

A New Year's Bureau of Chivalry

By MILTON MARKS



ENTLEMEN, it is New Year's Eve! And furthermore, on general principles I believe that the time has come when the honor of our club demands that severally and jointly we shall devote our bachelor energies to the neglected cause of chivalry."

The speaker brought his fist down with such a thump upon the table at his elbow that a glass that had stood too near the edge rolled off and broke in bits upon the hearth tiling. Each occupant of the club room started perceptibly in his easy chair. Nervous Mr. Emmet Keene dropped his newspaper in alarm. Solemn, dark-eyed Mr. Warren Gloom forgot to light his cigar, and held the lighted match in his hand until it burned the ends of his long, lank fingers. Ex-Alderman Samuel Hiller tortured his face with one of his homely, laconic smiles and stroked his chin with aggravating cautiousness. These and all the other occupants of the room directed their attention to the speaker, Gen. Friesbie Wiggins, and waited for him to continue. That he was in earnest was apparent at a glance. His rather fleshy face was flushed, his tuft of chin whiskers showed some signs of agitation and his eyes had a look of kindly seriousness.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "you have read the newspapers. You are well aware of the great stir which has followed the appeal of that admirable club woman, Mrs. Dexter Bloom, for protection for the members of her sex who have occasion to walk alone amid the dangers and inequities of our city streets. Could any sensible man be insensible to such an appeal? I speak with all seriousness, Mr. Hiller. I believe that the time has come for us as individuals and as a club to act. There is more in this matter than the newspaper humorists see. In spite of the fact that we are bachelors, I believe we stand ever for the best interests of woman—"

"Because we are bachelors, I should say, Gen. Wiggins," remarked Mr. Hiller, with a grimace.

"We stand, I say," resumed the general, "for the best interests of woman-kind. Indeed, for a quarter century the Bachelor club has never been before to lend its influence to any warfare against that which does not make for a better and a safer city. Again, the time has come for action. There has been some talk of establishing a bureau that shall supply maiden ladies of good character with reliable and agreeable escorts. The idea is taken humorously, but is there not something in it worthy of thoughtful attention, even the attention of—the Bachelor club?"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mr. Keene. "Bravo!" echoed the other members, who had now gathered in an amused and admiring circle about the respected and resourceful general.

"Ultimately, of course," continued the general, pleased at this exhibition of loyalty, "it would be our purpose to



THERE ENTERED AN APPARITION THAT SEEMED TO HAVE A DOUBLE IN THE STOREHOUSE OF HIS MEMORY.

have an organized bureau which would send out agreeable and dignified professional escorts on call. But, gentlemen, everything must have a beginning. We must in some manner have the ear of our Swampucket society on this subject. We must apprise the fair sex of our purpose. They must know that our personal integrity is behind this movement. We must at first be willing to act personally in this matter. Our city is not so large that our efforts will be misinterpreted, nor is it so small that our every act will be everybody's concern. And now I propose to you, gentlemen, as a means of launching this enterprise, that the members of this club to-morrow, in some appropriate manner, place themselves at the disposal of the unattended among the gentle sex of our society in this city. Could there be a time more propitious for launching such a movement? Gentlemen, it is New Year's Eve. Need I ask for volunteers?"

It were aim at impossible faithfully to describe the emotions which these heroic words of Gen. Wiggins aroused in the circle of bachelors that surrounded him. Some smiled. One or two "haw-nawed." Some puffed

each other slyly in the ribs; but a half hour of discussion and planning was enough to promise the enlistment, on one ground or another, of every member present. It need scarcely be added, however, that it was well into the night before the new bureau of chivalry was by all present thoroughly understood to be a perfected organization. Before the plans were complete William, the one hired attendant whom the club boasted, had been many times requested to pile more wood on the open hearth blaze as a means of defying the encroachments of the New Year's cold, which did what it could to entomb the gaiety within the ancient but distinguished frame residence that served as a club house, by covering all window panes with a quarter inch of hoar frost, except maybe here and there a peephole through which an outsider might catch a glimpse of a red dancing flame of the jolly fire. Otherwise, no heed was paid by the originators of the bureau of chivalry to the new fall of snow in the early part of the evening nor to the cold which succeeded it when the moon came up. When at last still small



"SHE WILL LOOK AFTER ME HERSELF—OR, THAT IS TO SAY—"

voices began to whisper in the ears of those whose habits were most regular, warning them that it was high time they betook themselves to bed, the plans for the morrow were fairly complete.

The day dawned bright and clear. The snow was fine and hard and gave back a thousand sparkles for every glance from the bedroom window of the early riser. The ladies of Swampucket knew nothing of what was in store for them, but rose early to finish their New Year's cake and candy making and to attend to the thousand details of this day of nut cracking, and corn popping, and apple baking. Soon after breakfast numerous tall and slender figures, but all with sprightly gaits, might have been seen wending their way to a common rendezvous at the Bachelor club, and doubtless they were noticed by many, but the real alarm did not begin to be sounded by Swampucket society until the doorbells began a tingle, tingle, tingle, that grew more frequent as the day wore on.

Her first caller took Miss Clarissa Frey entirely by surprise. As she afterwards explained, she felt as if the tide of time had taken her up bodily and set her back 30 years. When the doorbell rang she was not prepared for callers, being dressed, indeed, in her wrapper; but when a peek through a side window had revealed the fact that her caller (world on end!) was Mr. Emmet Keene, dressed in keeping with a bygone style of chivalry which she well remembered, even to the flaring white collar and black tie and the gold-headed cane, she flew with maidenly agitation to the very garret, leaving his admittance to others while she, alive to the spirit of the occasion, decked herself out with a wonder of a hoop skirt which her niece Phoebe had planned to wear that very night at a New Year's amateur play. Emmet Keene never had got ahead of Clarissa Frey, and he wouldn't do so at this late day if she could help it.

Mr. Keene was somewhat taken aback when, after a considerable delay, there entered the drawing-room an apparition that seemed to have a double in the storehouse of his memory. He tried to account for 30 years gone by, but for the life of him could not make it more than 20 in the figure before him. He had to admit, as he had done in times past, that Clarissa Frey was a remarkable woman. After the exchange of New Year's greetings and gossip Mr. Keene tried to explain the organization and purposes of the new bureau of chivalry, "a new—er—departure of the Bachelor club," as he explained, with nervousness. But somehow the point didn't carry. By inadvertent mention of the fact that the departure was founded upon the much discussed plea for protection from Mrs. Dexter Bloom, he found himself launched upon a deep and ethical discussion of women's clubs which ended only with the tingle of the doorbell, announcing the arrival of a fellow clubman, and indicating that Mr. Keene was not properly apportioning the time at his disposal among the members of the fair sex on his list.

Mrs. Dexter Bloom was a widow of considerable dignity and aggressive intellect. It cannot be said that she revealed any signs of agitation when Gen. Friesbie Wiggins was announced.

She was not subject to surprise. Much progressiveness had made her immune. Also there may have been another reason—but that is anticipating the climax of a New Year's night's "spread," to which the Bachelor club took it upon itself to invite Swampucket society in the course of the day's calls. But Mrs. Dexter Bloom, despite her complacency, was quite sensible of Gen. Friesbie Wiggins' commanding and graceful appearance as he stood on the threshold, silk hat in hand, meeting the half-natural, half-induced blush on her face with the bow of a courtier—but he shall be left to make his own call.

The theme of interest in the Globe office that night and in various other quarters was the impromptu "spread" of the Bachelor club. The compositors were put to work setting up the "kid" reporter's spirited story of the day's New Year's calls, which was to have as a heading: "Old Boys Frolic." The thing was done up brown. The organization of the bureau of chivalry was hinted at, and liberal space was left for whatever might develop at the spread. In the end a second story was written to cover the latter, for everybody said it was well worth it.

The Bachelor club opened its hospitable doors and kept them swinging until the place was fairly bursting with New Year's jollity, laughter and repartee—not to mention coffee and cake and good things to eat, as a little girl added who was present. Then, too, there was more romance in the air than the staid bachelor upholstery and hangings had absorbed in many a year.

The curiosity of some of the fair sex having been aroused by sundry inadequate references that had been dropped during the day to the organization and purposes of the proposed bureau of chivalry, it was naturally expected that the matter would be explained in full at the banquet. The members of the Bachelor club were somewhat divided as to how much of their plans on this score should be made public. It had at first been thought advisable to wait until the banquet and then to make a general announcement, for, to be effective, the purposes of the bureau ought to be known to those who would require the services of the professional escorts which it would supply. But some members thought this would bring unpleasant publicity to the present personal stage of the proceedings, and that it would be best for the members to drop appropriate hints while making their New Year's calls. But the experience of Mr. Emmet Keene in divulging the matter seemed to have been the experience of nearly all who had essayed the embarrassing task. Nor had the general embarrassment of the situation visibly decreased by the time the coffee had been reached that New Year's night. Ex-Alderman Samuel Hiller, as a ready speaker, was urged by those near him at table to divulge the details of the club's mysterious plan. But in a speech that was considered felicitous, he referred the whole matter to the originator of the plan, "to the esteemed and confirmed member of our club, Gen. Friesbie Wiggins." That gentleman appeared to be visibly affected by the task confronting him. He stammered:

"Fellow members of the Bachelor club, it grieves me"—he checked himself and looked hastily at Mrs. Bloom at his side, whose natural color was heightened to that of a peony, "that is to say, it gives me pleasure." He paused again, this time to wipe the gathering beads of perspiration from his forehead. Drawing himself together, he started again: "As the poet said, the best laid plans of mice and men—Well, the fact is, boys, the plan has its drawbacks. I've talked it over with Mrs. Bloom, and she says that as far as the personal element is concerned, she thinks she will look after me herself—or, that is to say," but he never got farther, and fell back into his chair amid vociferous cries of "traitor!" and the enthusiastic applause of the fair sex.

A STRONG INCENTIVE.



Humper—I hear that the station-keepers have resolved to stop the custom of giving bottles of liquor to their customers for New Year's presents. Bumper—They have, have they? Then hang me if I don't stick to my New Year's resolution this time.

He Imparts Information.

Little Ethel—Mamma told Freddy that if he wasn't good Santa Claus wouldn't bring him anything. Won't he?

Little George—Oh! Mamma's just throwing a scare into Freddy, and he's so little he don't know any better. Santa Claus leaves you things whether you're good or not!—Puck.

LOYALTY TO EMPLOYERS.

Remarkable Record of Railroad Men in an Emergency of Gravest Character.

The well-known writer on railroad subjects, Mr. Frank H. Spearman, in his book entitled, "The Strategy of Great Railroads," describes the surprise of the general manager of one of the eastern trunk lines, on a hunting trip in the north woods, who suddenly found himself on the right of way of a splendid well-built railway line, apparently of a construction and equipment similar to the New York Central or Pennsylvania, along which thundered in quick succession heavy trains of iron ore, splendid passenger equipment and general freight service of surprising proportions.

This was the Peninsula division of the Chicago & Northwestern railway which covers the upper peninsula of Michigan, including the hardwood district and Lake Superior iron and copper region, with a surprisingly efficient network of lines that connect the mines and forests with important lake ports, and with through rail service to and from the outer world.

Along this busy ore-carrying line a splendid exposition of the loyalty, intelligence and general good team work that can be expected of the average railroad man and the efficiency of the rules laid down for his guidance in an emergency, was given a few days ago, which so greatly pleased the superintendent and other officials that the story has finally crept into public print, and it is well worth repetition in these columns.

It was all occasioned by a very heavy sleet storm that fell in the upper peninsula, which threw down practically every telegraph line in the region in a few hours, and left the 464 miles of the division absolutely without telegraphic service for no less than 48 hours.

The ore movement has been especially heavy this year, more Lake Superior ore being transported on the great lakes than ever before in the history of the iron industry, and in this emergency every mine would have to shut down on account of the shortage of railway cars to move their product unless the road was kept open in spite of the storm.

There was nothing that could be done by the chief train dispatcher; both he and the division superintendent were temporarily out of the game. It was one of these emergencies where the "man behind the gun" must make good, or the case was a hopeless one. And make good he did, in true blue, loyal style, with that splendid initiative that makes the average train crew typical of the qualities we admire in our American troops.

There was no way in which to get orders for train movements, no means by which division headquarters could be kept advised of where their trains were, and, to the onlooker, no means existed by which the train crew could keep track of the whereabouts of trains in the opposite direction. It was an emergency of the gravest character, and was met with a splendid exhibition of good judgment and intelligent grasp of the science of railroad operation that is perhaps without an equal. They managed, on a single track line, without telegraph lines, for two whole days and nights, to keep every iron and copper mine in the district supplied with equipment, and moved all trains practically on time.

There were 4,971 cars moved over the division Friday and Saturday, October 20 and 21, and 125 freight trains and no less than 34 passenger trains were taken care of upon the division, all handled on time on a single track, without accident, mishap or delay, and without the help of a train dispatcher.

Can anyone beat that record of loyalty to employers, hard work and intelligent grasp of conditions?

"Any man who has ever handled the train movement of a busy railway division will appreciate how very much is involved in the work these trainmen did, hurrying to and fro over sleet-covered cars, keeping cool, and ready to meet every emergency by application of the operating rules provided for their guidance.

Origin of Railway Whistles.

Locomotives, 75 years ago, had no whistles. The engineer kept by his side a tin horn, which he blew before curves and dangerous crossings. But the noise was feeble. In 1833 an English farmer's cart was run down on the way to market, and 1,000 eggs, 100 pounds of butter, two horses and a man were lumped in one great omelet on the rails. The railway had to pay the damages. The president sent for George Stevenson, and said, angrily: "Our engineers can't blow their horns loud enough to clear the tracks ahead. You have made your steam do so much—why don't you make it blow a good, loud horn for us?" Stevenson pondered. An idea came to him. He visited a musical instrument maker, and had constructed a horn that gave a horrible screech when blown by steam. From this horn the locomotive whistle of to-day descends.

Stand Work Well.

Railroad magnates are generally supposed to be hard workers, but many of them seem to stand it very well. James J. Hill is 67, A. J. Cassatt, is 66, Marvin Hughitt is 61 and E. T. Jeffrey, Roswell Miller and Thomas Lowry own up to 62 each. Of 17 of the most prominent railroad men in the country not one is under 50 years old.

Cars of Wood and Steel.

Owing to inability of the old wooden freight cars to stand the impact of modern steel cars, a rule has been adopted on the western lines that cars of up and below 60,000 pounds capacity shall not be placed ahead of the steel cars in making up trains.

PERFECT LAND OF PROMISE

Section of Kansas That Possesses Uncommon Attractions for Farmers.

Down in southwestern Kansas, some hundred miles or so below "Dodge," is a veritable "promised land" flowing in milk and honey, and destined some day to take a prominent place in the top-notch farming country of the great southwest.

Here is what a recent enthusiastic visitor says about it:

"In the first place the farmers of this section, with the assistance of the great experimental farms and researches of the government and of the state, have found out what the Lord made this country for, and they are getting rich.

"For five kinds of African corn, dark and light, Kafir, Jerusalem corn, milo maize and dwarf maize, for four kinds of cane (sorghum), for Texas red oats, for beardless barley, durum wheat and alfalfa, this country is proving as sure a crop country as Iowa and Illinois are for corn and other cereals needing from 30 to 40 inches of rainfall.

"One township alone in Meade county this year shows by assessors' returns more than 25,000 acres of winter wheat in splendid condition and a large acreage being planted in durum or macaroni wheat this spring. In all of the counties in this section the wheat is very fine and a very much increased acreage over last year. It is 'the Artesian valley of Meade county' that makes it famous. It is a sort of freak formation, found only here.

"Crooked creek or Snake creek, as the Indians called it, is one of the several forks that, coming together, form the Cimmaron river. At Meade, a stone could easily be thrown across the valley. From this point it widens out until it is about 12 miles wide some eight or ten miles above Meade. It then narrows again for ten or 15 miles, making an average width of perhaps five or six miles for some 25 miles. This is all free alluvial soil, underlaid with sheet water, which is within easy reach of alfalfa roots. In other words, it is a true sub-irrigated district. This sheet water is from five to forty feet from the surface. Twenty thousand acres of alfalfa now growing in this valley from one to ten years old, illustrates the subject much better than it can be told.

"Below this stratum of sheet water at from 85 to 275 feet, artesian water is found. There are something like 2,000 of these wells now flowing in the valley. They are put down at a nominal expense. The water is pure and soft and has a temperature of 60 degrees summer and winter. There are from 110 to 125 sections of this land. I am familiar with the country in New Mexico and elsewhere that is on the market as alfalfa land, and I feel that I know that right here in Meade county, Kan., are better values multiplied several times than can be obtained elsewhere. I look to see this section of the country, in the not far distant future, recognized as among the most valuable lands in the United States."

FLESH AND BLOOD MACHINE

The Human Element in Handling Railroad Trains Increases Danger.

When a railroad train is going to wreck itself, it really does not make any appreciable difference whether that train is running at 60 miles an hour or 40 miles an hour. The real difference is in regard to the human machines that handle the trains, says the Hartford Courant.

A locomotive engine is a dumb thing, without the sense of hurry and responsibility, and whether its wheels revolve with greater or less rapidity is all the same to it, so long as it does not switch down. But the engineer, the switch-tender, the train dispatcher, and so on, all have nerves, and these nerves are subjected to an increased strain with every serious increase in the regular rate of speed. This is the real danger point with the fast trains between New York and Chicago.

Our American railroads kill a good many people every year when running at what may be called a normal rate of speed; and this means, at least in the case of half the accidents, that somebody's nerves have been overtrained and overstrained. If the human element in handling railroad trains could be made as insensible to outside demands as the locomotives are, one chief obstacle in the way of plans for great increases of speed would be done away with.

Dangerous Railroad Travel.

A newspaper writer, meeting Lord Brassey at Red Bank, N. J., asked the distinguished foreigner if he feared to travel on American railroads.

"Oh, no," Lord Brassey answered, "your American railroads kill a good many people in the year's course, but we must remember that they carry a good many people a good many miles. In proportion, probably, they do no more damage than the railroads of France or of Scotland.

"The famous Dr. Norman Macleod was once about to set off on a long railway journey through Scotland. Just as the train was pulling out the clergyman's servant put his head in through the window and said: "Ha' ye ta'en an insurance ticket?" "I have," said the doctor.

"Then," said the servant, "write yer name on it and gie it to me. They bae an awfu' bad habit o' robbin' the corpses on this line."—N. Y. Tribune.

In a Better Way.

Pete—I see one of the leading ministers was a brakeman on a railroad at one time. Pat—I suppose he is still doing coupling.—Cleveland Leader.

His Poor Shins.

Mrs. Kronnick—Really, my dear, we must get a dressing table for the bedroom.

Mr. Kronnick—No, madam, there's too much furniture there already.

Mrs. Kronnick (sarcastically)—Indeed? And how did you discover the fact?

Mr. Kronnick—By bumping into it all when I got up last night to get match.—Philadelphia Press.

Like the Original.

Mr. DeBrush—What is there about my portrait of you that you don't like, madam?

Mrs. Dobbson—I don't like the coloring in the face. It doesn't look natural.

Mr. DeBrush—I didn't try to make it look natural. You said you wanted it true to life.—Cleveland Leader.

Changed Shops.

The dog-pound—horrors!—is next door. To the butcher shop, I've found; Now I shall never more Buy sausage by the pound!—Cleveland Leader.

PARADOXICAL.



Hiram Milkweed—What are the prices of your rooms?

Hotel Clerk—The highest are the best and the lowest are the highest.—Philadelphia Press.

Wise Buyers.

The Christmas shopping days have c—The best of all the year. When early buyers make things hum And countless counters clear.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

She Bit Her Lips.

Mother (suspiciously)—What m your lips so red? Has that young man—

Sweet Girl—No, he hasn't. If my are red, it's because I've been b them. I was mad.

"Mad because he tried to kiss y "No." Because he didn't."—N Weekly.

Was It Possible?

"Did you see the football game "Sure."

"How was it?" "Great! It rained and the pl were plastered with mud from he foot, but they played a nice game."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

More Interesting.

A correspondent of a Kansas asks "Why are all millionaires sent to be either fat or baldhead? But a question that interests good deal more is "Why are and baldheaded men not milliona"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Exception.

"Everything goes up in antic of the holiday trade."

"Not everything." "I'd like to know one thi doesn't?"

"The mercury."—Cleveland Dealer.

Careless Man.

"Yes, he's engaged to Miss E "How did it happen?"

"He remarked that he would have love than riches, and sh strangle hold on him before h side-step."—Houston Post.

A Constant Surprise.

Mamma—I'm surprised a Johnny.

Johnny (thoughtfully)—I w you'll ever get used to me, n You're always surprised at m Bits.

Another Record.

Reid—My chauffeur's made record.

Greene—You don't say! "Yes; been fined eight tim days for speeding."—Yonkers man.

As a Matter of Econom

"Why do you print so man stories in your magazine?" "Well, I'll be honest—wif do it to save the cost of hir readers."—Chicago Record-He

Peace Offering.

"I just wonder what presen band will bring me to-night.

"Why, is it your birthday? "No, but we had a quarrel t ing."—Cleveland Leader.

Hot Stuff.

The sun had broken out i spot. Just as the train was pulling out the clergyman's servant put his head in through the window and said: "Ha' ye ta'en an insurance ticket?" "I have," said the doctor.

"Then," said the servant, "write yer name on it and gie it to me. They bae an awfu' bad habit o' robbin' the corpses on this line."—N. Y. Tribune.

After the Horse Sh

He—Do you love me? She—Well, I should just fown Topics.