



SOME NEW YEAR THOUGHTS.

THE PAST IS MERELY THE EXPRESSION OF THE LIVING PRESENT.

COMMEMORATION of the beginning of the year is sentimental, purely, since the first day of January makes no special epoch in history, nor is it the anniversary of the birth or death of any hero.

In looking for the beginning of this practice, one must go into the prehistoric past, for New Year is the most ancient of all the days which men have set apart for special distinction.

The day, then, neither a festival nor a fast; not one to keep alive the fires of patriotism, as the Fourth of July, or to bear in remembrance, as Christmas, the sublime life of a Christ, is, nevertheless, universally observed, because at one time it did stand for a most beautiful sentiment—the revivifying of nature.

Thus was it with the Chaldean, oldest of the civilized peoples, whence came Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation. They were as puzzled as moderns are over the mystery of death, and that greater mystery, life.

They knew their god lived and was pleased with his people. They broke forth into rejoicing which lasted many days. There was worship in the temples and the groves, and infinite gladness everywhere.

The New Year observance, then, is the survival of a day beyond the period of its effective use. Once a sublime object lesson, it remains solely as a record of the beginning of a new year, arbitrarily fixed by man.

Yet, as to the ancient, so to the modern, New Year teaches, after all, the same lesson. It tells that the old year is dead, and the New Year is born.

WILLIAM ROSSER COBBE.

CAN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE.



"Mamie," asked Mrs. Benham, "why do so many men reform and give up their bad habits at New Year's?"

McGorry (carpingly)—Them makers av almanacs hev got to be die t'raats, bedad!

McGorry—Make ut out? Here, now: We hev cold weather New Year's day, an' do they give us even a brith av frost on the fourt' av July, phwin our tongues are hangin' out wid the heat? Not so's yez cud notice ut, bedad!

Not a Procrastinator.

"I shall not wait till New Year's to turn over a new leaf," said young Hoopler. "My grandmother sent me a Bible for a Christmas present, and I shrewdly suspect that the dear old lady has hidden a few banknotes in it."

Go Slow.

Rather Discouraging.

Should Be Perfectly Happy.

ONE NEW YEAR'S RESOLVE.

BECAUSE SHE KEPT IT, ONE WOMAN'S LIFE WAS MADE MISERABLE.

"I'll never make another New Year's resolve as long as I live," sighed the hostess.

"H'm! Suppose you failed to keep yours?" replied the guest. "Pshaw; if you had, you'd have been wearing wings instead of furs and a halo rather than a picture hat."

"I kept mine, but it gave me a lot of trouble. You see, it was the first New Year's since my marriage, and I felt it necessary to turn over a very white new leaf, so I resolved—"

"Never to tell another fib? Then I hope Anne did not ask you if her new gown was becoming."

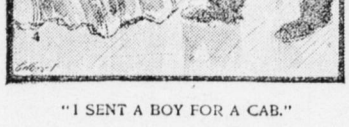
"I did not—neither did she. If she had, I would have at least told her that it was more becoming than the last one. I resolved to give up society and devote my time to charity. It is really so difficult to induce Arthur to go anywhere that I—"

"Might as well have the credit of giving it up voluntarily. Still, if you cried each time that he refused, he would bring you candy and flowers, and—"

"And spend so much money on them that I'd have to give up a hat or two, besides having my complexion spoiled by the candy."

"Not to mention the doctor's bill, if it made you ill. See?"

"Nor the fact that I'd have to take the medicine! No, I resolved to devote myself



"I SENT A BOY FOR A CAB."

to good deeds—I always did like giving advice."

"Was Arthur delighted?"

"I suppose so. He was reading his paper when I told him. It is queer, but that absorbs him as much as curling my hair absorbs me."

"Men are so queer. Did you really keep your resolve?"

"H'm; I gave a silk waist that came from Paris to a woman with three starving children and even showed her how to make it fit her. Then I went to see a blind woman who lived in an alley, and took her a bunch of roses and a lovely embroidered doiley. And there was Elaine, who never did a thing for anybody; I told her she ought to be ashamed, when I was devoting myself to the poor."

"And was she?"

"No. She remarked that I was wearing a new fur boa, and that I was evidently not depriving myself of imported hats. I told her that I had to set the poor a good example in neatness."

"True. But—"

THE TURNING OF A LEAF.

MR. SIMPLETON TURNED IT, BUT DIDN'T KEEP IT TURNED.

NOTICE that to-day is the first of January," remarked Mr. Wimpleton, as he unfolded the breakfast napkin. "The day has set me to thinking that I had better revive my boyhood's habit and make the resolve to turn over a new leaf."

"In the past, I—"

"Now, you are not going to resolve to help the poor by giving away all your second-best clothes, are you?" said his wife, apprehensively.

"You did that once, I remember, and had to shovel the snow off the front pavement in your best suit."

"I have done nothing of the kind," hastily replied her liege. "The fact is that I have not been as kind a husband in the past as I might have been, and—"

"Oh, I guess you've been as good as the average," responded his wife, calmly.

"No, I have not, my dear, that is merely your gentle, wifely way of putting it. I know that I have often displayed great temper when the provocation was slight, but in future you shall have no cause for complaint."

"Well, of course, you were very unpleasant about those bills, Nathaniel. I thought at the time that you never behaved in that way before we were married, and—"

"Displayed some temper, did I? No wonder. An angel on a tombstone would have displayed temper over such extravagance as that. Did you expect me to remain as quiet as a—as a gingerbread baby while I was robbed by a lot of—However, in future I shall do it, since you are so anxious."

"You are sure that you are not ill, are you, dear? The doctor said—"

"Never better in my life. I have merely seen the error of my ways and resolved to mend them in time. When I think of the terrible fits of anger to which I have sometimes given way, I—"

"Well, I was afraid that the last cook would make trouble because of the things you said to her about the biscuits, still—"

"The things I said, eh? Let me tell you, Sarah Wimpleton, that many a man would have deserted his wife for less than that. If I did make a few slight remarks I was fully justified, I can tell you. However, it shall never happen again."

"I am glad to hear it, dear. Now that I think of it, I feel very badly over your quarrel with the people next door, and your feud with the iceman, and the things you said about the cigars I bought you at Christmas were—but what is the matter?"

"The matter is this, madam; I shall not remain here to be insulted. I am the most patient and long-suffering of men, but even I will not stand this. I shall be at home late this evening, if you send me a note of apology in the interval for this unprovoked attack upon me!" The banging of the front door put an impressive period to the sentence.

"And all," said Mrs. Wimpleton, shaking her head at the clock, "all because he had decided to turn over a new leaf on New Year's day!"

Greeting to the New Year.

Hail, glad New Year! We do not ask Our woes you should disperse. We merely urge this simple task— Pray do not make them worse.

The Simple Fact.

Stuyvesant—Going to turn over a new leaf, New Year's day, old man?

Schermerhorn—No, going to turn over the same old leaf.—Brooklyn Eagle.

THE DYING YEAR.

Now the year is sinking slowly, Sinking to its last long sleep, And the passing hours seem holy, While we turn aside and weep.

Like a friend about to leave us, Very precious still it seems; All too honest to deceive us, Though made up of transient dreams.

Yet those dreams are interwoven With the fabric of our souls, And in passing they have proven Life is real as it unrolls.

O the year of tears and laughter, Shade and sunshine, calm and storm, Passing on, while we come after Vainly searching for its form.

Still that form, so feeble, lingers Like a pilgrim by the sea, And it points with trembling fingers Toward the unsolved mystery.

O how lovely in its dying Is the year so gray and old, While the wintry winds are sighing O'er a new grave in the mold.

By that grave with open portal, Thoughtfully we stand and wait Till the old year, like a mortal, Sinks beneath the walls of fate.

From that grave we come rejoicing At the breaking of the morn; In these words our gladness voicing: "Lo! another year is born!" —G. W. Crofts, in Chicago Inter Ocean.

THE UNEXPECTED

By MARY A. SAWYER.

Dear me!" Mrs. Hamilton rose swiftly from her seat at the sewing-machine and hurried into the hall to answer the telephone bell.

"Dear me!" she said, again. "It is so vexatious, when I told him this morning that we had plenty of cold meat, partridges are dear now, too, for they are out of season. And I did want to get this dress of Gracie's done before dark."

She stitched for a few moments longer. Then gathering up her work she folded it away in her large work basket.

"If I am to cook partridges for supper, I must have a coal fire. So," glancing at the clock, "I must get it under way at once. William is always punctual when he is bringing home any thing he especially likes for his supper."

She reproached herself for this remark almost instantly. "Of course he likes a variety; why shouldn't he have it when he works hard to supply all our needs? He grudges me nothing—why should I be vexed over this little extra cooking?"

Her annoyance was but temporary, therefore, and when she heard her husband's step in the hall she ran to the foot of the stairs and called to him cheerfully:

"Bring your partridges down here, William. I'm all ready for them, and the fire is burning splendidly."

Receiving no reply she went back into the kitchen. He had not heard her, but he would be down directly, she said to herself. She went into the dining-room and turned the gas higher. He might come through it, and it would not do for him to stumble against the table.

A few moments later her husband joined her. His voice was cold.

"Why are you down here?" he said, in a displeased tone.

"I wanted to be all ready for your partridges. Where are they?"

"My partridges? What do you mean? When did I say anything about partridges?"

"Not two hours ago. You called me up, and said you would bring home partridges for supper. And so I came down to have everything in readiness. They can't be cooked in a moment."

"You will not be troubled by them to-night. I said nothing about partridges."

"You certainly did."

"You are mistaken."

"I heard you distinctly. You said—"

"I said I intended to bring home Partridge, George Partridge. And I must say I expected to find you upstairs instead of pottering around down here."

"You must explain my mistake to him. He is a sensible man. He will understand why I was not there to receive him."

Mr. Hamilton's face relaxed a little. "Partridges! Partridges! I can't think how you could confound the two!" he said.

"I thought I understood you, but never mind now. You must go back upstairs at once. Send the children down in a few moments, please. I'm afraid they are not quite tidy."

"Tidy!" in a voice which brought a swift color into his wife's cheeks—"tidy! Well, moving toward the door, 'I'll send them down and you must get off that calico dress."

"I'll change it before I see him. Go up and stay with him, do! I must alter the table and get up a different meal altogether."

"It seems as if a man never could bring home his friends and find things as they ought to be," muttered Mr. Hamilton, leaving the room in evident ill-temper.

At the close of the evening, after the departure of the guest, it became plain to Mrs. Hamilton that his displeasure had not been materially lessened by the appetizing supper she had prepared, nor by the pains she had taken with her own personal appearance. He stopped suddenly before her, after pacing up and down the room.

to Mrs. Hamilton. She controlled herself by a great effort.

"I would like to read. I would like to be a thoroughly well-read woman. But with the house and the children and the sewing and the cooking, I really cannot get the time."

"Fudge! Nonsense! Where there is a will, there is a way."

"Not always."

Mr. Hamilton resumed his restless pacing of the room. "I'd find time to know something about my own country, I guess!" he declared.

Mrs. Hamilton left the room quietly. There was still an hour's work to be done downstairs, she said.

"Fudge! Nonsense!" retorted her husband.

A few evenings later Mr. Hamilton came home to his supper at the usual hour. He opened the door with his latchkey and found himself in an unlighted hall.

"Clara!" he called.

"Yes. What is it?"

"The gas isn't lighted, and the hall is as dark as a pocket!"

No response came from the sewing-room at the end of the hall, from which a faint stream of light issued. Stumbling toward it Mr. Hamilton uttered an exclamation of surprise as he pushed the door open. In the one large easy chair sat his wife. Upon the table beside her was a shaded lamp. In her hand was a large book, and upon its pages her eyes were fixed. She did not look up when he entered the room and walked up to the table.

After a moment's stealthy scrutiny of her face he turned away. He went back into the hall and struck a match noisily, and lighted the gas. Then, feeling his way, he went downstairs. Instead of the bright, cheerful dining-room, with the table attractively spread for the evening meal, he found darkness.

Uttering a purposely loud exclamation of disgust, he went into the kitchen. Here, too, was darkness. Striking several matches, he at last succeeded in reaching the gas. He rubbed his eyes when the strong light filled the room. In the sink were the breakfast dishes, unwashed; on the tables were plates of broken food; on the stove were the unwashed kettles and pans.

Mr. Hamilton strode through the cold room and called to his wife.

"Clara! What has happened down here? Has the range given out? Where is supper?"

No reply came. He hurried upstairs, breathing heavily.

"Clara, what's the matter?" Mrs. Hamilton turned a page and read with absorbed attention.

"Clara!" shouted her husband from the doorway.

She looked at him for a moment.

"Not so loud, please!" she said, returning to her book.

"What's the matter? Clara, I say, what has happened to the range?"

Mrs. Hamilton turned another page. A sudden fear seized upon her husband. Insanity! She had lost her senses!

He stole softly across the carpet and grasped the book she held.

"Don't!" she said. "Pray go away. You are interrupting me."

"Clara! Are you sick, or are you crazy?"

"Sick? No. Go away, do. I am so interested."

Her tone was natural. Mr. Hamilton discarded his momentary theory of insanity. His voice became more imperative.

"It is supper time! Where are the children? Where is the supper? Clara," loudly, "where is the supper?"

Mrs. Hamilton partially closed her book and looked at him.

"The supper? You said the supper?"

"I did!"

"Well," yawning, "I suppose it is getting late, but I must finish this book. I don't care about food, but I do want to know who succeeded to the throne after—"

"The throne be hanged!" interrupted Mr. Hamilton. "Where are the children?"

"The children? Let me see. Oh, I remember! You'll find them at your sister's. I—"

Year well by giving me bread and milk to-night. The children will like it, and so will their father."

Mr. Hamilton went after the children presently. As he passed a church he saw a multitude of people entering it.

"The Old Year out—the New Year in!" he thought.

He walked on with new purposes forming in his mind. The New Year should be different from the Old—there should be more time found for the enjoyment of life. Things should be made easier for his wife; they would make life higher and holier. It should be a New Year—a year of love to God and love to man.

He spoke of these thoughts, that were stirring him so strangely, that evening. He was alone with his wife. She listened with sympathetic interest. She said little, but her few words satisfied and cheered him.

He arose and stood by the window when the clocks rang out the year. Soon the worshippers in the churches filled the streets. Something of the solemnity of the hour passed from them to him. He looked up into the deep mysterious realm of starry space, and a strange new sense of companionship came to him. He found himself repeating words long half-forgotten: "If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee. The Lord is thy keeper."

Presently the sound of footsteps in the street died away. All was still again.

"The Old Year out! The New Year in!" he said. "Thank God for the desire to make it a better year!"

His heart was full as he turned away from the window.

The vision of the past grieved him sorely, but again he was comforted. "The Lord is thy keeper. He that keepeth thee will not slumber."—Zion's Herald.

HANDELS MONDAY.

"Gift" Day Is Universally Celebrated by Peasantry of Great Britain.

The first Monday of the New Year is universally celebrated by the peasantry and trade people of Scotland, of parts of Ireland and of the north of England, as Handseil, or "gift," Monday, says the New York Tribune.

On this day tips or small gifts were expected by servants, as well as by the postman, the deliverers of the newspaper, the scavenger and all persons who waited upon the house.

The word "handseil" is an old Saxon word which means "to deliver into the hand." It refers to the first sale of the New Year or of the day, as well as to the first gift of the New Year.

In some parts of Ireland and Scotland there is considerable merry contention in putting off all payments, however trivial, that come on this day until the next, it being considered unlucky to pay out money on this day.

On the other hand, there is special demand for such money, as money received on Handseil Monday is supposed to insure a full purse all the rest of the year.

After a somewhat riotous period of spending money Handseil Monday called for a sudden stop in all expenditures, and probably was a prudent check upon what had often become by this time reckless extravagance.

A vast number of people in this land of plenty buy a great many things which are of no practical use to them, and spend money otherwise in foolish ways. The people who do this are not those with plethora pocketbooks, but those who can least afford to be wasteful.

New Year's day is usually a day for good resolutions, and there is no resolution more common than one which calls for a general retrenchment of expenditures.

As a people, we are generous to a fault, and a vast amount of unhappiness in the household as well as actual crime can be traced to imprudence in money matters. It is a wise thing to have a day which calls attention to the number of things which we can easily do without, if for any special reason we are desirous to avoid spending all money.

There is little danger that it will make niggards. Comfort and happiness depend as much upon prudence in giving and spending when we cannot afford to spend as they do upon being properly open-hearted and generous.

Custom Largely Due to Dutch.

The custom of celebrating New Year's day in our country is largely due to the Dutch. Old Peter Stuyvesant made much of the day, and cheery assemblages were held at the governor's home, at New Amsterdam. The Dutch method of kissing the women for "A Happy New Year," was observed, and toll taken of all who were young and handsome. In fact, during the reign of Peter Stuyvesant New Amsterdam was the most thoroughly bekked country in all Christendom, and formed a marked contrast to the staid Puritans, who thought the observance of this day savored strongly of reverence for the god Janus, and who made no note of their first New Year's day in the new world, save to record: "We went to work betimes."

The Jewish New Year.

New Year's day was not regarded as a Christian festival until the year 487, and there is little mention of it until 1550, and when it was included in the liturgy. Most countries celebrate New Year's day on January 1, but the Hebrews celebrate theirs in September, for they arrange their calendar according to the new moon, and as their months are either 29 or 30 days long, New Year's with them is a movable holiday.