

MANY SIDES OF NEW YEAR'S

THE custom of celebrating the New Year by leaving behind, in theory at least, one's pet pernicious habit or besetting sin, may be hackneyed, but it certainly is not entirely relegated to the limbo of things forgotten or outworn. Some time New Year's day, when a quiet moment in the day's swirl offers time for thought, there will be a hasty taking stock of the year that is gone, a recounting of errors and failures, a silent promise that this or that will not occur again.

And what does it all amount to, after all, this old custom of revamping threadbare resolutions or selecting new ones? The cynic will smile and say that it is all a waste of effort, a flash in the pan, a half-hearted glossing over of mistakes by wordy and none too sincere promises of reform. The humorist will have his little fling in cartoon and witty quip and jest. He will gurgie with the sardonic glee of Robin Goodfellow over the folly of mortals and find in every resolve new subject for laughter. From the pulpit on Sunday will sound the admonition of the minister and the moralist. They will take good resolutions seriously, and set upon them the stamp of divine approval. And whether the wry sneer of the cynic, the mocking grin of the humorist, or the approving smile of the moralist prophesy the fate of the resolutions and their maker, it will be true that even the most momentary impulses toward better things will not be entirely wasted.

There was a time when, in the simple faith of childhood, you set down in black and white your promises to do better. On the first page of your new diary, a yearly Christmas present, you wrote in your best Spencerian hand—we knew none better in those days—something like this: "During this year I resolve not to lose my temper; not to be saucy at home; not to put off doing the things I dislike; to read my Bible every day." Direct, sounding blows were these on the chain mail of your besetting sins of a quick temper, a wickedly sharp little tongue, procrastination, and childish irreligion. Behind closed doors, lest any one see him in so meek a moment, Brother Dick was scribbling earnestly: "I promise myself not to be late for dinner, not to forget to wash my neck and ears, not to get in debt to father for my allowance, and not to play hooky a single day." Of course you failed, both you and Dick, before the little diary had its new gilt dimmed, or the soft penciling of the latter had blurred itself into unrecognizable illegibility. But the effort wasn't altogether wasted, and there were fewer fits of temper and cleaner neck and ears than would otherwise have been.

We grown-ups miss, as we get older, some of the past and gone aids to New Year's resolves. The day was once upon a time more marked by pleasant social customs. Only in officialdom is New Year's now a state-ly day of ceremonial. But it is not hard to recall that a decade or two ago there still survived some of the dignity and good cheer that had attached itself to the day. Before the Christmas fruit cake had all been devoured, or the stone jars of small cakes suffered too severely from the inroads of rapacious children, preparations for New Year's day were well under way.

Children were not included in this celebration. This was essentially the festival of their elders. Orders to keep from under foot were rigidly enforced, and did you wish to see the fun no place remained but the second-story landing, which gave somewhat inconspicuously upon the hall below, with a strained view of the big parlors, and none of the dining room beyond. That it was there and in full working order was evidenced by a keen sense of smell.

It was always great fun to wander up and down the principal residence streets as noon drew near, to find out who were to be at home and who were not. A basket tied to the door knob with gay red ribbons said, for all the world to hear: "We are not receiving today." If you were a boy and daring, later in the afternoon you stole up on the step to peep in and discover, by the number of cards within, the respective popularity of village maids and matrons. Wherever the door lacked the basket, you knew that behind the drawn shades there was the soft glow of candles or the yellow glare of gas, poor substitute for sunlight on snow, but presumably kinder to complexions and gowns just a trifle passe. And you knew that in each house, subject only to trifling variations of background, there would be enacted the same scenes.

Into the front door that opened at the first touch of the bell passed a fluctuating stream of men in holiday attire. There were elderly beaux a-plenty in broadcloth that was brushed to the point of perfection, smart young dandies, sporting the newest fashion in ties; awkward beginners not quite used to the length of their frock coats—we called them Prince Alberts in the days when New Year's calls were in vogue—and a sprinkling of substantial-looking business men paying homage to the established custom of society. Everybody who was anybody in "our town" paid his devoirs to the incoming year by making the rounds of his friends' homes.

Once inside, there was the neat maid or solemn butler to receive the caller's card and help him with his overcoat, hat and cane, and then a dash for his hostess and her daughters and friends under the chandeliers with the prism



of those who had filled the pews, especially that of one man, the governor of the state, whose aquiline profile, flashing eyes and straight, glossy black hair formed a never-to-be-forgotten personality.

Watch-night hymns have a personality of their own, as those of Christmas or Easter, if not so widely known. They are naturally serious and a bit foreboding, with a touch of the melancholy that is associated with the rapid flight of time.

The year is gone, beyond recall, With all its hopes and fears, With all its bright and gladdening smiles.

With all its mourners' tears, is an old Latin hymn to a common meter tune that illustrates the tendency of this branch of hymnology. Charles Wesley has been most prolific in voicing this thought.

Wisdom ascribe, and might, and praise, To God who lengthens out our days; Who spares us yet another year, And makes us see his goodness here.

is an old favorite. Often just on the stroke of midnight another of his voiced the feelings of the congregation, that beginning:

Join, all ye ransomed sons of grace, The holy joy prolong, And shout to the Redeemer's praise, A solemn midnight song.

SEND BATTLESHIPS TO CUBA

President Learns of Conditions on Islands and Will Not Permit Situation to Get Beyond Control.

Washington.—It developed Tuesday that a part of the government's information regarding the critical situation in Cuba—which it is expected will call for intervention this winter—was brought back by President Taft himself on his return from Panama recently.

On his way back the president stopped at Guantanamo to inspect the site selected by Secretary Meyer for a naval base to guard the Panama canal. It was learned Tuesday that on the occasion representatives of both President Gomez and the opposition factions described the conditions of the island, each from their own viewpoint, in such detail that the president had personal confirmation of reports that have reached the state department of the dispirited and corrupted conditions in Cuba.

Between January 1 and 9 the entire American battleship fleet, with one thousand or more marines aboard, will be in Guantanamo waters. It was announced at the navy department that the fleet will go direct to Guantanamo from its European cruise.

TEACHERS IN CONVENTION.

Annual Meeting of the Utah Teachers' Association Well Attended.

Salt Lake City.—Mathoniah Thom as, president of the Utah Teachers' association not only arraigned unfulfilled school boards in a severe manner but declared that many teachers were entirely out of place in the school room, in his address at the opening of the seventeenth annual convention of the association at the Assembly hall, Tuesday afternoon. The attendance at the meetings promises to break all other records. Many of those present favor state organization to govern all athletic contests. Western boys should be educated in the east and eastern boys in the west, says Dr. Tyler of Ansbury.

The visiting teachers were welcomed by Governor William Spry and Mayor John S. Bransford.

Americans Lashed by Hondurans.

New Orleans.—A special dispatch to the Picayune from Puerto Cortez Honduras, says William Barber of Kentucky and two other Americans were seized by Honduran police and soldiers, thrown into jail and brutally lashed. Afterward they were deported on the Honduran gunboat Tatumpala to Guatemalan territory and landed penniless in the forests.

New York Bank Closed.

New York.—The Northern Bank of New York, with deposits in its nine branches of \$6,912,582 at the time of its last published statement was closed Tuesday by O. H. Cheney state superintendent of banks, "for the benefit of the depositors." An inventory of the bank's assets and liabilities is now under way, but until it is completed no further statement will be made.

Italy Confronted With Strike.

Rome.—More than 90,000 railroad employees in Italy have just completed the taking of a referendum to determine what attitude they should assume in order to bring about an amelioration of their condition. By a great majority the men declared in favor of the instrument of strike. The authorities are directing all their efforts to preventing a railway strike, which, it is feared, might result in a strike of the employees in all public services.

Nevada Corporation Decision.

San Francisco.—In a decision rendered Tuesday Superior Judge Sewell directs that all stock and bondholders of Miller & Lux recognize the reorganized Nevada corporation of the same name and accept stock in it in exchange for their holdings in the old company. This disposes of the opposition of the minority of stockholders to President Henry Miller's reorganization plan and upholds his management of the corporation.

Will Adds to French History.

Paris.—The lost will of the Duchess of Angouleme, the daughter of Louis XVI, which was supposed to have been burned, has turned up and was published Tuesday. The document refutes one of the claims of the Naundorff Bourbons, whose partisans always insisted that the duchess recognized Naundorff, the so-called Prince Jean de Bourbon, who was asserted to be her brother, the Dauphin.

Increase in Congressmen.

Washington.—The coming congressional reapportionment will provide a total membership of 435 in the house of representatives, according to present indications. This would mean one member to every 211,700 of population.

Must Muzzle Hat Pins.

Kansas City.—Women here must muzzle their hat pins or they will be come lawbreakers, liable to a fine of from \$1 to \$500. The upper and lower houses of the city council passed the hat pin ordinance Tuesday.

Owens Original Site of City.

Denver.—Mrs. Harriet Rudd, widow of Anson Rudd, who homesteaded the land that is now the site of Union City, Colo., died at the home of her son in this city on Tuesday, aged 92 years.

GREAT FUN TO WANDER UP AND DOWN THE PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE STREETS

guled until six, when twinkling street lights warned the callers to retreat. Not a serious way to start the New Year! No, but a friendly one, that left hostesses and callers with a glow of human friendliness to last as warmth for many a day. And if seriousness were lacking, the same decade that enjoyed New Year's calling found itself also at one with the custom of watch-night service. For, in "our town," as in yours, mayhap, it was the thing to spend the closing hours of the old year in the quiet seriousness of prayer and sacred song. Children had their share in this, for fathers and mothers had not in that simpler time learned to fear the giving of definite religious instruction to their sons and daughters. It was clear and plain that a child must be trained in the way he should go, and watch night was a part of that training.

And, indeed, no youngster ever tried to beg off. There was first of all the joy of doing the unusual and the fun of sitting up past his bedtime. So you hid yourself to the nursery couch or the sitting-room lounge, after a hot supper, an old-fashioned winter supper of sausage and fried potatoes or scalloped oysters and muffins, and took a long, long nap. At half-past ten, father waked you, tucked you into cap and overcoat, and the family party started out under the cold stars, snow crunching under foot, to the nearby church.

Not so very long ago the writer came across an old chromo, of the sort that looks, in a dim and favorable light, like a fairly decent oil painting. In its day it had doubtless been the chief ornament of a well-furnished, comfortable parlor. Now it cluttered the window of a second-hand shop, dinky and out of sorts with fate. But even in the unflattering light of a dusty show window, it had a certain charm for the one who found it. It was the picture of a watch-night service, such as she had once known so well. Bright moonlight flooded the scene, bringing out in sharpened detail the snow-laden boughs of drooping elms and the Gothic spire of a small stone church. From stained-glass windows and opened door came streaming the warm glow of shaded gas jets. From village streets flocked men and women and children, stopping to say a word of greeting as they passed into the vestibule. The spell of the picture took her, with the speed of the magic carpet or of the seven-league boots, back to the New Year's eves of her girlhood.

So she had walked with father and mother and a sleepy small brother. Just so the tree had looked in the frosty moonlight. And just as warm and softly glowing had been the stone church, through whose open doors came the resonant strains of the great organ. She remembered with aching vividness the faces

A bit more joyful is the splendid, quaintly irregular,

Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.

It was easy after this to go home filled with loftiest aspirations, ready to begin the new diary with ambitious resolves that were bound to overleap themselves because of their very loftiness. There was one watch night when there drifted into the ken of the child the poem that has since meant to her, as it does to many, the very spirit of this day. From the choir gallery, just before the midnight hour, came the softened chorus of a strange melody. Then into the silence of the vaulted church rose a wonderful message in a voice that bore conviction to the listeners. It sang to the organ and the hushed accompaniment of the choir:

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild skies,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying, in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Through the whole of the splendid poem it swept, on to the triumphant conclusion:

"Ring in the Christ that is to be."

To the child the most dramatic moment of the evening came just on the stroke of the incoming year. While outside whistles blew and giant crackers exploded, bells clashed and clanged, inside hands clasped hands while together they sang the good old standby, "Blest be the tie that binds," before the hush of the benediction and the glad chorus of "Happy New Year's" that concluded the service.

There is another sort of quiet ushering in of the baby year that is conducive to the good resolve that counts so easily under favorable conditions. There were those in the old days, as there are in these, who felt that after the gala afternoon the happiest way of all was to sit quietly about the fire, chatting with half a dozen congenial spirits, singing a bit if the spirit moved, reminiscing as old times came back in the hush, and ending with the silent toast and the dash of sentiment that makes "Auld Lang Syne" the fitting song for such a moment.

That some such happy hour may begin little 1911's first appearance is the best wish one can offer to friends.

Let the auspicious morning be expressed
With a white stone distinguished from the rest.

So the stately Dryden has put the same thought. May it be true of us all.