pass,
I was once gay and bold!"
Said the year that was old.

IL

Said the year that was young—
And his light laughter rung—
"Come bid me good cheer,
For I bring with me hero
Such gifts as the earth
Never saw till my birth;
All the largeness of life,
Right royally, rife
With the plans and the schemes
Of the world's highest dreams.
Then—Hope's chalice filled up
To the brim of the cup,
Let us drink to the past,
The poor pitiful past,
Sang the year that was young,
While his light laughter rung.

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 something for the boy to do. But, wife, I 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 waiting 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 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 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. "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 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 seem 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 amounted up until they 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 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."

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

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL OF TO-DAY.

THERE are various ways in which Sabbath schools are helping the cause of Christ, besides being feeders to the Church, means of reaching the young outside of Christian families and places for the development of lay talent. They are centres of power and influence along indirect as well as direct lines. They affect the tone of the age, give stability to Christian belief, and create a healthy moral sentiment in the community.

The Rev. Dr. Stone, in a late address to the Sunday schools of Brooklyn, speaks after this fashion of their agency in developing a joyous type of piety and as a doubt-dissipator. "Why is it that the Sunday school of to-day is so different from that of our childhood? There is a formal tone that belongs to the Sunday school, and that reaches to the family, and influences the whole community, and even across church doctrine. This is not an era of doubt. There is more religious enthusiasm than ever before. Doubt comes when the Church is at a cold temperature. But the way to answer doubt is by intense Christian faith and activity. Warm, earnest, spiritual activity on the part of the laity, and especially in the Sunday school, banishes doubt into the air. Let us all remember that it is from a baby's cradle that Christendom has come."—Presbyterian Observer.

The Bells Beneath the Sea.

BY LUCY KENNEDY FLEMING.

IN THE old days of the wharves,
Nor ever a day that I was
The good ship sped with the blessed bells
She bore us to the far away
The pilot crossed his eyes and cried:
"Thank God for the blessed bells,
For vesper bells at midnight
Ring out their constant air."

"Ay, thank the Lord for our good speed
Across the doubtful sea,
"Hail!" cried the captain, "thank thyself;
"God holds no helm for thee."
The pilot crossed his eyes and cried,
"God pardon thee ere more,
And grant that we may safely come
Unto the Cornish shore."

The captain's oath was in his lips,
Or over the sun went down,
And while the people thronged the cliffs
Above the harbour town,
A mighty wave swept over the sea,
With dull and muffled roar;
The great ship trembled all her length
As she sank to rise no more.

Then over the whelming waters pealed
As tolling funeral knells
For those lost souls, the soft, sweet chimes
Of the Ferraby bells.

The moss creeps over Boltraux church,
Where rings no vesper lay;
Still waits the tower its blessed bells,
And silent stands to-day.

For low beneath the Cornish wave,
Where tangled wrecks lie deep,
The Ferraby bells are laid,
And their sweet tones are kept,
But ever 'gainst the billows toss,
And stern winds shriek in give
Their muffled chimes the blessed bells
Still ring beneath the sea.

—Harper's Bazar.

A NEW YEAR THOUGHT.

JUST now, at the beginning of a new year, is a good time for beginning life in the new. We are very apt to think about our mistakes and failures. Perhaps we have not lived the past year as well as we ought to have done. Mistakes are always ugly things to think of, and sins are still worse. We cannot change the year that has just gone, but we ought to try and do better in this new year. We ought not to repeat our mistakes.

Think of the days of this new year as pages of a book, on each one of which, while it lies open before us, we are to write something the story of the day's life. At the close of the day the page will be turned over and we will never see it again until all the books are opened on the great Judgment-day. If we would have the year beautiful when it is ended, when all its pages are written over, we must take pains to make each day beautiful while it is passing. Let us begin now, on these first days of this bright new year, and look at our faults and mistakes, and resolve not to make this year just like the old one but far better.

THE POPULARITY OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

THE cause of temperance is gaining ground in social circles, however cranks may deny the fact. Edward W. Bok says, in the Young Crusader:

The young man who to-day makes up his mind that he will be on the safe side, and adhere to strict abstinence, will find that he is not alone. He has now the very best element in business and social life in the largest cities of our land with him. He will not be chided for his principle, but through it will command respect. It will not retard him in commercial success, but prove his surest help. It will win him no enemies, but bring him the friendship of upright men and good women. It will win him surer favour than aught else in eyes which he will sometime in life think are the sweetest he ever looked into. It will insure him the highest commercial esteem and the brightest social position. And as it moulds his character in youth so will it develop him into a successful man and a good citizen. Try it, my young friend, and see!



"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON II.—JANUARY 8.

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE.

Ezra 3. 1-13.] [Memory verses, 10, 11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

They praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.—Ezra 3. 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

It is a privilege and a joy to have part in building God's spiritual temple.

TIME.—From October, B.C. 536, to May, 535.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and vicinity, from this time called Judea.

RULERS.—Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian empire. Zerubbabel, governor of Judea.

INTRODUCTORY.

The 50,000 returning exiles of our last lesson reached Jerusalem about July, B.C. 536. Their first work was to provide some kind of homes for themselves and their families in the towns near Jerusalem, where their ancestral estates lay. This took two or three months. Jerusalem was in ruins, and they were surrounded by people who did not sympathize with their plans.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. "The seventh month"—October. It was the seventh of their year, and the seventh since they left Babylon. 2. "Builded the altar"—before there was any temple, so that they could begin their regular public services of worship. 3. "The altar upon his bases"—the old altar foundation in front of the temple that was to be rebuilt. "For fear"—lest their neighbours should prevent them, or lest they should fail to secure the favour of God. 4. "The feast of Tabernacles"—held from the 15th to 22nd of the month. It was the great thanksgiving day. Two other feasts were held the same month, the feast of trumpets on the 1st, and the great Day of Atonement on the 10th. 7. "They gave money"—see 1. 6; 2. 69. 61,000 darics of gold—English guineas, or \$300,000, and 5,000 pounds of silver (\$100,000) had been raised before. "Joppa"—the seaport of Jerusalem. 8. "Second year, second month"—May, 535. 10. "Their apparel"—which for such occasions was very beautiful (Ex. 39). "Sons of Asaph"—a choir of singers, named from David's chief singer. 11. "Sang by course"—

responsively. 12. "Ancient men . . . wept"—the house was to be larger, but there was no wealth like Solomon's to lavish upon it. "Young men rejoiced"—that they had a temple at all, and that they could have a part in building it. It was much more than they had dared, two years before, to expect.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The first duty of a people is to institute and sustain religion and education. The poorest place will suffice for worship if it be the best we have. The family altar should be set up in every family. Worship should be regular and continual. Giving to the Lord is a part of worship. The foundation of true character and life is the Lord Jesus Christ. Every power of music should be used in the worship of God. While we regret that we cannot do all we would, we should rejoice with great joy that we can do something toward building up God's kingdom. We must expect opposition, but not stop on account of it.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. Where did the returned exiles live? In the towns near Jerusalem. 2. What was their first work? To build an altar in the accustomed place and institute the public worship of God. 3. What next? They contributed money and made preparations for rebuilding the temple. 4. Then what did they do? They laid the foundation of the temple with great enthusiasm and rejoicing. 5. What hindered them? Their enemies rose up against them, and for fourteen years the work was neglected.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

What is your duty toward your neighbour? My duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me: to love, honour, and succour my father and mother; to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him: to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters: to hurt nobody by word or deed: to be true and just in all my dealings: to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering; to keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity; not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get my own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.

The Child.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea . . . behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.—St. Matt. 2. 1.

From the far East they came,
Tired stained and foot-sore, yet with stately
men,
"Tell us," they asked, "the name
Of him whose beacon star our eyes have
seen?
Long have we followed it across the wild,
Seeking a monarch. Lo! we find a Child."

Versed in all Orient lore,
Adepts in horoscopes and reading dreams,
Ever demanding more,
That star has led them by its lambent beams
To find a sager sage serene and mild,
Skilled to decipher mysteries. Lo! a Child.

O Bethlehem! Where the star
Has led true-hearted men whose patient feet
Have crossed the desert far
To find, instead of sage, an infant sweet;
Thrice-favoured manger, where in weakness
smiled
Priest, prophet, king, is one—a little Child!

To thee all seeking hearts
Reaching forever out to higher things,
Bring wearily the smarts
Of balled soaring with imperfect wings,
To hush their crashing discords fierce and wild
In the soft gurgling laughter of thy Child.

Star of the East! We pray,
By thine epiphany guide thou our race
From East or West the way
That leadeth to the cradle-home of grace,
Until, quite-satisfied, across the wild
It kneels before and clasps that Holy Child.

Child of all time! We bring
Our gold and incense, all else flung away,
Tribute to Sage and King
Made manifest in every land to-day
Rejoicing that on yearning souls hath smiled
God's answer to all questionings—the Child!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

You say it cheerily? You wish it in your heart—"a happy New Year!" If it could only "come true!"

But for whom do you wish it, this happy New Year? For yourself?

Or do you wish first of all for those about you, that they may find the New Year full of kindly thoughts and friendly deeds and helpfulness? Then you yourself may help your own wish to "come true" for them. It will come true for you yourself when you try to make it true for others.

Wish it then, heartily, cheerfully and help your wish to come true—"a happy New Year!"

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