The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. J. McLEOD,] "THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter. [EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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The Intelligencer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.—Jan. 16.

PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Prophecy of Zacharias. Luke 1 : 67–79.
T. Song of Moses. Ex. 15 : 1–21.
W. Song of David. Ps. 98 : 1–9.
T. Exhortation to praise God. Ps. 113 : 1–9.
F. The Oath of God. Hebrews 6 : 13–20.
S. Isaiah prophesies of John. Is. 40 : 1–11.
S. The Faithfulness of God. Ps. 111 : 1–10.

GOLDEN TEXT: "*The dayspring from on high hath visited us.*—*Luke 1 : 78.*

LUKE 1 : 67-79.

NOTES AND HINTS.

The lesson to-day is a hymn, and is called the *Benedictus*, from the first word of the Latin translation. It consists of two parts, the first including verses 68–75, and the second, verses 76–79. In the first, Zacharias describes the more external aspect of the salvation which his people were now to experience by being delivered from their enemies; in the second part, he describes the conditions which must first be fulfilled before that period of outward prosperity can arrive.—*Barth.*

67. *Zacharias.* (See Bible Dict. on page 30). *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* The aged priest seems to have lost his speech because of his unbelief at the announcement made to him by the angel. (See Lesson I.) He remained dumb until the event was accomplished. The first use he made of the restored power of speech was to praise God for his mercy and faithfulness. There can be no nobler use of lip or tongue.

"This song, which was composed in the priest's mind during the time of his silence, broke solemnly from his lips the moment speech was restored to him, as the metal flows from the crucible the moment that an outlet has been made for it."—*Godet.* No wonder the old man's feelings were deeply moved. He saw, brought to his own door, as it were, the fulfillment of the oldest promise in the Old Testament, the promise of a Saviour.

68. *Blessed be the Lord.* Let him be praised. *Visited and Redeemed.* Visited in order to redeem. Spoken in the past tense because the salvation was as certain as if it had already taken place. It had really begun.

To redeem is to make a ransom, or pay a price by which a captive may be released. In the Old Testament, God is said to visit men chiefly for judgment; in the New, for mercy. God redeemed his people by providing for their deliverance from the bondage of Jewish ceremonies and the greater bondage of sin. The thought of deliverance through a ransom was in all the Messianic expectations of the time, see Ch. 2 : 38.

69. *Horn of salvation.* Animals wearing horns often exert their power through them, so the horn became a symbol of power, and was so used, both by classic and sacred writers. Ps. 92 : 10; 112 : 9; Jer. 48 : 25. A "horn of salvation" is therefore a powerful Saviour, one "mighty and able to save to the uttermost." It is possible that this whole figure *(horn of salvation)* may be taken from the Jewish altar, on the corners of which were projections called *horns.* (Ex. 38 : 1, 2,) Persons in danger might flee to the altar, take hold of its horns and be safe. (1 Kings 1 : 50; 2 : 28.) The Redeemer may be called "The horn of salvation because those who flee to him are safe."—*Barnes.*

In the house of David. Mary was a descendent from David. There is not a word in this noble burst of divine song about his own child; like Elizabeth, he loses sight of self in the glory of a greater than both.—*D. Brown.*

70. Parenthetical. *As he (God) spake.* The Old Testament is inspired. God spake through holy men of old. The voice of prophets began to speak of Christ very early. See Gen. 3 : 15. From this time to that of Malachi, about 400 years before Christ, he is the theme of prophecy. The Jewish dispensation, as a whole, may be regarded as predicting Christ. It was full of types, such as the passover, the manna, the daily sacrifices, the brazen serpent, and others, all of which were prophetic of Christ.

71. Zacharias probably had in mind the deliverance of his nation from the power of the Romans, but his words admit of a higher application, and foretell the final triumph of Christ and complete deliverance of the believer from sin.

72. "God would show mercy to the patriarchs in keeping his covenant with them and showing mercy to their descendants." *Perform the mercy.* Manifest or fulfill the gracious purposes of God to man. "The word *promised* was supplied in the English version, because of the difficulty involved in the thought of showing mercy to those already dead. But the thought is poetic. The pious Jews had wept over the decay of their nation, and, even though dead and living with God, the fulfillment of their hopes and wishes might be called showing mercy towards them."—*Shaff.*

74, 75. The chief purpose of our redemption by Christ is that we may serve him in holiness and righteousness in his sight. "The great design of Gospel grace is, not to discharge us from, but to engage us to, and encourage us in the service of God."—*Henry.* "Liberty to serve God according to the individual conscience, *i. e.*, religious liberty in the largest sense, is one of Christ's gifts to the world."—*Abbott.* "Zacharias laid great stress on God's fulfillment of his promises, and it is evident that the souls of Old Testament believers fed much on those promises. They were obliged to walk by faith far more than we are."—*Ryle.*

76–79. Turning to the child he speaks of his greatness as the herald of the Messiah. *Prophet of the Highest.* The one who should prophesy of the Highest. Christ would not be called the Highest if were he not divine. *Prepare the way.* This John did by calling men to repentance for the remission of sins. The knowledge of salvation comes in and through the remission of sins. Remission is pardon. *To give knowledge.* Christ gives salvation, John only a *knowledge* of salvation."—*Abbott. The tender mercy of God.* God's mercy is the source of our salvation. "Tender mercy is the atmosphere in which the Gospel of Christ has its birth and life, as the spring has its origin in the light and warmth of a summer sun."—*Abbott.*

Dayspring. The dawn of day. A beautiful figurative illustration of the glory of the coming Christ. Mal. 4 : 2. The Gospel brings light into the world. John 1 : 4. It does not leave us to grope in the darkness of our natural condition, nor in the dim light of the Old Testament. It is related, in Foster's Cyclopedia, that when Alexander encamped before a city, he used to set up a light to give notice to those within, that if they came forth to him while the light lasted, they should have quarter; if not, no mercy was to be expected. The light of gospel mercy shines clear and strong, and will shine till the end of time; whosoever will may come to Christ at any time and find remission of sins. He will surely guide their feet into the way of peace. The blessed effects of the dayspring which then dawned from on high were: The dispersion of ignorance, which is the darkness of the intellectual world; the awakening of men from sin, which is the sleep of the soul; and the direction of their hearts into "the way of peace," that is, of peace with God, by the blood of Christ, peace with themselves by the answer of a conscience cleansed from sin, and peace with one another by mutual love.—*Horne.*

THOUGHTS AND APPLICATIONS

I. No doubt Zacharias was thankful that his speech was restored, but more that the tender mercy of God was thus to be manifested to men.

II. They who are redeemed from sin are Christ's people, bound to him by strong obligation.

III. The horn is an emblem not only of power, but of beauty, glory and dignity as well. All these Christ possesses in the highest degree.

IV. We are delivered from the power of sin that we may serve God without fear, that is, with joyous freedom.

V. Christ's mission in the world was to give light to all men. So ought his disciples to be, according to their power, givers of light.

[For the Religious Intelligencer.]

LED BY A STAR.

BY JANE M. READ.

The sweetest Christmas story
I ever have been told
Is that of eastern sages
Led by the star of gold.

How eager were their faces!
What rapture lit each eye
That saw that orb of beauty
Adorn the eastern sky!

How patiently they journey'd
In silence of the night,
Till Judah's ancient turrets
Greeted afar their sight.

The King they found in splendor,
But where the new-born child?
Was this for what they journey'd,
And passed through danger's wild?

As, slowly, from the palace
The wise men turned away,
That star of lustrous splendor
Led with its kindly ray.

And, while they quickly follow,
It moveth on before;
Then, at the Saviour's birth-place,
Stands still—its mission o'er.

I love this tender story;
And think, there is a star
That beckons us to follow—
I see it from afar.

And far from sin and sorrow
That star, with influence, sweet,
Will guide us, if we heed it,
Direct to Jesus' feet.

And if you, too, would offer
Your incense, gold, or myrrh,
Go find some toiling widow,
Bestow your gifts on her.

"The poor are always with you."
I hear the Saviour say,
And shall we not remember
Christ's message Christmas day.

Still River, Mass., Dec. 1880.

OUR AGE.

BY MRS. MARY F. G. CRAMER.

"The world moves," is a trite but simple enunciation of a grand truth. There was a time when the world seemed to stand still upon its axis; or, if it moved at all, it was backward into deeper shadows, and men who were bold enough to try to dispel the darkness were persecuted or put to death.

But that long night of ignorance and superstition is past. Thank God the day has dawned; and how bright it is in contrast with the gloom that preceded it! Before it came, a solitary star now and then shed its faint light upon the world; the uncertain glimmer thus emitted was succeeded by constellations that made ambitious spirits look upward and long for more light; the beneficent Creator beheld the darkness, how great it was, and is it chimerical to suppose that there went forth, a second time, the edict, "Let there be light?" When the world was evolved out of chaos, physical light was first requisite, but man, though made a little lower than the angels stepped lower and lower, till it became painfully apparent that he needed other light than that of the sun, for he had in his waywardness, turned his back upon the great Author of all light. A new era in man's eventful history came with the new light which God and science shed upon his darkened understanding; books, not essays, must describe the transition period, from the darkness of Medieval times to this bright afternoon of the nineteenth century. We do not love to grope our way back among the shadows of that gloomy age; it is with the present we have to do; and what a glorious present in many respects it is! No mathematician could compute the sum total of the advantages we enjoy, that were never dreamed of by our primitive ancestors. The age in which we live is unique; it is something more, it is wonderful! What makes it so is an interesting query.

Prominent among the causes is the art of printing. Before its invention, the methods of disseminating knowledge were too tedious for practical purposes; hence not only the masses remained in ignorance but also the ruling classes. Learning, such as it was in that rude age, was mostly limited to the clergy, and the tyranny they exercised over the people is a confirmation of the fact, that "knowledge is power." The invention of printing was not only a great literary stimulus, but it contributed largely to the development of a feeling of brotherhood among the human family; and, as this increased, there was awakened a desire for more easy and rapid methods of communication than any then known. This led to the discovery of the mighty motive power of steam. By means of the iron arteries that intersect all nations, and the steam vessel that ply between them, not only is travel greatly facilitated, but trade and commerce are thereby rendered so flourishing, as to become sources of almost unlimited wealth. With education and opulence came the refinements of civilized life; for in addition to the necessaries and comforts, mankind aspired to the luxuries and elegances of life. To gratify this ambition, genius must plan and execute; and thus one great invention succeeded another, till there seems no limit to man's inventive genius. When steam power came to be regarded as too slow a medium for transmitting intelligence, electricity was employed, and lo! we were sending messages with lightning speed along wires, over the earth and under the sea, from one continent to another. The means of speedy transit and rapid communication now in use have led to wonderful results, the mere description of which have cost men of the greatest talents and culture years of toil. To fit scholars for their intellectual tasks, institutions of learning have been established where knowledge may be culled from every literary field. The grandest feature of education, in our times, is the common school system, by which the poor as well as the rich can enjoy superior educational advantages. In no country has this splendid system reached a higher degree of perfection than in our own. We appreciate it so highly as to regard it in the life of a national bulwark.

But the greatest triumph of our age is not what man has done, but what God has wrought. The Christianity of to-day is the same that Christ introduced into Palestine more than eighteen hundred years ago, but upon no age has it made such a deep impression as upon the one in which we live. Truly "our lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and ours is a goodly heritage." The glorious light of divine truth never shone so clearly upon the world as it does in this decade of our century; it grows brighter and brighter under the successful ministrations of faithful servants of God, who propose to take the world for Christ. This is a bold measure, and the enemies of the cross are numerous and vigilant, but he who is for us is more than all who can be against us.

The Christian soldier has nothing to fear but sin and this can be put to flight by the word of the Spirit. Marvelous proofs of this blessed fact are daily coming to light, and the good thereby accomplished, and the amount of evil overcome, eternity alone will reveal. What a revelation this will be! The finite mind can not grasp it, while the mists of this lower sphere obscure the spiritual vision, for here we see "through a glass darkly," and we, walking by faith toward the promised land, cheered by the light of the Sun of righteousness. With grateful hearts we may remember that its beams have reached to every corner of the earth, and times of "refreshing from the presence of the Lord" are just at hand. With such a joyous expectation, based upon the sure Word of God, what marvels may yet be recorded of this wonderful age, in which we have the good fortune to live!

In the name of the Lord let us help to consummate them, leaving as we depart this life, "footprints on the sands of time," that others seeing, may follow after, preforming deeds that will make their age illustrious.

NOT MAKING BUT SHAPING.

Native qualities of mind and character are something, but they are by no means everything, in settling what a man is to be and to do in the world. There are differences of original stock among men which are not to be ignored, and which cannot be obliterated; but with all this a great deal depends on the surroundings and the training of a person of any stock. Where a child is, and what is done for him, has much to do with deciding what he finally is in himself, and what he does in the long run for others. A person's life and character cannot be made by others, nor yet by his surroundings, but they can be shaped by influences and means of training. This is an important fact for parents and teachers to have in mind in all their dealings with the young.

Like every other truth, this finds its illustration in the analogies of inanimate nature. Each tree, for example, is after its own kind, whose seed is in itself. The elm can never become an oak, nor an oak a pine. The live oak of Florida would never show its massive richness of form and foliage in the scanty soil of northern New England. On the contrary, the pines of the far north would fail to find in the luxuriance of a tropical climate the supplies they gather for their life and growth from among the rocks and out of the bracing atmosphere of their native region. It would be as impossible to have the elm in its fullest gracefulness of form, and beauty of verdure, away from the meadows and village streets of the Connecticut River Valley, as to secure the magnificence of the red wood forest elsewhere than on the slope of the Pacific coast. If the substance of these trees severally analyzed scientifically, it would be found that each tree had in its growth taken to itself that which was its peculiar need; and that the excess or lack of certain elements of its composition, in the soil or the atmosphere of its surroundings, had determined and shaped its distinctive characteristics—within the limitations of its germinal nature.

Moreover, in the growth of a tree incidental circumstances and external pressure have no small degree of shaping and determining power. A sunken ledge of rock on one side, and a rich open soil on the other, may decide the unequal stretch of the roots below, and correspondingly of the branches above. The encircling sweep of other trees, or of buildings in all directions but one, may send the branches struggling toward the light just there with eccentric outreach. A presistent nipping of the buds and clipping or twisting of the shoots may change the whole tree into a grotesque and unnatural shape. A sharp blow or a severe wrench given to a tree while yet a sapling, or its smiting in maturer life by the lightning's scathing flash, may tell on its form and growth, and have a part in its distinctive development, from that time forward. It is obvious that the elements and agencies, the facts and forces, which go to complete the structure and shape the appearance of a single tree, are many and diverse. How much more is this a fact concerning the character of every human being!

It is not of the man's heart that we are now speaking, not of his character in the sight of God, but of his characteristics and qualities of mind—those peculiarities of disposition and taste and preference which decide his efficiency, and in large measure his standing and happiness in life. Spiritually, a man may be re-made, born again, given a new heart by the power of the Holy Ghost; but this regeneration does not of itself change the man's distinctive qualities of mind and disposition. *These* are of his original nature, and their shaping, but not their making, is mainly dependent on the man's surroundings, his instructors, and his associates, in the formative period of his life. It is in view of this truth that we say that much, very much, depends on the home life, and the neighborhood life, and the business life, and the school life, and the church life, in which our children are reared and trained; that much also depends on our understanding of the characteristics and peculiar needs of our children.

It is important for us to know, to begin with, what our children are; and this is not the easiest thing in the world to learn. Many a parent fails to know the most marked peculiarity, or the greatest danger, of his or her own child. If a parent should candidly ask the question of a fair and plain-speaking friend, familiar with that parent's children and competent to judge them, What do you think is the chief fault—or the most objectionable characteristic—of my son—or daughter? the frank answer to that question would in very many cases be an utter surprise to the parent, the fault or characteristic named not having been suspected by the parent. A child may be so much like the parent just here, that the parent's blindness to his or her own chief fault or lack may forbid the seeing of the child's similar deformity. Or, again, that child may be so totally unlike the parent that the parent will be unable to appreciate or even to apprehend that peculiarity of the child which is apparent to every outside intelligent observer. A child's reticence from deep feeling has often been counted by an over-demonstrative parent as a sign of want of sensitiveness; and so *vice versa.* Parents need help from others, from personal friends whom they can trust to speak with impartiality and kindness, or from the teachers of their children, in the gaining of a proper estimate and understanding of their children's characteristics and needs. The parent who does not realize this truth, and act on it, will never do as well as might be done for his or her child. God has given the responsibility of the training of that child to the parent; but he has also laid on the parent the duty of learning, by the aid of all proper means, what are that child's requirements, and how to meet them. A child may be permanently dwarfed or distorted in mental and moral characteristics through his parent's neglect of this duty.

And a neighborhood ought to be prized or shunned according to its probable influence over the children of our charge. So ought a school, or a college, or a church. The whole bent of the child's character, and all his prospects of efficiency and usefulness, may be shaped—even though he cannot be made, or re-made—by his playmates, or his school-fellows, or his teachers, or his pastor. And our words and actions, our constraints, may practically settle the question of what that child is and of what he does in the world. How this increases and deepens the responsibility upon us for the training of the children committed to our charge! How it ought to weigh with us in our own lives and actions, and in our choices and provisions for those whom we are thus shaping for all time, while we are quite unable to make them anew! —*S. Times.*

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Why, it was only yesterday that you and I were saying to each other, "I wish you a Happy New Year!" and here is the year, or rather here it was a few hours ago, grown gray and thin and intangible, and gliding, like a wan ghost out of sight. The dawn and the noon and the twilight; the midnight, and once more the dawn; and the old year, with its bundle of memories, is dismissed to the shadowy past, while the new year comes trippingly in. Shall it, too, like all the rest we have known since we were old enough to know anything in this wonderful and mystical world, have its changes of dawn and noon twilight and night, till the last of its days has departed, and its golden sheaf is carried home by the reaper, whose name is Time? And shall it, like all its predecessors, wear those magical shoes of swiftness which carry our later years over the ground with so amazing a celerity that we are dumb and petrified at the rapid transit of the seasons? Probably it will be just the same to us, dear friends, who own to here and there a silver hair among our brown or raven locks; but to the children, and to the merry boys and girls, a-tiptoe with expectancy on its threshold, it will have the grace to stay longer.

Forgetting, in this issue year's early days, the mistakes and omissions of the past—at least, so far forgetting them that we determine to lose no more precious time in fruitless and desultory repining—we may now begin again. The divisions of our lives into periods of a twelvemonth may be arbitrary, but they are very blessed. It is much to be able to turn over a new leaf. The fair copy at the head was not imitated as it should have been. We grew tired and discouraged, and those later lines were irregular scrawls: but here is another chance. Not a stain yet on this fresh page, and plenty of time to fill it with words sweet as songs, tender as love, and strong as purity. Oh, to be faithful in this new year, and so to be sure of happiness!

The rustle of good resolutions is in the January air, and not thicker are the fluttering flakes of the first snow-storm than are the thoughts of improvement and reformation and renovation, on every side, in everybody's brain. Commonplace men and women jostle us on the street, but they are revolving high and noble things, and the Recording Angel can hardly keep pace with sentiments which are not commonplace at all, but elevated and enthusiastic. Though much of this yearning and striving and inarticulate desire after what is better soon grows weary, and back into dull routine, yet no human soul falls wholly which at any time cherishes an honest, though it may be but a transient purpose to live after the pattern set by Christ. It is by looking unto Jesus that the world is saved, and we thank him for all who look, during the Christmas tide, at his cradle, and thence as the year wanes, to his cross, and in the new year's morning lift eyes heavenward to his throne.

What shall we do to build a bright year? God never disappoints us. All the falling short is on our side, for it is we who are weak, who lack endurance, and who are less in earnest than we should be.

In the first place, let us resolve that whatever we attempt, we will, so far as possible, complete, in the year on which we are entering. If completion be out of our power, let us prosecute our enterprises heartily, giving to nothing a half-attention, but doing with our might the thing to which we set our hands. Our paths in life are too often so strewn with the fragments of brave beginnings that we can scarcely summon courage to disencumber ourselves of the rubbish. "This man began to build but was not able to finish," is the epitaph written upon many a grand projection which never got beyond the foundation. The world over, it is the patient worker, who has the talent of keeping steadily at one thing, who excels. Versatility is admirable, but persistency is more so, and the more brilliant genius in the land will not gain distinction unless he can toil perseveringly and undauntedly.

Let us—and this is important—in the coming year hold fast to your friends. If we have lost any by death, by estrangement, or by our too loose clasping and little prizing what should be our pearl of price, a true heart answering ours, let us the more tenaciously treasure what is left. Friends are worth our cherishing, worth our caring for, and worth our taking trouble for. How they lighten our burdens! How their sympathy upholds us! How dear grow the touching of their hand, the shining of the love-light in their eyes, and the quiet strength of their responsiveness to our needs, as each year makes them more our own! Exiled from friends and severed from friendship, life would not be worth having. Its essence of delight, the finest elixir it ever gives us, the sweetest nectar we taste, is found in the thought of our friends. Shall we be too busy, too careworn, too preoccupied and too ambitious to love them, to aid them, to desire and rejoice in their love and esteem? Nay. No human soul thrives in loneliness. We must have sympathy.

Let us, in this new year, add to our stock of intellectual resources by intelligent and strenuous cultivation of the gifts we possess. Let us read, mark and inwardly digest the works of some of the best author, making our books and our interest in them as important as our daily food. Though we may have little time, amid our crowding cares, for such pursuits, let us still set ourselves toward securing the half-hour which shall stimulate thought and insure our being in good company. Conquer the difficulties. Surmount the obstacles. Let something else go. The one thing which you can not afford, for your own sake and your children's, is to stand still mentally. Books sustain the soul's best life, and help forward its growth, and you ought as willingly go without your daily dinner as your season of good reading.

Lastly, dear friends, let us remember that if we are to have a happy new year we shall have it only by keeping close to our Lord. The shadows lengthen. We are nearer than ever before to the crystal sea beyond whose waves shines out the light of the Father's house. Let us revive the ardor of our first love; let us lean on Him whose strength is unfailing; so shall prayer and praise hallow all our hours, and we shall rejoice evermore.—*Christian at Work.*

THE NEW GUINEA MISSION.

At the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society, S. Macfarlane gave an account of the mission to New Guinea. This is the largest island in the world, "as long as from London to Constantinople, and 500 miles wide in some parts." With a low, swampy coast line in many parts, the centre rises to the height of a mile or more.

"It was the darkest and most neglected island in the world." Its people were cannibals; constantly attacks were made by one village on another in the night; spears and poisoned arrows were the weapons used, and the captives were carried of to be eaten. Thus it has been revelling in cannibalism and idolatry. The island is beautiful, with magnificent forests; splendid mountains; fertile valleys; rich plains; sunny slopes; green-clad hills, and grand rivers; with its groves of cocoanut trees and well-cultivated gardens; with its spices, masooi bark, and betel nut.

A brave band of Dutch missionaries began a mission on the north end of the island, but all died except one, and the mission was broken up. The English missionaries learned by their experience, and took natives of other islands to do much of the work. They can bear the climate better than whites, and they work among the people to better advantage, because, having been cannibals themselves, they understand the New Guinea people, and succeed in imparting truth where whites would fail.

Landing on the island was at first most dangerous. At each new spot touched the missionaries took their lives in their hands when they went ashore.

In seven years, six hundred miles of coast have been traced, thirty stations formed, landings effected at one hundred places where friendly relations have been formed, and one river has been explored for two hundred and sixty miles. Four languages have been reduced to writing; school books have been translated into them; a catechism has been given to the people, and the Gospel according to Mark in their own tongue.

S. Macfarlane concludes:

"I shall never forget the first night I landed, and I should like to compare it with the last night before I left. It is all very well for the captains of our vessels and those on board. Their work is out at sea. But when they bring the vessel to a certain point the anchor is dropped, they have their evening's chat and turn in; when very often the missionary paces the deck in great anxiety, because he is to go on shore the next morning among a number of savages. I remember the feeling that came across me that night. I could see the fires through the grove of cocoanut trees; I could hear the drums beating; and I heard sometimes the shrieks of women. I knew that there was heathenism and cannibalism all round. Ah! but, as I sat on the verandah of my little house at Murray Island, the night before I came to this country, you must try and understand what my feelings were then. I was coming home to my own country and family. The opening up of the mission had been mostly accomplished; and here I was sitting on the verandah of this house, and I saw a fire in the cocoanut grove, just as I had done on that night before I landed. And as I sat there and thought of the work that had been accomplished during the six or seven years, there was a sound that came warbling up the hill. It was not the shrieks of women; but it was one of Moody and Sankey's hymns. These people were engaged in their evening worship; and after the singing of the hymn and prayer, and the talking of the teacher, then came about two hours of singing, for they are very fond of it. They know nearly all Moody and Sankey's hymns. All this has been accomplished within eight years. It was twenty years before the missionaries of Tahiti had their hearts cheered by knowing that a native was praying to the true God. We have not had to wait twenty years for that in New Guinea. There were two young men down at Dauan, about a mile and a half from the main. One of them was speared by the young chief, to follow his father's spirit into spirit-land; but the other one became very serious and anxious, and made many inquiries from the teacher about the progress of Christianity in the South Seas. One day he walked out very thoughtfully; and the teacher, suspecting that he was going out to pray, and being very anxious to know if there was a man in New Guinea who had begun to pray, went after him, and followed him until he came to a banana plantation. There he saw him kneel down under one of those trees. He clasped his hands and this was his prayer, 'O God, we hear that thou art the great God, the true God, the only God. My heart is dark, the hearts of my countrymen are all dark. Have pity on us and give us light.' I was exceedingly touched when I heard it, and greatly delighted, because I look upon that as New Guinea on its knees asking God for the greatest of all blessings—that He would give light. You remember that when the world was without form and void, the very first step toward order and beauty and life was the divine command, 'Let there be light.' And now there is darkness brooding over New Guinea, and, if we are only faithful, as we ought to be, shall soon have the light spreading over that land."

This account of Christian labor in New Guinea thoroughly justifies some of the last public words of the veteran Dr. Calhoun: "If any church puts the work of missions in a corner, the Lord will put that church in a corner."—*The Armory.*

THE CENSUS of Canada is to be taken in April next, beginning on the first Monday in the month. There are eight Schedules as follows:

Schedule No. 1.—Nominal return of living.
Schedule No. 2.—Nominal returns of deaths within the twelve months.
Shedule No. 3.—Real estate, public institutions and industrial establishments.
Schedule No. 4.—Return of cultivated land, field products, etc.
Schedule No. 5.—Live stock, animal products, etc.
Schedule No. 6.—Products of the forest.
Schedule No. 7.—Return of shipping and fisheries.
Schedule No. 8.—Products of the mines.

These include nearly two hundred different headings.

Be your strife
To lead on earth an angel's life.
—*Keble.*

NEW YEAR MUSINGS.

The New Year has come and the Old Year has fled,
Gone to the Realms of the past and the dead,
With its burdens and its sorrows, its hopes and its fears
Its hour of joy and its bitter tears,
And I muse to night, on its gifts to me—
Home, friends, and health, a blessed three.

The by-gone year was a kind, true friend,
For it brought me contentment and hope to the end,
If its hours of mirth and revel were few
Its pleasures were far from abiding and true,
Their memory will gild when my years are told,
The evening of life, with a sunset of gold.

But I often turn from the scenes that are o'er
To dream of the future that liveth before,
And I eagerly strive, with outstretched hand,
To lift the veil from the mystic land;
But all in vain, for I cannot see
What the coming months are bringing to me.

Will the days glide by, like a summer stream,
Reflecting the sunshine's golden gleam,
Through meadows so green and fresh and fair
And gemmed with bright flowers that sweeten the air,
With never a rock to ripple or stay
Its course as it flows on its seaward way?

Or will life be darkened by grief and pain
Like a river swollen with Autumn rain
Rushing along with a sullen roar
'Neath gloomy skies, past a barren shore,
Bearing away on its stormy tide
Leaves of bright hopes, once the glad summer's pride.

Shall I kneel this year at the honest shrine,
And offer my all to the Giver divine?
Or the world—will it claim the best of my love,
Alluring my heart from the treasure above?
To the flowers that die will my care be given
Or to culture immortelles to blossom in heaven.

Or the tolling bell and the quiet tomb,
And the still cold heart and death's lonely gloom
And the shattered hopes and last word said,
And the silent rest with the peaceful dead;
And sweet pale blossoms scattered there
With the trustful hope of the parting prayer.

Ah, life is checkered of sorrow and care,
We all must take our destined share;
If our path be sunny and happy to-day,
To-morrow dark clouds may o'ershadow our way,
The clearer the sunshine the deeper the shade
And the brighter the flower the swifter to fade.

If the shadowy future is bringing to me
Days bright with life's blessings, a heart light and free;
Or dark in their gloom and burdened with tears,
With their lessons of pain and fast falling tears,
Not my will but Thine, O my Father for me
Only guide me through life home to heaven and Thee.

BEGIN AT ONCE.—Begin at once the work of the year. Many things are not done, simply because they are not begun. You may waste the whole year in getting ready, as many people have done before you, and as you have done in previous years. There are those who let life glide away while they are getting ready to do something. With magnificent enterprises, they never get out of port. The record of unaccomplished, and even of unbegun, works makes a long chapter in most lives, and almost the entire volume of some. They would have done excellently, if only they had been early pushed out to sea. To some it has been good fortune, although at the time not thus esteemed, to have been pitched overboard, for they were obliged at once to swim.

Some people are like eagles which rise eagerly and sail high; others remind us of the bobolink, ever attempting to fly, but never ready to drop from "swinging briar or weed." Napoleon conquered his enemies before they began to organize. The unready is always the unsuccessful. Dispatch ends the business before caution draws his boots on.

A SIGNIFICANT STORY is told of Horace Bushnell. After preaching one muggy, depressing day his wife told him to burn the sermon, for it was not worth preserving. He did not do it. A year later, one bright, invigorating day, he repeated the discourse, and, going out of the church, Mrs. Bushnell told him to mark that one for future use, for it was one of his best. The story suggests two things. First, Mrs. Bushnell evidently tried, whether wisely or not, to help her husband. A good critic in the household is worth a great deal to a minister. Second, the effect of a sermon depends somewhat on the weather. However, the blessing of God may make it efficient even though bad weather gives the minister and his wife the blues.

AN ORGAN TROUBLE.—The *Presbyterian Witness* tells of a humiliating "scene" in Cooke's Church, Toronto, in connection with the introduction of an organ to assist the Choir in their practice. Cooke's Church is strongly Irish, and is that of which Dr. Robb was lately pastor. The opponents of the instrument turned out with sticks, and threatened violence. An actual fight was prevented by the Choir gracefully yielding to the mild persuasives of uplifted shillelahs. To secure harmony in the praise and worship of the congregation the shillelah men were summoned to the Police Court, and we doubt if the case is yet disposed of. The new minister is an organ-man, and the men of the contrary mind told him frankly that he was a bad man and very unsound. One faithful friend went so far as to offer to improve his soundness by means of the shillelah. Upon the whole, Cooke's church is not to be envied in its present mood."

RANDOM READINGS.

Character is a perfectly educated will.—*Novalis*

Leave your character where you have trusted your soul; your great Maker will take care of both.

Some people are so full of advice that it is impossible to take it all in. The only way is to can a large share for future use. There is nothing that will keep like advice.

"I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any fellow-creatuer, let me do it *now.* Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Be trustful, be steadfast, whatever betide thee,
Only one thing do thou ask of the Lord—
Grace to go forward wherever He guide thee,
Simply believing the truth of His word.
Earthliness, coldness, unthankful behavior,—
Ah! thou may'st sorrow, but do not despair,
Even this grief thou may'st bring to thy Saviour,
Cast upon Him this burden of care!
Bring all thy hardness—His power can subdue it,
How full is the promise! The blessing how free!
Whatsoever ye ask, in My name, I will do it,
Abide in My love and be joyful in Me.
—*Selected.*