

up that can ever depart from the calm serenity of the positive state. There is no variation in the scale, their motion, mental, moral or physical. They never would venture on either end of a see-saw, never go up, never go down, but always stand still in the middle, while their more animated associates experience the rising and falling sensations that give animation and delight to life.

The people of the comparative degree indulge in a little see-sawing, but not enough to make them dizzy; yet it has the pleasing effect of relieving life of the dull monotony which would assail them, if they, like their positive brethren, were so constituted that everything they looked upon was to be viewed in the same positive manner. They take one step higher in the scale of human existence, by permitting themselves to find an occasional thing of interest in their surroundings, which lifts them into a comparative degree of bliss. But being held taut by the check-rein of non-effusion, they are never able to reach either the heights of ecstasy or the depths of woe into which those people rise and fall who are bubbling over with superlative emotions.

These nervous, high-strung individuals are forever emphasizing their expressions with exclamation points. All their utterances are excessively emotional, they breathe in a world of superlatives, they feed on superlatives, and their feelings are consequently in a state of constant fermentation. They seldom if ever descend the scale the positive key-note, but are ever pealing forth rhapsodies, venting their enthusiasm as lavishly on a quiet, romantic frog pond as upon the rolling, throbbing ocean in all its boundless restlessness. They indulge in so many falsetto notes, throwing themselves into ecstasies over trifling things at which their brethren of the positive order would only glance unmoved, that they lose much of the sublimity of utterance when their souls stand face to face with those things which create within us the grandeur of joy indescribable.

But this superlative state of existence has the advantage of bringing the mind in contact with things which are "perfectly heavenly," while the lymphatic person of the positive order is never propelled heavenward by the force of his emotion, and the more fortunate and sanguine comparative may sometimes rise high enough to see the faint light of a far-off star, but the nervous, happy superlative sees stars above him, stars around him, and is quite a shooting star himself.

#### THOUGHTS ON NEW YEAR EVE

I sit and dream, though quite awake;  
I ponder o'er the fading year,  
And weary through the past I rake  
And search with mingled hope and fear.

I search for good that I have done,  
And hope with doubts and fears the while;  
For good I search, the wrong would shun;  
I rake for good yet find the vile.

I gaze made sad, and watch the glow  
Of ruddy coals upon the grate.  
For me these embers seem to show  
Some things, some things of life or fate.

I see the past; my good deeds shine,  
And shed their light like glowing coal,  
Or cast their ray o'er mem'ry's shrine  
As hope sheds light within the soul.

Hours flee; some embers now are dead;  
The shadows dim, my past mistakes,  
Grow dimmer, colder, wider spread,  
Till dark, cold fear my thought awakes.

I sit and dream, and in my trance  
I hear a hymn of praise for good;  
The hymn is drowned by heavier chants  
Which sound regrets in wailing flood.

Thus in my thought the closing year,  
A page in the great book of life,  
Lies bare; I gaze in wond'ring fear  
Upon its joys, its doubts, its strife.

Each sin may warn, each good deed guide,  
That future deeds excel the past,  
For time points out with seeming pride  
A page where yet no stain is cast.

Now this white page is giv'n to each  
To pen with light or blot with shame;  
While last year's page may plainly teach:  
Your deeds will always spell your name.