At the New Year reception at the White House three ladies, a mother and two handsome daughters, who are well known in society here, passed into the red parlor and then entered the line. Just behind them came a colored woman, and back of her two young ladies, quite plainly dressed, and then a man. The society woman gave her name, "Mrs. Dobson," and each of the young ladies said "Miss Dobson." Then the young lady of color said "Miss Dobson" and the two young ladies behind her each murmured "Miss Dobson," and were followed by the young man, who said "Mr. Dobson." By that time everybody within hearing distance was shaking with suppressed laughter. The seven "Dobsons" eyed each other scornfully after they got into the east room, and, excepting the society woman and her daughters, went their several ways, they being in no way connected. The name was not Dobson, but that does not matter.

* * * * *

As gracious an act as was ever committed was witnessed on Wednesday. A feeble old lady, with a market basket filled to overflowing, and a handsome young woman, apparently bound for the Capitol, boarded the cars at 7th street. A big, clumsy man in leaving the car at 6th street scattered onions and potatoes, celery and canned goods all over the car floor, kicking the basket over, and never so much as apologizing. Not a man nor a woman in the car—and there were a round dozen—moved to help the old lady gather up her property, till the young woman, quick as a flash, stooped to replace the eatables; then there was help enough. At 1st street southeast the woman and girl both got off, but the market basket was very heavy and overbalanced the shaky old lady, and in her attempt to save it, she fell, spilling everything. The young lady, who had been watching her, ran across the track, helped replace the vegetables a second time, then, picking up the basket, carried it nearly half a block, to the home of the little old lady. At the Capitol the young woman sent in her card, and presently a hale old gentleman came out of Representative Hall and reproached her for being late to lunch. She laughingly replied that she had been detained later than she expected, and then father and daughter disappeared toward the House restaurant.

* * * * *

"The ancient frigate Franklin, a relic of the old wooden navy, which has been used for many years as receiving ship at the Norfolk navy yard, is soon to be a deserted hulk," said a naval officer, who has recently visited the Virginia naval station. "She was examined not long ago by a board of officers, and it is believed they will submit a condemnatory report. The policy of the department, as is generally understood, is to do away with the time-honored but antiquated and out-of-date system of receiving ships, substituting for them shore barracks similar in general characters to the quarters occupied by enlisted men at army posts. The jackies of the old school are much opposed to this plan. They cling to their old fogy ideas of a seafaring life and believe a recruit should be placed upon the water from the very first. To break him in on shore and have him live in a barracks, they say, will make the fellow a land-lubber all of his natural life. While the receiving ships of today are nothing more than great floating houses, there is nevertheless an air of the sea about them, and this the old dogs among the men love. Dismantled and roofed over the ships haven't much resemblance to a sea-going craft. Another thing in connection with the receiving ships is that the families of commanding officers are allowed to live aboard.

"The Franklin is a historic old boat, and it has been suggested some one might buy her when she is put up at auction and place the craft on exhibition in different ports. This would hardly seem to be a profitable undertaking."

* * * * *

Promptly at 4 o'clock each week-day afternoon the business of the clerk's office of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia comes to a close. On the hour, year in and year out, the messenger shuts the door, which fastens with a spring lock. He has never been known to vary half a minute from the stated time in performing this duty. Although the official routine is at an end the newspaper reporters and representatives of several legal publications usually are engaged for some moments after 4 o'clock gathering information filed immediately preceding the closing of the office.

Writing rapidly at a desk near the door a few days ago one of the reporters gave evidence of considerable irritation when a knock was heard. He had already been twice interrupted since the door had closed in order to admit colleagues, who were shut out. He had considerable data to transfer to paper and was in a hurry to get away. The knock on the door was repeated.

"Who is this sundowner?" inquired the reporter without looking up. And, he added, in tones loud, and marked with contempt: "Who is this wanderer from the depths of despair, this belated pilgrim, this mendacious meanderer?"

Another knock, more pronounced than the others, was the only reply. The irritated scribe shoved back his chair, strode across the room, and with the remark: "I guess I'll have to let the slob in," flung open the door. Before him stood Chief Justice Bingham of the District Supreme Court, staid and dignified.

A silence that was painfully quiet followed. Finally the chief justice smiled faintly, the reporter managed to stammer: "I beg your pardon, judge, I didn't know it was you," and hastily proceeded along the corridor and out of sight. Knocks on the door of the clerk's office after hours are now answered promptly and without comment.

* * * * *

Senator Cockrell of Missouri is known as one of the most indefatigable workers in Congress. He not only watches the proceedings of the Senate every minute of the meetings to discover any irregularity in the way of doing business, but he does an enormous amount of work for his constituents. He is known as a most democratic man, and a short time ago surprised the employes in the Senate folding room by appearing in their midst and, taking off his coat, helping to get a quantity of documents ready for mailing. The senator worked with energy until he saw the work completed, after which he put on his coat and left the building.

* * * * *

Commissioner Evans of the pension bureau had an interesting experience some time ago when he was in the lobby of the House of Representatives. There is something about Mr. Evans that always draws a crowd about him whenever he goes among public men, and it is probable that no man in the country shakes hands with more men than does he. So it came to pass that when a great many people had gone to the Capitol to catch a glimpse of Mr. Roberts, the man of plural wives, Mr. Evans was in the lobby shaking hands with a hundred old friends who crowded around him. Some one with witty intent suggested to a party of lady tourists that the man in the center of that crowd was the Mormon polygamist, and with one accord the tourists gathered closer and some of the older ladies who were ambitious to say they had actually shaken the hand of a Mormon, approached the supposed representative from Utah. Mr. Evans was equal to the occasion, for as soon as he discovered why he was the subject of so much attention on the part of the tourists he became very obliging, explained that a mistake had been made and pointed out the first innocent-looking individual he saw as the real Roberts. There were more explanations later.

DEAR TO HIS HEART.

Even if the Dog Was Only a Poor Little Cur.

"Say, mister, don't you want to buy a dawg?"

The little ragged bunch of humanity was a study in ebony, and he looked up pleadingly into the face of the man whom he had accosted. "Dog?" queried the man, "I don't see any dog. I don't like to buy things sight unseen."

"Oh, I'se got 'im heah, all right, 'deed I has," asserted the little fellow, and he began to undo the various layers of old coats about his body, evidently put on so that the good spots of one would cover the rents in the garment underneath. Finally he brought to light a little yellow cur, half starved and wholly worthless, either for use or beauty.

"What do you want to sell him for?" asked the man, a smile beginning to creep round the corners of his eyes.

"Well, you see, suh, I'se had Bones a good while, and I thinks a heap of 'im, but kain't get no license fur him, and now they says I got to tie up his mouf, so's he won't bite you alls. Deed, mister, Bones never bit nothin' in his life. He's a powerful good dawg, an' I jus' kain't abear to see the dawg ketchers git 'im, an' I thought if I could sell 'im to somebody who would be good to 'im, like you alls, I might buy 'im back in the summer." And he snuggled the ornery little cur up under his rags, to keep him from shivering.

Then that man didn't do a thing but trot that little study in ebony off to buy a license for the "dawg" and a muzzle, and now he is safe from the "dawg ketcher."

HE CHANGED HIS, TOO.

For of Course She Could Not Know His Taste.

Christmas stories are now ripe. Some are true and some are not, but this one is a fact, as a Connecticut avenue mother can vouch. Her small son, aged about twelve, got her a pretty pocket book for a Christmas present. She got him a handsome little Bible. On Christmas morning the son presented the pocket book in his best style, and said: "Mamma, a man can't choose things for a woman very well, so if the pocket book isn't quite what you want just change it, won't you?"

Mamma replied that while it was a beautiful pocket book, there was another style that she liked better, and if her son did not object she would change it for the one she had seen a few days before. She made the change, and so reported a day or two later. The evening following she found this note on her dressing table:

"Dear Mamma: You changed your present because it didn't quite suit you, and so I suppose you will accord me the same privilege with mine. A Bible is a handy thing to have around, and I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness, but, of course, you could not know my taste in reading very well. I changed the Bible today for a year's subscription to" (and here he gave the name of a weekly story paper for boys that is as flashy as they make them). "You see, I will be reminded of you by a fresh story every week. Your loving son."

Better Facilities.

From the Chicago Post.

"Papa," said the beautiful girl as she sat down beside the old gentleman and pulled his paper away, "Harold wants to have a talk with you tomorrow."

"Oh, he does, does he?" returned the old gentleman in a tone that was not calculated to inspire confidence in a young man. "Well, what's the matter with tonight?"

"He prefers, papa, replied the beautiful girl, "to wait until you are at your office."

"And what is the particular advantage of my being at my office?"

"He can call you up by telephone there, and we have none in the house, you know," answered the beautiful girl.

ACCIDENT OR DESIGN?

From Fliegende Blaetter.

THAT VEXED QUESTION

The man with a face like an interrogation point bit off a large hunk of mince pie (cold), washed it down with a guip of cold milk, and turned to the man standing alongside of him in the lunch room.

"Say, my friend," he inquired, "do you know when the twent—"

"No, you don't, stranger," said the man addressed. "Not this time. I'm in here to partake of a modest luncheon consisting of buttermilk and chocolate eclairs, and no man's going to get me on that subject while I'm eating down town. I've got to stand it at my boarding house table; there's nothing else at that table. But I can't be drawn into the argument down town. What's more, I don't care a darn when it begins."

The man with a face like a question mark looked puzzled, but he wasn't easily squelched.

"I don't think you understand what I was going to ask you," said he. "I wanted to know if the twent—"

But the man with the buttermilk and the chocolate eclair moved off. The man with the question pulled down a large piece of hot gingerbread from the counter, grabbed a cup of coffee, and tackled another man alongside of him.

"Excuse me," he began, "but I want to inquire when you think the twent—"

The man addressed smilingly interrupted. "Nix, old man; not today," he said, amiably. "Too much brain fag about it. I'd be glad to accommodate you by going out and fighting a dog for you, or sawing a couple of cords of wood for you, or any little chore like that—but, nay, nay, when it comes to that question. I've passed that problem along to my two boys in school, anyhow. They've got lots of time and enthusiasm, and it'll expand their minds—that is, if it doesn't land them in a lunatic asylum. The question doesn't make much difference to me, anyhow. I'll live just as long, anynow, won't I?"

"But," expostulated the man with the questioning eye, "what I was going—"

The man he was addressing looked at his watch hurriedly and ran to pay his check, however, and the man with the interrogatory physiognomy had no recourse but to turn to another man near by.

"Look here, my dear sir," he started, "I want to ask you when the twent—"

"I don't know, and what's more I don't care," was the testy reply. "I've got something else to do with my time than to fritter it away on such idiotic calculations as that."

"You are in error," was the interrogatory man's hasty interruption, "as to what I was—"

Again he found that he was addressing no one in particular, for the testy man had moved away.

"I wonder what alls all these people around here?" mused the man with the inquisitive countenance. "When I try to ask them a simple question they either get—"

Just then he caught sight of a friend coming away from the counter with a big slab of pie and a cup of coffee. He elbowed through the crowd and corralled his friend.

"Ha, old man, you're just the one I'm looking for," he said, joyfully. "I wanted to ask you when the twent—"

His friend's face lengthened immediately.

"Look here, Jorkins," he said, expostulatingly, "that's a great fault of yours—picking up these confounded fads and asking questions about them. How the dickens, now, should I, a man that sells hardware for a livelihood, know when the twentieth century begins? And what the deuce is the difference to me, so long as I get three square meals—"

"Just wait a minute," interrupted the man with the inquiring mug. "I wasn't attempting to ask you anything about the beginning of the twentieth century. I don't care a hurran about that question, one way or the other. What I wanted to ask you is, when was the twenty-cent piece withdrawn from circulation? I've got a bet on the date with a friend."

HER HEART IS ALL RIGHT.

It's to Be Hoped That She Gets Her Trip After All.

The gift that demands a bit of self-denial, yet carries with it hearty good-will, is the very best gift of all. A year ago there were two young ladies admitted to one of the big government departments. One was the daughter of a rich man and the other of a poor mother, who needed the assistance of her daughter. The rich man's daughter wanted to earn money enough to take her on a three years' tour of Europe, her father believing she would be better fitted for it if she earned a portion of the money for the jaunt. The two girls became warm friends, though one was born near the gulf and the other in the far north. The daughter of the north pined for her mother, and her health failed visibly under the close confinement, and then there came a few weeks ago a letter from the family physician, who wrote that the northern girl's mother could not live through the winter unless taken to a warmer climate. The blow was severe, for the daughter had denied herself all but the necessities of life to send her small salary to her mother, and she had not a dollar in the world to spare for added expense.

Christmas morning there came a ring at the door of the big bare boarding house of the desolate girl, and she was called down to receive a registered package. Within was a pretty Christmas booklet, filled with merry rhymes, and between its five pages lay five crisp one-hundred-dollar bills. On the last page was a line: "Dear Heart: It makes my Christmas incomparably happy to know that with the inclosed you can take your blessed mother to a milder climate and prolong her precious life, as well as your own. A bright Christmas and a happier New Year from your friend who has no mother, but loves yours and you."

With that gracious gift her longed-for over-the-sea trip goes glimmering for another year; but in the big heart of this girl from the south there must be a peace that passeth all understanding.

Chinese Are Frugal.

From the Atlantic.

No race of men can surpass the Chinese in habits of industry and thrift. With the introduction of western civilization the vast resources of the country will be developed, the products of the soil and manufacture will indefinitely increase and domestic and international trade will be multiplied in its proportions. Now, in all this material regeneration of China the Chinaman will be in evidence.

Not a dollar will be gathered from the soil, from trade, from mines, from manufactories, without his securing a due proportion as a reward for his part in the enterprise. He will patiently and faithfully work for a master for half a generation and in the second half he will appear as his own master, at the head of a thriving business. Thus, in the industries of the future, wherever there is work to be done, there will be found Chinese ready to "sell strength," as working for hire is called in China; and they will sell more strength for the money than will men of any other nation.

Again, a dollar in the hands of a Chinaman represents far greater purchasing power than it does in the hands of a European. In China a dollar will purchase 1,500 pieces of cash, composed of copper and zinc. These pieces, with a hole in the center and strung on a cord, weigh seven pounds. A common laborer in Pekin is glad to give ten days of labor, and a carpenter or a mason six days, to secure this amount of cash. This money would give a comfortable support to an average family.

Three dollars a month, or $36 a year, would cover the living income of a Chinese family of the working class. The meaning of this is that the Chinaman will survive and prosper under conditions of life which would discourage and finally overwhelm the European.

Utah and Kandahar.

They were two young ladies, and they were sitting in the Pennsylvania station, waiting for a train. Around a package that one of them carried was a somewhat ancient Star. One of the young ladies remarked to the other, as she glanced over the headlines before her: "Isn't it just too funny the way that the United States does things. Now, there's that Mr. Roberts, that they won't let sit down in the Capitol. They made such an awful stir about it that I suppose the English heard about it, and so they have made him a lord, and a general, and he is to go fight for the queen away off in some horrid place. I should think we should feel mightily ashamed, I do so."

"Yes, indeedy," was the intelligent response, and then they chewed gum like a house afire.

SOLDIER AND BAD MAN

Generally, when the soldier and the bad man of the west come together the soldier gets the worst of it. But there are exceptions. There are also some very bad soldiers. Norman was one of them.

This is the story of a savage knife fight that took place in 1881, at Il Waco, Wash., between a Portuguese gambler named Luruzzu and an artillery soldier named Norman, who was stationed at Fort Canby. There is no more desolate military post on earth than Fort Canby, Wash. It is situate on Baker's bay, a sort of inlet at the mouth of the Columbia river, and about ten miles across from Astoria, the salmon-fishing town of Oregon—and an evil enough town, too. Fort Canby is at the base of Cape Disappointment, and a couple of batteries of heavy artillery have been stationed there for many years. Ever since the establishment of the post Il Waco, three miles away through a dense, bear-infested forest, has been the pay-day resort of the soldiers. It is an evil, pine-inclosed little town of shacks, where brace games of all sorts run wide open, where the most villainous liquor known to man is purveyed out of barrels with tin dippers and where crime used to be a pastime.

This soldier Norman was bad from a military point of view, and he was a bad man in the bargain. All the men he soldiered with knew that he was a bad man, and they let him alone. He occasionally got into their pay-day poker game, and he always won. Their games were not big enough for him, however, and he spent all his liberty over at Il Waco, bucking the brace faro and stud poker games—and beating them. Beating brace games was Norman's specialty. In truth, it was a marvel among all hands that so accomplished a gambler and short-card player should have entered the army, and the only natural inference was that he had put on the uniform to avoid capture at the hands of the civil authorities.

Norman's unvarying success at Il Waco brace tables finally enraged the proprietors of the layouts to such an extent that all except one of them closed up on him. The man who did not close up on him was Luis Luruzzu, as bad a Portuguese as ever carried a knife in his boot. Luruzzu had been hit so hard by Norman that he kept his tables open to the soldier in the hope of getting back some of the money. His hope was vain, for Norman went right on winning. Finally, in desperation, Luruzzu suggested one Sunday afternoon to Norman that they play a two-handed game of draw. Luruzzu was an expert crooked draw player, and he thought to retrieve his losses in this way.

"You're on," said Norman.

In the presence of a couple of soldiers and a couple of hangers-on of Il Waco, Norman and Luruzzu sat down to the game in the one-room shack where the Portuguese lived. Luruzzu won at first, and his beady eyes gleamed with the anticipation of getting back not only all his own bracetable losses, but of acquiring a lot of the gold that Norman had taken from the tables of the other layouts. When he began to lose, as he did, he grew so nervous that he began to drink bad liquor in order to get a hold on himself. Norman did not touch a drop. Norman was not a drinking man, anyhow.

Luruzzu began to lose his own jackpots, sometimes on his opponent's bluffs, and sometimes on his opponent's genuine hands—how ever the hands were put together—and then Luruzzu drank more, in a fashion very uncharacteristic of a gambler and the proprietor of brace tables. Norman continued rigidly abstemious, according to his habit.

Along toward 7 o'clock in the evening, after five hours' play, Luruzzu was out about $1,000 and he was growing very ugly and insulting. Norman took the Portuguese's insults calmly, and went on acquiring Luruzzu's money. At 8 o'clock, when Luruzzu had only $500 left, he stayed in on a deal of the soldier's. The ante had grown to $25, so that Luruzzu had $475 still in hand to bet. He stood pat on a queen high flush of diamonds. The soldier drew one card to his two pairs, kings and tens, and caught another ten. Luruzzu cast his $475 into the center of the table with a melodramatic flourish of drunkenness.

"You blue man, you big gun man, you dealer of cards queer, you must now be beat," he shouted, wildly. "I call for a showdown, having no more money by me."

He laid down his queen high flush of diamonds with a bang. Norman put down, one by one, his ten full, letting both of the hands rest on the money in the center of the table and looking quietly, but very determinedly, like a man expecting trouble, straight into the wild eyes of the man across the table. Luruzzu's face became blood red, and he was fumbling underneath the table. Suddenly, quick as thought, there was a gleam of a knife in the air, and Luruzzu's knife came down, aimed for Norman's right hand. But Norman's hand didn't happen to be there. Neither did his left. Norman was standing at full length, with a bowie knife in his right hand, and he gripped it like a man who knew how to use it.

The two men stood looking at each other for a second, and the look meant that the fight was to be immediately on. One of the four onlookers, a soldier quickly hauled the table to a corner of the room, and Norman and Luruzzu, leaping at each other in the center of the shack, began the bowie fence, which both appeared to understand thoroughly. Luruzzu was a trifle the better of the two, but he was handicapped by his condition, and reeled at critical points. The two men, both leaning far forward with extended and upraised knives, circled around each other with the caution of cats, lunging and dodging, but never getting near enough for the thrust for several minutes, both of them panting heavily. Once Luruzzu's knife grazed the fingers of the soldier's knife hand, but that was as near as he ever got to the artilleryman. The four men looking on from various corners of the shack took no part, the two hangers on being indifferent as to the outcome, and the soldiers seeing that their man probably had the winning end of it.

"Oh, no, you don't," said Norman, quietly, after a peculiarly vicious thrust on Luruzzu's part, and, taking advantage of a stagger his man made, he ran in suddenly and planted his knife squarely in the heart of the gambler, who was dead within a minute. The bad soldier threw his knife against the wall of the shack without a word to any of the other men, gathered up the gold and notes on the table, strode into the black darkness of Il Waco's miry streets down to the water's edge, ran up the single sail of a fisherman's felucca moored there, and shoved off into the waters of Baker's bay. He was never afterward traced, although the presumption of the army officers and civil authorities who made the investigation was that he sailed across to Astoria and stowed away on the steamship Columbia that sailed from Astoria for San Francisco at 4 o'clock the next morning.

But many an American frontiering soldier has succumbed to the American bad man to offset this one of few instances where the soldier held the edge.

Athletics for Girls.

From the Boston Transcript.

The gymnasium work alone would hardly account for the improved physical condition of college women, but taken in connection with the system of rational athletics which prevails at almost all these institutions it has made a noble record.

The time may come, if in fact it is not already here, when instead of fearing that the daughter of the family will be broken down by overstudy and graduate with a mental equipment gained at the expense of a weakened body, she will be sent to one of these institutions as much to strengthen her physique as to improve her mind. Bicycling, swimming, skating, tennis, golf, basket ball, boating and other forms of healthful out-of-door exercise that keeps the muscles firm and the nerves well braced are working wonders for the present generation of young women, and this influence is extending out from the colleges and having its influence upon less pretentious educational institutions and upon the social life generally.

We are inclined to think that the women's colleges furnish the most rational athleticism that is to be seen anywhere, and that the men's colleges might accept pointers from them. Over-strenuousness is avoided, and the ambition of the students is satisfied with well-developed physiques and abounding health. They do not train up to the heart-disease point. They do not strive for abnormal results. They lay the foundations for splendid womanhood, instead of discounting the future by overtraining. In other words, they are preparing for a vigorous life instead of a foot ball game.

Fine Distinctions in Chicago.

From the Chicago Tribune.

"There is a kind of smoky haze hanging over the city today," remarked the man who had just landed in town.

"A further acquaintance," replied the hardened native, "will satisfy you that it is a kind of hazy smoke."

TOO MUCH NEW YEAR DAY

"Going to receive on New Year, eh?" said young Wednew to his wife at the breakfast table about a week before the twentieth century didn't begin.

"Yes, Jack," replied his wife, archly. "Won't it be odd—receiving as a Mrs. on New Year day?"

"Umph! S'pose it'll be odd, all right, but where do I come in? Thought we'd fixed it to spend our first holiday season together quietly and alone—no flubadub or pink waists or fixin's? Am I supposed to be mixed up in the receiving end of it?"

"Why, of course not, Jack. You know men are not supposed to be in evidence around the house during New Year receiving."

"Well, I'm not going to be chased out, permit me to inform you. I've been hungering for two thousand years or so for a home, and now that I've got one I'm going to stay in it. 'Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch of the ranged empire fall; here is my space.' You don't s'pose I'm going to tog out on New Year day and go jamming around making calls? Hardly. Through with all that sort o' thing. Too old."

"Methusaleh! No, you don't have to go out on New Year day if you don't wish to, Jack."

"Well, then, where do I put in the day—in the cellar, or in the attic—I suppose the whole upstairs part of the house'll be employed as dressing apartments for your assistant receivers—or are you going to have assistants?"

"I am going to have assistants—four of them; one of them one of your old flames; am I not forgiving and free from jealousy? No, you will not have to stow yourself away in the cellar or the attic; couldn't you stay in your own den for just a few teeny weeny little hours, Jack?"

"That 'ud be nice—and smoke myself deaf, blind and dumb, and stare out of the window and at the figures on the wall, and read the 'Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire,' and just have slathers of hilarity. Where do I come in for some of the eggnog? And how about my dinner? Or is dinner cut out of these calculations?"

"I'll make you a nice little separate bowl of eggnog all for yourself, Jack, and you can have it in your own den; and we can have dinner before we commence receiving, of course. Now do be your lovely, agreeable self, for I am just dying to receive this New Year as a solemn, settled matron."

"What's the good of your having that old flame of mine here as an assistant receiver—whoever the deuce she may be—never had any old flames that I know of—unless I'm to have a peek at her, anyhow?"

"Well, it'll be enough for you to know that she's under the same roof with you."

So it was settled that way, although Wednew was heard to mutter several times before New Year day arrived that he couldn't exactly see where he was going to "get off at." Mrs. Wednew's name was given in the "receiving" columns of the newspapers, together with the names of her assistants, and there was a lot of overhauling of the lower rooms and embellishing with flowers and plants, and daily and nightly conferences between Wednew and Mrs. Wednew as to what she'd look the prettiest in ("you'll look pretty in any old thing," comprised his share of the conferences), and then New Year day happened along, as that and other days have a habit of doing. Wednew evinced a perverse desire to loaf around the lower floor of the house in his smoking jacket during the morning hours, but he was sternly told that smoking didn't go down stairs that day, for fear of tainting the atmosphere and spoiling the effect of the fragrance of the cut flowers, and by 11 o'clock in the morning he found himself chased to the second floor. He hadn't any more than read the morning papers and smoked a couple of cigars before Mrs. Wednew told him that dinner was ready.

"Dinner? At noon—only a couple of hours after breakfast? How's this?" he inquired.

"Well, we begin to receive at 2, you know, Jack, and I want to have the dishes all out of the way, and the maid tidied up to serve the refreshments," explained Mrs. Wednew.

So Wednew, without any appetite, sat down to his noon New Year dinner, being gently jogged along whenever he seemed disposed to linger over the viands. Immediately after dinner, which lasted somewhat less than half an hour, Mrs. Wednew disappeared upstairs, and at half-past 1 she appeared unto her spouse, who was gloomily looking out of the parlor windows, radiant and ready to receive.

"Now, Jack, au revoir for a few teeny little hours," she said to Wednew. "My assistants will be arriving very shortly, and you are not supposed to be within miles of here. Just go up to your den, like a dear—it's all fixed lovely, with the individual bowl of eggnog—and enjoy yourself. It'll all be over by 7 o'clock, and then we'll have a jolly old time when I tell you about everybody that called."

Wednew ascended the stairs with the look of a man going to execution, and went to his den. He had a sort of unexpressed feeling that this first New Year he had arrived at as a married man wasn't exactly panning out as one wild whirr of hilarity for him, but he couldn't exactly make up his mind what was wrong with it.

"Wonder why it is," he thought, "that men can't break into this New Year picture somehow or other, in their own homes? Married man's either got to hide somewhere under his own roof or revert to his bachelorhood and jam around making calls. This looks to me like one of the respects in which a married man is a dead one. Darned queer a chap can't have his wife with him when he wants her. Feel as lonesome as the dickens up here all by myself. 'N I don't believe she wanted me to go out calling, at that. She didn't suggest it, I noticed."

He took a couple of eggnogs out of the bowl and settled himself down to read. He read two pages of the book and then got up and looked out of the window. He heard the front door opening and closing down stairs, and the cheery laughter of young women, and the deeper tones of the men making pretty speeches.

"They're having all kinds of fun down there, and here I am hidden up here like a burglar that's got in and can't get out. Wonder she didn't tie me to a bed post in the store room."

He took a few more eggnogs, and then the idea struck him. He furtively opened the door of his den and looked out. Yes, they were all down stairs, and he could race to his dressing room and get his dress clothes. He waited until the laughter and chatter down stairs were mingling high together, and then he tiptoed to his room, furtively got out the things, grabbed a brush and comb from the dresser, and tiptoed back to his den. Then he lit the gas—it was growing dark—and rigged himself up. He remembered that, having come in the basement way on the night before, his overcoat and top hat were on the basement rack. He crept down the basement stairs, put on his overcoat, grabbed a cane, and let himself out into the darkness.

* * * * * * * * *

When Wednew got home about 10 o'clock he found his wife in wild alarm.

"Great heaven, Jack, what has happened? Where and how did you go? Why did you—"

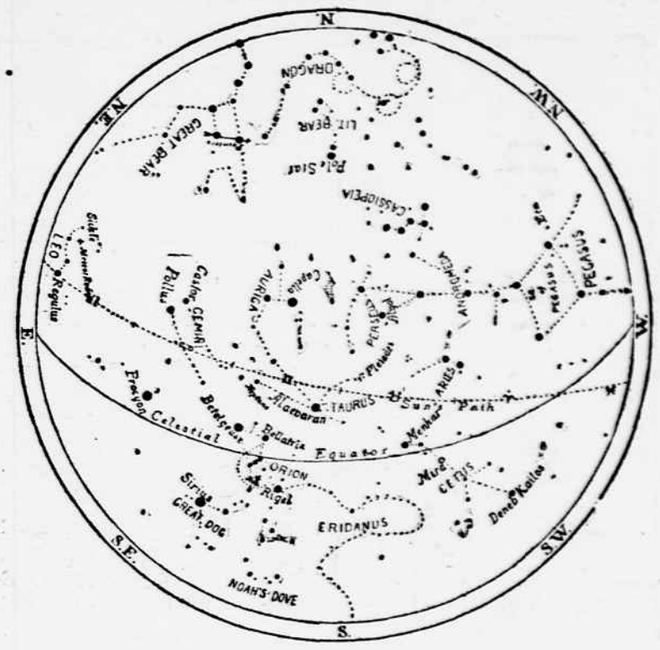
"Happy New Yearsh, li'l one," said Wednew, removing his overcoat with great dignity and beaming upon her affectionately. "Jesh got li'l loneshome, thash all. Got 'fraid bogle man up there all 'lone. Lesh live together in our li'l home after thish, hey?"

Food for the Brain Workers.

From the Sanitary Record.

It is all right for the man who labors all day in the open air to eat freely, but the man of sedentary habits, the brainworker, must adapt his way of living to his needs. He must be well nourished, for the brain is incapable of good work unless well supplied with pure blood, but such a man cannot possibly furnish vital force to digest three large meals daily. If he tries it nature will protest at every step. The chemical changes of digestion will be imperfectly performed. The stomach will neither secrete freely nor churn the food with cheerful alacrity; the pyloric orifice contracts and allows such chyme to pass with grudging reluctance; the intestinal lacteals are ashamed to absorb such miserable pabulum, which chokes, irritates and congests them, so the large meal remains in the digestive organs to ferment, putrefy and steep the individual in foul gases and depraved secretions.

But the system can furnish enough vital force to convert a small meal into pabulum of high standard, which will be absorbed without difficulty. Three such small meals are not enough to keep the individual properly nourished, however; four to six will be required. Each should consist of but one or at most two articles of food, the diet to be varied by changes at meals. The portion of food served must be small; the patient must stop as soon as the appetite is satisfied and gaseous distension is proof positive that the meals are still too large or too close together.



A Planisphere of the Heavens, showing the positions of the Principal Stars which are above the horizon January 1—15—31, at 9—8—7 p.m.

JANUARY HEAVENS

Cold Winter Nights Enhance the Beauty of the Stars.

TO LOCATE THE CONSTELLATIONS

Recent Discoveries in the Matter of Dark Suns.

THEIR LIGHT GONE OUT

Written for The Evening Star.

The brilliant star which may now be seen at about 9 p.m. nearly overhead is Capella, in the constellation Auriga. Low in the southeast is the still more brilliant Sirius. A circle described through these two stars, the line joining them being a diameter, incloses a region unequaled for splendor by any other of equal extent in the whole heavens.

Within this limited area are the constellations Orion, Taurus, Auriga and Gemini, all brilliantly adorned with bright stars. Orion contains two of the first magnitude—Betelgeuse (Bet-el-jeu-ze), in the right shoulder, and Rigel (Ree-jel), in the left foot—and four of the second magnitude, namely, the "Three Kings," which form the belt of the huntsman, and Bellatrix, in his left shoulder. Saiph, the "Sword," at the opposite corner of the constellation—in the right knee—is of the third magnitude.

A straight line run from Sirius to the Three Kings and prolonged to an equal distance beyond them strikes Aldebaran, the "Bull's Eye," in the head of Taurus. Prolonged still farther to a distance about two-thirds as great, it strikes the Pleiades, in the Bull's shoulder.

At the left of Sirius, forming with it and Betelgeuse a large equal-sided triangle, is Procyon, the Little Dog. Midway between Capella and the eastern horizon are the Twins (Gemini), the upper of which, Castor, is a bright second-magnitude star, while Pollux, the lower, being somewhat brighter, commonly ranks as of the first magnitude.

Between Capella and the head of Orion is another conspicuous pair of stars, about as far apart as the Twins, but less bright than they, one being of the second and one of the third magnitude. These are the tips of the horns of Taurus, the celestial Bull—the very long "golden horns" with which he was said anciently to "open the year," the rising of this constellation, in the latter part of April, having been anciently the signal for the farmer to begin his spring's plowing.

The Dog Star.

Sirius, the Dog Star, nine times as bright as an average star of the first magnitude and five times as bright as the brilliant Capella, has naturally held a prominent place both in mythology and the history of astronomy. Among the ancients Sirius was generally regarded as a star of baneful influence. The Persians called it Tishtrya, and dreaded its malign radiance as the cause of the summer droughts and of diseases among cattle and men. Similar notions respecting it were prevalent among the Greeks and Romans. The Egyptians, on the contrary, regarded it as a beneficent star. It was known to them as Sothis, and was believed to be the residence of the goddess Isis. Its rising, or first appearance above the eastern horizon at daybreak, which occurred in July, marked the beginning of the Egyptian year, the sacerdotal year, which contained 365¼ days, known as the Sothic year to distinguish it from the civil year, which contained but 365 days. The rising of Sirius brought with it the annual inundation of the Nile, and it was, perhaps, because of the star's supposed watchful care over the interests of the husbandman that it was called Anubis, the Dog, a name which still clings to it.

Star Distances.

Sirius is among the sixty or seventy stars of which the distances from us are known, with a greater or less margin of uncertainty. It stands third on the list, not first, as might be supposed from its superior brilliancy. The nearest star, so far as is known, is Alpha Centauri, a star of the first magnitude, too low in the southern hemisphere to be visible north of the latitude of New Orleans. The next is 61 Cygni, a star of only the fifth magnitude, in the constellation of the Swan, particularly interesting as the first star of which the distance was determined by Bessel some sixty years ago. The distance of Sirius, according to the determinations of Drs. Gill and Elkin, is about 500,000 times that of the sun, or about eight "light-years." That is to say, light, which comes to us from the sun in eight and a quarter minutes and from the moon in one and a third seconds, requires eight years to flash across the space which separates us from the brilliant Dog Star.

The light of Sirius is estimated to equal that of seventy suns placed side by side. The sun in its place would shine for us as a star of only the second magnitude. If we suppose that Sirius emits the same amount of light, area to area, as the sun, we may easily calculate that to shine at its distance as brightly as it does it must have a diameter about eight times that of the sun, which would give it a volume five hundred or six hundred times as great as the sun's. But Sirius is undoubtedly hotter and intrinsically much brighter than the sun, so that this is probably an overestimate of its size.

The Companion of Sirius.

The discovery of a companion of Sirius—by Mr. Alvan Clark, jr., while testing the performance of a new telescope, in 1862—afforded the means of determining the star's mass, or weight. The result of the calculation was strikingly at variance with what had been anticipated from the star's great brilliancy. Although seventy times as bright as the sun, Sirius proved to be only about three times as massive, or heavy, as that luminary.

Dark Suns.

One of the most interesting of the astronomical events of the past year is the discovery made by Prof. Campbell, at the Lick observatory, that many of the stars vary in the rates of their movements toward us, or from us in such a way as to leave no doubt that they are revolving in orbits around or in connection with companion bodies, which, being invisible, must be non-luminous, must be "dark suns." The discovery has been made with the spectroscope—or, rather, with the spectograph, which is the same instrument adapted for taking photographs of the spectra of celestial bodies—and is due to the power which that instrument has of revealing a motion of approach or recession in a star through a slight displacement which such motion causes in the spectral lines.

Prof. Campbell's list of discoveries of this sort already embraces fifteen stars, of which the most interesting is Polaris, or the North Star. This star has been found to be moving toward us, but with a velocity which varies in such a way as to indicate that it is associated with at least two invisible companions, with one of which it forms a binary system, the two bodies revolving about their common center of gravity in a period of about four days, while this pair revolves about the third body, in a period not yet determined, but which appears to have a length of many years.

Variable Velocity.

Another and equally interesting case of variable velocity "in the line of sight" is afforded by the brilliant star Capella. An examination of six spectrum plates of Capella "leaves no doubt," says Prof. Campbell, "that this star is probably, like Polaris, a spectroscopic binary." The companion body is dark. The period of revolution has not yet been determined, but it would appear to be some ten or twelve months in length. There are indications also of a second companion, which is luminous, revolving in a much shorter period, not yet determined. It is interesting to recall here that a few years ago it was discovered at the Harvard College observatory that Beta Aurigae, the second-magnitude star in the right shoulder of the Wagoner—Capella is in the left—is a "spectroscopic binary," the companion star being bright, but too close to the principal star to be visible through a telescope. The period of revolution in this case is four days.

Other interesting stars on Prof. Campbell's list are: Epsilon Ursae Minoris, the second star from Polaris in the handle of the Little Dipper; Eta Pegasi, a star of the third magnitude near the northwest corner of the "Square;" Epsilon Librae, in the northern pan of the Balance, and Beta Capricorni, the lower of the conspicuous pair of stars which mark the horns of Capricorn.

The great interest which attaches to these discoveries lies in the fact that the dark bodies thus revealed must be bodies of considerable size in order to swing, as they do, the stars—the suns—with which they are associated. They can be nothing else than extinct suns, not mere planetary bodies. They seem to be fairly numerous, to judge from the number already discovered. We may regard them as illustrations of the fate which awaits our own glorious luminary, some millions of years hence.

The Planets.

Mercury is a morning star, but is too near the sun to be visible.

Venus is an evening star, setting shortly before 7 o'clock. Visible low in the southwest.

Mars will be an evening star, though not visible, until the 16th of the month, and after that date a morning star.

Jupiter, three hours west of the sun, is now visible in the southeast as a morning star.

Saturn and Uranus, between Jupiter and the sun, are both morning stars.

Neptune is an evening star, the only planet now above the horizon at 9 p.m., about six degrees due east of the star which tips the southern horn of Taurus.

At 1 a.m., Washington time, on the 2d of this month the earth was in perihelion—at its nearest to the sun.

Pancakes in Chile.

Correspondence of the Chicago Record.

For several days I noticed the word "panqueque" upon the bill of fare at the hotel, and did not know what it was. There is a brand of wine from one of the Chilean vineyards with that name, and I supposed it was perhaps the same thing referred to, although it was difficult to understand why it should appear among the desserts on the menu at the dinner table and on the bills of fare for breakfast. The best way to find out about