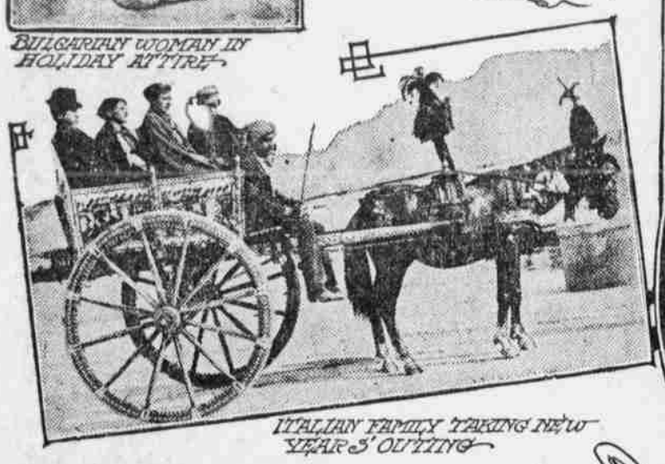
NEW YEARS IN MANY LANDS

BULGARIAN WOMAN IN HOLIDAY ATTIRE

NEW YEARS GREETING IN JAPAN



ITALIAN FAMILY TAKING NEW YEAR'S OUTING

GERMAN STUDENTS CELEBRATING NEW YEARS

NOWHERE does New Year's ceremony mean more than in the land of the little people whose faces have become familiar to us on paper fans. Indeed, from a national point of view, this season is the greatest occasion of the year.

Elaborate preparations are made long in advance. Houses are cleaned inside and out. Doorways are decorated with rice ropes and fern leaves and evergreen. Every housewife buys a pot or two of "prosperous age plant," a miniature pine tree, some bamboo, and some plum twigs, to win for her home by ornaments like these the favor of the jealous deities that guard the future.

The city streets resound with the mallet blows of the dough pounders making "mochi," the Japanese equivalent of plum pudding. All debts are paid. New clothes are bought. There are toys for the children, and picture cards that bring good fortune and are good to dream on when tied securely to the wooden pillow.

O, happy New Year! Day will hardly dawn before each town and village will be stirring. There is so much to do in celebration. First there will come the ceremonial breakfast, when the health of all the family must be drunk in that rice wine called "zoni." Then visits must be paid to all acquaintance. Father will wear no more the traditional costume, fantastic and peculiar. For him the frock coat now, of European manufacture. But mother, in her quaint kimono and elaborate headdress, will look just as she has looked on New Year's day since time immemorial.

The children will be decked out in gorgeous colors; they will throng the streets, clattering along on their wooden clogs in pigeon toed but joyful haste, and shouting "Banzai!" to friends and foreigners. In the streets clowns will perform strange antics, exclaiming loudly meanwhile:

"Hail, hail, ye gods of heaven and earth! Significant omens are in the air, and the universe is full of lucky signs."

To accompaniment of flute and drum, two-legged lions will give the "lions' dance" in masque. Strange masqueraders will dart hither and thither through streets and temple gardens.

It will be a happy time for Japanese children. For three glad days every little girl will expect to play her favorite game of shuttlecock and battledore. The boys will fly their brand new kites. The children will play games with brightly colored balls, chanting countless rhymes. Grown people will play New Year's card games. The firemen will give acrobatic exhibitions on their ladders. Every nook and corner of Japan will be in gala dress and gala mood.

Northern France is not far behind Japan in appreciation of the significance of the New Year. There Christmas, so important on our calendar, is scarcely celebrated, except by attendance at midnight mass and by a festal supper. But the last night of the year, the "Vigil of St. Silvestre," calls for observance, and the first day of the new year, "le jour de l'an," or "le jour d'etrene," is dedicated to the renewal of friendship and to general gift giving.

So universal, in fact, has the custom become of giving presents and pretty little souvenirs that the expression "bonne etrene" means good fortune and "mal etrenne" misfortune. Candy and flowers are acceptable gifts in France, but there is only one real rule in the matter—a New Year's gift must not be useful.

In most Scotch households, as in France, New Year's day takes the place of Christmas, an evidence of ancient sympathy when both countries regarded England as a mutual enemy. On the last night of the year, in rural district, groups of men and boys go disguished from house to house singing curious songs, such as this:

Rise up, good wife, and shak' yer feathers.
Dinna think that we are beggars;
We are bairnies come to play.
Rise up and give us hogmanay.

When they have received the cakes and coins they expect they go on to the next place, first, however, having chalked the house, in token of good luck. Next morning all the children get up early and view with wide and interested eyes the

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS CELEBRATING NEW YEARS

blue and white marks that decorate every dwelling in the village.

Scotland is, as well, the land of cakes, and at this season the bakers' shops are filled with toothsome dainties, sugar covered and mottoed in ice.

Germany observes various customs. Calls are made on January 1, and gifts are exchanged; delicious little cakes are eaten in honor of the festal day. Different neighborhoods have characteristic rites and superstitions.

Thus, in the Black Forest a workman likes to work a little bit at his trade the first day of the year, to coax luck in business; most picturesque is the vender of clocks, who sets out to sell one at least of his wares. Munich drinks deep to the health of the season in good Bavarian brew.

Jena, whose people recognize descent from those ancient Germans who believed in a god that brought light and warmth each year into the world to overcome the cold and dark of winter, builds in its public square at New Year's time a great bonfire, which typifies this ever new gift of the genial old deity that loved warmth and gave light.

Thither at midnight the people carry the things they wish to cast out of their lives with the old year.

Fire as a New Year's symbol is favored in Wales, as well. There fires are burned on New Year's day to purify the house for the entrance of a new and gladsome era; and the ashes are kept sacredly from year to year, esteemed for special medicinal virtues.

The ringing of bells to announce the death of the old year and the birth of the new one is common in England and Scotland and in some parts of the United States. In many English churches impressive midnight services are held.

In the dales of Westmoreland it is usual to open the west door to let the old year out and to open the east door to let the new year in.

In England it is still an enjoyable practice to offer a mince pie to every caller during the last week of the old year, for every pie eaten under a different roof represents a happy month during the year to come. Often as January 1 draws near one hears the expression:

"Thanks, I have eaten my twelve, so please excuse me."

What probably is the strangest New Year's rite is held in the Cevennes mountains, in southern France. At the last evening mass of the old year the herds and flocks of the peasantry are gathered before the portico of the little stone church high up on the mountain side and are blessed by the priest and sprinkled with holy water by the acolyte who follows him, in order that that this, the sole wealth of the countryside, may increase and prosper during the year to come.

The sight of the holy hour is wonderful. As the church bell tolls above them the frightened animals bleat and bellow and try madly to escape. First the oxen are blessed, then the cows, next the sheep and lambs, and finally the goats and pigs.

Throughout Europe many delightful customs prevail. In Scandinavia a feast is always prepared for the little birds, which might otherwise go hungry, on account of the deep snows.

In Holland, as in Scotland, the wind is noted with care, because the luck of the year will be determined by the direction whence it blows. The south wind brings heat and fertility, the west wind milk and fish, the north wind cold and storm, and east wind a fruitful season.

In Italy the New Year is a day of greeting and good will and special feasting. Sicilian peasants take advantage of the fete to drive to town in their gay carts, so that the country roads are merry with the music of tinkling bells.

And Swiss folk, practical, industrious, stop their work for the nonce and visit friends, even when they have to carry their babies down the mountain slopes in cradles on their heads.

Bulgaria's heart history is of especial moment just now. On happy New Year's day in Bulgarian villages the small boys run from house to house waving branches of the cornel tree and shouting greetings as they tap all they meet with the luck bringing branches.

Bulgarian girls go through an interesting ceremony in an effort to pry into the secrets of the days to come. On New Year's eve a queen, chosen by lot, guards a kettle full of water, in which both men and maidens have dropped finger rings or some personal trinkets. Till dawn she watches.

Then to an open place in the center of the village she takes the precious kettle, covered with a cloth, a dancing, singing crowd following her. An oracle, who has been selected for eloquence of speech, proclaims successive fortunes. He cries:

"The lucky girl whose ring shall appear shall marry the best man in the village."

The queen of the festival dips her hand into the kettle and brings forth a ring, and its owner receives it from her secure in the belief that good luck betides her matrimonially before another New Year.

GETTING BACK.

"Why do you insist on trying to sell me beefsteak and beans and buckwheat cakes?" demanded the barber. "I told you all I wanted was two fried eggs."

"Well, I was in your shop yesterday," retorted the restaurant man. "All I wanted was a shave, but you bulldozed me into a shampoo, a foam fizz, and a tonic rub."

A SAD AWAKENING.

"Warden, where are my flowers? Give me those flowers."

"Those flowers are for an embezzler in the next cell."

"Flowers for an embezzler, with a murderer in the same jail? A life of crime is not what I was led to expect."

NOT DIFFICULT.

"I wish I could do something startling," said Gladys Gloom, sick unto death with ennui.

"Well, Gladys, that is easily accomplished," said her close friend, Bella Blazes. "Go back to that little old-fashioned town where you were born and smoke a cigarette on the public square."

HAD "THE GOODS" ON GERALD

Little Sister, After the Manner of Her Sex, Was an Eager Witness Against Small Brother.

Geraldine was a meaning patient, and her twin brother, as physician-in-chief was dosing her, to their supreme delight, when their mother chanced to observe them. Being a Christian Scientist, she told them that they must not "play sick"—they must play pleasant games.

A few days later Geraldine ran to her mother, shocked and horrified, exclaiming: "Mother, Gerald said an awful bad word!"

The mother turned toward the boy, who had sulkily followed his sister, and who now sturdily declared:

"I didn't!"

"Yes, he did, too," protested the girl, dropping her voice to a sepulchral whisper. "He said 'Doctor.'"

Something to Be Thankful For.

In her dressing room one evening Sarah Bernhardt summoned one of her attendants, and ordered her to bring some peaches from the nearest shop. Either the maid misunderstood the order or she thought, as the saying goes, "That any old fruit would do," for she came back a few minutes later with half a dozen plump, juicy pears in a basket.

At the moment, Bernhardt was declaiming to a friend about the dearth of good new plays, and anybody would have thought she was too absorbed in her lamentations to notice the maid's mistake. She took a pear from the basket slowly and, apparently, unconsciously, and the maid turned to leave the room.

In an unlucky moment the girl paused at the door and looked round. Then, with astonishing swiftness and accuracy of aim, Bernhardt raised her hand and the pear flew through space, smashing itself to a juicy pulp on the girl's face.

"Thank heaven!" was all she said; "thank heaven it wasn't an apple!"

All Is Fish to the Net.

"Catch anything while you were away on your vacation?"

"Sure I did. It weighed 28 pounds. You catch anything?"

"Uh-huh. I told you I would. She weighs 130 and her dad's worth half of a street railway company, an electric lighting plant and two breweries."

Advance Information.

"Young man, we need brains in our business."

"I know you do. That is why I'm looking for a job here."

BUMPED HIS SELF-CONCEIT

Young Lady's Reason for Choosing Escort Not Exactly What He Had Imagined It to Be.

Mr. Blank (we've got to call him that because he's really a very decent fellow, and he'd kill us if we told his real name) is first tenor in a glee club. He sings in a choir, too. Everybody likes him.

The other night a bunch of young people met for a social session at a certain house in the suburbs. They ate and danced and they sang. And when it was all over the prettiest young woman there—she hadn't been escorted thither by any chosen cavalier—said:

"I walk home, but it's a lonesome walk and I'm afraid. There have been holdups in this part of town. So I choose Mr. Blank to see me safe home." On the way home Mr. Blank was considerably swelled up. The prettiest girl had chosen him from a crowd of personable bachelors, and his feelings of self-satisfaction were excusable. He couldn't resist saying:

"Why did you think I was the strongest and bravest man there tonight?"

"I didn't," answered the girl. "I picked you because I knew you could holler the loudest!"—Cleveland Plain-dealer.

A simple remedy against coughs and all throat irritations are Dean's Mentholated Cough Drops—5c at all good Druggists.

Fixing the Blame.

"Auntie, when you were a young girl were you very pretty?"

"Yes, my child, very pretty."

"Were you popular?"

"Oh, yes, very popular. I was the belle of the neighborhood."

"Didn't any young men ever come to call on you?"

"Oh, yes, my dear. Lots of them."

"Then, auntie, why is it that you never married?"

"Nobody ever proposed to me, my dear."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. But I've often thought it must have been the high cost of living that scared the young men off in those days."—Detroit Free Press.

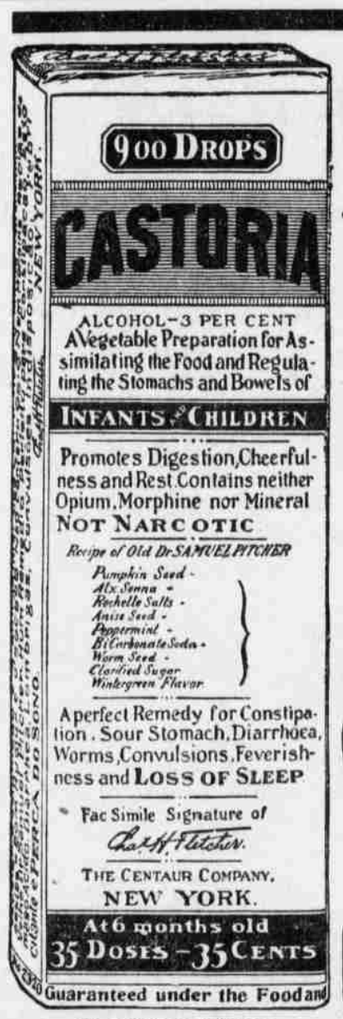
Don't buy water for bluing. Liquid blue is almost all water. Buy Red Cross Ball Blue, the blue that's all blue. Adv.

Good Definition.

"What's a free lancer?"

"That's a hack writer who is earning more than $12 a week."

Many a man has killed himself from overwork inventing labor-saving machinery.



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