

LAMENT OF THE OLD YEAR

ALAS! my time has nearly come; I'm weak and weary, and cold and numb. And sad and sour, and cross and grim. The world looks dark and drear; I'm short of breath, so I pant and wheeze. And shiver and shake, and cough and sneeze. My limbs creak mournfully in the breeze— For I am the poor Old Year.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

WE WERE always getting out of wood at Maple Knoll. It was the big fireplace in the sitting-room that ate up all the fuel we could get. I never saw such an insatiable monster. Yet we couldn't make up our minds to close it up and put up a stove instead, because of its radiant cheerfulness. How jolly it was, just when the first touch of a winter's twilight stole on, to pile fresh hickory logs on the old andirons and watch the flames dash up the chimney's throat and light the whole room with a mellow crimson flame.

Breakfast was ready when we got it safely under cover, and notwithstanding our impending doom, we fell upon the ham and fried potatoes and pancakes, and enjoyed our meal immensely. "Girls," said auntie, when the last potato and the last crispy brown butter-cake had vanished, "I don't want to dampen your spirits, but there isn't a chip left, and how we're going to cook dinner I don't see."



THERE WAS DORA WITH HER FACE LIKE A HOLLYHOCK.

bag of oats for his horse, and had come up through the side lane and taken the liberty to put the animal in our barn to eat his oats, while he himself ran in to see how we all fared this inclement day, etc., etc. I slid out while he was thus discoursing and rushed to the parlor with a very forlorn hope of finding a stray stick or two left over there, making a fire and getting him into the parlor while we finished the dinner. The hope died as I poked my head into the arctic desolation of our best room. It was on the east side, where the spiteful wind had been battering at it all night, searching out a hundred crevices about windows and door to hurl the fine, powdery snow through. There were drifts, varying in size, on the piano, on the chairs, and a dainty white powdering all over the carpet, which the wind had puffed in under the door. You could fairly feel the gale whisking about your ears. There wasn't a scrap of wood nor a chip in the wood box. Relinquishing a wild idea of chopping up a parlor chair or two to make a fire of, I scooted back to the sitting-room chilled to the bone.

what spirits we might. It wasn't more than two hours after he left that Uncle Jink, a dilapidated old colored man, appeared with a yoke of steers, which he left in the lane while he came plodding through the snow to the house. "Heard y'all was out o' wood," he grinned, "so I 'lowed I'd come an' snake up a few logs 'n' split fer de fire place 'n' whack up some fer de cook'n' stove."

I was left a small orphan, in Uncle John's time, and he and Aunt Laura had not made an atom of difference between Dora and me in their love and care. But now it had been so long since I had heard from Frank I couldn't help being afraid he had frozen to death or been buried in a snowslide. And this dreadful rainy day I couldn't even have the satisfaction of going or sending to town for the mail, if there should possibly be any news.

stopped falling now, and the air felt crisp and bracing. The sun wasn't shining yet, but there was a mellow look in the sky, as if it meant to pop out any minute. New Year's calling was not much in vogue in our rural district; still, it was Aunt Laura's way to make a red-letter day of the opening one of the year, and always to be prepared for any stray caller who might chance to appear. She had a cheerful fire in the parlor, a plentiful supply of coffee and cake on hand, and we all put on our pretty house dresses and prepared to be happy whether anyone came or not.



The New Year

IT IS TIME there are no nests as in music. Time was in the without-a-beginning, and time will be ever and forever. On and on and on it goes in harmonious perfectness, knowing no age and making no record of days. "Natur non salutat"—nature never made a break or a pause. It shows no chasms anywhere in its majestic course.

NEW YEAR'S RETROSPECT

WELL, well, so this is New Year's day," said Mr. Spooner. "Do you remember how we quarreled this day one year ago?" "Remember! I think I do!" cried his wife. "Why, the cards were ordered when it happened, and I didn't know whether I could have your name taken out and Dick's inserted, in case I changed my mind."



THIS DAY ONE YEAR AGO.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

If Sincerely Made They Are a Help to Right Character, Although Sometimes Broken. 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.



DID HE MEAN IT?



THEN THEY BOTH CASHED IN.

Coldeck—What was the difference, '99, old boy, between you and me at 11:30 last night? ... Give 'em up. Coldeck—Well, you were drawing to a close and I was drawing to a flush.—Chicago Chronicle.

Tracte. "I shall not see you till another year?" Has dawned," he said. Oh, tickle maid! she turned not pale w fear— She laughed instead. This seems a tragic day, till we remember It shrouded the thirty-first day of December.—N. Y. Truth.

Honest Injun! Do you really mean it when you say you'll do better the coming year?—L. A. W. Bulletin.