

MORE NEW YEAR'S LESSON

The New Leaves

Adapted from Laura E. Richards

Here is a great story for the New Year that will help children understand what "turning over a new leaf" means. Better to learn good habits in the home than out in the world, where turning the leaves may be much tougher.

"Wake up!" said a clear little voice. Tommy woke, and sat up. At the foot of the bed stood a boy about his own age, all dressed in white, like fresh snow. He had very bright eyes, and he looked straight at Tommy.

"Who are you?" asked Tommy.

"I am the New Year!" said the boy. "This is my day, and I have brought you your leaves."

"What leaves?" asked Tommy.

"The new ones, to be sure!" said the New Year. "I hear bad accounts of you from my Daddy--"

"Who is your Daddy?" asked Tommy.

"The Old Year, of course!" said the boy.

"He said you asked too many questions, and I see he was right. He says you are greedy, too, and that sometimes you pinch your little sister, and that one day you threw your reader into the fire. Now, all this must stop."

"Oh must it?" said Tommy. He felt frightened, and did not know just what to say.

The boy nodded. "If it does not stop," he said, "you will grow worse and worse every year, till you grow up into a Horrid Man. Do you want to be a horrid Man?"

"N-no!" said Tommy.

"Then you must stop being a horrid boy!" Said the New Year. "Take your leaves!" And he held out a packet of what looked like notebook paper, all sparkling white, like his' own clothes.

"Turn over one of these every day," he said, "and soon you will be a good boy instead of a horrid one."

Tommy took the leaves of paper and looked at them. On each leaf a few words were written. On one it said, "Help your mother and father!" On another, "Pick up your toys!" On another, "Stop tracking mud across the floor!" On another, "BE nice to your little sister!" And on still another,

"Don't fight Billy Jenkins!"

"Oh!" cried Tommy. "I have to fight Billy Jenkins!" He said--

"Good-by!" said the New Year. "I shall come again when I am old to see whether you have been a good boy or a horrid one.

Remember,

"Horrid boy makes horrid man.

You alone can change the plan."

He turned away and opened the window. A cold wind blew in and swept the leaves out of Tommy's hand. "Stop! Stop!" he cried. "Tell me--" But the New Year was gone, and Tommy, staring after him, saw only his mother coming into the room.

"Dear child!" she said. "Why, the wind is blowing everything about."

"My leaves! My leaves!" cried Tommy. Jumping out of bed, he looked all over the room, but he could not find one.

"Never mind," said Tommy. "I can turn them just the same, and I mean to. I will not grow into a Horrid Man." And he didn't.

(This story just goes to prove that we can change, if we want to- Cory)

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