

CELEBRATING NEW YEAR'S DAY HERE AND THERE

CELEBRATED by religious observance and festivals among the Egyptians, Chinese, Jews, Romans and Mohammedans many centuries before the Christian era, New Year's Day is still the one holiday celebrated by all nations civilized or savage. While true that the first day of the New Year does not fall simultaneously in all sections of the globe, since all countries do not use the Christian Calendar, it is nevertheless a fact that each Nation has its own New Year's Day. Even the cannibals of the South Sea Islands and savage tribes of Central Africa celebrate the beginning of the New Year with some sort of ceremonies. One general characteristic, however,

and down the streets. At midnight the din, the roar and the rattle that has kept up unceasingly since the electric lights were turned on, breaks loose in one mighty blast that threatens to tear even the subway trains from underground and far the elevated from their tracks. Nowhere else in the country is the celebration so blatant, so ridiculous and so recklessly extravagant as there.

From the spectacular standpoint the long list of notables on dress parade, no celebration equals, perhaps, that at the White House at Washington. All society of the Capital attends. Second only in splendor of display to the glittering uniforms of the diplomats and the army and

Blue Room and the procession begins with the foreign ambassadors, headed by the dean of the corps, and the ministers and attaches of the various legations. Then come the Chief Justice and the other members of the Judiciary, then the Senators, Representatives, Army and Navy officers and other officials of the government. Later in the day, the President receives the people at large, and their waiting line generally extends from the front door of the White House out to and down Pennsylvania Avenue for several blocks.

At the precise instant Old 1911 changes to New 1912, a million miles of telegraph wires and countless wireless stations will publish the glad tidings to every city and village in the country and to ships at sea. And this will be official, too, for the message will come direct from the U. S. Naval Observatory at Washington, and still more directly from an old-fashioned clock that has long held an honored place in that institution. This plain-faced old clock is always correct, never varying even one one-hundredth of a second from the astronomical reading of the stars. It furnishes standard time for half the world, and as the New Year is born will send its message clear up to Alaska, to South America, to China and to London.

Over in France, New Year's Day is not entirely one of rejoicing, that is, unless one is able to rise above such mundane things as finance. For New Year's in France means—'Hill! It is the universal pay-up day of the year. All the dear, familiar old bills that have been joggling along and accumulating during the year suddenly pile in en masse and greet the head of the house on New Year's morning. It is not difficult to obtain credit in France, provided one possesses the externals of a comfortable competence, and the tradesmen and landlords and shop-keeper are content to wait until January first. Then they drop their gentle little reminders in the mails or, more frequently, present them through representatives. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker—and all the galaxy of "their sisters and their cousins and their aunts"—are to be

reckoned with.

The New Year's gift is really an institution of the day in France. First it begins with the tradespeople. And comes the postman on New Year's morning who must receive a remembrance (ten francs or so) in return for his greetings and his services during the year. After him, it's the piano tuner, the telegraph boy, the bread and the butter man and the newspaper—and this, indeed, is but a partial list of those who come to the door of the average French home on New Year's day seeking a "present."

Lovers and sweethearts, friends, social acquaintances and even business men exchange presents, such as on Christmas Day. But, somehow, the New Year's present is even more imperative than the one on Christmas.

In many instances these remembrances take the form of confections, for Paris is especially prodigal in this respect, huge sums being expended every first of the year for candies, festival, banqueting, and merry-making likewise hold high carnival. From New Year's Eve until the morning of the second day of the new year, the streets of Paris are en fête. Beautifully gowned women, in richly decorated carriages, and groups of be-ribboned holiday seekers form a surging happy pageant that throngs the wide and brilliant boulevards. Cafe life then is wild and brilliant and the students from the Latin Quarter contribute their full quota of roistering and revelry in the restaurants and along the streets.

The German celebration of the New

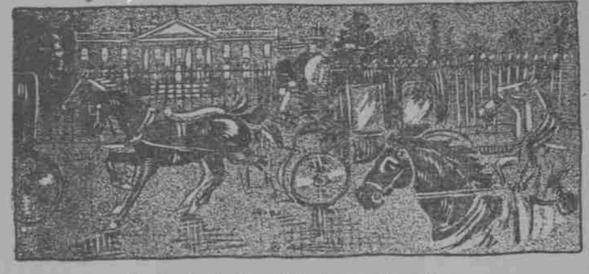
Year is not lacking in wholesome good-cheer and festive pranks, but it is pre-eminently a decorous one. In Berlin elaborate musical programs are rendered and everywhere anthems and festival songs are chanted, beginning at twilight of the last day of the old year and continuing until the bells peal forth the glad tidings of a new year born unto the centuries. There is one German custom that dates from the year 1848, that has no little of the spirit of the typical "bad boy" in it.

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ing a high hat need take no umbrage if a couple of German students who may have endeavored a trifle too zealously to find the bottom of the flowing bowl, slip up behind him and smash the aforesaid hat down over his eyes in true Mut-and-Jeff fashion. This is the penalty he pays for wearing such a hat at such a time and he has no kick coming to him, even if his hat is knocked off his head and kicked until it ceases to be a hat.

The good folks in the Rhenish provinces have an adaptation of this custom that is more gentle and—yes—less expensive, considering the damage done. This consists of stealing up upon a friend as he is walking along the street and whispering in his ear: "Prosit Neujahr." The friend thus accosted straightaway comes across with a little present, such as a cigar, or a drink or an invitation to dinner. In Frankfurt-on-the-Main the entire city rushes to its windows, as the Old Year dies, flings them open and, glasses in hand, drinks a toast to Father Time's latest-born. Then the windows are slammed down, the merriment ceases and all retire for a peaceful night's slumber.

In England the New Year customs are of very ancient origin and even more generally observed than in this country. Every English family sits up to see the old year out and the new year in, and always with a bowl of hot punch, etc., with which to drink the toasts to the New Year. The custom is a survival of the time when the head of the house assembled his family around a bowl of spiced



En Route To the White House Reception.

marks all the celebrations and that is the spirit of rejoicing and feasting. Many of the customs are quaint and unusual, but still fraught with the spirit of revelry and good will.

In our country, of course, especially in the large cities, merriment and conviviality hold full sway, though the watchnight services in the churches appeal more to those of serious bent to whom the passing of the old year and the welcoming of the new are causes for reflection, meditation and even sadness.

In New York in particular—though most other cities are not far behind—old Gotham—the New Year's frolic is a veritable Bedlam of noise and revelry. Millions are spent in wine and costly suppers and, as the hour of midnight strikes, a full hundred thousand glasses are raised aloft in the joy palaces along and near Broadway and the health of the New Year drunk. 'Lil' Ol' Nu Yawik in the throes of her New Year's Eve celebration is indeed a sight for the gods and man—and each year it grows more elaborate, less sane and more lavish.

The lobster show places—human and crustacean—are jammed to the doors, with the tables engaged weeks beforehand. The noise and the wine-drinking zone extends fully ten miles, with every foot of it packed by a yelling, struggling, seed-natured crowd marching, in unending procession, up

navy officers are the floral settings. Uncle Sam furnishes the flowers from his wonderful greenhouses and likewise the music, the famous U. S. Marine Band that always plays at White House functions.

Every vantage point is set upon for the banking of flowers and extreme care has to be taken that they will not impede the progress of the ten thousand people and more who surge through the rooms at the reception. All mantels are covered with blooms and palms and bouquets in vases are placed at every convenient point.

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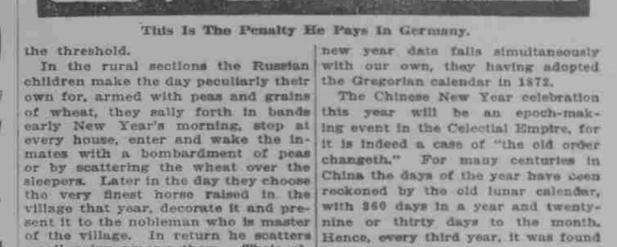
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In England the New Year customs are of very ancient origin and even more generally observed than in this country. Every English family sits up to see the old year out and the new year in, and always with a bowl of hot punch, etc., with which to drink the toasts to the New Year. The custom is a survival of the time when the head of the house assembled his family around a bowl of spiced

penny apiece all the way up to one pound. Feasting is really the chief feature of the Scottish celebration, more so than at Christmas or any other time of the year. Steaming hot "wassail," too, is carried from door to door and indulged in by neighbors and friends.

In Russia the Julian calendar is still in vogue and January 1 there corresponds to January 14 of our calendar. The Russian festival begins on New Year's Eve and lasts until the fourteenth day of the New Year. At midnight, as the old year is dying and the new being born, the Czar attends public mass, and precisely on the stroke of twelve o'clock a hundred cannons are discharged and the revelry begins. At the end of the celebration—two weeks hence—the people fast and attend solemn religious services, marking on the doors of their houses, also, a cross to prevent Satan from crossing



This is the Penalty He Pays in Germany.

the threshold.

In the rural sections the Russian children make the day peculiarly their own, armed with peas and grains of wheat, they saily forth in bands early New Year's morning, stop at every house, enter and wake the inmates with a bombardment of peas or by scattering the wheat over the sycpura. Later in the day they choose the very finest horse raised in the village that year, decorate it and present it to the nobleman who is master of the village. In return he scatters small coins among them. Their elders, too, make presents to the nobleman, such as cows, sheep and fowls. The strangest of all Russian customs, perhaps, is the gathering around a jar of water by each family group in the belief that, if their faith is sufficiently strong, the miracle performed by Christ in the Gospels when He turned the water into wine, will be repeated.

New Year's Day in Japan is picturesque to the extreme. The Emperor holds a formal court reception, which is attended by the foreign diplomats and high officials of the Japanese government. The celebration among the people lasts five days, and preparations for it are begun long

new year date falls simultaneously with our own, they having adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873.

The Chinese New Year celebration this year will be an epoch-making event in the Celestial Empire, for it is indeed a case of "the old order changeth." For many centuries in China the days of the year have been reckoned by the old lunar calendar, with 360 days in a year and twenty-nine or thirty days to the month. Hence, every third year, it was found necessary to insert an extra month in order to keep the seasons in their proper order. Only a few days ago, however, the new cabinet decreed that China should change to the Gregorian calendar, our method of reckoning time.

The Jewish New Year is usually celebrated sometime in September and is called "Rosh Hoshbanah," also "Yom Hardin," which last means "day of judgment." New Year's Eve is observed with fasting and the day itself with feasting. "May you be in favor with God this New Year," is the Jewish form of salutation, from which the Gentile greeting, "Happy New Year," is said to be a contraction.



"The Health of the New Year!"

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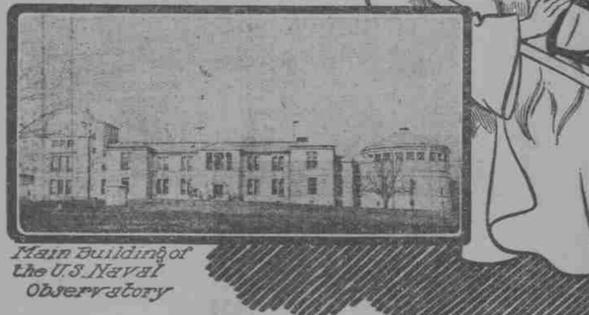
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THE NEW YEAR TIME SIGNAL



Main Building of the U.S. Naval Observatory

CHE approach of New Year's always pulls us up sharply, as it were, to a realization of the fleeting of time. Even though all the rest of the year we indulge in blissful disregard of the passing of the golden moments there is something (and it isn't solely the crop of Christmas bills, either) that with the approach of January 1 rouses us to an appreciation of how rapidly a twelve-month has sped past. Time, for the nonce, becomes a commodity upon which we set a higher standard of value and while the public mind is intent on the subject of time and almanacs and calendars and almanacs there is an avalanche of good resolutions to take greater heed of the minutes and the hours during the ensuing year.

How many of us, thus roused by the passing of another milestone, realize that Uncle Sam, with his penchant for dabbling in everything bearing upon human welfare, concerns himself all the year with that precious asset—time. He even has a special institution devoted primarily to this and kindred subjects. It is designated as the United States Naval Observatory in those dry official volumes wherein Uncle Sam lists his activities in unimaginative language, but it might more expressively be termed our national "time factory and almanac office." It cost a pretty penny in the first place, this old intelligence office with its expensive equipment of telescopes and scientific instruments of various kinds and it costs a tidy sum to maintain, for the services of a number of eminent scientists are re-

quired all the while and there must be a sufficiently numerous corps to enable some to be on duty day and night. The "night watch," it may be added is necessary if the government is to keep close tab on the stars which are the dependable monitors of our time system.

The general public hears little of this Federal "time factory" save just before New Year's, when there is a buzz of gossip in the newspapers relative to the preparations which are made each year for sending out what is known as the "New Year time signal." This is an electric throb which is sent over the telegraph wires from Washington exactly at midnight on the last day of the old year, and which not only officially chronicles the birth of a new year, but also furnishes everybody who cares to avail himself of it with the means of setting his watch and starting the new year aright. Some years the New Year time signal is sent all around the world and even when that is for any reason impracticable it is dispatched not only to every nook and corner of the United States, but also to Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, the Philippines and every other bit of soil over which waves the Stars and Stripes.

Now, as has been said, the public gives heed to the doings of Uncle Sam's time factory on this momentous occasion, but all through the remainder of the year we go along regulating and setting our timepieces through its aid without giving so much as a thought to the vehicle whereby we attain such accuracy. Indeed it is safe to say that even the citizen who stands watch in hand at

noon to verify his timepiece by the dropping of a timeball does not pause to consider that the time signal which is sent out from the "time factory" every day at noon is, in reality, just as important as the spectacular electric announcement that encircles the globe when a new year is ushered in. You are a trifle mystified, perhaps, by the prefix "Naval" to the title of this governmental observatory, — wonder why this institution should be attached to the Navy Department. At a guess you would scarcely know what Department of the government what Department of the government a time factory might naturally be expected to be an adjunct of, but you would not expect it to be the Navy Department. It comes about in this wise: Next to the railroad the interests that are most dependent upon accuracy of time are those that operate ships. An error of a minute or two in the operation of a ship might, under certain circumstances, work sad havoc just as an error of

a minute or two in the operation of an express train might have serious consequences. Now Uncle Sam's largest and most valuable ships are, of course, our naval craft and consequently there has been entrusted to the Navy Department the task of conducting a "time factory" that will produce dependably accurate time.

The Naval Observatory, accordingly makes its daily and year-end determinations of the absolutely authentic time primarily for the benefit of the ships of our fighting fleet, but incidentally it gives everybody else the benefit of this "guaranteed correct" time free of charge. Or, at least Uncle Sam makes no charge, although to take advantage of his generosity you must be in some city where a time ball is operated on a public building in accordance with the receipt of the time signal for Washington. No matter where you live the experts of the Federal "time factory" will regulate or correct your clock



The Home of Uncle Sam's Great Telescope



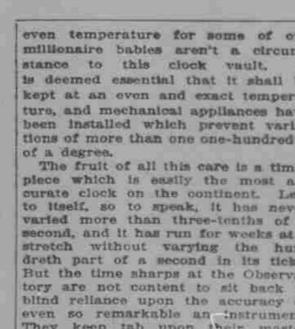
Building with Sliding Roof Specially Constructed for Making Photographs of the Heavenly Bodies



The "Clock Building"



The Special Apparatus for Photographing the Sun



Getting Ready for a Photograph

even temperature for some of our millionaire babies aren't a circumstance to this clock vault. It is deemed essential that it shall be kept at an even and exact temperature, and mechanical appliances have been installed which prevent variations of more than one one-hundredth of a degree.

The fruit of all this care is a timepiece which is easily the most accurate clock on the continent. Left to itself, so to speak, it has never varied more than three-tenths of a second, and it has run for weeks at a stretch without varying the hundredth part of a second in its ticks. But the time sharps at the Observatory are not content to sit back in blind reliance upon the accuracy of even so remarkable an instrument. They keep tab upon their master clock all the while through the positions of the stars in the heavens, making use of an instrument known as a transit to determine whether the clock is in perfect harmony with the movements of the heavenly bodies. The observer whose duty it is to check up the performance of the clock that is a model for all the timepieces in the United States gazes skyward through the transit just as he might through a telescope, which it resembles in appearance. The basis for his odd detective work is his knowledge of the exact time at which certain of the fixed stars must appear at certain positions in the heavens. If, by any chance, the master clock at the Observatory does not indicate the proper moment when a star is seen in the position designated for that moment it is certain that there is something wrong with the clock and not that the star is behind or ahead of schedule. To be sure, the comparisons are not made thus, off-hand, but the observer

watching various fixed stars through the transit instrument obtains the data which when reduced to statistical form enables him to get a bead on the workings of the clock on which so much depends. As has been intimated, however, errors worthy of mention have never shamed Uncle Sam's price ticker.

Not only in transit instruments, but in all apparatus for sky exploration is the Naval Observatory's equipment notable and complete. It possesses, for instance, a 26-inch telescope that ranks as one of the most powerful instruments devised since the dawn of 1846, of our present era of large telescopes. It was this telescope that first showed the satellites of Mars and gave us new facts regarding the sister planet in which we feel a keener interest than in any other in the universe. Another important group of instruments provided at the Observatory are designed to enable photographs to be made of the sun. Indeed one or more photographs of the sun are made every day in the year, when the weather will permit, and these photos constitute a unique record of sun spots and the changes they have undergone from time to time. You may be mystified as to how such information could be of benefit to our naval interests and yet it has its influence in several directions. One connection that you probably had not thought of has to do with changes in the weather. If there is any class of men who are obviously affected by weather conditions it is those who go down to the sea in ships and when we take into consideration that the sun practically controls the weather of the earth it is easy to understand how it is that the scientists at the Naval Observatory are anxious to learn all they can regarding Old Sol.