

No New Leaf Was Needed

By WRIGHT A. PATTERSON



Said Mrs. A to Mr. A on Dec. 31:—

To-morrow another year begins. To-night is the time of all times to plan for the future. To resolve; to forswear our petty vices; to lay aside the evils in our lives. Have you, John, considered what to-night means to you, and to me? Have you thought of the things I have gone without and might have had but for your extravagance? Have you counted the cost to you, and to me, of your so-called pleasures? You sit there smoking a vile weed, but have you thought of the gowns you have burned up within a year? I venture to say no. Let's talk it over, John, just you and I, and as the old year dies plan for better and more noble things in the year to come.

Said Mr. A to Mrs. A on Dec. 31:—

Your sentiments, my dear, are noble ones, and meet with my approval. We will plan to-night for the year that is to come. Yes, not the year alone, but years. We will study and solve the problems that mean a better and truer life for you and me. There are many little things we might improve upon. So many better ways in which to spend the small sums we now but throw away. The price of that novel you are reading would have purchased the slippers I so badly need. Now let's begin by my giving up cigars, which I agree are but vile weeds, and you your novels, which are but the cheapest kind of trash and twaddle.

Said Mrs. A to Mr. A on Dec. 31:—

With all the many vices with which you indulge yourself, it seems that you might overlook the one small pleasure which I have. Yes, I admit there are more elevating books than present-day novels. But am I to give up my only pleasure, the one small thing from which I get my wee mite of enjoyment? Do you, John, think it fair to ask of me this sacrifice that you might have the slippers you certainly do not need? Your vices are so great beside my small one. If you really mean all that you say about planning for the future, why not give up your club? It is but another of the many needless expenses which you incur year after year.

Said Mr. A to Mrs. A on Dec. 31:—

That's right, and I'm glad you mentioned it. I had not thought of it before. That will be money saved. Now I propose a bargain, and it's fair. My resignation from the club will go in to-night if you will join me in the good work and mail to-night your withdrawal from the bridge club or class or whatever you may call it. A good deed is always better when it's doubled, and that will be two good deeds accomplished, two savings made, instead of one. What say you, my dear; will you join me in turning over this new leaf with the opening of a new year? The question is entirely needless, for I know, of course, that you will.

Said Mrs. A to Mr. A on Dec. 31:—

You certainly can be horrid upon this one night of all nights when you should look back upon the things which you have needlessly robbed me of during the year just closing. I should think you would be ashamed to sit there and point to my few small pleasures as though they were vices from which I should escape. There is certainly little enough in life for me without being deprived of books and social intercourse. But if I must, I must, and if the sacrifice of my innocent pleasures will put a stop to your many vices I presume I must offer them on the altar of noble and obedient witchhood. But, oh, John, I did not think you would ask it. (Tears.)

Said Mr. A to Mrs. A on Dec. 31:—

Now, wife, don't cry. I am a brute and I admit it. Let's start anew and talk this over. Let's see if we have sinned against ourselves or others. Let's see if our so-called vices are not mere pleasures to which we are entitled. I think they are. I see nothing we need repent of; nothing to swear off. I'll keep my cigars and you your novels. I'll keep my club and you your bridge game. We'll let gowns and slippers go hang if need be, and enjoy ourselves. Now, that is better, isn't it, my dear? That meets with your approval, I am sure, and we will greet the coming year with joy and not with tears and lamentations.

Resolved by Mr. A and Mrs. A on Dec. 31:—

Durnig the next year and the years to follow we will live our lives as we have lived them. We will enjoy to the full our several pleasures. We will make no new resolutions which we will later regret and break. We will not ask either of us from the other that which each is not willing to give to the other, and now let the New Year come.

Dated 12 o'clock, midnight, December 31.

NEW YEAR OBSERVANCE IN MANY LANDS

Americans are too busy to take many holidays, but few of them fail to observe New Year's day in some way or other. The good old custom of making calls on one's friends fell into disrepute long ago because it was so abused by the over-convivial, but family gatherings usually mark the day, and the church folk all over the country still hold watch meetings in the religious edifices to usher in the new year. Our observance of the day, however, are not so picturesque as are those of many other countries.

IN MERRIE ENGLAND

ENGLAND and Scotland have retained many of their interesting customs of olden times, this being especially true of Scotland. Weeks before the New Year begins, the village boys, with great secrecy, meet in out-of-the-way places and rehearse their favorite ballads. As the time draws near they don improvised masks and go about from house to house singing and cutting many quaint capers.

The thirty-first of December is called "Hogmanay," and the children are told that if they go to the corner they will see a man with as many eyes as the year has days. The children of the poorer classes go from house to house in the better districts with a large pocket fastened to their dresses or a large shawl with a fold in front. Each one receives an oaten cake, a piece of cheese, or sometimes a sweet cake, and goes home at night with a good supply of homely New Year cheer for the rest of the family.

The Scottish elders celebrate the day with a supper party, and as the clock "chaps" 12, friend greets friend and wishes him "a guid New Year and many o' them." Then, with great formality the door is unbarred to let the Old Year out and the New Year in, and all the guests saunter forth into the street to "first foot" their acquaintances.

In Edinburgh a great crowd gathers around the church in Hunter square and anxiously watches the clock. There is absolute silence until the first stroke of 12 until the last.

The old folks now go to bed but the young have other business on hand. Each girl is expecting the "first foot" from her sweetheart, and there is much stratagem displayed in outwitting her occasionally, and having some serving maid or grandmother open the door to her lover.

The weather is carefully observed at this season, for it is supposed to betoken that which is to come. There is a rhyme current in Scotland which runs thus:

If New Year's eve the night wind bloweth south
It betokeneth warmth and growth;
If west much milk, and fish in the sea;
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;
If northeast, flee it, man and brute.

During the last century all work was laid aside on the afternoon of the thirty-first, and the men of the hamlet went to the woods and brought home loads of juniper bushes. Each household also procured a pitcher of water from the "dead and living ford," meaning the ford in a river, by which passengers and funerals crossed. This was brought in perfect silence and without being allowed to touch the ground in its progress, as contact with the earth would have destroyed the charm.

The rites next morning were supposed to protect the household against witchcraft, the "evil eye," and other devils. The father rose first, and taking the charmed water and a brush, treated the rest of the family to a vigorous baptism, which was generally acknowledged with anything but gratitude.

Coming back, the thrifty Scotchman closed all the doors and windows and put the juniper bough on the fire. When the smoke reached the suffocating point, the fresh air was readmitted. Then the cattle were fumigated in the same manner, and the painful solemnities of the morning were over.

On New Year's day a superstitious Scotchman will neither lend nor give anything whatever out of his house, for he fears that his luck may go too, and for the same reason, the floor must not be swept. If the fire goes out it is a sign of death.

IN THE CZAR'S DOMAIN

RUSSIANS have a very pretty ceremony. On each New Year's day a pile of sheaves is heaped up over a large pile, and the father, after seating himself behind the pile, asks the children if they can see him. Upon their replying that they cannot, he says he hopes the cross will be so fine the coming year that he will be hidden in the field.

The Russian New Year is 12 days later than ours, and is a gala occasion for all. There is a grand celebration of mass in the morning, and the rest of the day is devoted to congratulatory visits. Good wishes that

cannot be carried in this way are inserted in the newspapers. In military and official circles ceremonial visits are paid.

The Russians are great at fortune telling, and on New Year's eve the unmarried ladies and gentlemen send servants into the street or go out themselves, to ask the names of persons they meet. These will be the names of persons they will severally marry, and many a bashful Russian lover has speeded himself in his suit by taking care to be the first man his lady's servant met.

When midnight is reached, each member of the family salutes the other with a kiss, beginning with the head of the house, and then retire, after wishing each other a Happy New Year.

WITH THE NORWEGIANS

THE hospitable Norwegians and Swedes spread their tables heavily for all who may come in, and in Stockholm there is a grand banquet in the Exchange, given to the king and his family. On this occasion the monarch throws aside "the divinity which doth hedge a king," and mingles with his people as citizen to citizen, in true democratic fashion.

Danes greet the New Year with a tremendous volley of cannon, and old Copenhagen is shaken to its foundations at midnight. It is also considered a delicate compliment to fire off a gun or a pistol under the bedroom window of one's friends at a very early hour.

Dwellers in Cape Town, South Africa, are an exception to the general run of English colonists. After the custom of the early Dutch settlers, they celebrate New Year for an entire week. Every house is full of visitors, every man, woman and child is dressed in his best, and no one has any business except to seek amusement, which he does frantically. There are picnics to Table Mountain and pleasure excursions in boats. There is a dance every evening. At the end of the week everybody settles down to business, and the settlement is as calm and well ordered as if it had never heard of New Year.

THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE

AS EVERY one who has seen a Chinese quarter in a large city knows, "the heathen Chinese" celebrates the New Year in a right royal fashion. In the mother country the rejoicings absorb fully a month, during the first part of which there is not an empty mouth in the empire.

But the refreshments are of a light kind—peanuts, watermelon seeds, sweetmeats, oranges, tea and typically Chinese cakes. Presents of cakes are given to the poor, and "brilliant cakes," supposed to help the children along with their studies, are distributed from the temples.

At an early hour on the second of February—the New Year's day—they propitiate heaven and earth with offerings of rice, vegetables, tea, wine, oranges, and imitation paper money, which they burn with incense, joss sticks, and candles. Afterward they worship their household gods and deceased ancestors and living relatives. All this is carried out in the most solemn manner, and offerings are made to everybody except the living.

Images of gods are carried in procession to the beating of a deafening gong, and mandarins go by hundreds with congratulatory addresses to the emperor. Their robes are gorgeously embroidered and are heavy with gold. Numerous amusements are provided for the public, the chief of which are acting, illuminations, and fireworks.

THE FLOWERY KINGDOM

JAPAN'S New Year's day is the twenty-ninth of January. By this time all accounts have been adjusted and all disputes settled. Everybody puts on the regulation dress—a sort of light blue cotton—and starts out to visit relatives and friends. The visiting lasts for three days, and they send letters of congratulation in stiff set phrases, to those in distant places.

They go to their favorite tea gardens, and there is a grand procession in which all trades are represented. Drums and strident instruments are played by numerous bands, and wax figures are sold by the thousand. They amuse themselves with top spinning, kite flying, jugglers, actors and fireworks, and the "ladies of quality" please themselves with the "butterfly dance."

Presents are offered of cooked rice, roasted peas, oranges, and figs. The peas are scattered about the houses to frighten away evil spirits, and on

THE NEW ENGINEER

By DANIEL W. GALLAGHER



UNDER the old earth's outer crust—Mid bed-rock fragments and lava dust;

Watching the axis turning slow,
The Old Year stood at his dynamo
In the power plant which time maintains,
And numbered losses and figured gains.

"I've done quite well," said the aged seer—
"My record's good as an engineer.
I've kept things humming, above—below,
Folks can't complain that I've been slow,
And now I'm off when midnight calls—"
Then he started doffing his overalls.

He washed his face and brushed his hair—
Then leaped far back in his arm-chair
In pensive mood till a sturdy chap
Clambered up to the old man's lap.
And said: "Old Year—they tell me you
Are sorter thinking of getting through."

"Right you are," cried the aged man.
"Your task awaits you, little Jan.
Get into your duds and start right in,
I will wait right here until you begin,
For I wish to see if I rightly guess,
Which of the levers you first will press."

Then Jan marched up to the dynamo.
He passed the levers of "Want" and
"Woe"—
Nor touched the levers of "War" or
"Fame"—

Stopping the while to read each name:
Then a handle grasped—as he turned to go,
The Old Year's face seemed all aglow.

So when the dawn of that day began
Man thought of his stricken brother man.
With ready help and an honest tear.
For them that knew no glad New Year,
'Twas the lever of Love in the midst of
gloom—
That Jan had gripped in the engine-room.

Thoughts for the New Year

We sleep, but the loom of life never stops, and the pattern which was weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up in the morning.—H. W. Beecher.

We are not in this world to do what we wish, but to be willing to do that which it is our duty to do.—Gounod.

It is the every days that count. They must be made to tell, or the years have failed.—W. C. Gannett.

Soberly and with clear eyes believe in your own time and place. There is not, there never has been, a better time.—Better place to live in.

Only with this belief can you believe in hope.—Phillips Brooks.

We may make the best of life, or we may make the worst of it, and it depends very much upon ourselves whether we extract joy or misery from it.—Smiles.

The darkest shadows of life are those which a man himself makes when he stands in his own light.—Lord Acton.

Our life is short, but to expand that span to vast eternity is virtue's work.—Shakespeare.

The hour that is gone I cannot recall, but to-morrow I will do better than yesterday; and all to-morrows shall be better than the yesterdays. Let us "leave behind our low-vaulted past."—Dyer.

Life is fruitful in the ratio in which it is laid out in noble action or patient perseverance.—Liddon.

THE NEW YEAR'S CHOICE

It is Well to Choose Wisely for the Time That is to Come.

Once, long ago, the Lord appeared in a vision of the night to a young man with the offer, "Ask what I shall give thee." And a decisive moment was that in which the young king weighed against all others the thing which he most desired.

Centuries lie between us and the young king, Solomon, but still—and especially on each recurring New Year's—God appears to each of us with practically the same offer, "Ask what I shall give thee." And, as with Solomon, so with every heart, there lies the choice of the gift. Were the question an audible one, what would your answer be?

Each recurring New Year's, in effect, says: "Ask what I shall give thee." And the choice for the coming year may be our choice for all the years of life. It is by choice that men seek wealth and learning and by influence. And it is not a question of this and that, but of this or that. To choose is to decide between, to leave as well as to take. Therefore, what will be our choice for the year before us? God Himself asks the question, makes the offer.

Christmas Fairies.

An old English tradition has it that at Christmas-tide, elves and fairies may mingle with humankind in the festivities, and the holly, bay and ivy are hung that the fays may find hiding places. They are also thought to find a refuge to the woodland sprites who, at this season, are half-taken in the forests.

DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

By CHARLOTTE BEAUMONT JARVIS.

Miserere! toll the bell,
Let the earth send forth a knell,
For a great soul takes his flight,
None knows whither, in the night—
Miserere!

Stretched upon his snowy bier,
Dying lies the good Old Year;
And upon the midnight gale
All may hear his parting wail—
Miserere!

In the old king's chequered reign
There were mingled joy and pain;
Friends proved false, while foes were true,
Sinners many saints—a few—
Miserere!

There were hearts that suffered wrong,
Bore it bravely, and were strong;
Hearts there were, so black within,
Satans wondered at their sin—
Miserere!

Garners full of fruitful store,
Measures pressed, and running o'er;
Famine in the streets at night,
Doing deeds too dark for light—
Miserere!

Rang the church bells for the wed,
Told they also for the dead;
In one home a joy was born,
From another joy was torn—
Miserere!

Such earth's sorrow, such its sin,
All must end where they begin;
Snow which wraps the New Year's feet
Is the Old Year's winding sheet—
Miserere!

Now his spirit goeth fast,
Midnight hour will be his last;
To your knees, earth's worn and weary—
Miserere! Miserere!