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THE FIRST STAR OF THE YEAR.

In a field of amethyst,
Hanging like a globe of mist,
Comes the first star of the year.
Streaming banners, crimson red,
Float above the sun's low head,
Resting from his day's career.

Like a bursting ball of snow,
Like a white rose opes to blow,
Shows the low'ring star her face.
Bright companions one by one
Gather round her pearly throne,
Each resplendent in its place.

Like the dawning of the truth
As love wakens in the youth,
Flashes now the New Year's star.
Queen and brightest of her race,
Shedding all her lustrous grace
Down to us from realms afar!

Down to us from realms of light,
Ever glowing, beaming, bright—
Golden star and dazzling sun.
Clouds may oft obscure their rays,
But they cannot quench their blaze.
Constant in their course they run.

Wisdom fraught, they teachings give,
How we day by day should live,
Nobly shining in our sphere.
Greater light and clouds may mar,
Shine on steadfast like the star,
Like the first star of the year.

—Chicago Record.

IN THE GOLDFIELDS.

We were all sad that New Year's eve in the Australian goldfields in the year 1853. The day before we numbered 20 Americans and Englishmen, who had come in search of wealth, and now three of our number had just been laid away forever on the hillside, buried in one deep grave, their lives crushed out by a fall of earth.

That night, while the 17 of us who were left sat around the campfire, young Ross said:

"Boys" (we were all friends and never yet had used among ourselves the ordinary digger appellation of mate), "this is a sad ending of our first Australian New Year's day. Maybe it will cheer us up some if I tell you of one which in Canada two years ago turned out more happily."

There was a general cry of "Do, Fred, do," and the boy began:

"Some of you know that my home is in a backwoods township, about 80 miles northwest of Toronto and not far from Georgian bay. My father, who was formerly a captain in a regiment of British cavalry, sold his commission in 1842 and emigrated to Canada, where he bought a 600 acre, partially cleared, farm, wishing to give his five boys and four girls a better chance in life than a family in moderate circumstances can have in the old country. I was only 8 years of age then, and my baby sister not half as many months.

"My mother" (I wish I could convey an idea of how tenderly Fred spoke that word whenever occurring in his story), "though a tiny little thing, who wears a No. 2 boot and a 5½ glove, is as brave as an Indian princess, and she and my father are just like lovers yet. So we were a very happy family and got on splendidly.

"Every year a big patch of bush was cleared up, and when I left home there were more than 400 acres of the farm under some sort of cultivation. Father and my three elder brothers sometimes worked as hard as the hired men, and they all liked it, but Hugh and I, the two youngest boys, were, we thought, awfully abused by being sent to school, and afterward to Upper Canada college at Toronto. We made up for it all, though, in the summer and Christmas holidays, as there was any quantity of fishing and hunting everywhere around our home.

"About six miles from our place lives Colonel Warwick, a half pay officer, whose family is of exactly the same size as ours, and ever since coming to Canada we had dined and spent the evening with them on Christmas day, and they with us on New Year's day, and we always had great fun.

"Two years ago today, Jan. 1, 1851, the Warwicks—father, mother and nine children, big and little—came to us as usual, but when we sat down to dinner our total number was only 21, instead of 22. The place at my mother's right hand was vacant, and she herself, though doing the honors gracefully, wore a troubled anxiety, which she could not wholly conceal, and which was more or less reflected by each face in our own family."

"Had one of your brothers or sisters died, then, Fred?" asked one of the men.

"No—that is, we hoped not. The trouble was that 18 months before, in July, 1849, my eldest brother, Donald, longing for adventure and excited by wonderful reports from newly discovered goldfields, had left home, bound for California, and not a word from or of him had yet reached us beyond the mere information that he was to leave New York for Colon on the 16th day of the month as passenger on a sailing ship, the name of which he did not give. From Colon—now Aspinwall—he intended to cross the deadly isthmus to Panama, and thence take ship on the Pacific for San Francisco.

"On the New Year's day of 1850 his absence had thrown but a slight cloud on our jollity, as in those days there was no Panama railway, and six or even nine months might well pass away without letters from him. But now another whole year had gone by, and even my bravely hopeful father had begun to feel alarmed, for it was not like true hearted Donald to neglect his own people, and yet, if still alive, how was his long silence to be accounted for? We feared that, like so many hundreds of other gold seekers, he might have perished in fever stricken Panama, as he would, we thought, have certainly written if he had safely reached San Francisco.

"The grizzled old soldier, Colonel Warwick, tried hard to cheer us by his own reminiscences of mysterious lost and happily refound comrades in India and elsewhere and by truthfully reminding us of the many vicissitudes to which letters from California were then exposed. 'Why,' he said, 'the boy has probably written a half dozen times, but either in crossing the isthmus, passing round Cape Horn or coming by way of that wonderful overland pony express the letters may every one have been lost. I've known far stranger things than that, in the way of missing mail matter, to occur among our fellows, even in easily reached and densely populated India.'

"For a year before leaving home Donald had owned a magnificent Newfoundland dog, Prince by name. The Black Prince we youngsters called him not only on account of his color, but also because his chivalrous and daring character greatly resembled, in our estimation, that of the famous personage in English history for whom we had named him. Indeed Prince had once saved his master's life when the latter was one day, in an outlying field, suddenly attacked by a furious, half wild bush bull. Hence Donald was so greatly attached to the creature that he had, notwithstanding the added expense, taken him along on his tedious journey, much to our regret, as we sorely missed the grand old fellow in all our outdoor sports.

"So, on this New Year's day, all of us, even down to 9-year-old Margery, thought constantly of the faraway pair. But the rites of hospitality could not be neglected, and by and by, stimulated by the purposed gayety of our visitors, all of us young folks joined, just in the gloaming, in a romping game of 'hide and seek.'

"At ordinary times our big ten room loghouse was lighted by homemade tallow candles, but on festive occasions my mother used sperm ones. Numbers of these were now burning, in addition to the great open fires, making all within doors altogether too light for the proper enjoyment of our game; so, by unanimous consent, we agreed that the 'hiders' should have the privilege of the fast darkening wood shed, stable and nearest barn.

"The play went merrily on for half an hour or so, each successive 'seeker' generally routing out the most cunningly concealed 'hiders' in no time. But then little Agnes Warwick so artfully hid herself that the 'seeker' of the moment, utterly failing to discover her, was finally obliged to call upon the whole crowd for assistance.

"High and low, up and down, through stable lofts, between wood piles, behind straw stacks, inside the big fanning mill, over grain bins and under the barn, we hunted without success. Then, gathered in a cluster on the thrashing floor, we were about to give up and let the little mischief find herself, when, through the open door, into which the pale moonlight streamed, a dark body rushed, shot past us and sprang over into a nearly empty haymow, whence instantly came a great rustling and a series of inarticulate cries—from the now discovered Agnes—which sounded to us like those of fear and pain.

"'A bear! A bear!' screamed the elder Miss Warwick. 'A bear is killing the child!' These brutes are quite plentiful in our neighborhood.

"'Pshaw!' exclaimed my brother Hugh, 'bears don't come out in winter.'

"'No, nor they don't have long tails either, I guess,' wisely observed little Margery.

"Recovering from our momentary astonishment, we young men and boys were in the act of rushing to the rescue when out of the manhole of the mow crept little Agnes, laughing half hysterically and encircling with one arm the neck of a big black dog!

"'Why, it's Prince! Donald's Black Prince!' all of us simultaneously shouted, for now we plainly saw the peculiar, heart shaped breast spot which was the only speck of white on the glossy coat of our long lost friend.

"It really seemed as if the wise old fellow had stealthily watched our play until he found what the trouble was, and then, with deliberate purpose to surprise us, had dashed past without greeting, and guided by his unerring nose had speedily torn the hay off the form of his well remembered playfellow, for pretty Agnes Warwick used to spend fully as much time at our home as at her own.

"Now, having so well succeeded in creating a sensation, Prince threw off all disguise, and after hilariously jumping upon each of us in turn gamboled, barked and frisked around in an ecstasy of delight, while we all started in a wild race to the house.

"Evidently some one—perhaps with news of Donald—had arrived, for a strange sleigh stood before the open door, and as we neared the house we could hear my father's voice ringing out in tones which did not sound like those of grief.

"'There's word from Donald! Come on!' yelled my brother Archie as he sprang to the leading place.

"The other 16 of us followed pellmell, almost tumbling over each other in our eagerness, and burst like a cyclone into the big parlor. Then the old roof shook with our half frantic cheers, for there, in the center of the room, stood Donald himself! He was brown as an Indian and bearded like—well, like any gold digger, but was the same old Donald still, while, clasped to his breast, with her arms about his neck, lay my dear little mother, softly crying in speechless joy."

Here poor Fred almost broke down, and not a homesick man of us all could trust himself to speak. Presently, however, the young fellow—he was only 19—went on:

"Boys—I—tell you—this—was—almost—too—much for me. I'll never forget that time if I should live a thousand years. It seemed like getting my brother back from the grave itself. Some of us cried like babies, and even the stern old colonel himself had to pretend that the open door blew the fire smoke into his eyes.

"At last we quieted down a little, and after the two hungry travelers—Black Prince and his master—had eaten a good dinner, Donald told us his story. It would take me all night to repeat it in full. Besides I can't tell it as he did, so I'll just give you the marrow of it.

"On landing at Colon he and all the other passengers had to pay $40 each for mule hire, with a pair of big Mexican spurs thrown in for every rider, in order to get across the isthmus. More than one-half of the crowd already had symptoms of the fever when they got to the city of Panama, and 26 poor fellows died there while waiting a week for a Pacific ocean ship.

"Donald was stricken down almost at once and lay for three months between life and death in the house of Father Laporte, a kind French-Canadian priest, who took good care of him and his effects, and when he was able to dictate wrote for him to my father, though neither that letter nor three others written from different places by Donald himself were ever received—a quite common occurrence during the first two years of the California excitement.

"During the whole of his master's illness Prince stuck close to him, though, as Father Laporte afterward related, nothing but the dog's own fierce courage and fidelity had prevented him being stolen by covetous thieves.

"At last Donald got strong enough to sail for San Francisco, where he arrived after a five weeks' voyage and in robust health. Here he wrote a long home letter, and, accompanied by Prince, went off at once to San Juan diggings. He had good luck from the very first, and in eight months cleared above all expenses nearly $11,000. Then, being no longer able to bear up under that awful homesickness which all of us are beginning to know so well, he pulled up stakes and started for home.

"He told us that often, while on the diggings and in the city, too, he had been offered 50 ounces of gold for Prince, but that 50 times 50 could not have bought him, very fortunately for Donald himself, for on his journey from the mines to San Francisco he was waylaid one night by two Mexican tramps and saved from robbery and death only through the dog's watchfulness and courage.

"It seems the vagabonds had concealed themselves in a clump of chaparral by the roadside and were in the act of stealing out upon their intended victim when sharp eyed Prince sprang forward and bore one of them to the ground before he could use his murderous knife, then held him by the throat until Donald had bound him, while his villainous comrade, seeing the game was up, disappeared in the bush.

"Without further serious adventure my brother had returned home by way of Callao, thence to Panama, then across the isthmus again, and so by an Atlantic steamship to New York, where he sold his gold, all except a few specimen nuggets, for $17.10 per ounce, that being then the highest price for California gold.

"While he was telling his story the noble old dog listened intently, and, I do believe, understood every word, as at the most striking passages he thumped the floor with his great tail in token of approval."

"You had a jolly time, then, after all, eh, Fred?" said one of our fellows.

"Jolly! Well, I should say so. Our New Year's day, which began with anxious doubts and went along with forced gayety, ended in a regular jubilee."

Feeling too greatly shocked by the tragic death of our comrades to remain longer on the Ledden, four of us—Jack Urquhart, Fred Ross, Joe Wells and I—started next day for Eagle Hawk gully, Bendigo, whence, after three weeks of profitable work, we went across country to Jim Crow creek.

I may add that Ross, Wells and I, after many stirring adventures, got back to America all right, and that Jack Urquhart married a pretty English girl and remained in Australia.—Romance.

Hansell Monday In Scotland.

"Hansell Monday" is still a familiar phrase in Scotland, notably in Fife, where old New Year's day is still observed (Jan. 12). To hansell is to bless or endow or give—a sort of luck penny. To hansell a new article is to wear it on an auspicious occasion.

Work is hurried over in the morning, and then all take holiday.

Rifle shooting at a target or glass ball shooting is an ever popular sport, the prizes being given either in money or beef. The local butcher kills a fat bullock, and the shooters pay so much a shot in hope of gaining a prize. The Christmas dinner of English folk is eaten by their Scotch compatriots on this day. The master brews a bowl of punch or toddy and passes it round to the servants, and all unite in drinking and pledging good health and happiness to each other. In the evening dances, balls and raffles are the popular amusements.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Remember the Poor.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor! The Lord will deliver him in every time of trouble. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle and who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart; he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against a neighbor; in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; who putteth not out his money to usury nor taketh a bribe against the innocent—he that doeth these things shall not be moved forever and ever.—Scott's Commentary.

New Year's Toasts.

It is hoped that many will remember on New Year's day that it is better to give than to receive, and that the relief funds may be swelled accordingly.—Washington Star.

May the new year give us all good health, good luck and plenty to do. With health one can be happy, with luck one can prosper and with work avoid temptation.—Boston Journal.

May the new year from this morning to its close be one crowded with peace, happiness and prosperity in your homes. May it be a year rich in real blessings for all people.—Washington Post.

NEW YEAR'S IN JAPAN.

The Custom of Making Gifts Prevails. Holiday Street Scenes.

On New Year's day the Japanese tradesmen send their customers small offerings, usually of something in their line of business. A grocer will give perhaps a pound of sugar or a little package of rice. Every present, large or small, costly or inexpensive, is accompanied by a little folded three cornered paper a few inches in size. Sometimes this is of crimson or gilt paper or sometimes blue or silver, according to the taste of the sender.

The origin of this custom is very ancient and curious. In days of old a piece of dried fish was sent with each gift, but gradually people fell into a vicious habit of sending on the same piece of fish with the next present they sent away, as if they received so many offerings they could not possibly eat all the fish that came. Finally matters got to such a pitch that a gentleman could frequently smell his present coming around the corner. So in order to do away with this abuse these little pieces of paper were substituted.

Another custom that seems very strange in our eyes is that of sending presents of eatables, sweetmeats, mochi or bean cake, etc. Such dainties are sent in priceless bowls of cloissone or satsuma set on a lacquer tray. Over all is thrown a silk and gold embroidered square of soft ribbed crape, and the messenger carries it through the street held at arm's length. The recipient eats the contents, and without washing or cleaning the bowl in any way returns it and the cover with elaborate thanks.

The little shops, which look like dry goods boxes set upon end, are filled with gay toys, with dolls, kites and bits of tinsel and dyed feathers made into tiny ornaments for the ebony hair of the brilliantly dressed, powdered and rouged little girls.

Acrobats and street actors attract crowds of not only children, but their elders. Then there are Punch and Judy shows, but Punch and Judy are replaced by fabulous cats, badgers and foxes, who play all sorts of tricks upon men and women. Conjurers and snake charmers reap a harvest, and the man who makes and plays bamboo flutes earns a small fortune.

Every one from the little tots of 6 or 7 to grandams of 60 or 70 plays battledoor and shuttlecock. And such gorgeous battledoors as were never before seen! Great, awkward pieces of board, plain on one side, the other elaborately decorated with a figure of a noted dancer or geisha, the hands and face painted on the wood, but the dress of silk or paper pasted on and standing an inch or more above the board. The shuttlecock is a gilded seed stuck around with dyed feathers until it resembles a flower.—New York Advertiser.

Good Resolutions For the New Year.

Let us look [illegible] mistakes of the bygone [illegible] a new course of action for the future. Where we have been wrong let us now be right, and where we have [illegible] right let us stick to that course, going from good to better, from [illegible] to best.

A word about the resolutions that will be made today and broken tomorrow—do not make them at all if you do not mean to keep them. A promise bears no weight that is [illegible] forgotten. Make the covenant with your conscience and your Maker. Do not blazon your righteous sentiments abroad, but with sober sincerity of purpose watch out against the faults, making a gallant fight against the foes of evil.

With such an incentive to inspire you the new year will gradually become to you a close friend, bringing joy and happiness in its path and breathing into your heart messages that will indeed make the wishes for a happy New Year materialize in every truth to your own superabundant satisfaction.—Philadelphia Times.

Only One Day In the Year.

Brother Christian, determine to make this the best year of your life—the richest, ripest, strongest, happiest. But you cannot grow in grace "by wholesale." Begin the year by putting the knife into some bad habit or besetting sin. Begin by laying stiff hold on some neglected duty. Consecration means letting Jesus Christ own the whole of you. Holiness means serving Christ in little things, and remember that in all the year you will see only one day, and that will be called "today." The ladder to heaven is climbed not by a leap, but round by round.—Theodore L. Cuyler.

Thoughts For the Dying Year.

There are many of earth's thoughtless ones to whom the dying of a year is only the rounding up of an astronomical period devoted to idleness or to the pursuit of pleasure, while the coming in of a new year is the point of view from which to regard the possibilities for ministering to the pleasures of sense for another twelvemonth.

But to others the New Year opens up another and a very different outlook—to those who realize the mistakes that belong to the past and who look anxiously toward the future and what it may bring.—Christian Work.

The Roman New Year's.

Among the ancient Romans the "strenæ," or New Year's presents, were not only exchanged between relatives and friends, but were exacted from their subjects. Under the Cæsars these New Year's gifts became such a source of profit to the sovereign and so onerous a burden to the people that Claudius limited their cost by a decree.—Selected.

Wolf-monat of the Early Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons called New Year's the Wolf-monat because the wolves were more ravenous then than at other times, and the Scandinavians also called it Aefter-Yule. In old illuminated missals and calendars January is depicted as an old man, carrying a woodman's ax and a bunch of fagots, shivering and blowing upon his fingers.—Exchange.

NEW YEAR'S CALLING.

An Old Knickerbocker Custom That Should Be Perpetuated.

While the New Year's customs of ancient times possess for us a certain fascination, we find still more interesting the celebrations of the present time. The one that is most characteristic, most truly American, is the old Knickerbocker custom of making calls upon New Year's day, and it is to be hoped that it will be long continued by those who care to encourage and sustain whatever is distinctly national and characteristic among us. It is true that this custom belongs to a time when making calls had not become a daily business, pursued for want of other occupation by men and women of leisure. It is true that it belongs to a time when men were too busy to do much visiting and gladly seized this annual opportunity of looking up old friends and especially the busy wives and mothers they had known as girls and recalling and recounting the scenes and events of their youth.

This annual brightening of the links of old friendships is the special function of New Year's calls. The day is put to very bad use when it is employed, in a mere effort to count up a long list of names of persons whom one may have seen yesterday or the day before and who have no steady purpose to prevent them from calling every day of their lives.

Of course one does not want to miss one's intimates on such a day, but there is not the same object in setting apart a day for them, and that is the reason why some modern and fashionable people who have "traveled" relinquish the custom when they return home to a life based as far as possible on what they have heard and seen abroad. But this class are not all of American society. There are many who represent the oldest and best families who cling to old habits, who do not spend half their lives abroad, but who are the strength and honor of the best enterprises and efforts at home.

Then there are others, busy business and professional men and women, who form the largest part of our "best" society, who perhaps do the most to formulate its habits and perpetuate its customs, and to these the 1st of January, as a day of freedom and devotion to the social idea, is a boon which they welcome apart from its significance and the desire to perpetuate it as a custom.—Philadelphia Times.

AT BAVARIA'S CAPITAL.

New Year's Reception at the Court of Dresden—Greeting the Queen.

On the night of the cour the persons who are to be presented assemble in an amber hall lighted by wax candles in six immense crystal candelabras. Ladies of honor stand here in a group near the door, while aids-de-camp move about, the strangers that come in one by one being placed in a row that lines the four sides of the room. Embassadors, ministers and ministers' wives take up their places along the line near the persons who are under their charge.

Suddenly three taps of the marshal's staff resound on the mosaic, hard wood floor, and majesty enters. All bow deeply. The queen gives her hand to the minister's wife next to her, then steps very close in front of the first lady to be presented. Her master of ceremonies mentions the lady's name. Majesty is nearsighted. The lady therefore makes her reverence without taking the conventional two steps backward. "Is she living in Dresden?" the queen inquires. The stranger answers, "Yes, your majesty," whereupon the queen moves her hands nervously, fingering her fan. The page, in crimson and silver, who carries the end of her outspread, long, peacock colored, velvet brocade train, stands motionless, like a statue. His face is powdered, and his curly peruke has been sprinkled with a white porcelainlike dust that glints in the light. During the pause and silence the stranger observes it curiously, though her eyes are fixed on the queen and her mouth fixed in a grin, as if before a photographer's camera. At last the next question comes, "Is she not American by birth?" "Yes, your majesty," comes the stereotyped, stupid little reply. Majesty pauses again one indecisive moment longer; then finally she nods and passes on to the next stranger. At once the next stranger makes her reverence of greeting while the first is finishing with hers of farewell.—New York Independent.

Superstitions of New Year's Eve.

Country folk study the weather very closely and draw auguries therefrom, for the winds of New Year's eve have portentous qualities. Hence:

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

The custom of drawing water from the dead and living ford Usque-Cashrichd is still followed in some parts of the highlands. This water when drunk acts as a charm against the spells of witchcraft, the evil eye, etc. The highlanders, too, burn juniper branches and fill their houses with smoke to purify them and prevent harm entering them during the coming year.—Selected.

How to Make a Prosperous Year.

The way to make a prosperous year is to make it. Quit borrowing trouble. Quit conjuring up hard times. Remember that the sun will shine, the rains will fall, health and strength are yours, and that your fortune is with yourself and not with the stars.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Scrutiny Night.

Another curious local name for New Year's eve a century and a half ago was "Scrutiny night." In Merton college, Oxford, all the college servants then delivered up their keys to the warden and fellows, and the worthy servants received them again with a Latin address.—Exchange.

NEW YEAR'S LONG AGO

A DAY OF HEARTY GREETING TO FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.

Callers Regaled With Pure Apple Cider and Doughnuts—Cutting the New Year's Cake—The Girls of Bygone Days—Have We Changed For the Better?

New Year's is nothing at all nowadays, and you may sail over it as easily as over the equator and not see it in the least. But it was a day then that meant something, and it came in at the head of the year in a way that you should understand it was there. Nor was it our way to do as they did in the times of its decadence. Nobody knew anything about cards—those little infinitesimal nothings that make up for respect and honor and good fellowship. Oh, fie, but what shams there are nowadays! But we took off our greatcoats and hung up our hats, and we did not count up the doorbells we had rung as so much of a contribution to society.

To be sure, there were not then so many of us in this land, and those that were did not all live in the cities, but we had breathing room and elbow room and were ashamed neither of work nor of being known to eat our bread by the sweat of our brows. Now, your little whiffet passes for a humorist because he can mimic country ways, and says, "Oh, fie, but the fellow parts his hair in the middle, and his shirt front is bigger than his brains!" "Come up to the fire," said my little mother. "Pull up your chair." And the circle widened out bigger till it took in half the room. There were the minister, and neighbor Hotchkiss, and old lady Denison, and the twin old maids, and my uncles George and Platt, who sat in the corners of the fireplace nearer the heat, and there were more besides; and every one was happy. "Will you pass the cider?" said my little mother, and then began the fun. That cider was made of Spitzenbergs, every drop of it. And you should have tasted that cider! It was pressed out in no patent mill, with a million bushels of rubbish and dirt. It was pure juice of the apple. It did no one any harm, and it went around with a huge salver of doughnuts. O Lord, but what has become of the knack for doughnuts, and caraway cakes, and gingersnaps? One would think it could not have so evaporated.

It was coming time to cut the huge loaves of cake, and our little mother already had a knife in her Washington cake, and my tall aunt had a knife in her Lafayette cake. Then I could see that our father was uneasy, and he got up and took the poker and furtively watched the two women as he gently rolled over the front stick in the fire irons and had everything ready for a tremendous poking of the whole heap. But happily just then the parson warmed into a discussion of St. Paul's epistle to Timothy. "Pish!" said my little mother, "but St. Paul will do well enough for Sundays, but he did not understand women." "You are right," said my aunt, "and for my part I hate old bachelors when they set up to teach married folk." You could see in a moment that all danger was over, and my father quietly laid down the poker, and the two women drew together and began to whisper, and instead of rival cakes we had the two sorts put lovingly together on one plate and a plate for every one of us. I never saw such big pieces of cake before or since. It was all to our advantage. The rivalry had become a rivalry of generosity.

Girls in those days were big, rosy creatures, who could laugh and did not wear corsets. They milked the cows and harnessed the horses and went to mill on horseback without a saddle. They could knit and sew and could eat like other folks. They did not nibble confectionery and giggle, but were open to a clean kiss and knew how to give one. Our girls and our neighbors' girls were seven that day, and they soon had things all their own way. While the older women sat in easy chairs the girls flew about and cared for everybody. Ah, but what a creature a really beautiful girl is! She needs no art at all. Bless 'em, but is not nature enough? Yes, truly, there are fools who trick themselves out till you cannot tell they are girls, only by their wriggling walk, and their giggling talk, and their heartless disregard of everything but themselves. Rights? Dear me, but our girls had their rights and gave us our rights. They ruled the house with their honest behavior. Our plates were not allowed to be empty for one moment. Each girl had her own cake or tart or cooky as truly as the aunt and little mother.

So it was our New Year's day came and went, and we slid softly into the arms of the great new days and great new things, and here we are. Bless me, but why can they not all rise up just for once to see the changes that have taken place? Perhaps it is better as it is, for I am sure that they would miss about everything that made up the world for them. The huge factories have stolen away all that made our homes interesting, and for my part I think we have a long road to reach the future millennium. But in those days our homes were the universe to us, and we did not care for huge buildings and great cities. We had George Washington and Thomas Jefferson when New York was no bigger than a village, and I do not believe they would have been the better or wiser had they lived in these days. No, indeed!

And when they were all gone our little mother sat very silent for awhile, and then she said, "Father, does not the world grow more beautiful each year?" And he took once more the poker, and he stirred the fire very gently as he said: "Mother, the logs are burning away one by one. We must keep the coals alive." "Yes, indeed," said my little mother. "We must keep the soul warm."—E. P. P. in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

THE DRUNKARD'S DEATH.

Sad Story of a Gifted Man Who Was Overcome by the Rum Demon.

As I sat alone in my room this afternoon thoughts of the career of a certain man came across the lens of my memory, a man whose acquaintance I made in the bright days of my early manhood, and that remembrance carried a wave of sadness over my heart. Thoughts of him now crowd themselves on my memory, and I mention his fall because his fame as a lawyer was worldwide. Gifted with nature's highest endowments, few indeed were his equals and none his superior.

He stood first and foremost in his chosen profession, a credit to his friends, a blessing to his adopted country and an honor to his native land, dear old Ireland. But a thirst for strong drink entered into his soul. He contracted habits of debauchery and consequently sank in social grade. His friends and business deserted him. Many attempts were made to reclaim him, but all failed. The demon of strong drink had complete possession of him. That glorious mind, gifted of God, became a complete wreck, and that voice of more than Roman eloquence, to which thousands had listened spellbound, and which had so often with soul stirring pathos pointed out the ways of right and justice, was silenced forever by the abnormal power of drink. His ending was as terrible as his life had been sublime. In one of the foulest dens of a great metropolis he expired alone—

With no friend near to catch his last breath
Or to close his sad eyes when silent in death.

No funeral cortege assembled to do him honor or follow his remains to their final home beneath the sod. No requiem was sung for the repose of his soul, only:

Rattle his bones over the stones.
He's only a drunkard whom nobody owns.

This truly eloquent and gifted man was guillotined by the cruel ax of intemperance in the very prime of his manhood and was buried as common paupers are buried—at the city's expense in the potter's field.

No marble entablature marks his last resting place. His grave is unknown and unwept.

But why mention any individual instance of the horrid effects of strong drink when we know that numberless bright lives are wrecked by it every day; that myriads of the brave, the gifted and the loved of our nation are falling by the demon knife of intemperance as grass falls before the mower's scythe.—J. J. Kelly.

The Disease of Inebriety.

The two chief factors of the disease of inebriety are poisoning and education. The disease is of the nerve tissue of the brain, and the craving for liquor—which is of the brain and not of the stomach or other organs—is only one of its symptoms. Nature first tries to resist the poison of alcohol—that is to say, the young man unaccustomed to it is made sick by drinking. Secondly, nature learns to tolerate the poison—that is to say, the young man, persisting in indulgence, soon learns to "carry a load." Thirdly, nature at last comes to demand alcohol as a stimulant. The brain becomes so poisoned that a variation of type of the delicate nerve cells which compose it takes place, and it will not do its work unless the craving is satisfied.

The periodical drinker, or the dipsomaniac, and the daily drinker are scientifically the same. One has educated his brain to demand alcohol every day, the other at longer intervals. With the dipsomaniac the craving for liquor often disappears during his period of sobriety. This periodical desire of the brain for stimulant does not at first recur as a craving for liquor. It masks itself under (the most common symptom of its return) a passionate desire to go somewhere, a longing for excitement, for change, for the theater, for a trip to the country or to the city, for any form of amusement out of the usual course. The victim is nervous and becomes irritable.

The wives of periodical drinkers learn to know when the period of drinking is coming on. Then come the tears, and the pleadings, and the broken promises. The debauch follows, the patient undergoes the unspeakable tortures of sobering up, regains his health, and again is practically free from the desire for drink until the return of his period. If mental impression were of avail, the remorse which the dipsomaniac suffers after every debauch would cure him.—W. E. Brigham.

Compensation.

It is true that drinking does a great deal of harm to a man, but how seldom we mention the compensating advantages that come to him. For instance:

He drank when he was stupid
For to quicken his insight.
His eyes grew still more bleary,
But his nose grew bright.

He drank when he was weary
His strength for to prolong.
His legs grew still more shaky,
But his breath grew strong.

He drank when he was downcast
For to chase away the night.
His debts grew still more heavy,
But his purse grew light.

—Voice.

A Few Figures.

The Blank Record published by the English Alliance made newspaper clippings for two weeks, and here is the record charged to alcohol—25 dangerous accidents, 13 robberies, 5 cases of insanity, 62 outrages and assaults, 20 cuttings and stabbings, 5 cases of brutality to children, 52 assaults on women, 72 assaults on constables, 94 violent deaths, 18 cases of suicide, 12 cases of manslaughter.

Temperance Notes.

Four million four hundred and twenty-eight thousand have been convicted of drunkenness and disorderliness in London in a quarter of a century.

The annual drink of New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand is £13,250,000—a larger amount than that raised the world over for foreign missions.

A new Minnesota statute punishes the drunkard by a fine of from $10 to $40 for the first offense, from $40 to $60 for the second and 90 days in the workhouse for the third.

AN IDEALLY BAD BABY.

His Whims Were Law, and His Temper Fattened on Their Indulgence.

Tom was a bad baby from the very beginning of his usurpation. He would cry for nothing, he would burst into storms of devilish temper without notice and let go scream after scream and squall after squall, then climax the thing with "holding his breath"—that frightful specialty of the teething nursling in the throes of which the creature exhausts its lungs, then is convulsed with noiseless squirmings and twistings and kickings in the effort to get its breath, while the lips turn blue and the mouth stands wide and rigid, offering for inspection one wee tooth set in the lower rim of a hoop of red gums, and when the appalling stillness has endured until one is sure the lost breath will never return a nurse comes flying and dashes water in the child's face, and—presto, the lungs fill and instantly discharge a shriek or a yell or a howl which bursts the listening ear and surprises the owner of it into saying words which would not go well with a halo if he had one.

The baby Tom would claw anybody who came within reach of his nails and pound anybody he could reach with his rattle. He would scream for water until he got it and then throw cup and all on the floor and scream for more. He was indulged in all his caprices, howsoever troublesome and exasperating they might be. He was allowed to eat anything he wanted, particularly things that would give him the stomach ache.

When he got to be old enough to begin to toddle about and say broken words and get an idea of what his hands were for, he was a more consummate pest than ever. Roxy got no rest while he was awake. He would call for anything and everything he saw, simply saying "Awnt it" (want it), which was a command. When it was brought, he said in a frenzy and motioning it away with his hands, "Don't awnt it; don't awnt it!" and the moment it was gone he set up frantic yells of "Awnt it; awnt it!" and Roxy had to give wings to her heels to get that thing back to him again before he could get time to carry out his intention of going into convulsions about it.

What he preferred above all other things was the tongs. This was because his father had forbidden him to have them lest he break windows and furniture with them. The moment Roxy's back was turned he would toddle to the presence of the tongs and say, "Like it," and cock his eye to one side to see if Roxy was observing, then "Awnt it!" and cock his eye again, then "Hab it!" with another furtive glance, and finally, "Take it!" and the prize was his. The next moment the heavy implement was raised aloft, the next there were a crash and a squall, and the cat was off on three legs to meet an engagement. Roxy would arrive just as the lamp or a window went to irredeemable smash.—Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson" in Century.

RECENT ROAD LEGISLATION.

What the Various States Have Done For Highway Improvement.

The states which have recently enacted laws on the subject of road improvement are California, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin. There are only three exceptions to the rule that all this legislation was enacted in 1893—that of New Jersey, from 1888 to 1892; Vermont, which took action in 1892, and Washington, one of whose laws was enacted in 1890, and the other two last year.

One of the most elaborate of these laws is that of Massachusetts establishing the state highway commission, with its extensive advisory functions as to the construction of good roads and providing for the establishment and construction of state highways, contingent upon legislative appropriations.

The laws of New Jersey are models of their kind. They facilitate the construction of both local and county roads and provide that when the owners of two-thirds of the lands fronting on any public road agree to pay one-tenth of the cost of improvement the county authorities shall cause such improvements to be made. State aid was provided for in 1892 by legislation authorizing one-third of the cost of county road improvements to be paid for from the state treasury to the extent of $75,000 a year. A wise provision of the New Jersey legislation is that requiring all road taxes to be paid in money, experience everywhere having shown that a leading cause of bad roads was the practice of permitting farmers to work out their road taxes.

The example of New Jersey in this respect was followed by New York last year, and by Wisconsin also, to the extent of providing that all road taxes shall be paid in money except in townships that specifically vote to retain the labor system. Oregon, however, provides that petitioners for county roads must each do one day's work on the roads or pay $2—a striking way of assuring earnestness of intention on the part of petitioners. Nearly all the states in question provide specifically for road construction under county auspices. New Hampshire, Vermont and Wisconsin, however, make the town the basis. New Hampshire abolishes subdivisions in towns for highway districts and requires 25 cents in every $100 valuation to be spent for road improvement. Vermont lays a town tax of 20 cents in every $100 valuation for support of highways and a state tax of 5 cents on the dollar, to be apportioned to the towns according to mileage. Vermont also creates a state highway commission to investigate roadbuilding in the state.

Toll roads disappeared from Massachusetts more than a generation ago and are here regarded as belonging to the era of the stagecoach. They are still common in many parts of the west, and Missouri's new county option road law provides that county courts may establish tollgates upon roads that have been suitably improved. Oregon's new county road law, on the other hand, requires all roads built under its provisions to be free of toll. Washington's new road laws are remarkably elaborate and demand that improved roads shall be constructed in a very thorough and substantial manner, according to good engineering principles.—Boston Herald.

STATESMEN WHO DON'T DRINK.

History of the Congressional Temperance Society at Washington.

Few people are aware that there is a temperance society at the national capital composed of congressmen, but it is a fact nevertheless, and it has flourished for more than 60 years.

The Congressional Temperance society was organized Feb. 26, 1833, three months before the first national temperance convention ever held in this country, which met at Philadelphia in May of that year. In the old senate chamber, now occupied by the supreme court, under the leadership of such men as Edward Everett, Daniel Webster, Horatio Seymour, Lewis Cass, Felix Grundy, George M. Dallas, George N. Briggs, John Blair and William Hendricks, the society sprang into being. Lewis Cass, secretary of war, was chosen president, and Theodore Frelinghuysen, senator from New Jersey, submitted a constitution, which was adopted and signed by 100 members of the senate and house of representatives. The following is the preamble to this constitution:

"As the use of ardent spirits is not only unnecessary, but injurious; as it tends to produce pauperism, crime and wretchedness, and to hinder the efficacy of all means for the intellectual and moral benefit of society, and also to endanger the purity and permanence of our free institutions, and as one of the best means of counteracting its deleterious effects is the influence of united example.

"Therefore, we, members of congress and others, recognizing the principle of abstinence from the use of ardent spirits and from the traffic in it as the basis of our union, do hereby agree to form ourselves into a society, and for this purpose adopt the following constitution," etc.

The object of the society is given "to discountenance by example and by kind moral influence the use of ardent spirit and the traffic in it throughout the community."

On this basis the association carried on its work with more or less activity for many years. In 1876, under the inspiration of such men as Vice President Wilson and Senator Buckingham of Connecticut, the society became specially alive to the great purpose of its existence and has enjoyed increasing usefulness and prosperity since that time.—Washington Post.

Exert the Power of Banded Good.

To silent example add active work. Speak. Reach out the hand to some struggling neighbor to sustain and direct him. Take part in associations formed for the spread of temperance, for the proper enforcement of the laws, for the distribution of proper literature. Associations have a power which the members working separately do not own. They have done a noble work amid many difficulties, often with slight encouragement from the communities whose battles they were fighting. Our more influential Catholics, those of more affluence, of higher social positions, have kept aloof from them. The laborer, the mechanic, the poor man, in one word, has been charged with the duty of fighting the whole battle.

This is not as it should be. I do not discard the poor man. God forbid! But I would enlist in our ranks the rich as well as the poor. If God has placed us in more elevated stations, we owe him more loyal service. There is a tendency, which is not according to God's ways, that as men ascend in society they sever themselves from their fellow men, do not feel the same sympathy with their wants and are afraid to come in contact with the masses even for the furtherance of noble causes. In the temperance warfare I make a special appeal to men of affluence and influence. They can do much for us, and we need their aid.—Archbishop Ireland.

Without Wine Sauce.

A young man sat at a hotel table with a gentleman and a lady friend for whom he felt the greatest respect. The waiter said to the gentleman, "Will you have pudding with wine sauce?" "Yes," was the answer. The young man's craving for strong drink was aroused at the mention of the wine sauce, and he also was about to reply affirmatively to the waiter's question when his lady friend quickly said, "Pudding without wine sauce, if you please." "Without wine sauce," came the young man's reply.

Afterward, in the parlor, he said to her, "I want to thank you for doing me a great favor." She looked astonished. "You do not know what it meant to me when you said at the dinner table, 'Pudding without wine sauce, if you please.'" He then told her his struggle against strong drink and how near he had come to falling, saved only by her timely example.—New York Evangelist.

Hereditary Drunkenness.

Professor Clifford Albutt of Cambridge university, England, in testifying before a British commission to investigate drunkenness and its treatment, said: "The curious thing about drunkenness is that it is generally hereditary in that particular form—as drunkenness. Drunkenness generally comes in the same form and manifestations. It appears not merely as a general tendency to insanity, but as a special form of it." He also adds that public opinion, education, physiology and so on are having such a strong effect that the thing will die out of itself in large measure. Would this were true!—Union Signal.

The Temperance Movement In Russia.

A temperance society has been organized in St. Petersburg which includes a brother of the reigning czar, a high dignitary of the Greek church and the ministers of all the departments of government. The leading Russian newspaper, in commenting on this new alliance of government with temperance says: "Only the co-operation of the government departments with the efforts of the society can deliver the people from the thraldom of drunkenness. To abolish such is the province and the power of the government."