Sunday Reading.

How we Long sometimes for a new Star

The desire to begin over again is one of those longings so common and universal that we may say it is a native instinct. Sometimes it acts upon a multitude of men at once, and then we call it revolution. When It acts upon the individual it is the spirit of self-improvement, and the most valuable stimulant and restorative nature exhibits. All that chloride is to the physical life, this longing to begin anew is to the spiritual and intellectual life, and the man or women who never feels it is either helplessly self-satisfied or hopelessly

despairing. Now, it is true that we cannot pass a private Act of Congress in order to make our future fit our best intentions. Most of us before we arrive a middle life have become conscious that there are things-good things-which will not be ours simply for wishing for them. We can remember many New Years as periods when we made excellent resolves that we never put into practice, and we have realized that self-improvement is a duty to be done with all our energy, because we feel that "the night cometh, when no man can work."

But next New Year we will make another fresh start, and in order to give us hope and strength, we will remember, first, that it is never too late to mend. 'The Man at the Gate' has never yet said to any applicant for admission, 'The door is shut. It is too late!' It the past is irreparable the present is our own, and we may have another opportunity. It was this hope and aspiration that made Ahah 'go softly,' and the prodigal re urn to his father, and David write the Fifty first Psalm, and which in our own cases has over and over again led us to pour out our souls in contrition and determine to turn a new white page and leave a better record upon it. That we have failed, and failed again and again, need not intimidate us for a new trial. Aspirations, imperfections, and failures are intimations, future achievements. Defeats foretell future successes. The sin to be dreaded is the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin. Our light must be burning, however dimly, and we must keep on the right road, however often we stumble on the way.

Under no circumstances can it be true that there is not something to be done. as well as something to be suffered. Let us sit down before the Lord and count our resources, and see what we are not fit for, and give up wishing for it. Let us decide honestly what we can do, and then do it with all our might. Let us wisely determine what physical circumstances in our lives impede our progress, and then remove them, or else remove ourselves from them. Let us honestly acknowledge our faults, and not do as Catullus says-"carry them in the back knapsack. Let us bring them forward to the front and light, and then have nerve enough to lay the axe to their root. Let us forsake improper triends. Let us study that divine and diffi u.t arithmetic which will teach us to 'number our days, so that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom

We have all an irrepressible wish to see success attend our efforts for improvement. We want to enter the Promised Land in our own life-time. To toil constantly i faith and hope, and yet die in the wilderness, 'not having attained unto the promises, but seeing them afar off,' is a prospect that makes our hearts fail. What shall we do to succeed? Let us lay down

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at God's teet our failures, our successes, our hopes and fears, our knowledge and ignorance, our strength and weakness, our confidence and misgivings, all that we are; all that we may be-content to take up thence just what God shall give us.

Those so seeking shall surely find him and if not here, even then we will not be discouraged in trying to do well, for man's destiny ends not with the grave; and many will know him there who did not know him here. If we are onty trying to find the way, the stages may be lonely and dark, but they will lead at last to the light long-

We have before us now an arc of our orbit, large enough to let us judge of our trend. Dare we look critically at it? Are we better, purer, more in earnest now than we were at the beginning of the year? Has the lesson of the cross been cut more sharply in our hearts? have we learned more self-denial? Have we been more self-sacrificing? Can we take the Ninetieth Psalm-that grandest of all human compisitious—as our New Year's homily, and acknowledging all the deep sadness and truth of the first twelve verses, cry earnestly 'Return, O Lord,' and then enter joyfully and bopefully into its happy prayers for the future years? It so, then each of us may say confidently, as we enter

"I go to prove my soul, see my way, as birds their trackless way, shall arrive; what time; what circuit first, ask not. In some time, his good time, I shall

He guides me and the birds, In his good time." -Amelia E. Barr.

WHO HOLDE?

An Old Familiar Hymn and How it Saved a Young Man.

Among the patients wanting to see the doctor at the Free Dispensary of the Bowery Mission, conducted by The Christian Herald, one day lately, was a young man, poorly clad and evidently suffering severe pain. He rose quickly when his turn came to respond to Dr. Dowkontt's 'next,' and went into the consulting room.

Dr. Dowkontt gave him a mixture to relieve his pain, and then asked him about himself. It was a sad story he told. He was tne son of a minister who has a church in a city not two hundred miles from New York. He had drifted away, had fallen under the power of drink and had sunk into abject poverty.

'These clothes,' he said, are all I have in the world, and they are pretty old. Not a cent left. Last night I slept in a wagon, and the night before, on a doorstoop, and the police came ad clubbed me. Life is not worth having on these terms. I have been looking at the river today, and I am inclined to try that.

The doctor expressed his sympathy and urged him to turn to Christ as the beginning of a new life.

'No use, doctor,' he said gloomily, 'I have not the power now. I've tried over and over again, but as soon [as I [get up and have a little money, I let go and drink gets the mastery.'

'When you were at home,' said the docor, 'you must have heard the old hymn,' Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,' did you

'Oh yes, I know it well.'

'Do you remember how it runs? I am weak but thou art mighty,

Hold me with thy powerful hand. This is your lesson; you have tried your

own strength; now try what Christ can do. The young man went away thoughtfully and the doctor did not see him again for ten days. At the end of that time he look-

d in.' He is holding me, doctor.' he said. 'This is a new experience. It is early days to talk yet, but I never had so much hope before.'

Two weeks afterward he called to say goodbye. He was going to his family. 'I thank God I ever came into the Bowery Mission,' were his final words.

THE SELGEANT'S TRIBUTE,

How the Officer Paid the Prince a Weak Compliment. A very great military authority said, 'There are no bad regiments, but only bad

colonels.' There is abundant proof that { Napoleon's belief is shared by the rank and file of soldiers, but this fact could not be more happily illustrated than by the following story, taken from the London Illustrated News, of a quaint compliment paid to the German Crown Prince, atterward Emperor Frederick:

After the battles of Weissenburg and Worth, which he had won, the crown prince was sauntering alone one evening past a barn occupied by a party of Wurtemberg troops. Hearing something like organs, and you obtain the stump oratory going on, the prince opened the door and looked in. Every one rose. 'Ob, sit down! I'm sorry to disturb. dore say there's room for me to do the

> making a speech?' All eyes were turned on a sergeant, whose very intelligent countenance looked, however, sorely puzzled when the commander-in-chief asked:

same,' said the prince. 'Pray who was

'And what were you talking about ?' Quickly recovering his presence of mind,

the sergeant confessed: 'Well, of course, we were talking of our victories, and I was just explaining to these young men how, four years ago, if we had had you to lead us, we would bave made short work of those confounded Prus-

THE ALCHYMISTS

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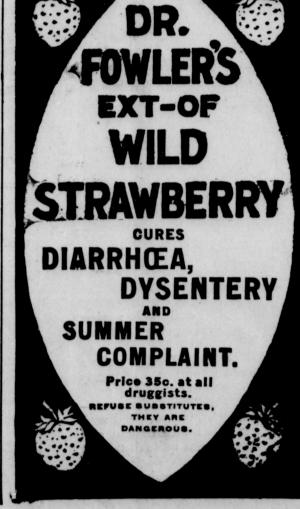
The Same Men.

A war story with a lesson is related by the Omaha World-Herald, which has it from a gentleman of that city, a Coefederate captain in the Civil War.

Lincoln was urged from the beginning of the war to take Richmond, but talking of taking Richmond and taking Richmond were two different matters. General Scott, who was not retired until after several futile attempts had been made to take Richmond, was summoned before the

"General Scott," said Mr. Malcoln, "will you explain why it is that you were to take the City of Mexico in three months with five thousand men, and have been unable to take Richmond in six months with one hundred thousand men p"

"Yes, sir, I will, Mr. President," replied General Scott. "The men who took me into the City of Mexico are the same men who are keeping me out of Richmond



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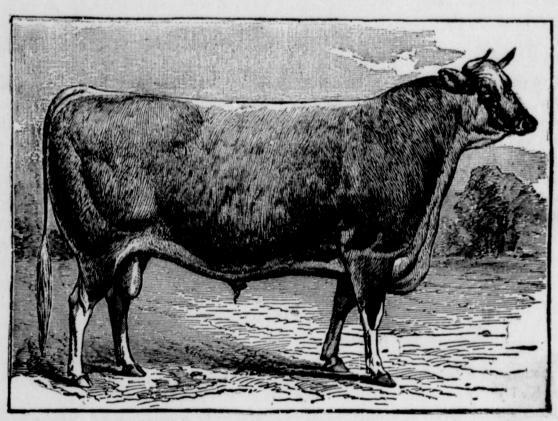
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How Some Good People Magnify the Small-The Quaker spirit, at its best, is the

spirit of truth, righteousness and all-embracing charity; but sometimes Quakers, like other people, make too much of little things, thereby becoming, what they loathe, formalists. The Church Standard tells two anecdotes illustrating this tendency.

In the days when Friends were accustomes to wear cocked hats turned up at the sides, one good Friend bought a hat of this description, without noticing that it was looped up with a button. He sat one day in meeting, when he noticed some looks of curious displeasure. Taking off his hat, he saw the reason for the looks, and then rose and said, 'Friends, if reigion consists in a button, I wouldn't give a button for it.' His sermon was at least understood.

A somewhat similar story is told of an influential Friend who, on his way to meeting, was caught in a drenching rain, and borrowed a neighbor's coat.

He seated himself opposite to Jacob Lindley, who was so much disturbed by the glittering buttons that 'his meeting did him no good.' When the congregation rose to depart, he felt constrained to go up to the Friend who had so much troubled him and inquire why he had so grievously departed from the simplicity enjoined upon members of their society.

The good man looked down upon his garment, and quietly replied, 'I borrowed he coat because my own was wet; and indeed, Jacob, I did not notice what buttons were on it.' Jacob shook his hand warmly and said, 'Thou art a better Christian than I am, and I will learn of thee.,

Jacob was right. He had been paying too much attention to the 'mint. anise and cummin' of Quaker tradition.

Fine Restraint.

The courtesy and the fine artistic instinct of the Japanese are to be found in every detail of their private life. Not

only do they make beautiful pieces of work but they insist upon beauty of behavior. Even their funerals are controlled by this unerring instinct. A writer in the New York Ledger says that he once tried to comfort a poor Japanese woman who was crouching beside her dying husband, and controlling herself by an effort which seemed to shake her very being. 'Cry,' I said. 'It will do you good."

She laid her slim, brown finger upon her trembling red lip, and shook her head. 'It might disturb him,' she whispered.

The next day came, and the man was dead. Then the wife lay prostrate under extreme grief and the strain of this longenforced self-control. Again I said to her, 'Cry! It will do you good.

But the soft reply came quickly:
'It would be most rude to make a hideous noise before the sacred dead."

