

The Old Year and the New.

BY MRS. E. C. FRIEND.

With reverent mind and prayerful heart, We pause within the open door, And let the past our thoughts beguile, E'er yet we step beyond the stile, To turn to thee, again no more, Old Year, with all thy treasured store, We hesitate with thee to part, And say at last farewell.

We'll give to retrospection dear, Of fleeting time, a sacred hour, While yet is left a little space, On memory's tablet we will trace, What thy bequest, what precious power, What added worth, what moral power, Have we received from thee, Old Year? E'er yet we say farewell.

With gratitude to God above, We call to mind the days so blest, When faith, and peace, and joy so sweet, Walked hand in hand, with us to greet The coming hours, as on they passed; We queried not how long they'd last, But took them from the store of love, And must we say farewell?

Some burdens, too, had we to share— Not all of joy thy gift has been; But bitter woe, with poisoned dart, Again, again, has pierced the heart, Till, worn and weary with the pain We cried aloud, nor cried in vain; Oh God! teach us the cross to bear; And strength to live, from out thy store Hast thou bequeathed us, O'er and o'er, And now, Old Year, farewell.

The ringing bells, with joy proclaim The Year, the glad New Year has come— But ached and breathless let us wait, A moment more, and contemplate The path before us all unknown, With hidden things 'tis thickly strawn. New Year, what means to us thy name? Oh! dare we welcome thee?

What joy supreme, what heights of bliss, May lift the soul, till, upward borne, It seems to reach heaven's very gate To catch a glimpse of joys that wait The loving heart, when life is done, The summons heard, dear child, come home, Oh! if we knew our lot was this, New Year, we'd welcome thee.

But what if Sorrow grim and dark Stands in our path with outstretched arm, To scatter misery and pain; Till heartstrings snap beneath the strain And mocking grief our hopes disarm, And life seems robbed of all its charm. Despair is hovering o'er; when hark! A voice whose tones our soul doth thrill Come whispering to us—"Peace be still." With Father close, we will not fear, What'er thy portion, sweet New Year, By faith, we welcome thee.

How Begin The New Year?

Another year has departed, gone as on the wings of the wind! A new one has begun its course, and already is bearing us on to the future. Its times, seasons, responsibilities, duties, joys, sorrows, trials, changes have already begun to meet us, and soon must be met by us to their end. How shall we meet them? In what spirit enter on the future? How begin the New Year? Shall we not begin it with

Thankfulness for our mercies? Looking back, we cannot but see our many sins, but no more can we fail to see God's wonderful and ceaseless mercies to us. How multiplied and great have been our negative mercies; the evils we have not suffered, the dangers that have not overtaken us, the sorrows that have not crushed our hearts, the trials and sufferings that have not overwhelmed us, the sins we have not been left to commit! And then our positive blessings, are they not more than we can number?—life, health, food, raiment, friends, social and civil privileges and enjoyments; and, above all, spiritual blessings, the knowledge of God, the light of his Word, the gift of his Son, the blessed influence of his Holy Spirit, all the bounties of his providence, all the means of grace, everything by which we may be fitted for duty here and for Heaven hereafter! That all these have been and still are ours, shall we not enter on another year with deep and devout thankfulness? Shall we not also begin the year with

Renewed confidence and trust in God? This is the stay and support and stimulus of the soul. Let us exercise it afresh in God as our Father, in Christ as our Redeemer, and in the Holy Spirit as our sanctifier, comforter and guide. Let us trust God's providence, and put away anxiety and care; trust his promise, and expect all needed blessings; trust his guidance, and at every step be willingly led by him. Let us look to him for wisdom to direct our way, strength for the discharge of duty, grace to subdue our sins, pardon to give peace to conscience, goodness to supply our wants, and love to lead and uphold and cheer and bless us according to our need. Entering on another year let us take up the promise afresh, and exercise a fresh faith in the almighty and loving Promiser; and in all the future before us let us go in the strength of the Lord, relying wholly and only on him. Let us begin the year, too, with

Renewed and entire consecration to God. As the year is opening let us hear the appeal of the apostle: "I be-

seech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." In the closet, under the very eye of God; at the cross, in the very shadow of the Saviour's sufferings; in the recesses of the heart, under the moving influence of the Holy Spirit, let us solemnly give ourselves anew to God, to live for him as he directs. On our time, talents, property, influence, on all that we have and are, let us see the consecrating sentence. "Occupy till I shall come." And let us go onward through the year as consecrated persons, set apart for God, voluntarily devoted to him, his servants, disciples, stewards, not our own, but bought with a price, serving and honoring him, making it our meat and drink to do his will. Let us begin the year, too, with

Constant watchfulness. With the opening year we have taken another step in our pilgrimage; and it is in the enemy's country, where we are surrounded by dangers, exposed to temptations, and liable to errors and sufferings and sins. And the voice of the Master sounds to us, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" Let us be watchful then against snares and temptations; watch for intimations of God's will; watch for the leadings of divine providence; watch for opportunities for doing good; watch for all that may aid our growth in grace. Let faith make us steadfast; penitence keep us humble; prayer bring us strength; consecration shut out a selfish and worldly spirit, and watchfulness in all ever keep us ready for the coming of our Lord. So living we shall begin the year in the spirit of

Readiness for whatever may be before us. We know not what a day may bring forth, but we know that the end is rapidly approaching and that at any moment it may come to us. Let us then live in the expectation of faith and hope, knowing that the time is short, that probation will soon be ended, that the Saviour will soon come, that our reward is but just before, that now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. So let us begin the year and its course will be duty, its progress peace, and its end everlasting blessedness. If we are spared to live, Christ will be with us; and if called away, we shall be with Christ in joy unspeakable and full of glory!

As dawns the opening of the year before you, Firm in the faith of Jesus ever stand; Through all your pathway let the Master lead you, Follow the guidance of his loving hand; Cherish his Spirit, ever seek his glory, Ne'er for a moment lay thine armor down; Ever press onward toward the heavenly mansions, Faithful till death, and then the glorious crown! —Independent.

A False Step at the Beginning.

We overtake a great many beginnings in our journey from the cradle to the grave. Some are beginnings of periods of time; some are new opportunities; some are inception of new enterprises; some are decisions of great questions of duty and destiny. A false step at a beginning is multiplied in its results by the years which come after. Its evil and adverse influences spread themselves into broadened and broadening injuries.

Sometimes a habit is formed in early life which is a severely false step at a critical beginning. It does not seem at first to involve danger. But the little force which is gathered within it gradually accumulates. The way into which it leads descends with a steeper and steeper grade until the momentum gained is practically irresistible. Sometimes that which the young heart neglects is to take with decision a true step. This neglect may be of itself a very false step, and may lead to the taking of a great many other false steps, especially if the neglect is that of welcoming Christ and His truth to the heart, involving a renewal which strikes more deeply into the life, which is more penetrative and far-reaching in its results than any other step which it is possible for a human being to take. One of the beginnings of which we are now along-side is the beginning of a new year. This is a beginning which we could not help making if we would. Time is relentless in its coming and going. An hour which is a rare joy we cannot prolong, and an hour which is a bitter sorrow we cannot abbreviate. But around this beginning which we must make voluntary beginnings may cluster. The New Year's season is a good point for beginning new enterprises of faith. It is a good point for a new departure of activity. It is a good time to look over the twelve months (which we thought were not going very rapidly as they were passing, but which we now see were flying like shuttles in a loom) to ask with honest questioning of ourselves what

mistakes we have made which can be rectified. A mistake at the beginning is sometimes made of neglecting the doing of some Christian duty. It seems inconvenient to do it at first, or it is trying to the nerves, and it is deferred. This is a false step at a glorious beginning. The true way is, at the very outset, to lay hold of the doing of whatever proves to be the thing to be done next, with a will. It is the easiest way, on the great whole, as well as the best. A duty is not a bunch of nettles, but if it were, it would be easier to grasp it firmly than to try to take hold of it daintily. Around the decided doing of what there is to be done, a habit will grow up in time which will be a help and a joy.

It would be a false step at the beginning to commensurate the new year with neglect of the word of God, and the beautiful humilities and consecrations and charities to which it invites. Something of the word every day it is for the soul's health to receive—and not merely the words of the word, but the thought which the words invest and reveal. The words of value as storing and expressing vitalizing thought, which our souls need, day by day, as our bodies need daily bread.

In the life of the son of Solomon who became King of Judea there were three days of the beginning of his reign which became sadly eminent. Within these three days he decided what answer he would return to a request which he had received. The historian took pains to make a very careful record concerning these three days' deliberation, as if his thought was instinctively wandering back to say, "O, if these three days had been improved to form a purpose true and wise—if those three days had only been used as they might!"

There are sometimes such days in life, on which interests hang which are immense; whether we gain or lose what is as valuable as all that makes existence worth possessing, depending on what we make of them. Such days sometimes come into the youth time of life. They not infrequently lie within a New Year's season. At this season the old and the new come together—the outgoing and the incoming—and voices seem to be saying to the heart, Now what will you make of this new year? will you take as the ruling question of a new life, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The question lingers in the heart and will not be banished. Such days are what those three days were to Rehoboam. How many times within the seventeen years of his after life must his sad thoughts have wandered back to those three days, on which so much hung and poised for him, so much more than he dreamed of when the days were passing. So will life on the earth be looked back upon from the great future, only with dissatisfaction of which we can now form no conception if it shall prove to have been a false step at the beginning. —The Rev. S. C. Leonard.

Unconscious Influence.

Any one who carefully notes the comparative value of lives in a community, will soon learn that the element which counts for the most, is that subtle thing which we call personal influence. One may give much money to religious and charitable objects; another may be an eloquent talker, and his voice may often be heard in public meetings; another may be enterprising, foremost in all progressive movements; another may be scholarly, a writer, an author, an oracle on all questions of learning, another may represent the best things in art, in taste, in whatever is beautiful and refined—yet not one of these may impress himself on the community as does some quiet man, without either wealth or eloquence, or public spirit or scholarship, but who possesses that mysterious, indescribable power—a beneficent personal influence. There is something in him more subtle than money or speech, or activity or beauty; a spiritual force, which flows out from his life, and touches all other lives, and strangely affects them. It is to him what fragrance is to a flower, what light is to a lamp; it is part of himself, and yet it reaches outside and beyond himself.

It is, so to speak, the projection of the man's own character, the flowing-out of his own life into other lives; it is the energy of the man's spirit working, as it were, beyond his body, and working without hands. In the good man, it is goodness—goodness dwelling in his soul, and pouring out like light from the windows of a cottage on a dark night. In the Christian, there is more than mere human goodness; God's spirit dwells in him. Every true Christian is in a sense a new incarnation. St. Paul said, "Christ liveth in me;" and he prayed for others that they might "be filled with all the fulness of God." The lamp that

burns in a Christian's heart is the flame of the Divine Spirit, and the personal influence of a Christian becomes spiritual power. It is like the shadow of Peter: it has a healing, life-giving effect wherever it falls. Such a man goes about his daily duty as other men do; but while he is engaged in common things, he is continually dropping seeds of blessing, which spring behind him in heavenly beauty and fragrance.

Every good life is constantly scattering these unconscious, unperceived influences. A mother works hard day in her home, keeping her house order, preparing comforts for her family, watching over her children. She can tell, in the evening, just by many garments she has mended, by many rooms she has swept, and by the entire day's history; but all day long she was patient, gentle, kind. Every turn, she had a bright smile for her children; she had cheering words and fond attentions for her husband; she had a pleasant welcome for her friends who called: in all these things she was unconsciously scattering seeds that will spring up in sweet flowers on other hearts and lives.

Who doubts which of these two ministries is in reality the richer and more effective? Yet the tired woman does not think of counting the ways; influences and services at all in her retrospect of the day's work. If she could do so, it would greatly cheer her, and strengthen her for a new day's life when it begins. She of times comes to the day's close discouraged and depressed, because she has seemed to do so little beyond the endless routine of her household duties. When she sits down with her Bible, after all are quiet in her household, and looks back, one can scarce recall one earnest word she has spoken for her Master. The whole day has been filled with earthly commonplace and she thinks of it with pain and disheartenment; yet if she has lived sweetly and patiently amid her toil and worries, dropping cheerful words in the ears of her household, singing bits of song as she went about her work, bearing herself with love and faith amid all the experiences of the day, she has unconsciously performed a ministry of blessing, whose value she can never know till she gets to heaven.

We do not realize the importance of this unconscious part of our life-ministry. It goes on continually. In every greeting we give to another on the street, in every moment's conversation, in every letter we write, every contact with other lives, there is a subtle influence that goes from us that often reaches farther, and leaves a deeper impression, than the things themselves that we are doing at the time. After all, it is life itself, sanctified life, that is God's holiest and most effective ministry in this world—pure, sweet, patient, earnest, unselfish, loving life. It is not so much what we do in this world as what we are, that tells in spiritual results and impressions. A good life is like a flower, which though it neither toil nor spin, yet ever pours out a rich perfume, and thus performs a holy ministry. —Silent Times.

Two Questions.

What has the Old Year taught? What has the New brought?

We stand upon the boudry of a New Year, looking along the way on which we must go, and wondering, whither it will lead us? What shall we find in this strange country? There are vague guessings and fond hopes; there are whispered fears and strong wishes. But over all lies uncertainty—a mist that spreads about the valleys and creeps half up the hillsides, chilling and dismal. Life itself is so frail, and our hold upon things that are more than life to us is altogether so insecure, and in the past there is so much of failure, and however long our life may be, there is so much less of it left for us now; so we look away and fear.

But here at our right hand is our loving Father. He has gone forth all along the way. He arranges; he provides. Right into my heart there comes the warm, comforting gladness of the blessed Presence. "Dear child," saith he, "have I ever failed thee? Has the provision ever led thee to a wrong path? Stand under the boundary line and look back as well as forward. Oh, how wisely has he led us all along our way! How infinite his love has been! How bountifully he has dealt with us! How pitiful and patient! How often he has forgiven, and at what infinite cost. How wonderfully delivered, how graciously restored us! Lo, he is mine and I am his! He leads me along the new way. He encompasses me with the wings of his love. "The God of mercy and love prevent me." Surely our grateful faith wakes up with a new song to greet the New Year. "I will fear no evil for thou art with me." —Mark Guy Pearce.

To The Doubting Ones.

Ask thy soul these questions: 1. Whether there be any gain by doubting. Faith purifies the heart? 2. Whether there is anything more pleasing to God than to trust him in and through Jesus Christ; when all comforts are out of view, and when you see nothing but what is contrary to the promises? 3. Whether you must not venture upon Christ at the last,

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Random Readings.

None of us love men as Christ love them. —Spurgeon.

A well-made head is better than a head well-filled. —Montaigne.

Even sin does not harden people so much as the gospel heard but not heeded. —Peerson.

Whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well. —Dickens.

What a man has learnt is of importance, but what he is, what he can do, what he will become, are more significant things. —Arthur Helps.

This sorrow which has cut down to the root, try to think of it not as the spoiling of your life, but as a preparation for it. —George Eliot.

There are many books in which man seeks God; in the Bible God seeks man. It is a divine gift to man, written that we through patience and comfort might have hope. —T. T. Lynch.

When we are most filled with heavenly love, and only then, are we best fitted to bear with human infirmity, to live above and forget its burden. —Maria Hare.

The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. —Abraham Lincoln.

As education, in the last analysis, is the influence of one person over another, so Christian education is the outflow of that influence from a person who owns in his or her life the power of a Christian faith. —Horace E. Scudder.



INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY

1888. WINTER ARRANGEMENT. 1880.

On and after MONDAY, 18th November, 1888, the Trains of this Railway will run as follows (Sunday excepted), as

Woodstock, connecting at the Junction with Fast Express via Short Line for Montreal and the West. RETURNING TO FREDERICTON. From St. John 6.40, 8.45 a. m.; 4.45 p. m.; Fredericton Junction 8.10 a. m.; 12.50, 6.25 p. m.; McAdam Junction, 11.20 a. m.; 2.06 p. m.; Vanceboro, 10.55 a. m.; St. Stephen, 9.20, 11.30 a. m., 12.15 p. m.; St. Andrews, 6.45 a. m.; arrive in Fredericton 9.20 a. m.; 2.00 and 7.15 p. m.

LEAVE GIBSON. 8.00 a. m. — Mixed for Woodstock and points north. ARRIVE AT GIBSON. 5.30 a. m. — Mixed from Woodstock, and points north.

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LEAVE GIBSON. 8.00 a. m. — Mixed for Woodstock and points north. ARRIVE AT GIBSON. 5.30 a. m. — Mixed from Woodstock, and points north.

A. J. HEATH, F. W. CRAM, Gen. Pass. & Ticket Agent. Gen. Man.

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