Two Ways of Giving

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

"Do you mean to tell me that those things were shipped just as they were?" inquired Mrs. Carswell, sitting up very straight, and fanning herself violently, though it was December, and cold.

"Yes, Mrs. Carswell, they were," replied Mrs. Brown, in an apologetic tone. "You know we had planned, before you went away, to meet somewhere for a day and put them all in order. Your sudden departure put a stop to that, and we waited for you to come back; you know every society depends on its president in such matters, but you stayed longer than we expected, and at last we remembered that if we didn't send at once they wouldn't reach the missionary for Christmas, so we just packed the things and shipped them. We thought the missionary's wife could fix them up."

Mrs. Carswell's pretty cheeks were scarlet in spite of the fan.

"What sort of difference does it make whether they get through by Christmas or not?" she asked. "There isn't one thing in the lot suitable for a gift. How Christian people dare to offer, for a missionary box, garments frayed and threadbare, buttons off, and sleeves out at the elbow, is a mystery to me. Surely the least they ought to do would be to put them in repair.

"It would be much more appropriate to give such things to our own pastor, because he lives where he can buy what he wants, and his salary is ample for his needs. But no—it would be an insult to Dr. Hollister. So we send him barrels of flour, and sacks of sugar, and loads of choice fruit to add to his already goodly supply. We shower upon him Morris chairs and study-tables, to make room for which something must be banished from his well-furnished study. We deluge him with elaborate dressing-gowns and embroidered slippers, for which he has no use, being already comfortably clad. And then we ship disreputable cast-offs to another preacher who was Dr. Hollister's classmate in college and seminary, and who is his equal in every way—a man who is bringing up his family to be capable women and honest men, on a salary that wouldn't buy cigars and theatre tickets for some families in our church. Such a man as that we send—such——" Mrs. Carswell choked and stopped. Her visitor mildly surprised, began a feeble protest. "But, my dear woman, if you had been here to tell us what to do——"

Mrs. Carswell suddenly recovered her voice. "The idea," she said, indignantly; "that because I was away nursing my sick sister, a lot of intelligent women, who buy and make and re-make for their own families, and know quote well what is suitable and appropriate for them, didn't know any better than to pack a barrel of trash and call it a Christmas gift! Mrs. Brown, do you realize that that same Mrs. Ellis was reared and educated in a higher circle of society than any of us aspire to? Is it to her discredit that reverses of fortune have left her poor? Isn't she rather to be commended the more, for being willing to help her husband in his arduous and poorly paid labor, when his talents and hers could shine in a much more lucrative position? Don't tell me there is any excuse! I'm so ashamed of our missionary society I feel like resigning on the spot!"

"Well, I'm sure I'm sorry you feel so about it, Mrs. Carswell. If there was anything we could do—but the barrel is gone, and it's too late to help matters now," and Mrs. Brown rose and drew her handsome wrap about her."

"Yes, unfortunately it is too late to give them a respectable Christmas, but it must be made up to them in some way at once!" declared Mrs. Carswell, with an air of determination that made her visitor wonder "what that dear fanatical woman will do next."

What she did was to write numerous notes and dispatch them at once, inviting the twenty-five young ladies of her Bible class to spend the next evening with her, and bring sewing materials with them, also such bits of embroidery, laces and robbons as they were willing to spare.

Mrs. Carswell knew that most of her girls belonged to well-to-do families, who would willingly help her in carrying out her plan, if once their interest was aroused; and she acted accordingly.

The young ladies needed no urging, for an evening in their teacher's pleasant home was enjoyed; and at the appointed hour, the merry bevy trooped in. When they were all together, Mrs. Carswell talked to them of the noble missionary "out west," with his beautiful wife and interesting family—told the story of their struggles and deprivations and self-sacrifice, and told it well.

When she had finished, Minnie Wells asked a question. "If they are so smart and accomplished, why do they waste their ability in such a field as that? If he'd take a city church and get a big salary and given a lot of money to the frontier work, wouldn't that do just as much good?"

"No, dear. Money never takes the place of personal work, if God has made the personal work our duty. Mr. Ellis is doing in a very small degree what our Saviour did for us when he left heaven, to come among us and work out our salvation amid trials such as even our home missionary knows nothing about. Mr. Ellis feels that the disciple is not above his Lord.

"Now it is not only our duty, but our high blessed privilege, to give as God has prospered us, of money, and also of time and materials, to help those dear people do their work.

"It is only by doing all we can along every line, that we fulfill Christ's command to 'preach the Gospel to every creature.' We can't all go as missionaries, but that command is as binding on one of God's children as another, so our part of the work must lie in supplying the needs of the missionaries so as to leave their time and thoughts free to do our share of preaching the Gospel as well as their own."

"Oh! I wish we could get their things to them by Christmas, but I suppose that is out of the question," said one of the girls.

"Yes, I am sorry to say it is," replied her teacher. "But as that cannot be helped, we'll do the next best thing and give them a happy New Year. Perhaps the gift will be more enjoyed because so unexpected. And, girls, let's send them a gift worthy the name, remembering that in doing for God's children we are doing for Him. Let us try to honor him in this, and in all things that we do.

"Now for our thimbles and needles. Let's make the minutes count."

* * * * * *

It was New Year's Eve. Out on a Western prairie where the bleak wind whistled across miles of level plain stood the little home of the Ellis family. Wooden shutters rattled and creaked, and a sudden gust of wind blew spitefully down the chimney, scattering ashes over the tidy hearth. The room was small, its furniture plain and scanty, and in the midst stood the missionary barrel.

It had arrived only that afternoon, having been delayed en route, as winter freight so often is in the North-West, where snowdrifts and blizzards frequently make progress impossible.

Mr. Ellis had smuggled it into the wood-shed, out of sight, till the children should be asleep. His wife had lived for days in joyful anticipation of its arrival. It was a sore disappointment when Christmas came and went without it, but the children had been brave, and made the most of their scanty supply of molasses taffy, which was their only present. They felt they could afford to be patient when such a wealth of unknown treasure was on its way. So they had watched from day to day, and when father announced its safe arrival they told each other they were glad it had been late—they'd have the fun of hanging up their stockings on New Year's Eve, and such a jubilee as there should be to-morrow!

At bedtime the stockings were hung with gleeful confidence, and the parents had laughed with them, remembering the barrel in the shed.

When the little ones were asleep, it was rolled in and opened. But when the unpacking had been accomplished, the husband and wife sat looking at the heap with sad faces, saying nothing, but thinking much. To be sure, there were many things which would be most useful and acceptable during the long cold winter, after they had been made over, or relined, or patched, or something. But there were no toys—no books—no candy, without which Christmas isn't Christmas to a child; and the empty stockings hung limp and pathetic, waiting.

Mrs. Ellis rose at last. "Let's pack them back, Edward, for to-night," she said huskily. "I must try to hunt something for those," she pointed to the stockings, then her courage forsook her and she broke down.

"Don't, dear—don't," begged her husband, holding her close and trying to soothe her.

"I can't help it, Edward. Just this once let me cry. When I remember my own childhood and contrast it with that of our children it breaks my heart. It is not fair that they should be deprived of everything, when others have so much. I feel sometimes like giving up."

"No, dear—never that. You couldn't, you know. 'All things work together for good to them that love God'—and we do."

"I know—but the children. I don't mind anything for myself, Edward, but you and the little ones——"

"He loves us better than we love each other, Edith. He does not willingly afflict. We need the discipline, or we should not have it;" and the tender hand patted the bowed head with a touch like a mother's.

"Edward, I wonder if I shall ever be as good as you. It is I who need the disciplining—not you, dear, unselfish boy," and Edith Ellis clasped in both her own the hands that had grown hard and calloused working for the people of his flock.

A call from the gate startled them, and Mr. Ellis went out. "I hope it isn't somebody come to take him away this cold night," murmured Mrs. Ellis, anxiously, as she heard voices in the harkness.

A moment later he came in with a bundle so big he could barely carry it—a bundle done up in burlap and looking delightfully mysterious.

"Look at this Edith," he exclaimed, with beaming face. "Perhpas after all they will not be disappointed." His wife couldn't find her voice to answer, but worked at the cord with trembling fingers. "It's a carpet!" she exclaimed at last, as she caught a tantalizing glimpse. "We do need it so—I'm very thankful! only—Edward—we can't put it in the stockings."

It was securely fastened, but they got it untied at last, and unrolled a length to see the pattern. As they did so something fell out—a flat parcel wrapped in tissue paper and marked, "For Mrs. Ellis."

"Handerchiefs, Edward. Oh, how pretty—six of them, hand-made," she announced excitedly. Another turn of the roll disclosed more treasures, and still more further on, till at last the little room looked like a fancy store. There were napkins, and tidies, and towels—not all new, but all good and in perfect order. A generous length of muslin wrapped lengthwise in the carpet, another of flannel, and one of crash; collars and cuffs, dainty hoods and caps—well, it would take too long to describe the treasures that wonderful carpet held. But the best of all, in that happy little mother's eyes, lay in what had been the very centre of the roll, where in a long, compact bundle were snugly wrapped a pretty doll with wardrobe all complete, balls, skates, and marbles, with pounds of candy, and a sweet letter of sympathy and interest that was like an inspiration to them both, signed, "Mrs. Carswell's Bible class."

Mrs. Ellis gathered her arms full of treasures and hugged them. "Those dear, sweet, lovely girls," she exclaimed. "Only think of all this loving thought for us almost at our door, while I was complaining and thinking nobody cared for us. I'm sure I'll never be so wicked again. Oh, Edward, look at those stockings! So full they wouldn't hold a feather more. How can I wait ti'l morning?"

Mr. Ellis folded a warm muffler and drew off a new glove as he answered, "We have all been most generously remembered, Edith. If the receiving is so joyful, surely God will bless the givers."

"I shall pray for them as long as I live," declared the little woman with quivering lips. "I hope they will every one have as happy a New Year as they have given us—more than that I couldn't ask."

People didn't know that the secret of Mrs. Carswell's wearing her old cloak that winter was tacked down on the Ellis' sitting-room floor; nor that there was scarcely a girl in the Bible class who had not practised real self-denial in the giving which did so much good.

And God knew it all, and made it up to them every one in blessings pressed down and running over.

THE SENSIBLE MOTHER.

When little ones are ill the sensible mother no longer doses them with nauseous, griping purgatives, nor puts them to sleep with the so-called "soothing" preparations which always contain harmful opiates. Baby's Own Tablets have been used by thousands of mothers who cheerfully testify that they are gentle in their action, absolutely safe, and make little ones sleep soundly and naturally, because they remove the trouble that made baby irritable and wakeful. On this point Mrs. T. Watson, Sarsfield, Ont., says:—"I have used Baby's Own Tablets and find them a very valuable medicine for young children. When baby is cross or fretful I give her a Tablet, and it soon puts her right."

These Tablets cure all the minor ailments of the little ones. They are good for all children from birth onward. Sold by medicine dealers or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing The Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

If Sincerely Made They Are a Help to Right Character.

New Year's resolutions are so often made the target for cheap jokes by cheap critics as to create the impression that such resolutions are never kept and never ought to be made. The criticism is unjust, its logic is false, its effect pernicious. A recent preacher brought out the true idea in a sermon upon Peter's pledge of devotion to his master, even though all others should desert Him. Simon did not yield to temptation because of his earnest assurance, but in spite of it. It had been said that hell was paved with good resolutions. If that was true it was certainly the best thing about the place. We must resolve before we do. Right resolutions sincerely made are a help to right character, even if by distress of opposing forces some of them are not kept. Peter's faith did not finally fail, and very likely he had more faith and more strength because he failed once and so learned his weak point. It is a good thing, then, with the thoughtfulness belonging to the outlook of a new year, to desire and decide and declare that we will live truer, nobler lives. Making the resolve, not lightly or boastfully, but seriously and expecting the Divine help, we shall succeed in part if not in full. He whom we call Master and Lord is praying for us that our faith fail not. The man who resolved and failed and tried again became a strong man. What he wrote to his brethren in the first century was doubtless an echo of his own experience, and it will be fulfilled, even to the twentieth century: "After we have suffered awhile God will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

About the ....House

PREPARING FISH.

It is economy to buy a whole cod or haddock weighing three or four pounds, as the whole fish is much cheaper than when sliced and all of it can be utilized.

Try this method of preparing a cod or haddock: Clean and wipe the fish, cut off the head, cut the flesh from the backbone in two long strips. Put the head and bones over the fire in cold water and cook for one hour, to make a fish stock, as there is much gelatine in the head and some flesh clings to the bones. Strain this stock and reserve it as a basis for a fish chowder, adding potatoes, milk, onion, salt pork and crackers according to any good chowder receipt. The fillets of fish freed from the bones are to be used to make molded fish.

Molded Fish.—Butter an oval mold, lay in it a strip of boned fish, then a layer of bread crumbs seasoned with melted butter, onion juice, chopped parsley and lemon juice, pepper, salt and curry. Add more fish and crumbs till the mold is full. Moisten with one half cup of milk or water and the whole or white of one egg, to bind the mixture together. Have crumbs on top and add bits of butter. Bake for one-half hour, unmold on a platter and serve with Spanish sauce. Oysters dipped in buttered crumbs may be substituted for the seasoned crumbs and a Hollandaise sauce used.

Baked Stuffed Fish.—Another way to bake fish with crumbs is to prepare a stuffing with one-half cup of bread crumbs, one-fourth cup of melted butter, one-half cup of cracker crumbs, a few drops of onion juice, one-fourth teaspoon of salt, one-eighth teaspoon of pepper, one tablespoon of chopped parsley, two tablespoons of chopped pickles. Bind together with hot water. Lay one-half a boned fish on a tin sheet in a baking pan, add the stuffing in a layer, then the second strip of fish and bake for one-half hour. Serve with egg sauce. The whole fish, dressed for stuffing, may be filled with these seasoned crumbs, placed erect in a tin, in the shape of an S, larded with salt pork wedges and baked till brown. Lift it out carefully on the tin sheet, slide it on to a platter, garnish with sprigs of parsley, cress or celery stuck in the eyes and mouth and serve with any fish sauce.

A solid piece of hallibut or cod may be baked without stuffing. Wash and dry the fish. Remove the skin by dipping the fish a moment in boiling water and then scraping the loosened skin off with a sharp knife. Place the fish on a tin sheet in a baking pan. Season it with salt and pepper, sprinkle it with bread crumbs and lay upon it several wedges of salt pork. Bake for three-quarters of an hour and serve with any fish sauce. This solid piece of fish may be stuffed by removing the central bone and filling the cavity with seasoned crumbs, then proceed as directed above. Fish turbans make an attractive dish. Take thin strips of halibut, cod or haddock, roll and skewer them with wooden toothpicks. Spread with melted butter, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on each turban a slice of onion and let stand for half an hour. Remove the onion and bake the fish in a shallow tin from fifteen to twenty minutes. Serve with tomato sauce.

Broiled Fish.—Among the most delicate fish for broiling are lake or salmon trout and whitefish, which are fresh-water fish from the Great Lakes and are in season during the winter. Broiling seems to be a simple process, yet it requires care and attention to prepare the fish without burning it. No cook can put a fish over the coals in a broiler and go away to attend to the rest of the dinner. Everything should be made ready for serving before starting to broil the fish, which must be watched and turned and timed. With a bright hot fire, which broiling requires, a fish one inch thick will cook in twelve to fifteen minutes, more time being needed for a thick fish like salmon, bluefish or shad. Use a double wire broiler well greased with salt pork to keep the flesh from breaking and sticking. Lay the fish over the fire, flesh side down, and broil it till it is a golden brown, lifting occasionally if necessary. Cook it from eight to twelve minutes, then turn onto the skin side and broil it four or five minutes. Remove to a hot platter, rub the flesh with soft butter, garnish with parsley and quarters of lemon and serve. Halibut, cod, salmon steaks, bluefish, mackerel, butterfish, sea trout and shad are good fish for broiling. If cut very thick, the cooking may be completed in the oven.

Boiling and Steaming Fish.— In boiling or steaming fish much is lost or wasted by absorption into the boiling water or by evaporation. Boiling is far from an economical process, but it is often convenient. A thick, solid piece of fish is required, salmon, cod, halibut and red snapper being best to boil.

Some cooks advocate boiling fish in court bouillon, which is made thus: "Mince one onion, one stalk of celery, three springs of parsley and fry them brown in a little butter. Add two tablespoons of salt, six pepper corns, one bay leaf, three cloves, two quarts of boiling water and one pint of vinegar or sour wine. Boil for fifteen minutes, skim well, strain and add the fish. Simmer until the flesh leaves the bones." A simpler method is to add a little vinegar or lemon juice to the boiling water or to use no seasoning except salt, depending upon a seasoned sauce for flavor. To keep fish in shape it is well to tie it into a piece of cheesecloth or mosquito neeting. Place it in a fish steamer or immerse it in boiling water to cover, adding one teaspoon of salt. Let the water boil gently from twenty to 30 minutes, the time depending upon the quality and quantity of the fish. Too much boiling makes fish watery. When it is tender, remove it carefully to a hot platter, garnish with sliced hard-boiled eggs, pickled beets, lemon and parsley and serve with any fish sauce, such as oyster, white shrimp or tomato.

Fried Fish.—Fried fish is very popular and though much has been said about the indigestibility of fried food, there's no denying the fact that it tastes good. When properly cooked, fried fish need not be dangerous to persons of sound digestion, if used in moderation, but not too often. The trouble with fried fish arises from the hardening of the fish fibre and its tendency to absorb grease, both of which conditions retard digestion. There are two methods of frying. One is to immerse the fish in boiling oil and the other to fry it in a pan with salt pork scraps. The latter is the more tasty, the former more rapid and less likely to absorb the fat if the fish is drained on brown paper. Small fish like trout, smelts, perch and pickerel are dipped whole in flour, Indian meal or egg and crumbs and fried crisp. Cod, halibut, haddock, flounders, sole, etc., are cut in slices or fillets, dipped and friend either way.

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"Last winter I was so bad with a cold that I could not speak above a whisper, and had great pains in the chest. At last I feared it would develop into consumption. A friend advised me to use Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine, and one bottle cured my cold, which I believe would have proved very serious if I had not used this medicine."

Mr. John Pollard, Echo Bay, Ont., writes:—"I was troubled last winter with a very bad cold, which was beginning to settle on my lungs. I was so hoarse that I could scarcely speak, and had a nasty hacking cough, which I could not get rid of. One bottle of Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine cured me, and I can heartily recommend it."

Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine, 25 cents a bottle, family size (three times as much) 60 cents, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto. To protect you against imitations the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous receipt book author, are on every bottle.