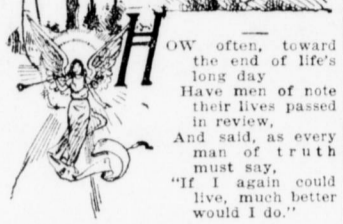


THE NEW YEAR



How often have they shown mistakes of theirs, Which they had made when in their youthful days; Thus warned their hearers, lest they'd not beware, So, fall into the error of their ways.

How often have these words gone unrecalled, Till death came staring at the open door; Then hearts have stood in terror, and, appalled, Too late repented of the sins of yore.

Bright youth afar from us may long have fled; Old eyes may be our only guides and charts; But still another year has softly sped, And finds us weak, with lowly, contrite hearts.

But now before us lies a snow-white path, For us to tarnish, trample, blacken as we will; Oh, give us strength, so when the year has passed, The road behind shall be the white path still.

—Giles Bishop, Jr., in Boston Budget.

A MODERN MIRACLE



It was the last day of the Old Year, London had recovered from its Christmas festivities—and their after effects—and was preparing to see the New Year in. In the misty hours of the December afternoon, two young men were gazing through the windows of a Piccadilly club at the people who were hurrying up and down that popular thoroughfare.

"Well, Densham," said the younger and darker of the two, "are you meditating any lofty and noble resolutions for the New Year?"

"I am afraid that is not much in my line," replied Lord Densham, in a slightly affected tone. "Why do you ask? Are you going to turn over a new leaf, as our spiritual pastors and masters call it?"

"I've turned over many new leaves," said Cecil Briarley, lightly; "but the same old tales, the same moth-eaten jokes of fate, seem to be written on all of them. No two years are the same, but they are all beastly similar."

"Ah, Briarley, I am thinking of making a great alteration," said Lord Densham, who was evidently in a communicative, though serious, mood.

"Really? Are you going to change your tailor, or only let your mustache grow?"

"Don't be flippant," said his lordship, in quite a melancholy tone. "The fact is, Briarley, old boy, I'm in a hole!"

"You in a hole. It's not money?"

"Of course not—it wouldn't be much use coming to you if it were, would it? No. I'm going to get married." This was drawled out slowly and with a deep sigh, as though the speaker felt he was making some mighty self-sacrifice for the benefit of humanity.

"I thought you looked jolly blue about something; but wherefore the hole?" asked Briarley. "Nobody compels you."

"My dear boy, everybody compels me," said Densham, gazing thoughtfully at his white and well-kept hands and finger nails, and adding, pathetically: "Of course, you don't know what it is to be highly eligible."

"No," replied Briarley, with a grim smile.

"But unfortunately I shall have to marry in self-defense," proceeded his lordship, taking no notice of his friend's remark. "It is sickening to feel that you are being run after by all the girls and all their match-making mammas."

"Poor, poor Densham!" murmured Briarley. "No wonder you are in a hole."

"Yes, but the worst of it is that I've fixed on two girls, and I can't for the life of me decide which of them to have."

"And who are the favored couple between whom Paris the Second has to judge?"

"One is Daisy Molyneux—the lively little thing with the blue eyes and the good figure, you know. Of course, she is very jolly and awfully fond of me—"

"Yes; and the other?"

"The other is Sybil Castlemaine."

"Who?"

"Sybil Castlemaine, your—er—second cousin, isn't she?"

"Good heavens!" muttered Briarley. "What did you say?"

"Nothing. Do you think Sybil cares for you?"

"I am afraid there is not much doubt of it, old man," said his lordship, mournfully, as he languidly stroked his clean-shaven chin. "I used to fancy you were rather fond of her at one time, but, of course, it is impossible."

"Utterly!"

"Well, look here, old chap, I shouldn't ask everybody, but which of the two girls do you advise me to have?"

"Can't you have both?" asked Cecil, rather savagely.

"Now, come on, old fellow, give me your honest opinion. They're both

nice, loving little girls, and it's an awful bore to have to choose. Which would you ask?"

"Well," said Briarley, slowly, and with a bitterness his companion did not appear to see, "it certainly is incredible that any girl could refuse the honor and privilege of being Lisa Densham, wearing the Densham diamonds and sharing the Densham celebrity. The only wonder is that you have been permitted to enjoy your liberty for so long. I should advise you to have Daisy Molyneux."

"Not your cousin?"

"No; she would not suit you nearly as well as Miss Molyneux would."

"Thanks, awfully, old chap; I only just needed an impartial opinion like yours to help me to decide. I'll propose to Daisy to-night; she is going to be at Lady Vivyan's dance, and so is Sybil, so I can get it settled either way. Will you be there?"

"Yes, I expect so."

"Right, then I shall see you later."

As Cecil Briarley watched the retreating figure of the wealthy and coroneted friend who was so overburdened with unsought affections, and didn't know which of the two maidens he really loved, he summed up the situation in one word, which he muttered very low, and with heartfelt sincerity. No one heard it, but it is safe to conjecture that it was a syllable of most emphatic disapproval.

Lady Vivyan's rooms presented a gray and brilliant scene that evening. To welcome the new year with dancing and revelry, with music and mirth, was perhaps typical of the giddy social whirl in which hostess and guests revolved in their more or less important positions; but, after all, every day, every hour, start a new year, and it is only sentiment and commercial convenience that settles one particular chime as marking the commencement of another circle.

Lord Densham arrived early. He was



"NOW, TAKE ME, FOR EXAMPLE," HE WENT ON.

attired with his usual care and correctness, and he wore, also, an air of determination that suited him very well. It displaced the appearance of indifference and listlessness which usually make the hereditary legislator look limp and flabby. He speedily discovered that both Daisy Molyneux and Sybil Castlemaine had come, and with a sigh of relief to think that his decision was at last made, he proceeded to seek out Miss Molyneux that he might acquaint her with the honor he proposed to do her.

It was considerably later when Cecil Briarley arrived. He was not in the best of spirits, and did not intend to do much dancing. One of the first persons he noticed was his own cousin.

"What, Sybil—you not dancing?"

"How are you, Cecil? No; I haven't been here long."

"Shall we sit down somewhere until some one comes and claims you?"

"By all means; it is quite a long time since I have had the chance of talking to you, Cecil."

"Have you never heard of Tantalus?" asked her cousin, as he led her to a secluded corner.

"Who was he? An ancient god, wasn't he?" replied Miss Castlemaine. "Was he a relative of Bacchus. The spirit dancers are named after him."

"No," said Cecil, very seriously. "He was a young man who longed for a certain prize, and it was just out of his reach."

"And this is apropos of what?" inquired Sybil.

"Tantalus would have been happier if his prize had been out of his sight as well as out of his reach."

"Why can't you talk like a rational being, Cecil?"

"I only wanted to say that in order to escape the madness of Tantalus, I have been letting my prize go out of sight. They are waltzing very nicely," he added, drawing her attention to one of the couples who were floating near them.

"Lord Densham and Daisy Molyneux?"

"Yes. Densham's a nice fellow, isn't he?"

"Ye-es. I suppose one would hardly call him shy or modest, would one?"

Her merry brown eyes looked up into his, but they didn't find any responsive twinkle.

"He has no need for modesty; he knows his worth."

"Every bit of it!" said Sybil.

"Yes; but when a fellow like that can choose any girl he likes—when he knows they are all like pretty apples asking to be plucked, it is enough to make him conceited."

"And other fellows jealous?" added Sybil, mischievously

"Yes, and other fellows jealous."

"And I suppose none of the pretty apples can be strong enough to refuse to fall into his hand?"

"It would be a modern miracle if they did."

"Then, perhaps, the age of miracles has not yet gone," said Sybil, nodding gayly to him, as Lady Vivyan came up and introduced a new partner to her.

A little later Briarley was trying to soothe his feelings with a cigarette in the smoking-room when Lord Densham came up to him.

"I say, old chap, a funny thing has happened. She has refused me."

"Who has?"

"Why, Daisy Molyneux."

"By Jove! Were any signs of insanity ever noticed in the family before?" asked Cecil.

"No, I believe not," answered the peer, frowning, as usual, to see any sarcasm in the question. "I tried to point out to her what it meant, but she stuck to it. Nice little girl, too."

"Well, I'm awfully sorry, Densham, really I am."

"It doesn't matter so very much; Miss Castlemaine is here, isn't she? You see, I can ask her, and get it settled."

"Of course you can," said Cecil, with a trace of bitterness in his tone.

"I think I'll go and find her. I'm rather sorry I wasted my time over that other silly girl, but it was your advice. Anyway, it makes my choice much easier."

As he walked off Cecil Briarley watched him, and although he was not a man given to the use of bad language it is a lamentable fact that a little word before referred to slipped with terrible earnestness from his lips.

When Lord Densham suggested to Sybil Castlemaine that they should sit the dance out in the conservatory, she saw that he meant to propose to her, and his lordship perceived that, under the circumstances, there was nothing to be gained by beating about the bush.

Cecil Briarley. He was about to walk past them when Sybil said:

"Oh, Cecil, here you are! You're just in time."

Densham yielded her up with his customary smile, and Cecil whispered:

"I was not going to claim you for this dance; I thought you would prefer to sit it out with him."

"With him? Why?"

"I—er—I believe he has a question he wants to ask you."

"I don't think he has," said Sybil, quietly.

They were about to join the dancers when it was announced that the mystic midnight moment had almost arrived, and those who cared to do so were to go to the open windows and on the doorsteps and the balconies, to listen and wait for the solemn peal that was to mark the annual commencement.

Briarley got a wrap to throw over his cousin's shoulders, and then they went to the further corner of the long balcony.

It was a clear, frosty night, and the stars and the moon were shining with a brightness that, reflected in the hoar frost on the grass and trees, illuminated the dark hour with a soft, poetic light. Cecil stood silently by Sybil's side for some seconds, and then he whispered:

"And is the beautiful night making you thoughtful, too?"

"No," said Sybil, with her face turned a little from him. "No, I was thinking of Tantalus."

"Ah, poor Tantalus!" sighed Cecil. "I hope you pity him."

"I don't think I do," responded his cousin, softly, feeling glad that the shadows hid her blushing cheek. "Perhaps his prize was not so far out of reach as he imagined."

Cecil may not have been rich in this world's goods, but he was not poor in imagination.

"Sybil, didn't Densham ask you anything?" he whispered.

"Yes, Cecil, and—and—I performed a modern miracle."

"My darling!" and then there was silence.

"Sybil, you know I am not a rich man, and I am not a lord."

"And you are not horribly conceited and selfish, either, dear."

He did not remove his arm, and a sudden hush of expectancy quieted the chattering party. Nothing was heard for a moment, and then from a dozen clanging clockalls around them boomed forth the solemn chime that announced the birth of the New Year.

One, two, three—ten, 11, 12.

"Sybil," whispered Briarley, "the old tarnished years are gone. Here's to the golden future."—Household Words.

A HARMLESS EARTHQUAKE.

How the Recently Arrived Schmidt Family Ushered in the New Year.

In the St. Nicholas, Helen A. Hawley tells the story of a harmless, unnecessary earthquake. It was five minutes to 12 on the last night of the old year. One would suppose that at five minutes to 12 every small boy and every small girl would be in bed and, what is more, asleep hours ago. Here were Mr. Schmidt and Mrs. Schmidt, who were grown up, so that was well enough; but here were nine little Schmidts, and they were all wide awake at this late hour. Peter Schmidt and Hans Schmidt were twins. There was Greta Schmidt, there was Louise Schmidt—but dear me! It is too much to give all their names. Two pairs of twins make four, and five who weren't twins—four and five make nine little Schmidts. And Papa and Mamma Schmidt, and there were 11 in the family. Why were they all up and dressed at so late an hour? To explain, they were just from Germany—not that very day, but only a few weeks from the "Faderland;" and now they lived in a tenement house in a great city. It was not one of the very, very poor tenements, but fairly comfortable. They had not learned new ways yet, but did everything as they had done in the home land.

It was funny to see them at five minutes to 12 on the last night of the old year. Papa Schmidt and Mamma Schmidt stood each one on a chair, each one bent over ready to spring, but with chin raised, and every eye on the clock. It seemed as if that minute hand never would get over the last five minutes. When the clock struck 12, they jumped to the floor all together, as hard as ever they could, and shouted: "Glueckliches Neu Jahr!" as loud as ever they could. They called it "jumping into the New Year." It was what they used to do in Germany. Now, Papa Schmidt and Mamma Schmidt were really heavy, and the little Schmidts were by no means thin. The tenement house, though comfortable, was by no means new, and when they all came down hard it made things shake.

THE WORSE OFF.



"De man dat makes New Year resolutions 'em accidentally breaks 'em," said Uncle Eben, "ain't nigh as bad off as de man dat 'magines he doesn't need none."—Washington Star.

THE MORNING OF THE YEAR



IN THE evanescent beauty of a winter morning's glow Come the footsteps of the New Year o'er the light and fleecy snow. And a happy welcome soundeth from the steeply-guarded chimneys And prophesy the joyful bells the dawn of better times;

In the splendor of the morning, e'er the stars have vanished quite, When the earth awaits her bridal in her robes of spotless white, And the millions watch impatient while the holy bells they hear, From the orient, old in story, comes again the glad New Year.

The old year passes slowly, like a vision of the night, With its ever-shedding sorrows and its pleasures dimly bright. In its footsteps all around us lie a people's tears imparted, And its dark and silent passage is the joy of all the world;

Let the bells that ring its going greet the infant New Year's birth, May its dawn proclaim an era that shall brighten all the earth; Let every land beneath the sun from trouble find release, And read upon its brow the sign of universal peace.

Columbia greets the New Year with a welcome fair to see, And brighter glow the stars that gem the banner of the free; To the future that it brings us, to the days that come apace, We trust the mighty destiny that doth invest our race;

In the flush of its dawning we can see a grander fame Than that whose hale glid-to-day our country's deathless name; In the brightness and the beauty of the year's initial morn Beneath the flag our fathers gave a newer day is born.

Hail the year's auspicious dawning! let all strife and evil cease, May every sword be buried 'neath the blended bloom of peace, May every son of freedom stand erect to-day and hear

With lifted soul the chimes that ring the morning of the year; From far Alaska's whitened coast to where the waving pines Their shadows shed where nobly stood the serried battle lines, From Maine's immortal surges with their legends still untold

To where the Sacramento cleaves a paradise of gold, Ring out, O chimes, your gladness, let rejoicing rule the land, God holds the New Year's blessings in the hollow of His hand; He hath guarded well our country from the days of long ago

When knelt the Pilgrim Fathers in the New Year's fleecy snow; Each year hath brought us grandeur, and the one before us now Will set another star of fame upon Columbia's brow;

Behold! with added glory now the nation doth appear, In the bright and matchless splendor of the dawning of the year.

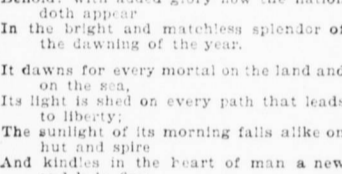
It dawns for every mortal on the land and on the sea, Its light is shed on every path that leads to liberty; The sunlight of its morning falls alike on but and spire

And kindles in the heart of man a new and holy fire; Lo! it marches to the anthem that the Choir Immortal sings, And every tongue may prophesy the blessings that it brings;

From east to west, from north to south throughout our country dear Let the proudest and the humblest greet the dawning of the year.

T. C. HARRBAUGH.

NOTHING LEFT TO TURN OVER.



He—But I'm going to turn over a new leaf. She—You've done that so often that there can't be any leaves left to turn.—Collier's Weekly.

A Natural Mistake.

Young Post (to friend)—Well, Charley, I've sworn off.

Friend (enthusiastically)—I'm heartily glad of it, old boy; and all your friends will feel the same. Let's go and have a drink.

Young Post—Didn't I just tell you I had sworn off drinking?

Friend (disappointed)—You didn't say you had sworn off drinking poetry. Good-bye.—N. Y. Tribune

The New Year.

Love's harmonies flow toward him full and sweet; Sin's wild, discordant cries are past him hurled; With sad, glad heart and brave, reluctant feet He steps upon the threshold of the world.—Judge.

None to Turn Over.

"I thought you were going to turn over a new leaf, John," she said.

"I was," he replied, "but I find I can't."

"Why not?"

"There won't be any new leaves until spring."—Chicago Post.

Merely an Official Form.

He wished me a happy New Year; The words would have tickled me, but I knew from his hesitating tone I was booked for a salary cut.—Chicago Record.

JOHN HOBBS' ERROR.

How it Helped Him to Break a Cast-Iron Resolution.

IT was the eve of the New Year. In one short hour the bells would peal for the birth of 1900.

John Hobbs, lawyer and notary public, sat in his office thinking, for he had much to think of. Eighteen hundred and ninety-nine had been what he called a "corker." In other words, it had been vastly unsatisfactory.

He was young and handsome, and the poorest lawyer in the city, both as to finance and legal ability. And he rightly attributed this dual poverty to a pair of brown eyes. Had he devoted as much of 1899 to the study of law as he had to those brown eyes, he would have progressed vastly in legal lore.

"And, by Jove!" he cried, bringing down his fist, "I will not waste another minute on the little coquette! I have let her play hob with me long enough, and to-night I draw the line and dismiss the case!"

Having said which, he took up his pen and wrote the following ironclad resolution:

"Chicago, Jan. 1, 1899. "I hereby resolve and promise during this year just arrived to have nothing whatever to do with Anita Sara Atkins."

Having written this, he appended the following:

"I, John Hobbs, having appeared before me, John Hobbs, a notary public for the county of Cook, state of Illinois, do most solemnly swear that I will keep the above resolution. JOHN HOBBS."

To this he affixed his notarial seal, and taking 50 cents from his right pocket, paid it to himself, and put it in his left pocket.



AFFIXING HIS SEAL.

The clock struck twelve. John Hobbs immediately underwent a revulsion of feeling. He felt that life itself would be worthless without Anita.

"But I have sworn it," he said, "and it would be perjury to think of her now!"

But suddenly a gleam of joy lightened his face.

"By Jove!" he cried, "this resolution is null and void! There is a technical error in it! I have succumbed to the inevitable force of habit, and dated it 1899, instead of 1900! Anita, my darling, I am free!"

With a cry of joy he coiled the sworn resolve into a lighter, and lighted his pipe with it.

Some people swear when they date everything incorrectly on the first day of a new year. As for John Hobbs, he only smiles. They will be married in June.

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER.

THE GLAD NEW YEAR.

its Advent is Marked by Various Customs in Many Lands.

MORE attention is paid to New Year's in our national capital, Washington, than in any other city in the United States. The stir levee at the white house is but the beginning of the calling that continues throughout the afternoon and well into the night in official and private houses. In fact, the social season is formally inaugurated on New Year's day. It is grand rallying day, and men call then who never emerge from their shell again during the year. Lists are published in the newspapers of the houses where receptions will be held, with the names of the assisting women. The latter often attract more callers than the hostess, and newly arrived families are on the lookout for popular women for their receptions. The affairs are conducted with lavish southern hospitality. Tables are loaded with viands—real southern egg-nog or bowls of Fish House punch mixed by a well-guarded formula, an heirloom in the family, is served. It is a gala day for Washington, and it is well it comes but once a year.

New Year's day is made much of in Europe, and in some countries its celebration is on a more elaborate scale than Christmas. Gifts are exchanged with reckless abandon, recalling the days of feudalism, when every landlord presented his tenant with a fat capon. An orange stuck with cloves was the common gift of poor people. Among the rich, gloves were a popular present, and often a sum of money, called glove money, served as a substitute. When pins were invented they took the place of gloves, and every woman was proud of her collection of pins made from thorns, bone, silver, gold or steel. The expression, pin money, was originally used to designate the money often presented in lieu of the pins for their purchase. Under good Queen Bess the custom of giving presents on New Year's was at its high water mark, and the most extravagant packages were distributed anonymously with no inscription but a verse expressing greetings.

According to an old superstition, one's luck for the year is dependent on the complexion of the first man who calls. If he is a blonde, fate will be kind, but if a dark-complexioned man steps over the threshold first, sickness, trouble and financial disaster are apt to stay with him. So firmly was this superstition implanted in the mind of an elderly woman that she made arrangements every year by which her first caller was sure to be of a light complexion.

The holiday revels in England end with Twelfth Night. In America they are drawn to a close with the New Year celebration. The stripping of the Christmas tree, which properly takes place New Year's Eve, is frequently made the excuse for a jolly party. There is very likely to be a package on the tree to each one present, containing a joke that will be as good-natured as it is amusing.

Drink His Only Solace Now.

"Yes, I'll swear off on New Year's day," he said, "if my neighbor's kid'll swear off from trying to learn to play His everlasting fiddle."—Chicago Tribune.