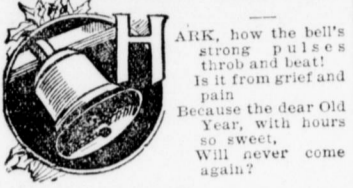


The old year and the new.



Or is it restless joy that thrills and leaps From the dizzy spire and dome That though the Old Year shall soon lie asleep, A glad New Year will come?

Look! as the Old Year sinks in dreamless rest, With weary sigh and moan, The New Year, all in regal splendor dressed, Ascends the vacant throne.

The light of hope is gleaming in his eyes As scattered are the sands, A scroll with strange unspoken prophecies He bears within his hands.

"Tell me, New Year," I ask, "of paths unseen That wind far on ahead— Those shadowy regions where no foot hath been Except by fancy led.

"What waits beyond? Will bloom and sunshine lie Where'er those pathways tend, Or are there mountains towering grim and high Before the journey's end?"

Ah, thought again I question eagerly, With mingled hope and fear, He opens not the scroll of prophecy; No answer do I hear.

The New Year only smiles; I may not know What future hours may bring, If o'er me hope's sweet presence shall bend low, Or sorrow's sable wing.

Old Year, how fair the country I have passed, What golden hours were they! Will not their radiance be softly cast About my onward way?

Good-bye, good-bye, as music faint and clear, Reechoed o'er the sea, Shall be the joyous memories, Old Year, That shall return of thee! —Alice Jean Cleator, in Ohio Farmer.

ONE NEW YEAR'S EVE

IT WAS late in the afternoon when Mrs. Townsend saw the last piece of furniture transferred from the mover's wagon to the parlor of her new home, and now, as the clock struck 11, she looked around her bedroom in a dazed and bewildered way.

"How can Jack leave me alone so long when he knows what a lot there is to do," she said aloud, as she sank into a chair before the open fire, the only cheer-inspiring object in the room, and looked about again, as the last stroke of the clock died out.

"Ugh, will I ever get this muddle into anything like order," she muttered. "How I hate it all, and oh, how I hope we will never move again, as long as I live—I'm tired of packing and unpacking, of arranging and rearranging. What a chaos in which to begin the New Year!"

And visions of brilliantly lighted parlors, glittering tables, pretty girls and handsome men passed before her by way of contrast. Then the baby stirred and she rose to place it more comfortably in its crib. Coming back to her chair by the fire she caught sight of a small blue box in a corner of one of the open trunks.

"Ah, I'll burn you now," she said, softly. "It is sentimental nonsense to carry you around any longer. This is just the fire for you, and I'm too worn out to do another stroke of work."

Lifting the lid she took out a bundle of letters addressed in a flowing business hand to "MISS ROSE WINSTON, 109 West Street, 'New York City.'"

Somehow her heart beat a little faster as she recalled how happily it had thrummed at sight of these same envelopes three years ago. Three years! Was it only three?

est. If I might only hope I should work so hard to make myself worthy of you—you are a perfect treasure. You may always believe me to be, Your own, "JACK."

With a deepening flush on her cheeks and a tender light shining in her eyes she opened a second letter with fingers that trembled slightly—such a sea of memories was surging over her.

It began without date, but that she could easily supply: "My Darling: "To-day you have made me the happiest of mortals, for you promised to become my wife! Who would not be happy under the circumstances—for the man who gets you gets a prize, indeed. I shall not say what I shall try to do for you except that if love and devotion can make you happy, sorrow and sadness shall never know you."

"To-night you looked so pretty—your eyes were brighter than ever I have seen them. You looked happy. Oh, that you may always look as you did to-night!" "Sweetheart, I love you so much more than I can tell—more than I ever thought myself capable of loving anyone, and when I think it over, I wonder how it all came about. You did not try to make me love you, neither did I find myself loving you—found that I must be with you to be happy."

"Now I am going to answer the precious letter my own sweetheart wrote me to-day. How lovely it is! It is just like her from beginning to end. I love you so much more than I can tell—more than I ever thought myself capable of loving anyone, and when I think it over, I wonder how it all came about. You did not try to make me love you, neither did I find myself loving you—found that I must be with you to be happy."

"Nothing that you say can hurt me, dearest, for I know that you speak for the best interests of us both. "Yes, my darling, I want you to be sure of yourself, for I would not blight your life ever so little. "Should I love you, life would be little worth the living, yet I would rather lose you than ever see you unhappy."

"You are unjust to yourself in many ways and rate yourself too low. You say that you don't understand yourself. Did you ever know any one who could say: 'I know myself?' Dearest, others know us best—others see our faults and virtues in a clearer light than we can see them. I shall not pretend that I understand you, for it has long been conceded that the mind feminine is incomprehensible to man, but, oh, my sweetheart, all the faults you confess to are dearer to me than other women's virtues. You are you, my darling, and I love you as you are. That is clumsy, but at best I can ill express how dear you are to me."

"Your heart pleads for me, but your head does not. That shows good sound sense, and I can only hope that the heart will get away with the head. "And now, my sweet, as a guard against fickleness I want you to give up to a certain extent your male admirers. I don't mind their calls, I rather like them, for I am proud to have my sweetheart a favorite, but you must let them know that you belong to me and that I am a monopolist. I can love you enough alone, they may like you, I can love you as much as you love to be loved—so remember, no trifling."

"I know, dearest, that you might have chosen many men handsomer, nobler, richer than I, but you will never find one who will love you more than does "Your own devoted, "JACK."

The third letter ran: "My Own Darling: "I believe the happiest day of my life has just ended. To-day another begins, though I will never be thoroughly happy until I hear the words which make us man and wife—then how happy I shall be and oh, how proud! When we are married I shall always try to be the best of husbands and my first aim shall be to make you happy; then I am happy."

"You are the one to make me—make more of me than the ordinary man. There is nothing that I would not try to do for your dear sake. As a beginning I shall try to have my business hours changed, so that I may have my evenings for my sweetheart. I can say of her as someone else has said of his love: "She's more than diamond, ruby or pearl, She's a dear little, sweet little, neat little girl!"

"You are all that and more. You are more precious to me than are jewels—you are invaluable—they are not. "It is after two—and I still have writing to do. "Good-night, sweetest, dearest, best! My beautiful Rose—I love you, I love you, I love you! "JACK."

Long the tired woman stared at the loving words—could they have been written to her? Why had she not read them oftener? Why was it that all the beautiful romance had died out of her life? Whose was the fault? Again her eyes devoured the dear words before her. How her heart warmed with tenderness toward the writer. How she hungered for the kisses and caresses he used to lavish upon her. If only to-night he would take her in his arms all tired, nervous and unstrung as she was, and pet and comfort her. If she could hear him call her by the old, fond, foolish names how it would lighten her heavy heart and rest her weary body.

Then she thought of the time she had repulsed his loving advances—of her petulant retorts, her irritable complaints under misfortunes and reverses. How far, far below his ideal she had fallen. Would he ever love her so well again? Could she ever get back to her throne?

Solemnly the bells began to toll for the dying year. They sounded deep in the heart of the waiting wife. "Oh, God," she prayed, "for the New Year's fight, grant me patience, gentleness, love. Help me reinstate myself in my husband's heart for the dear Christ's sake."

And tears trickled slowly through the fingers which supported the tired head. A step, a hand on her chair, a cheery voice saying: "A Happy New Year, little wife! What, crying? Why, my darling—my poor little, pretty little drowsing white Rose—what a brute I've been to leave you so long," and she was gathered to her husband's heart.

He held her close till the storm of tears was over, soothing her as a mother might a tired little child, with tender words and caresses—the very words she had longed and prayed to hear. "Oh, Jack," she whispered when she had grown calmer, "do you think you can ever love me again, as you did when you wrote these?" And she pointed to the letters scattered at her feet.

"So you have been going over it, too?" her husband replied, somewhat irreverently, and looking down at the letters. Then taking her tear-stained face between his hands, he said, tenderly: "My foolish child, are you not my precious wife? Have you not borne hardships that a better husband might have spared you? Have?"

"But, oh Jack," she interrupted, "how have I borne them? Think of the recriminations, the reproaches, the complainings—even if you are good enough to forgive I can never forgive myself."

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"There, there," said Jack, laying his warm, loving lips to her quivering, self-accusing ones, "you shall not abuse my wife. Now I shall put you to bed, but first wish me a Happy New Year and we will begin all over again."

With her arm about his neck and the old love-light shining in her eyes she murmured, obediently: "I wish you a Happy New Year, my husband!"—Mary Wright Davis, in Every Month.

OLD-TIME NEW YEAR'S CALLS.

They Held an Important Place in the Observances of the Day—Origin of the Custom.

Among the festivities of old New York the observance of New Year's day held an important place, says Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, in the Atlantic. In every house of any pretension the ladies of the family sat in their drawing-room, arrayed in their best dresses, and the gentlemen of their acquaintance made short visits, during which wine and rich cakes were offered. It was allowable to call as early as ten o'clock in the morning, but the visitor sometimes did little more than appear and disappear, hastily muttering something

about the "compliments of the season." The gentlemen prided themselves upon the number of visits paid, the ladies upon the number received. Girls at school vexed each other with emulative boasting.

"We had 50 callers on New Year's day." "Oh! but we had 65." This perfunctory performance grew very tedious by the time that the calling hours were ended, but apart from this the day was one on which families were greeted by distant relatives rarely seen, while old friends met and revived their pleasant memories. In our house the rooms were all thrown open, and bright fires burned in the grates. I recall a New Year's day, early in the thirties, on which a yellow chariot stopped before our door. A stout, elderly gentleman descended from it, and came in to pay his compliments to my father. This gentleman was John Jacob Astor, who was already known to be possessed of great wealth.

The pleasant custom just described was said to have originated with the Dutch settlers of the olden time. As the city grew in size, it became difficult and well-nigh impossible for gentlemen to make the necessary number of visits. Finally, a number of young men of the city took it upon themselves to call in squads at houses which they had no right to molest, consuming the refreshments provided for other guests, and making themselves disagreeable in various ways. This offense against good manners led to the discontinuance, by common consent, of the New Year's receptions.

A Sure Enough Example. Teacher (giving lesson in natural history)—An extinct bird or animal is one that no longer inhabits the earth. Willy Green, give us an example of an extinct bird.

Willy Green (smacking his lips)—Why, that turkey duck killed for our New Year dinner!—Pack.

One New Year's Eve

By Manda L. Crocker.

THE wish of a blue dress, a faint breath of violets, as in passing, and he felt rather than saw Maria Summerfield go by.

Standing a little apart from the knots of merry young people thronging the pleasant rooms, he was conscious of a thread of pain running through the last night of the old year, touching only Miss Summerfield and himself.

By he, I mean Leigh Reyburn, the owner of the old-fashioned, low-voiced grange, beneath whose roof the young people of Gladbrook had gathered to keep a merry watch-night. With music and laughter and gay repartee they meant to dance a welcome to the joyous New Year without much thought for the staid old twelve-month which had served them so faithfully.

But Leigh moved uneasily, sending imploring glances after the blue gown, all to no purpose. Marie was absorbed with the fascinating company of Maurice Davenport, and was smiling her sweetest—and Marie could smile divinely—and entertaining him admirably.

Reyburn was thinking hard, and it must be confessed, uncharitably. Had he worshipped and lived for Miss Summerfield these two blessed sunny years, to have hope and happiness go into the grave of the frail old year leaving nothing but memories?

What was that Marie was singing to the sweet-toned guitar she held so daintily, strapped in place with a blue ribbon? "Ring out the old, ring in the new; The year is dying, let it go; Ring in the new, ring in the new."

Her voice seemed to falter a little on the words, as if it fell to a soft cadence. Was it possible she was thinking of the old so tenderly—the old love, for instance? Ah! well, he did not know.

The yule log had burned out a week ago, but he had not the heart to take up the sivey ashes from the old, red brick hearth as yet. Ever since that other night he had kept his eyes and closed his doors to all merriment for two long years. But somehow the lads and lassies of Gladbrook had lain their sympathies on his door-stone and worked themselves into his good graces once more, and before he realized what he was doing he had given up the silent rooms again to Christmas party. But no more New Year frolics under his roof, he said; not until—well, maybe—He stopped short in his musings, still the remnant of the mistletoe hung in the bracket work of the old chandelier and he remembered now, as he looked at it, how pure and fair Alicia Merrill looked when Herman Montrose kissed her beneath its potent spell a week ago. She put him in mind, O, so much, of her. Covering his eyes for a moment with trembling hand, he went to the window and looked out. White and glistening as an angel's wing lay the snow on the intervening fields. Over there was her house, but she had been away now for a long time studying music, and he had heard, for she did not write to him, that her voice was simply divine, and as a musician she was wonderful.

Nevertheless, it was a night like this, nodding toward the flooding moonlight outside, that they—he and she—had their misunderstanding. A spasm of pain crossed his fine face and he caught his breath a little. He could not tell just how it came about, never clearly understanding, but that night so much like this, and New Year's Eve, too, marked the beginning of their diverging paths. And he had heard of diverging paths which came together again after awhile.

To-morrow was the glad New Year again. Would his happy greetings be only mockery to him? Suddenly a thought, which had smoldered in his mind for days, flashed up like a gleam of heavenly light, radiating his whole being.

She was coming home to-night on the late train; and he was so hungry to see her; only God knew how famished of heart he was! He would take the down train, get off at Rockland when she changed cars for Gladbrook. No one could prevent him from riding home in the same coach with her; and even that would be a blessed comfort. Then, maybe, something would come of it. Who knew?

In 15 minutes he was inside his great coat and locking the hall door, with a nervous, glad excitement stealing over him, like the coming of a new day. A ten-minute walk brought him to the station. "Going away for the New Year?" queried the agent, pleasantly, handing Reyburn the required pasteboard.

"O, a little way," he replied, absently, pulling on his gloves. Scarcely had he settled himself in the outward-bound train than Joe Antrim thumped him on the shoulder and sang out: "Hallo, going away on a blow-out, I suppose? Well, so am I. Some are going away, and some are coming home."

In the awkward silence which followed Joe's voluble introduction, he seemed to read Reyburn's thoughts, for, without looking further for reply, he began again: "Miss Summerfield is coming to-night, they say; and they say, too, that she is bringing her best fellow with her. Gladbrook looks for a wedding at the Summerfield home to-morrow. But, of course, I don't know; it is only gossip, maybe."

Having thus delivered himself, Joe Antrim, without waiting for reply, betook himself to the smoker, leaving Reyburn in just the state of mind he intended, half-way between insanity and desperate intent.

But by and by Reyburn's mind cleared to Joe's last sentence. Only gossip. Of course that was all; but Joe was mean to hash it over, to him of all persons, and in such an insinuating manner, too. Well, he would go on to Rockland now if he met her

complete bridal party; he would see for himself, and if it was all true, why, he would not go home that night, and perhaps Gladbrook would never see him again.

At Rockland he had only a few minutes to wait between trains, and almost the home-bound one was waiting on a side track. Purchasing his ticket, he ensconced himself where he could plainly see the passengers leave the cross-train.

"Now for the bridal party, at least the bride and groom," he said, trying to be jocular with himself, although his face was very white and his mouth twitched nervously.

At the cry "train, train," everybody began to bustle about. Friends, baggage and good-bys were mixed up indiscriminately, but Leigh was very still. He could hear his anxious heart beat out its suspense in great suffocating leaps, as the fateful train thundered in.

Sure enough, there was Miss Summerfield; and the fine-looking young man who helped her alight also took charge of her baggage.

Heaven have mercy! Were gossip and Joe Antrim right, after all? But pshaw! any chivalrous fellow traveler would have done as much.

Notwithstanding this plausible thought, Leigh slipped into the home-bound coach like a thief, taking the corner seat in the rear end of the car.

When Miss Summerfield came in, the terrible groom-to-be, to whom the bridal party had dwindled, even he, was not in attendance. Marie carried her own "grip."

The man felt a tremor of hope quiver all over him, something like an electric current. She took the third seat from the door and leaned her head on her hand wearily. A strange air for a bride, thought the man in the corner. He could not see her

face, but some way he felt that this New Year's Eve was not what she wished. O, was she in trouble, too? He had half a mind to go to her; the seat directly behind her was providentially empty; he could whisper "Marie" over the back of her seat when his courage warranted it.

At the next stop he took advantage of the stir of the passengers and slipped into the coveted groove. Blessed privilege! He had not been near, so near her for years, and his heart was on fire. When he could wait no longer, he whispered over the barrier: "Marie!"

She looked up, surprised and startled. After the confusion had left her lovely face, she gave him her hand gingerly and asked in strained tones: "How came you here, Mr. Reyburn?"

"I could not help it," he confessed, flushing, but looking straight at her. "I wanted to be near you once more. You don't know how miserable I am without you."

There was a world of emotion in the undertone, but he kept bravely on: "I came down to Rockland for nothing else than that I might get a glimpse of you. I felt it would comfort me to ride home in the same coach—to-night of all nights."

He stopped and looked at her in such a pitiful, hungry-hearted way. It was all out now, this confession of his. He meant to make it at the risk of everything before his heart failed him—and he had done so.

Of course she could do what she pleased with it, and him, too; he had staked and would win, or lose, all. Putting his elbow on the barrier and leaning a little toward her, he waited for her to speak. And her face was a study. Presently she gasped out: "Then you aren't to be married to-night?"

The interrogation snapped the last thread holding Leigh Reyburn's great love in reserve.

"Marie, darling! Could you—did you think—O, Heaven! as if I could love anyone but you! O, Marie!"

The whiteness of his face was terrible to see; but it all dawned upon her at once. "I—I—O, Leigh!"—she put out both her hands, and two great tears stole down her cheeks to finish the sentence more eloquently than words.

IS IN PANCAKE FORM.

New Process of Baling Hay Which Has Its Advantages.

Pressed in Layers into Bales Cylindrical in Form and About Size of a Nail Keg—Being Shipped to South Africa.

The baled hay that is being shipped from New York for the use of the British army in South Africa, and the American army in the Philippines is being compressed by a new process. The hay is put up in bales cylindrical in form, about the size and shape of the old fashioned nail keg, or 18 inches high and of the same diameter. When baled in this shape the hay is as hard as a board. The bales weigh about 145 pounds.

The hay is "handed out" in pancake form. The hay pancakes, or layers, which make up the bales, are about three-fourths of an inch thick. The most compact bale of hay put up by the old style requires about 160 cubic feet of space per ton. This new-fangled hay takes up only 50 cubic feet of space per ton.

A singular combination of circumstances is afforded at the baling plant in Brooklyn. The contractor is using Canadian hay, baled in the old square fashion, in Canada. The old bales are torn to pieces and fed into the top of the six new compressors. About half the product of the Brooklyn plant goes to South Africa for use in the army which is fighting the Boers, while the other half goes to Manila for use by Lawton and MacArthur's cavalry.

The good thing about this new bale is that a mule can carry two 112-pound bales, and after he is fed off them for two or three days, there is enough left for a cavalryman to use as a miniature rampart. The hay is packed so tight that a bullet would not go far into it. A mule can carry only one of the 145 pound bales. The greater number of bales shipped to South Africa weigh 112 pounds, the English hundredweight.

WILL HELP ARMY SURGEONS.

Surgeon General Sternberg Prepares Two Bills for Presentation to Congress.

Surgeon General Sternberg has prepared two bills intended to correct an injustice to volunteer and acting assistant surgeons in the army through a construction of law made by the comptroller. The first is an act for the relief of acting assistant surgeons.

It appears that under the comptroller's decision if one of these officers falls ill or is even shot or wounded in the line of duty his pay must cease during the period of his disability. To meet this ruling the surgeon general has prepared a bill conferring upon these officers the same rights and privileges as commissioned officers of the regular army and providing for the payment of their salaries during absence.

The other ruling of the comptroller is that notwithstanding the volunteer army act providing for the assignment of an assistant surgeon with the rank of captain to each regiment of volunteers such officers can only receive the pay of a lieutenant, this construction being based on a regular army requirement that medical officers shall serve five years in the grade of lieutenant before becoming entitled to a captain's pay. To meet this difficulty Surgeon General Sternberg has prepared a bill specifically providing for the payment of the salary of a captain, mounted, to such assistant surgeons.

THEY STAND TEST.

Automobile Fire Engines Are Successfully Used in an Experiment in Paris.

The cable dispatches announcing that automobiles had proven a success in connection with the fire department in New York finds an echo in Paris, where an electric hose cart, designed and constructed by the technical section of the Paris fire brigade under the direction of Capitaine Ingenieur Cordier, has stood the test of practical experience and is now working in admirable fashion. At several fires it arrived before engines and hose carts drawn by horses.

The fire department has ordered six other electric fire extinguishing machines of different models, including a hook and ladder and steam fire engines, which will be used should occasional demand in connection with the exposition in 1900.

The motive power of the hose cart now in use is supplied by an invention of MM. Bouquet, Garcon and Schiore, of Neuilly sur Seine.

Growth of the Telephone System.

It is stated that the close of this year will see 3,500 independent telephone exchanges in operation, having over 750,000 instruments. In 1880 there were under rental use in the country 69,873 telephones. One year later the number had increased to 132,692. In 1898 the number of telephones in use was over 1,000,000. In 1885 there was in use in the various systems and modes of building 137,223 miles of telephone wire. At the beginning of this year the mileage had increased to 1,158,000 miles. The use of the telephone is more common in the United States than in any other country.



HE WHISPERED: "MARIE."



HER VOICE SEEMED TO FALTER.



A Habit of His.