

A NEW YEAR'S REVERBY.

WHEN through the leafless forest the wild winds rudely sweep; When snow is on the meadow, Where the violets lie asleep; When outward, drifting, drifting, The Old Year goes forlorn, In the mystic hour of midnight The glad New Year is born.

Last night I watched in sadness, The passing of the Year, For it bore from me a record That cost me many a tear. But a gentle voice has whispered And made sure it's all right, We're all as liable to mistakes as the sparks that fly upward.

He tilted up and down on his toes midgetly incredulous of any possible error in his reckoning, while Drusilla Wyncoop went over the columns from the top downward. Her lips chattered audibly over the task.

"Yes; that's just right, Abel, and I'm only thankful it isn't any more. Lord of liberty! who'd believe nutmegs an' pepper 'n' salt would cost 'most \$30!"

Her eyes rested on Page 46, still lying open on the counter. Her own page, opposite, looked almost empty in comparison.

From top to bottom and from side to side, Page 46 was full of minute, unsteady words, traced with cramped painstaking and flanked by a relentless column of figures.

"What a pageful!" she exclaimed. "You don't say the McKies owe the whole of that? Land of liberty! I don't see how they get a wink of sleep, and New Year right on the verge, too! I couldn't."

"I guess it don't keep them awake any. Shiftless folks can sleep with their heads under water."

Mr. Tappan's voice, loud with scorn, echoed back from the high rafters.

Mrs. Wyncoop shook her head reprostratingly. The words issued a little twisted out of shape by the fat shawl pin between her lips:

"O, no, no, Abel; you shan't call them shiftless. I don't know about Jerome

PAGE FORTY-SIX.

LEMONS? Well! where's your money for 'em?"

Abel Tappan spoke sharply.

The thin, wizened little face across the counter took on an anxious look.

"Mother, she couldn't send the money. She says if you'll please to charge—"

"Charge!—charge! I'm sick o' that tune, you can tell your ma. You can skipper right home and tell her now. When she wants lemons I calculate she's got to pay for 'em same as other folks does."

Little Jot McKie's clumsy shoes shuffled half way to the door, then shuffled resolutely back to the counter again.

"They're for Love, you know," he said, courageously. "An' Love's sick. She's hurt in her back, an' she says the water don't taste good. She's set on having some lemonade. An' mother says if you'll trust her, Mister Tappan—"

"Ain't I trusted her since 'way back most to flood time, I'd like to know? Ain't her page in my ledger chock full o' trustings this minute? When she's settled that page up, mebbe I'll begin over again a trusting her—mebbe so. But not till; so you needn't stand there waiting for lemons. Might's well go right along home, sonny."

But Love's pinched, white little face pleaded with Jot, and Love's restless little fingers tugged at his heart strings. Poor Love! and the water didn't taste good. If there was just a squeeze of lemon juice in it! Pluck up courage, Jot—one more trial! For Love, you know—for Love!

"I'll do chores to pay for 'em, an' you needn't only let me have one, Mister Tappan. The water tastes bad, an' Love's set on having a squeeze of lemon I'll carry it right home an' hurry back an' do chores. I'll come quick as—"

"As your ma pays her bills—just about as quick as that," laughed Abel Tappan, roughly. "I don't know 'I'm suffering for chores this time o' night. I guess Dove, or Love, or whatever her name is, 'll have to drink water a spell longer. Your ma can put some vinegar in to fiven it up, with a sprinkling o' sugar. I useter drink that with a relish when I was a little shaver. You've got to pay for lemons if you want 'em out o' this store. I've trusted you and trusted you till I'm sick of it."

Little Jot drew up his stunted figure in injured dignity. The very freckles on his face radiated scorn.

"Keep your old lemons!" he cried, his voice quavering unsteadily. "We don't want 'em! (O, poor little thirsty Love!) I guess we ain't beggars! I guess we mean to pay our bills! Mother'd got the money most all saved up, but Love got worse an' she had to have the doctor an' lots of medicines."

He took long, manly strides toward the door, his indignant voice trailing after him. Mrs. Drusilla Wyncoop, just entering, ran into him, and her ample figure and the flapping folds of her shawl quite engulfed the little scurrying shape.

"Land of liberty!" she cried, cheerily, "who's this running over me just if I didn't amount to anything! O, you Jotham! Well, I guess I'll have to get my life insured! Good evening, Abel. I thought maybe you wouldn't mind if I dropped in to settle up my account. To-morrow's New Year, and I couldn't sleep a wink to-night, up to my ears in debt."

Abel Tappan beamed at her over the counter. He hunted up a chair for her and put it near the stove.

"I guess 'twouldn't be more than up to your elbows, Mis' Wyncoop," he laughed, jovially. "Not deep enough to keep you awake. But I knew you'd be in to-night, just as well's I knew I should eat my supper. I told Becky, I says: 'Mis' Wyncoop! be in to pay

her bill to-night, you see if she ain't, Becky," says I—set down here by the fire, do—and here you are! Well, all is, I wish there were more like you in the world! Those shiftless McKies, now—that little scamp of a Jot's been in trying to get trusted again, but I've struck! I guess it's about time, too."

He got down his big book from the high corner desk and spread it open on the counter, turning the pages laboriously. Abel Tappan was his own book-keeper and had his own peculiar fashion of "keeping" the great, leather-covered book—a fashion that would have first puzzled, then floored the dapper, precise graduate of a commercial college. But it sufficed for Abel Tappan very well.

"Forty-two, forty-three, forty-four, forty-five—Wyncoop; that's your page," he said. "And I declare if Page 46 ain't the McKie page, right across from yours. I'd forgot that. Twenty-nine—twenty-nine dollars and eighty-three cents. There you are, Mis' Wyncoop! You better reckon it up yourself and make sure it's all right. We're all as liable to mistakes as the sparks that fly upward."

He bent down unsteadily and kissed her. His heart broke in the kiss.

"Daddy'll fetch you a drink right off," he faltered.

But she thrust away the glass he brought her.

"It don't taste good—take it away, daddy. I'm so thirsty in my throat!"

"Yes, yes; daddy'll go get some nice fresh water, right out of the well. You wait, Becky."

Becky lifted up her small, tangly head and gazed up at him reproachfully.

"Take it away, daddy," she cried. "Put lemon in—it don't taste good. I want a squeeze o' lemon in, an' sugar. I'm so thirsty!"

Abel Tappan's grizzled head bowed itself beside the child's.

"Yes, yes; daddy'll fetch a lemon right away and make it taste good," he mumbled in an agony of grief, against her cheek. "Daddy'll see to it all nice."

Back in the store again, he could find no lemons, though he searched and researched with dogged insistence. Where could they be? There had been plenty of them, over there on the second, right-hand shelf, in a row.

He moved boxes and cans, he cleared whole shelves with a sweep of his arm, Becky's little wail sounded on, unceasing, in his ears. He must find them! He



"WISHER A HAPPY NEW YEAR, DADDY!"

McKie, but his wife ain't. She's a real devoted woman, and works dreadful hard. Maybe she don't know how to make the money spend as well's she might, but that ain't shiftlessness. And I never saw a tenderer hearted mother than she is to that little sick girl o' hers. I guess she humors her to pieces. Poor little thing!"

Abel Tappan stirred uneasily. A row of golden lemons on the shelf looked at him with silent reproach. "The water don't taste good," a boy's eager voice said in his ear.

"She looks like your little granddaughter, too," Mrs. Wyncoop went on, driving the shawlpin home with an impetuous aim—"everybody noticed it. Before she fell downstairs and crooked her back the teacher—she boarded with me then—said you could hardly tell those two children apart when they were together. She used to get 'em all mixed up at school. Same colored hair, with the same kinks in it, and their eyes just alike, and even their little dimples matching! The little McKie girl was fat and well then, like your Becky."

The lemons blinked their yellow eyes reproachfully. Mr. Tappan strode behind the counter and swept them, with a succession of clatters, into the money drawer, out of sight. He was mentally reviewing the items of Page 46. He knew them by heart. How many, many of them were little unpretending luxuries that a little, peevish, sick child might crave! How few of them—herings now and then, and salt codfish or oatmeal—were necessities! It had nettled him over and over again to think of it, but now, somehow, it touched him against his will.

Yes, O, yes, he knew they used to say the little McKie girl—Love, Dove, what was her name?—looked like Becky. His Becky! His little round, roly poly, happy Becky!

After Mrs. Wyncoop's departure Abel Tappan took the big brown ledger back to the corner desk still open. Doggedly he turned the pages and went to work. With quick steps the little New Year was hurrying to meet the Old Year. His light footsteps made no creaking

over the snow. Eleven—quarter past—half-past—how close they were, almost touching hands!

A little voice roused Abel Tappan by and by—Becky's—but he had never heard Becky's voice from such a distance before. He seized the lamp and hurried upstairs, where he and his little beloved, motherless Becky and old Nancee lived.

The child was tossing on her bed, fretting plaintively. Her little face, in the lamp's feeble glimmer, looked unduly flushed and thin.

"My back aches so!" she whimpered.

Becky's back ached so! Becky's little straight—no, O! Lord have mercy, it was crooked! It bowed out pitifully against the little white sheets. Becky's face was sharp with pain.

Abel Tappan shuddered from head to foot. The lamp shook in his hand unsafely. Through the blur on his glasses the little tossing head on the pillow seemed strangely far away from him. Was it his little, plump, rollicking, dancing Becky—his straight Becky he had been so proud of always?

"I'm so thirsty in my throat!" moaned the little crooked Becky on the bed.

He bent down unsteadily and kissed her. His heart broke in the kiss.

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Then he had been asleep. He had had a terrible dream. Thank God, he was awake now! He carried Becky back upstairs, feeling every step as he went, with slow care. Then he tucked her into bed among blankets and quilts, and kissed her.

His lamp was flickering out, and he got another and carried it down stairs. The big book on the high corner desk lay open at page 46—

What!

Abel Tappan could hardly believe his eyes. He took off his glasses and rubbed them on the lining of his coat. But when he put them on again, he could still see two wavy, criss-cross lines meandering from corner to corner of page 46.

Mrs. Wyncoop's page, opposite, was clean and uncrossed.

"Well, now, who'd 've believed it!" he laughed, in loud delight. His heart felt light and glad. "I did it myself, instead o' crossing out Mis' Wyncoop's! And it can stay, too. It'll remind me that I ain't going to press that poor McKie woman a mite—not a mite—not if she can't ever pay up. She's got a poor little spindling, crooked-backed girl, and the Lord knows that's enough affliction. That's more'n I could stand."

With careful painstaking, he retraced the slanting lines, his pen spluttering tiny flecks of ink upon his intent face.

"There!" he breathed softly. "I guess they're black enough to remind me if I ain't stone blind! Now I'll turn over a new leaf."

At the top of the clean, new page he wrote, in his small, unsteady letters, the word "Lemons."

"I'll send Becky over with 'em first thing in the morning—if I can find 'em," he added, laughing again. Then he slapped his thigh in a sudden spasm of recollection.

"Why, bless your heart! they're in the money drawer this minute, holding their sides, like as not. I raked 'em all in to get 'em out o' my sight."

A sleigh load of belated revellers was crumpling past. Their gay voices rang out, and their laughs chimed in pleasantly with his.

He hurried to the door, unlocked it, and shouted after them at the top of his voice, little Becky's "Wisher Happy New Year!"—Annie Hamilton Donnell, in Country Gentleman.

ANOTHER NEW YEAR.

Age Reckoned by Inward Signs—Old Only as Our Growth in Manly and Womanly Virtue Would Show.

A modern author suggests that if all record and measurement of time by hours and days and years could be abandoned, we should gradually adopt a newer and truer standard, and count our age by inward rather than outward signs.

If, by transformation of mental habit this introspective reckoning could suddenly be brought to bear, in what new aspect should we see ourselves and our friends. How old would many seem who are yet in the vigor of youth, and how youthful many whose brows are wrinkled and crowned with silver hair. We might not wholly separate time and growth, but we should measure time for mortals as we do for trees, by the indications of growth.

Who does not know the difference who looks back and sees how the lifeless years of his past lie half forgotten while the life of the vital years has power still to set every pulse athrob? These years count, the others are eiphers. We are as old as their grand vitality inwrought into experience and ripened into character has made us. We are as old as our thoughts are high and deep; as old as our love is wide and warm; as old, and only as old, no matter how many our years, as our growth in manly and womanly virtue would show. The brain may have absorbed facts and theories and philosophies about goodness and the real self, learning the alphabet of God's lesson of obedience and trust.

These being the natural food of the soul, its real growth depends on the soul's power of assimilating what has been prepared by a Divine hand for its nurture. Yet on no amount of thought about obedience, or love, or goodness will the hungering human nature thrive. No careful analysis of foods will build up the wasting tissues or give new strength to the growing body, only that which enters into the life becomes part of fiber, and blood, and bone.—Washington Home Magazine.

HOW SHE KNEW.

But how long it took to find his great coat and get into it! He tried in hurry. Heavy weights seemed to hang to his limbs and drag them back with diabolical persistence. Would his arms ever go into the sleeves? Was it going to take till crack o' doom to get his hat on his head? Big drops of sweat scurried down the seams of his haggard cheeks. He set his teeth doggedly.

If the lemons in the money drawer had only jogged against the door of his memory!

"I'll find one—big one—steal one—anything!" he cried aloud.

Hark! was that the little voice, muffled by the folds of the thick comforter, still calling to him? Was it growing clearer, nearer?

"Wisher Happy New Year, daddy."

Why, it was Becky said it herself, standing in the murky doorway? Becky! Her voice shrilled out to him, triumphant and sweet.

Abel sprang forward in sudden horror and caught her in his arms. Her little nightgown fell away from her bare toes, and he felt the chill of them against his wrists.

"Happy New Year," he repeated, mechanically, after her. He was hugging the little cold feet fiercely to his breast, and burying his face in the tousled hair.

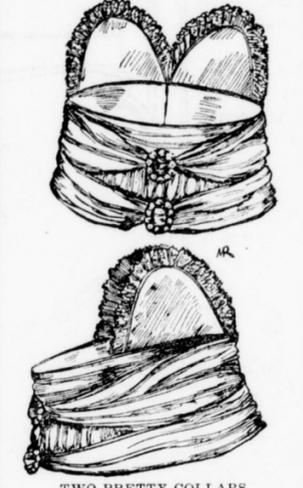
It was Becky—Becky—and her cheeks, against his, felt round and warm. And she sat on his arm as straight and strong as a little ramrod!

THE LATE FASHIONS.

Some Pretty Things That Are Appropriate for the Season.

One of the Many New Ideas in Petticoats—A Christmas Gift That May Be Made at Home.

It is quite wonderful how much an elaborate affair for the neck will add to a very plain costume. But as these accompaniments to the toilet are absurdly expensive, it is always better to see the design and make them at home. A very handsome salmon-pink



TWO PRETTY COLLARS.

collar is made of soft silk, over a stiff foundation. The collar fastens at the back with ordinary hooks and eyes. The silk is drawn over the collar, and fastens in front with small rhinestone buckles; between the buckles is a shirring of white chiffon.

Two pointed pieces of salmon-colored silk, edged with lace, cover the neck completely beneath the ear.

It would seem that Dame Fashion had carefully designed to have the new jackets so various in cut as to be becoming to all figures, stout or slim. Very long tight-fitting jackets reach to the knees, and many are worn even

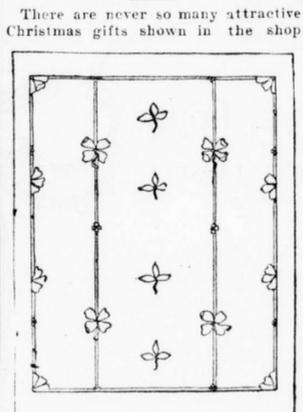


ONE OF THE SHORT JACKETS.

longer. These are especially stylish, made up in fur. Short jackets are also worn. It is quite the rage to have dark fur jackets trimmed with wide lapels and cuffs of light fur. The high collar is also lined with light fur.

The illustration shows a new French model developed in Persian lamb. It is very short and tight-fitting. Over the hips it is cut into three scallops toward the front and a short "pigeon-tail" at the back. It is a very "chic" jacket and exceedingly becoming to a slight figure.

There are never so many attractive Christmas gifts shown in the shop



AN EMBROIDERED BOOK COVER.

windows but one still has a desire to make something oneself.

A pretty idea is an embroidered book-cover. The conventional design can be embroidered in one or several colors on blue linen.

The cover is made on the pattern of a folding cardcase and is especially

adapted to protect a handsomely bound book from becoming soiled in handling. Although the book-covers by no means a new idea, it is too good a one to go out of fashion, and the book lover will find them an ever-welcome present.

A charming dressing sack for a young girl is made of pale pink eider-down flannel.



AN EIDERDOWN DRESSING SACK.

The turn-down collar is slightly low at the throat.

The jacket fastens at the neck and waist with two pretty pink satin ribbons. A dainty pocket ornaments each side of the jacket over the hips.

The cuffs turn back.

The entire jacket, cuffs, pocket, etc., are edged with pink satin ribbon about an inch wide.

Odd as it may seem, it is always easier to find a pretty bonnet for a little girl, than an attractive one for a wee boy.

However, a very stylish design for a boy's bonnet is a black velvet. The full, soft brim falls jabot-fashion at each side of the face. The brim is lined with pink silk. An enormous pink satin bow and a large pink plume ornaments the front.

There is such a rush of new ideas in silk petticoats that it is a question to know which ones to select. A very



SOME LATE PETTICOATS.

handsome silk skirt is of alternating stripes of pale green, black and white stripes garianded with pink roses. The flounce is short in front and long at the back; it is trimmed top and bottom with a narrow plaiting of heavy black



SOME LATE PETTICOATS.

satin ribbon, which is quite a novelty.

A very dainty skirt is of pale pink taffeta. It is trimmed at the bottom with six rows of pink mousseline de soie, laid in perfectly plain bias folds or tucks about an inch and a half wide. Above these are two folds of white mousseline de soie. The upper fold is slightly festooned and held in place by soft rosettes of the same material.

THE LATEST.