

THE NEW-BORN YEAR.

WESTERNIGHT the year lay dying!
By his lowly couch we met,
Bringing ivy-leaves, and trying,
Some with smiles and some with sighing
To remember—or forget.

Now the nursing year is waking,
And we gaze into his eyes,
Heedless of his sire's forsaking,
In his cradle he is taking
Gifts from earth and sea and skies.

Dawn of gold and sunset gleaming,
April eve and Juneteenth morn,
Things of truth and not of seeming,
These have glorified his dreaming,
He the heir, the newly born.

In his tiny grasp he treasures
Riches that may soon be ours—
Sunlight gold in brimming measures,
Meadow fragrances and pleasures,
Honeyed wine distilled of flowers.

Soon the child will frolic lightly
O'er his father's grass-green grave;
Day shall be his playmate brightly,
And his sleep be sweetened nightly
By the songs of wind and wave.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

pledge, serve him wine with every course. If you want him to hate a woman, invite her to meet him every time he calls, and tell him how 'suitable' she would be.

"And if you want him to love you," finished the bachelor, "don't ask him to swear it, but tell him that he really ought not to. The best way to manage a donkey—human or otherwise—is to turn his head in the wrong direction and he'll back in the right one."

"Then," said the widow decisively, "we ought to begin the New Year by making some resolutions."

"Some—what?"

"Vows that we won't stop doing the things we ought not to do," explained the widow.

"All right," agreed the bachelor thoughtfully, "I'll make an resolution to go on making love to you as much as I like."

"You mean, as much as I like, Mr. Travers," corrected the widow severely.

"How much do you like?" asked the bachelor, leaning over to look into the widow's eyes.

The widow kicked the corner of the rug tentatively.

"I like—all but the proposing," she said slowly. "You really ought to stop that—"

"I'm going to stop it—to-night," the widow looked up in alarm.

"Oh, you don't have to commence keeping your resolutions until tomorrow morning," she said quickly.

"And are you going to stop refusing me—to-night," continued the bachelor firmly.

The widow studied the corner of the rug with great concern.

"And," went on the bachelor, taking something from his pocket and toying with it thoughtfully, "you are going to put on this ring"—he leaned over, caught the widow's hand and slipped the glittering thing on her third finger. "Now," he began, "you are going to say that you will—"

The widow sprang up suddenly.

"Oh, don't, don't, don't!" she cried. "In a moment we'll be making promises!"

"We don't need to," said the bachelor, leaning back nonchalantly, "we can begin by making—arrangements. Would you prefer to live in town or at Tuxedo? And do you think Europe or Bermuda the best place for the—"

"Bermuda, by all means," broke in the widow, "and I wish you'd have that hideous portfolio taken off your town house, Hilly, and—"

But the rest of her words were smothered in the bachelor's coat lapel—and something else.

"Then you do mean to marry me after all?" cried the bachelor triumphantly.

The widow gasped for breath and patted her hair anxiously.

"I—I meant to marry you all the time!" she cried, "but I never thought you were really in earnest and—"

"Methinks," quoted the bachelor happily, "that neither of us did pro- pose too much." We haven't made any promises, you know."

"Not one," rejoined the widow promptly, "as to my flirting."

"Nor as to my clubs."

"Nor as to my relatives."

"Nor my cigars."

"And we won't make any vows," cried the widow, "except marriage vows."

"And New Year's resolutions," added the bachelor.

"Listen!" cried the widow softly, with her fingers on her lips.

A pea of a thousand silver bells rang out on the midnight air.

"The chimes!" exclaimed the widow. "They're full of promises."

"I thought it sounded like a wedding bell," said the bachelor, disappointedly.

"Maybe," said the widow, "it was only Love—ringing out."—Los Angeles Times.

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN CHINA.

The Breakfast is a Poetic and Religious Rite.

Except at the Chinese New Year, which comes in February, it is very hard to catch a glimpse of children in China. Little beggars will run beside you for miles to earn one "cash," a copper coin with a square hole in the middle of it, worth the twentieth part of a cent; but children who have parents to care for them seem to be kept indoors all the time, or only allowed to play in walled yards and gardens, writes Bertha Runkle in St. Nicholas.

We used to say to each other, "Why, where are the children? Haven't they got any?" But at New Year's we found out that they had.

This is the great holiday of all the year in China, when everybody hangs out flags and colored lanterns and sets off firecrackers. (We borrowed our custom of firecrackers for the Fourth of July from Chinese New Year's.)

All the people put on their very best clothes, and the children the best of all, jackets and trousers of bright blue or green or yellow or purple, the boys and girls so much alike that you can only tell them apart by their hair.

The boy's, of course, is braided in a pigtail, and the girl's is done up on her head with silver pins, or, if she's a very grand little girl, with gold or jade.

Thus decked out, the children go walking with their proud papas and mammas, and often go to the theater, which is a rare treat for them.

Perhaps Chinese children have romping plays together, but they always look as if they were born grown up.

New Year's Calls.

The custom of visiting and sending presents and cards on New Year's day is recorded almost as far back as history goes. The practice of using visiting cards can be traced back for thousands of years by the Chinese. Their New Year's visiting cards are curious. Each one sets forth not only the name, but all the titles of its owner, and, as all Chinamen who have any social position at all have about a dozen, it makes the list quite appalling. These cards are made of silk or else of fine paper backed with silk and are so large that they have to be rolled up to be carried conveniently. They are, indeed, so valuable that they are returned to their owners.

THE COST OF LIVING

19 BILLIONS OF DOLLARS SPENT ANNUALLY IN UNITED STATES.

THE CITY VS. THE COUNTRY

Unequal Distribution of Business Works a Hardship Upon Many, and Retards Growth of Agricultural Towns.

Statistics as to the cost of living are ever interesting to the economist. It is estimated that only 29 per cent. of the people of the United States reside in large cities. It is claimed about \$19,000,000,000 are spent each year by the 86,000,000 people in the union for clothing, food and luxuries. If 71 per cent. reside in rural towns and farming sections, it stands to reason that the percentage of money paid for necessities of life is 71 per cent. of the vast sum of nearly \$19,000,000,000 annually expended. These figures open up a wide field for study of economic conditions.

For sake of illustration, let it be estimated that in the large cities the cost of living is 50 per cent. more than in the country towns and farming districts, which would still leave approximately 60 per cent. of all spent for food and clothes credited to the people living outside the larger cities. Then it is found that the amount rural residents spend annually is \$11,800,000,000. But do the profits on this vast amount of business remain in the rural districts? Do the merchants in those 65,000 country towns receive the patronage of the people who are residents of the districts? A conservative estimate is that one-third of all this vast trade goes to the 415 large cities, wherein reside only 20 per cent. of the population. Were the profits on the trade that belongs properly to the country towns kept within them and within their districts, in the course of a dozen years their wealth would be increased nearly 100 per cent. But the drifting of the business to the large cities not alone makes the country towns poorer, but necessitates like drifting of the population of the country toward the thickly populated cities on account of the lack of industries to afford employment. Herein is found the cause of the complaints of students in economic conditions of the tendency of the country-bred youths to drift toward the large cities, and explains the cause. The country residents are the ones to be blamed for such conditions. It is a lack of appreciation of home enterprise, and the desire to trade in the large towns that is the cause.

The sending away of dollars assists the great combinations to control manufacturing, financial affairs, and all lines of industry, and even the trusts are tightening their grips on the farms, controlling the prices of commodities that the farmers must have, and detaching the prices at which he shall sell all his products, as with the destruction of the business of the rural towns, the home market is made poorer, and in fact even before the small town merchant can supply the people living within the town with products that are produced in the immediate neighborhood, the trusts must have their "profit" out of the transaction. Reader, do you know a remedy?

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FACTORS IN TOWN PROGRESS.

Some Comment Affording Thoughtful Folk Food for Reflection.

It is the duty of every merchant to give support to his home paper. When he pays the editor dollars for judicious advertising he is helping himself, helps the editor get out a better paper, and helps the community in general.

Public schools are one of the great props of national government. The more prosperous is a community the higher will be the educational facilities. Good schools are a help to any town and bring into it the most desirable classes, who seek to educate their children. He who assists in building up the business of a town also assists in bettering the schools.

Commercial clubs have been potent factors in the advancement of many towns. To the farmer the commercial clubs are as important as to the man of business. There is no reason why the farmers of the community should not cooperate with the business men in every undertaking that has for its object the benefit of the home town.

The young man starting in life should have a certain object in view. The seeking of a vocation is an important thing. Too many seek lines of work that they are not naturally qualified for. The greatest success is made by the men who follow that business or profession for which they have natural inclination and talent.

Thousands of people are still on earth who can remember the dismal failure of the Ruskin cooperative colony in the south, the falling to pieces of the Delany community in California, the disintegration of the "Agricultural Wheel" and the hundreds of thousands of dollars lost a day-dreamer in Missouri and Kansas in efforts to demonstrate the practical work of theoretical cooperation. Still people will bite at baits thrown out by the alleged cooperative commercial concerns, who have headquarters in large cities and do business through the mails.

A well known eastern financier, who for some time was the president of a large trust company, recently resigned, giving as his reason that a man, according to his belief, can do better working for himself, and that no man can really earn a salary equal to what he can make in business for himself. One of the conservative financial papers in commenting upon the move of the financier here referred to says that in these days, when all kinds of business are being converted into stock companies, the number of trades in which a man may engage in business for himself have become so few that for a great bulk of men, even those having the mental equipment which in other years would have been sufficient to make them their own masters, there is now no other opening than that of service for some corporation. For the bulk of the people, outside of those in agricultural pursuits, it is service for the corporation or no work at all. This truth is becoming more evident day by day. Even the farmers are feeling the strain of corporate methods. It is true that millions must have the products of his lands and his hands, but the corporations are the mediums he must work through, and from him they exact their things. It is to the interest of the farmer as well as the laborer in every walk and sphere to prevent as far as possible further encroachment of organized capital, and this can be done by as far as possible keeping the dollars that you earn in circulation in the community where earned and thus prevent the further concentration of money and of business in the great cities.

Is There Not Danger?

Is it poor policy for the farmers and the laborers of the land to help build up less than a dozen large stores situated in great cities to do business of thousands of dollars in country towns. One Chicago concern does a business through the mails of \$60,000,000 a year. Twenty thousand dollars in business is about the average for the country town store. Here we have an example of one concern doing the business of 3,000 small stores. Is there no danger that should these great concerns through their immense business drive the local dealers out of trade that they would become like other great combines, oppressors of the people?

Example of Modern Engineering.

A remarkable example of the scrupulous exactness with which modern engineering work is accomplished is found in the new piece of the Suez, which has been placed to within one-sixteenth of an inch of the position it must occupy to allow of the two parts of the vessel to be joined. When the tubes of London, working from either end, were about to be united it was found that they were only an "inch or two out of line. The ordinance survey of England, when the various sections were brought together, showed a discrepancy of less than five inches, and the construction of the Forth bridge, the greatest feat of all, was more remarkable still. When the king came to drive the last bolt the hole through the various plates was so near that the heat from a flaming paper was sufficient to expand the metal and allow of the rod being thrust through.—Fall Mall Gazette.

Abuse of Credit.

It is the abuse of the credit system that frequently causes trade to drift from the home town to some distant concern. Merchants extend credits to their customers, and when the bill reaches a large figure, the customer avoids the store of his benefactor, and when goods are needed sends the cash to some distant place. This is unfair, yet it is too often the case.

No Doubt of It.

First Old Maid—Do you think she's happy?

Second Old Maid—Certainly. She's married.—Detroit Free Press.



The Turning of the Glass

It has come once more to the turning of the glass. The sand is all but spent, and the days of the old year are as chaff in the wake of the wind. By the gray light in the western shack, at the heaped tables of the rich, within the great places of exchange, and even amongst those who go out upon the high seas, men will give pause. For it is the time of reckoning, and sober thought must go to the balance against mirth and merrymaking. It is the supreme hour of resolution. May the trend of worship be not towards the god of gold. May men not overlean towards the side of materialism. May there be reverence for simple things, for the young babe in the cradle and the old man nearing the valley. May the milk of human kindness and the good hand of common sympathy go forth to the natal feast. Then might the New Year dawn bright, and people of the world over could repeat with the poet:

"Turn again the wasted glass,
Kingly crown and warrior's crest
Are not worth the blade of grass
God lathers for the swallow's nest."

Newton MacTavish

THE NEW YEAR WHAT WE MAKE IT

By Ada C. Sweet

The only consistent pessimist is a dead pessimist, but unfortunately there are a good many of these hapless brethren of ours alive. Never are they more active, and happily unhappy, than toward New Year's day, when all the rest of the world is looking hopefully and cheerfully forward, in expectation of good luck and kind fortune during the next 365.

The pessimist delights in derision of the good resolutions which mark the celebration of New Year in the minds of many people. Shame upon the man or woman who would dull the bright ambitions and desires for the better of any human being! But there is little time to give to habitual mourners and augurs of evil. The new year will be what we make it, so far as our individual lives are concerned, and the man or woman who resolves to be happy in a healthful, unselfish way, is taking the first road toward happiness.

We are all after happiness, in one way or another. Even the recluse, even the martyrs of old, were on the endless search for happiness, though the joy of heaven rather than that of earth was the goal fixed upon in the eyes of those who sacrificed the present for the future. Eternal happiness was what they desired.

Unselfish happiness is always waiting, right around the corner. If we will only take our eyes off the far distance and look nearer home. The resolve to make next year a happy one for those nearest us will bring a good deal of real joy and satisfaction to the maker of the resolution, if he holds out well.

Silent resolve is a good thing, too. Sometimes one's enthusiasm evaporates when it is much spoken of. But don't let us allow the enemies of the race of man to discourage us in making good resolutions; and then don't let us fall to keep those that we make to the best of our ability.

There is room for improvement in all of us, and when we have acknowledged that, and set ourselves to improve, why, we are on the nearest road to success and happiness.

Christianity's Teachings.

To picture the change in the race wrought through the birth of Jesus is beyond the limits of an artist of either pen or brush. Christianity created painting. The sculptor's art was known and practiced to some extent before the birth of Christ. Sculpture could portray that beauty and strength of limb which was the Greek ideal of human perfection, but the Christian ideals were spiritual and could not be interpreted in cold, chiseled marble. The babe of the manger taught that man's glory was not in physical, but in spiritual triumph. A recent "History of our Lord as exemplified in works of art," has shown how the story of Jesus from nativity to resurrection was told by artists. Each picture was a sermon. Under the light of the babe of Bethlehem, motherhood, childhood, youth, manhood were inspired to new purpose. Through these sermons in pictures, men were moved with pity for the ignorant, the sick, the suffering. They were inspired with a new hope in sorrow, a new strength in temptation, a new joy in social fellowship.

Wondrous Influence!

The comforts we enjoy in material things from the influence of the babe of the manger might be approximately computed with our present almost limitless powers in mathematics, but how vain are the figures in an attempt to compute the influence on the life of the babe of Bethlehem on the life of the world. The enlargement of life, the development of character, the inspiration of lofty ideals, the ever-widening influence that is building for eternity.

Daily Thought.

Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts.—Charles Dickens.

When The Year Begins

One of the queerest features of the first day of the year is the fact that it has been celebrated on many different dates. With us the year begins on January 1, according to the calendar prepared by order of Julius Caesar, and later revised from time to time as necessity seemed to require. Hardly a month in the year but what has been regarded at some time, by some people, as the first of the 12, and consequently the beginning of the new year. Sometimes the date was logical, determined by the position of the sun in the heavens.

Sometimes it was fixed by agricultural or industrial conditions, sometimes by a great historical event, and occasionally it was merely arbitrary, determined without any special reason being assigned. At one time the Greeks began their year September 1; at another on the first day of July, the beginning of the Olympian games. In what is called the Alexandrian era the year began on August 20. One Jewish chronology assigns October 1 as the date on which the creation of the world began, and consequently adopts that New Year's day. At one time the Romans began their year on April 24, at another on March 1, and finally as we do now.

According to the meteoric cycle, the year began on July 15. During the period of Alexander's empire the commencement of the year was on September 1; the era of the Maccabees was dated from November 24. The people of Tyre began their year on October 19, while the so-called Sidonian era commenced on October 1, and the Augustan era made February 14 the first day of the new year. The ancient Egyptians began their year with the overflow of the Nile, which ever that might occur, while in India the annual flood of the Ganges furnished a date for popular chronology, and the Mexicans, although they had a complicated system of calculating time, popularly reckoned their year to begin with the spring planting.

The Jewish rabbis had four beginnings of the year, the first of the month Nisan, supposed to be the date of the Exodus; the first of Tishri, which began the agricultural year; the first of Elul, the day on which the cattle were numbered, and the first of Shebat, which was called the new year for trees. Christmas day, Easter, the beginning of each solstice and many other dates have been observed at different times by various nations; even now in Russia the day of the new year is 12 days behind that of our calendar, the Russians having never adopted the Gregorian calendar, which, indeed, did not come into general use until about the middle of the eighteenth century.

A Christmas Prayer.

Oh God my Father, looking up at the shining stars of the cold December sky I remember the patient mother and the rock-hewn manger in lowly Bethlehem where lay cradled Thy Love for the world. In the shadows of the silent stall I stand beside the Child. Speak to my soul as I wait I pray Thee. Let the trusting, loving spirit of the Child steal into my life until it calms all anxious fears and soothes all bitterness and pain.

In willing surrender and passionate longing let me take the Christ Child to my heart, that henceforth I may live as He lived, love as He loved and following in His footsteps bring Help to the needy, Courage to the weak, Comfort to the sorrowing and Hope to the lost. Amen.—Congregationalist.

The World's Indebtedness.

If you would take from literature the writings of Christian people you would take away nearly all the writings of classic poets, historians, scientists, journalists and scarcely anything would be left worthy of reading. The great productions of man's intellect bespeak our indebtedness to the sun of indebtedness who came to illuminate the mind as well as to regulate the heart.

No wind can do him good who steers for no port.—Italian.

New Year Irresolutions

By HELEN ROWLAND

The Widow Discusses Them With the Bachelor.

I WASN'T it hard, said the widow, glancing ruefully at the holly-wreathed clock on the mantel-piece, to know where to begin reforming yourself?"

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the bachelor, "you are not going to do anything like that, are you?"

The widow pointed solemnly to the hands of the clock, which indicated 11:30, and then to the calendar, on which hung one fluttering leaf marked December 31.

"It is time," she sighed, "to begin mental house-cleaning; to sweep out our collection of last year's follies and dust off our petty sins and fling away our old vices and—"

"That's the trouble!" broke in the bachelor. "It's so hard to know just what to throw away and what to keep. Making New Year's resolutions is like doing the spring house-cleaning or clearing out a drawer full of old letters and sentimental rubbish. You know that there are lots of things you ought to get rid of, and that are just in the way, and that you would be better off without, but the minute you make up your mind to part with anything, even a tiny, insignificant vice, it suddenly becomes so dear and attractive that you repent and begin to take a new interest in it. The only time I ever had to be taken home in a cab was the day after I promised to sign the pledge," and the bachelor sighed reminiscently.

"And the only time I ever overtook my bank account," declared the widow, "was the day after I had resolved to economize. I suppose," she added pensively, "that the best way to begin would be to pick out the worst vice and discard that."

"And that will leave heaps of room for the others and for a lot of new little sins, beside, won't it?" agreed the bachelor cheerfully. "Well," he added philosophically, "I'll give up murdering."

"What!" the widow started.

"Don't you want me to?" asked the bachelor plaintively, rubbing his bald spot. "Or perhaps I might resolve not to commit highway robbery any more or to stop foraging?"

"All of which is so easy!" broke in the widow sarcastically.

"There'd be some glory and some reason in giving up a big vice," sighed the bachelor, "if a fellow had one. But the trouble is that most of us men haven't any big criminal tendencies, merely a heap of little follies and weaknesses that there isn't any particular virtue in sacrificing or any particular harm in keeping."

"And which you always do keep, in spite of all your New Year's vows," remarked the widow ironically.

"Huh!" the bachelor laughed cynically. "It's our New Year's vows that help us to keep 'em. The very fact that a fellow has sworn to forego anything, whether it's a habit or a girl, makes it more attractive. I've thrown away a whole box of cigars with the finest intentions in the world and then gotten up in the middle of the night to fish the pieces out of the waste basket. And that midnight smoke was the sweetest I ever had! It was sweeter than the apples I stole when I was a kid and the asses I stole when—"

"If you came here to dilute on the joys of sin, Mr. Travers," began the widow coldly.

"And," proceeded the bachelor, "I've made up my mind to stop flirting with a girl, because I found out that she was beginning to—"

"I understand," interrupted the widow sympathetically.

"And, by Jove!" finished the bachelor, "I had to restrain myself to keep

from going back and proposing to her!"

"How lucky you did!" commented the widow wistfully.

"But I wouldn't have," explained the bachelor ruefully, "if the girl had restrained herself."

"Nevertheless," repeated the widow, "it was lucky—for the girl."

"Which girl?" asked the bachelor. "The girl I broke off with or the girl that came afterward?"

"I suppose," mused the widow ignoring the levity and leaning over to arrange a bunch of violets at her belt, "that is why it is so difficult for a man to keep a promise or a vow—even a marriage vow."

"Oh, I don't know." The bachelor leaned back and regarded the widow's coronet braided through the smoke of his cigar. "It isn't the marriage vows that are so difficult to keep. It's the fool vows a man makes before marriage, and the fool promises he makes afterward that he stumbles over and falls down on."

The marriage vows are so big and vague that you can get all around them without actually breaking them, but if they should interpolate concrete questions into the service such as, 'Do you, William, promise not to growl at the coffee—'

"Or, 'Do you, Mary, promise never to put a dab of powder on your nose again?'" broke in the widow.

"Nor to look twice at your pretty stenographer," continued the bachelor.

"Nor to lie about your age, or your foot or your waist measure."

"Nor to juggle with the truth whenever you stay out after half-past ten."

"Nor to listen to things that—that anybody—except your husband may say to you in the conservatory—oh, I see how it feels!" finished the widow with a sympathetic little shudder.

"And yet," reflected the bachelor, "a woman is always exacting vows and promises from the man she loves, always putting up bars—for him to jump over; when if she would only leave him alone he would be perfectly contented to stay within bounds and graze in his own pasture. A man hates being pinned down; but a woman doesn't want anything around that she can't pin down, from her belt and her theories to her hat and her husband."