

For the New Year.

Another year! another year
Has borne its record to the skies
Another year! another year,
Untried, unproven, before us lies;
We hail with smiles its dawning ray—
How shall we meet its final day?

Another year! another year!
Its squandered hours will ne'er return,
Oh! many a heart must quail with fear
O'er memory's blotted page to turn.
No record from that leaf will fade—
Not one erasure may be made.

Another year! another year!
How many a grief has marked its flight!
Some whom we love are no more here—
Translated to the realms of light.
Ah! none can bless the coming year
Like those no more to greet us here.

Another year! another year!
Oh! many a blessing, too, was given
Our lives to deck, our hearts to cheer,
And antedate the joys of heaven,
But they, too, slumber with the past,
Where joys and griefs must sink at last.

Another year! another year!
Gaze we no longer on the past,
Nor let us shrink with faithless fear,
From the dark shade the future casts.
The past, the future—what are they?
To those whose lives may end to-day?

Another year! another year!
Perchance the last of life below;
Who are its close Death's call may hear,
None but the Lord of life can know,
Oh, to be found, when'er that day
May come, prepared to pass away.

Another year! another year!
Help us earth's thorny paths to tread
So may each moment bring us near
To thee, ere yet our lives are fled.
Saviour, we yield ourselves to thee,
For time and for eternity.

—The Changed Cross.

TALKS TO YOUNG MEN.

The Mean Young Man.

Meanness has its degrees, down to the thirty-third. In almost all forms of sin there is a respectable mannerism, but meanness is not only despicable in the thing it does, but in the way it does it. Some men appear to be born with the whole tendency of their natures in that direction; there seems to be no noble, manly ambition or manners about them. Even if they do a good deed it is in a mean way.

1. There is the mean man financially, who is not only prudent (which is a duty) but who, in all mutual associations, instead of cheerfully paying his part of the expenses, dodges and gives as little as he can. He never volunteers his offering, but waits until he is urged and coaxed and then grumbles at the cost. He looks upon all benevolence as so much money wasted. His idea of life is to get all he can out of others and give back as little as he can. Unselfishness as an idea of life does not seem to have entered his soul. And all this grows upon him. Nothing more dries up one's whole nature than stinginess. It contracts the affections, narrows the ideas, and writes its smallness upon the face. It kills the spiritual life. There are intelligent men of spotless morals in every community and in every church who are without power for good, whose words in the prayer-meeting and whose prayers no one enjoys, simply because they are so grasping and mean in money matters. There is more hope of saving an intemperate man than a mean man; for drunkenness may be only a passion of the flesh, but meanness is pure selfishness of heart. Let no young man ever marry a stingy young man, for he will make a narrow, unsympathetic, overbearing husband.

2. The mean young man takes advantage of another's circumstances. Taking advantage of another's ignorance or poverty or necessity, and then saying, "Oh, business is business," and, "Every one must look out for himself," is meanness. There are such men, who never break the letter of the law, whose words are softer than butter, who patronize you with the blandest smiles, and who will let a poor man's bill run up with the greatest spirit of accommodation until they have him in their hands and then strip them of every cent, or who will let a poor, ignorant woman or child cheat themselves. Such men are cowardly scoundrels. Taking advantage of another's weakness is the bottom of meanness. If a man is to cheat any one, at least let it be his equal.

3. He who is false to natural affection is mean. The natural affections are sacred and should be honored. By the laws of nature a mother and sister have a claim upon the love and helpfulness of the son and brother. When a man will see his own mother suffer for want of what he can provide, or his own sister in distress which he can relieve, or will himself enjoy luxuries which he denies his wife, and because she is a woman and married to him makes her his slave, he has forfeited all claim to respect from decent people. I know a man in comfortable circumstances, with money at interest, who lets his

mother, who is a good woman, be supported by charity; and another man, able bodied and strong, who lets his wife work in the mill while he loiters about the street. There are not microscopes enough in the world to find the souls of such men!

4. The young man who betrays confidence is mean—he who gives away a secret, or when a bit of confidential conversation is overheard tells it to others. I knew an educated, polished young man who was allowed to be much in the company of older men of his profession and would hear their occasional remarks about others, kindly but sometimes critically spoken, and though there was no pledge of secrecy, for gentlemen never need pledges, he reported their criticisms. Of course he at once lost the confidence and respect of those men, and they never can honor him again. It was meanness which no polish of manners can wipe out from his soul.

5. The young man who abuses honest affection is mean. Next to the love of Christ the love of a pure woman is the most sacred fact which comes to a man's heart, and next to a man's love for God his love for woman should be purest and most faithful. The sincere devotion of the weakest, poorest woman is too sacred for the greatest man's trifling. The professional "flirt" is a contemptible wretch. The young man who wins the affections of a young woman simply that he may enjoy her society, intending all the time to cast her off when the right time comes, would steal incense from the altar of God if he could; and he who, having thus won the devotion of a pure woman's heart, without giving good reason and in an honorable way seeking release from his promises, casts her off as though her love was a plaything for his recreation, is beneath all detestation; he is full of unmitigated meanness, and no young woman should shed a tear for such a villain, but rather thank God she is delivered from his hypocrisy before it is too late.

6. He who sneers at another's religion is mean. The religious belief, when honest, is the deepest and most sacred fact to the soul, and no matter what the religion is, it is to be respected because it is the most serious emotion of the nature. It is the sincere struggle of the soul after God. No gentleman speaks lightly of another's religion to his face, any more than he would speak disrespectfully of that one's mother. Even in a heathen temple I would respect the honest belief of the deluded worshiper. When another asks my opinion or invites me to discuss his faith with him, then I am at liberty and he is responsible, but before that, common politeness requires me to withhold my criticisms in his private presence. There are men claiming to be intelligent who are constantly saying all possible tantalizing, slurring and provoking remarks about their wife's or sister's or child's religion, who speak sneeringly of the Bible and the church and the creed of those who live with them. Such a man is a brute. He is meaner even than a wife-beater, for the one only cuts the flesh, but the other lacerates the soul. Some men who profess to be Christians stoop to this meanness. If their wives are Methodists and they are Baptists, they can never let them alone, but are constantly reminding them of all the faults they can see in the followers of Wesley. Such men are contemptibly mean. And it is noticeable how people who pretend to be most liberal in their faith are sometime most insinuating and tantalizing in their social deportment towards those who differ from them.

7. That is meanness which makes the love of God an excuse for not repenting. How many persons there are who think that because God is love he will save them at last, and so keep on in sin, trusting that somehow the love of God will bring them to heaven. This at last will be seen to be the greatest of all meanness for which a man will despise himself. Yea, this will be the deepness of hell to the lost soul—that it abused the love of God and made that an excuse for sin which should have been the highest motive to holiness. A man may of necessity be poor or ignorant or weak, but he need not be mean.

Christian Work for Women.

What is at present most wanted in Christian work is quality rather than quantity. The soul of man or woman is the most delicate, sensitive and beautiful thing in the universe, yet we deal with it by methods often rough and harsh. To work with it in a truly fine and beautiful way is given to hardly more than one man or woman in a city. The work of Christ cannot be done immediately and without preparation. It must be done by organization, by patience. A man may go to a hundred meetings and not get the comfort he wants. He is like one stranded on some little

shoal, who does not know how to get off, and yet the touch of a kind and sympathetic hand can easily free him. People's hearts must be reached to-day by methods different from those of twenty years ago. Owing to the growth of cultivation we are no longer satisfied with the theology of our parents—I do not say with the religion of our parents—we would be grateful and glad to possess that; but we cannot accept some of the old theories. The outlook is changed. The minds of thinking people to-day encounter poisons never met before. Among young men in our colleges there is revolt against the narrow things, the unlovely intolerant and inconsistent things whereof we Christians are convicted. What such men need to be told is, what Christianity is not. They must fall in love with the kingdom of Christ when they see it as it is. And so it is with young women. With many of the best minds and the largest and richest natures and most honest hearts, the problem is to reach those who have never found that hearty faith which would enable them to have a ready and eager sympathy with Christian work. I can imagine no more beautiful future for the Y. W. C. A. than a constant, holy aim to add to the beauty of womanhood the flower and grace of Christianity. One can but be awed and solemnized to think of the future of America—a future of such great hope. The aim of all our work should be to make people like Christ—to introduce into every town and village those who love him and try to live like him.

In Edinburgh University the Christian students go not so much to prayer-meeting as they do to seek those who are going astray, and to lend a hand to a stranger who is going down. A student will take such a man to live with him, and live him right—live a good life before him until he has changed the whole tone of his being. Just such work may be done in all colleges everywhere, for women as well as for men.—Prof. Drummond.

No Harpoons.

A sailor who had just returned from a whaling voyage was taken by a friend to hear an eloquent preacher. When they came out of church the friend said, "Jack, wasn't that a fine sermon?"

"Yes, it was ship-shape; the water lines were graceful; the masts raked just enough; the sails and rigging were all right; but I didn't see any harpoons. When a vessel goes on a whaling voyage, the main thing is to get whales. But they won't come to you because you have a fine ship. You must go after them, and harpoon them. Now it seems to me that a preacher is a whaleman. He is sent, not to sail among the fish, but to catch them. Jesus said to His disciples, 'I will make you fishers of men.' How many such sermons as that would it take, do you think, to awaken a sinner as the thousands were awakened in the day of Pentecost, and to make them cry out, 'What must I do to be saved?'"

"But, Jack, people nowadays don't want to be harpooned. They want to be interested intellectually in the truth. They like to listen to such expositions and illustrations as the doctor gave us this morning. Did you not see how attentive they were? Surely it is a grand thing to attract such an audience to hear the Gospel."

"To hear about the Gospel, you mean. I don't object to the doctor's expositions and illustrations. As I said before, they were all ship-shape. But the trouble was when he had sailed to the fishing-ground, and the whales were spouting around him, instead of manning his boats and trying to catch them, he made a polite bow and said, 'I am glad to see so many whales. I hope that they admire my ship, and will come and spout around it again on its next voyage.' Do you think that the ship owner in New Bedford would send such a captain to Behring Strait a second time! Now read the report in Acts of Peter's first Gospel sermon. He begins with an able exposition of the Old Testament prophecies in regard to the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit; and then, when he had gained the attention of the crowd, he charged home upon them with the words, 'Jesus, whom ye have crucified.' That was hurling a harpoon. And we are told that it was effectual. 'They were pricked in their heart,' and the Gospel catch that day was three thousand souls. No, no, a fisherman wants a good ship and good boats; and then he wants sharp harpoons, and the skill and courage to hurl them at just the right time. The harpoons ought to be polished, too; the more highly polished the better. But, after all, the harpooning is the main thing. If the whaleman fails in that, his whole voyage and venture are a failure, and I can't help thinking that it is so in preaching."

Jack was an old-fashioned tar. He did not appreciate the modern

improvements. In some parts of the country the idea of preaching to save sinners is obsolete. The aim and effort is to attract congregations. The successful preacher is not the man who is instrumental in bringing men to Christ, but in bringing them into the congregation, and thus making it strong socially and financially.

The temptation to labor for congregations rather than for conversions is very insidious. Elders and trustees often join with Satan in presenting it to the minister. "We must fill the pews and the treasury," they cry. "We must not repel the impatient by pricking them in their hearts." But God sends his ambassadors, not to prophesy sweet things, but to cry, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Brethren, don't go a-whaling without harpoons.—Interior.

The Last Week Of The Year.

There is a legend of a poet who devoted a month to meditation on Death, that he might write something which had never been written on that sublime and awful theme. As the legend runs, he wrote not a single line until the last day of the month. On that day he was stricken with a fatal illness, and had just strength sufficient to write: "Alas! I shall now write what was never written before—Death and I have met."

If it be so difficult to write upon death things that are new, it is not less so to write upon the flight of time.

The ministers have preached their sermons, and their influence has depended not upon the things said, but upon the depth of feeling which attended their utterances and the respect felt by the hearers for the sincerity and gravity of the speakers. The solemn watch-night services are yet to come. These vigils—an essential part of the Methodist year—are always impressive when led by a minister of practical wisdom and piety.

Because the forming of resolutions at this time has been so customary, and the effect of the resolutions so transient, some have satirized them; yet the close of the year becomes more solemn as persons advance toward the end of life. The boy of sixteen rarely thinks of the shortness of life; he has no plans that require a long period. If he enters college or goes to business, it is rather the plan of his parents than one of his own making; even if he choose the course, his eye is fixed upon points but little in advance. The young man full of enterprise does not look very far ahead; or, if so, with but a rapid glance. But when forty, or fifty, or sixty years of age are reached, the perspective visibly narrows, and many feel despondent. Memory becomes more active than imagination. Yet imagination often develops extraordinary vividness of conception at a short range. Men and women say with frequent iteration, "I am sixty now; in ten years I shall be seventy." From this state of mind a paralyzing listlessness may come.

There is no antidote to gloom as years increase but the power to project thought beyond death, and that depends upon conscious communion with God and a firm belief in a future state. It is necessary to people heaven in the mind's eye with those who in this and former years have vanished from physical vision. It is also important to remember that even though infirmity diminishes ability, it never can release from obligation so long as any power to work for God or humanity is left. The ten talents may shrink to one, but he who used ten when he had them is not justified in wrapping the remaining talent in a napkin and burying it in the earth.

To Young and Old, and to those on the great plateau that separates youth from old age, we wish serious but not sad thoughts as the year draws to a close, and a happy New Year, made so by the determination to "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

Mistakes.

It is a great mistake to set up our own standard of right and wrong and judge people accordingly.

To measure the enjoyment of others by our own.

To expect uniformity of opinion in this world.

To look for judgment and experience in youth.

To endeavor to mould all dispositions alike.

To yield to immaterial trifles.

To look for perfection in our own notions.

To worry ourselves and others with what cannot be remedied.

Not to alleviate all that needs alleviation as far as lies in our power.

Not to make allowances for the infirmities of others.

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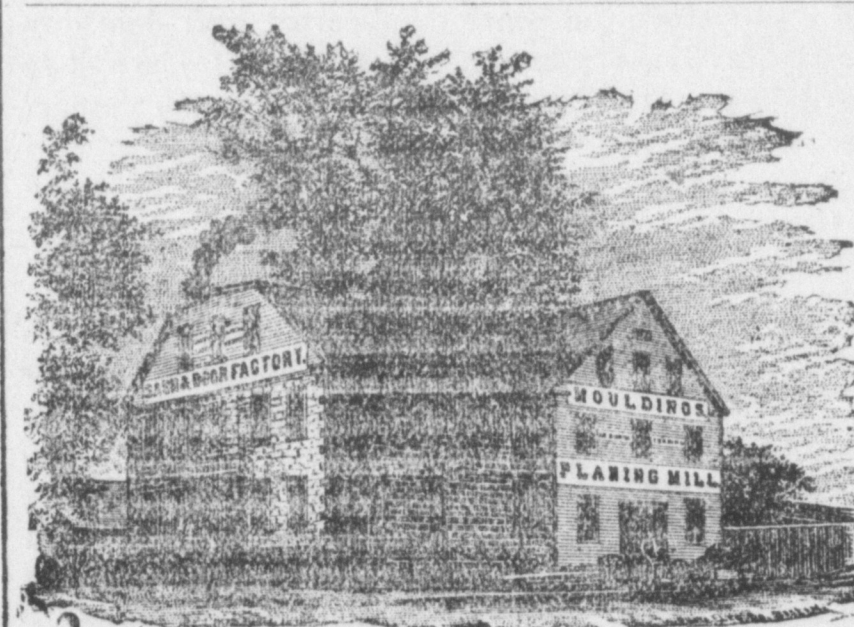
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