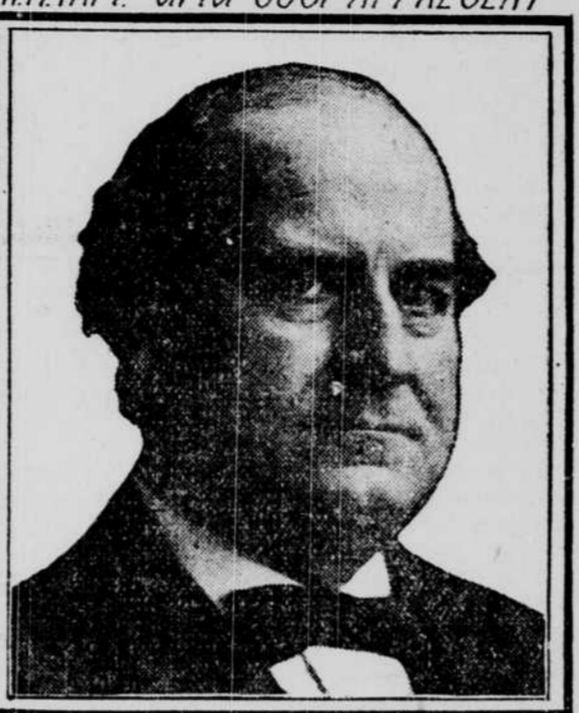


NEVER AGAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY D. McVILL



WHEN a few days our ears will be filled with the deafening crash of people breaking their New Year's resolutions. Three million sets of iron-clad non-combustible American "never agains" crushed to earth will remain there until dug up again the night of December 31, 1909.

What has the New Year in store for you, joy or sorrow? Few to-day realize what or where they will be before the end of 1909, and attempts to prognosticate probably would be vain. As far as destiny is concerned the world literally lives "from hand to mouth." We can only guess at what the next year will bring.

For William Jennings Bryan 1909 means more lectures at so much per night. For William Howard Taft, 1909 is a year of glad rejoicing, for on March 4 he assumes the presidential chair vacated by Theodore Roosevelt. Four years ago when an attempt was made to relegate Mr. Taft to the bench of the supreme court of the United States he little suspected that he was material to fill the chair at the head of the nation.

Joy is mingled with sadness in President Roosevelt's case and his cup is one of bitter-sweet, for while he lifts the cares of the presidential office from his head and applies his strenuous tests upon the habits of the East African jungle he has shot his bolt as far as the U. S. A. is concerned, there being nothing left to conquer.

But for the commonplace citizen of these United States 1909 carries only conjecture, as a rule. Lots of men and women start the year planning to carry out some cherished ideas, whether they will succeed being a matter that only Father Time himself can solve.

There are approximately 83,000,000 souls in this country. Of that number statistics say 3,000,000 have drawn up sets of resolutions, which if carried out would cut a swath in the nation's liquor and tobacco traffic.

From every state in the union the cry "never again" arises, and just a few days after the debut of the new year the phrase gives way to a murmur of "just one more" with the eventual result that 15 days or three weeks finds conditions once more at a normal state.

There is a saying that a man is never great until he dies. Therefore it is generally not until the demise of the righteous that we learn of the man or woman who made and kept a New Year's reso-

lution. Then the press lets us know about it and as a rule the alleged New Year's resolution which was kept may be laid at the door of the bright young reporter who covered the death and who was anxious to inoculate a feature into his story.

There are thousands of ways of applying the "never again." Here are a few of the more or less popular ways:

I promise never again, after January 1 to—

- Drink intoxicants,
- Smoke Tobacco,
- Swear,
- Be Mean to My Wife,
- Keep Late Hours,
- Waste Money,
- Eat Heavy Meals,
- Vote the Ticket,
- Grow a Mustache,
- Spurn the Alarm Clock's Call,
- Read Novels,
- Quit My Job,
- Believe Fish Tales,
- Play Cards,
- Gamble,
- Celebrate July 4,
- Dance Overtime,
- Ask for More Pay,
- Tell Lies,
- Wear Loud Socks,
- Flirt,
- Part My Hair in the Middle,
- Shirk Work,
- Watch Salome Dances,
- Marry,
- Be Conceited,
- Wear Merry Widow Hats.

Other purely local faults are subjects of New Year's resolutions and usually the signed and sworn document is tucked away in a corner, neglected and its contents forgotten. Then the party to the "swearing off" who for three days has been telling his friends or her friends how invigorating it feels to be once more spiritually pure, drops down a step or two and when resolutions are mentioned has a merry laugh and tells about how last New Year's he or she had sworn off this and that and had had more fun "with the folks over it."

At midnight each December 31, Father Time loads up the water wagon with thousands of ex-imbibers who now are firm believers in the health-giving properties of aqua pura. About 12:01 a. m., January 1, the one who is less able to stand the gaff of total abstinence slides off to the

ground and proceeds to celebrate. For fear that he may be loose some two or three others follow him and pretty soon most of them are sliding back to Mother Earth and alleged happiness. Occasionally a man or two is found who keeps a resolution or two and then there is a place reserved for him in the hall of fame, but there are lots of empty niches there.

New Year's parties, attended by young people are the breeding places for resolutions. Inventors of games who profit thereby, have gone so far as to concoct resolution games for parties of that sort and in some of the contests the loser is compelled to keep his promise to "swear off" this or that, if he would adhere to his or her affidavit.

A story is told of a young lady and a young man, engaged to each other, who attended a New Year's party. The couple were extremely fond of each other and the bride-to-be had only one objection to her intended spouse, viz. that he drank intoxicants. He was not aware that she knew it. Consequently before the little social function she "fixed" the resolution contest, so he would lose. She playfully told him that he must keep his resolution and he, rather fearfully promised, little suspecting the plot.

Well, he lost and said he would keep the promise, though he lied and said he never touched a "drop in his life."

"I hear you don't drink," she breathed into his ear from the depths of a cozy corner, "but I want to be sure that you never will."

Thus the young man's habit met its Waterloo in the New Year's trick of a "stacked deck," promoted by his fiancée, and now, five years following their marriage, his taste for spirits was declared positively extinct by the wife in a recent coroner's inquest at the ladies' sewing circle.

That was one resolution which held and probably will for the rest of the young married man's life, providing he doesn't get into politics. But that was one of a few. When a man or woman makes a resolution with a string attached to it, such as awarding a watching friend a few simoleons in case the promise to abstain from some habit is broken, then the vaccination "takes," but otherwise, it seldom holds good for more than a week. A week is really a long stretch for the life of a set of promises, most of them expiring with dawn of January 1, although having been made only the previous night. This new year will see the breaking of approximately 3,000,000 well-founded resolutions, but who cares? There are lots more New Years coming, say the philosophers.

VERDI AND HIS THRIFTY WAYS

Great Composer Worried Over Small Hole in His "Best Coat."

Baron Edmondo Mayor des Planches, ambassador from Italy, told in a Washington recently. The great Maestro had just produced his opera "Aida" in Paris for the first time and the entire city was wild with enthusiasm. The president of France made it known

that at the second performance the rosette of the Legion of Honor would be conferred on the illustrious composer, a great fete was gotten up to honor the event. The president made the presentation, and Verdi seemed overcome with emotion. Indeed, he fumbled with the rosette so long that one of the attendants of the president arose and, taking his penknife, made a neat slit in the coat and placed the

button firmly in place. After the opera a grand banquet was given and everyone was concerned to see that the Maestro looked unhappy. He would lapse into fits of musing even during the most enthusiastic speeches, and would sigh and look doleful indeed. Finally an old friend got near him and asked solicitously what was troubling him. Verdi mused a long time and then explained sadly: "I do not see that you can do anything to help me and, indeed, I cannot see how I can help myself. I am just wondering

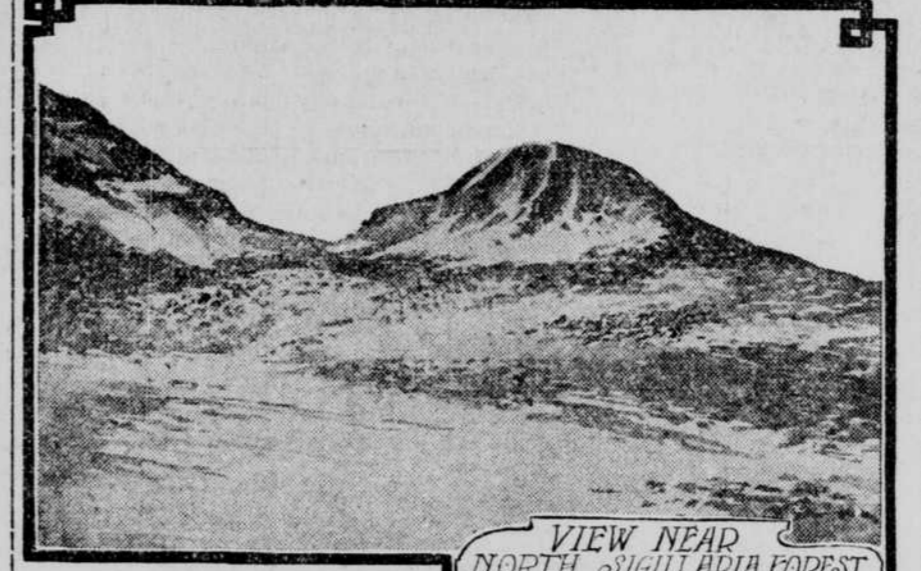
what my wife will say to me when she sees this great hole in my best coat."

Sashes Much in Evidence.

A glance at the windows of the shops show that the sash has come into its own again, and that all sorts of extravagances in that direction may be expected. Not only do children wear sashes, but the young girls and older matrons have them, the simple blue and pink ribbons of sweet 16 and the velvet and heavy silk for 60 being equally popular.

THE PAINTED DESERT AS A PARK

ARIZONA SEEKS ITS PRESERVATION BY NATION



stone into images, columns, monuments, towers and strange, fantastic forms that have no names. Irrespective of its coloring, it would deserve to rank among the world's wonders. Yet its coloring is the greatest wonder of all. Here may be seen a red wall 500 feet high and 100 miles long. Yonder is a coal black cliff of hardened lava rising from a valley floor of snowy alkali. From any vantage point, one may survey a glowing landscape that shows 100 shades of pink, gray, red, chocolate, carmine, crimson, mauve, brown, yellow and olive. Near Indian Wells is a seemingly interminable line of tall rock sentinels, all garbed in different hues, on guard in this land of enchantment. No wonder the Spanish explorers, when they first beheld it more than 250 years ago, named it "El Pintado Desierto."

Nine miles north of Adamana is Dead River canyon, from the rim of which one obtains a view of the Painted desert that can hardly be matched for scenic interest. The drive requires not more than two hours, over a road that derives more than ordinary interest from the circumstance that it crosses the old Central Overland stage route, the far western extension of the historic Santa Fe trail. Although this has not been traversed for more than a quarter of a century, the deep ruts worn by the wheels of the stage coaches, freighting caravans and prairie schooners of the emigrants, bound for the far-off land of gold in the exciting years that began with '49, are still plainly visible.

Just on the brink of the canyon is an ancient cedar tree, the only one for miles around. Tradition has it that here was the famous rendezvous and camping place of a band of desperadoes and cattle rustlers that terrorized this part of Arizona for many years. Hence the spot is locally famous as the "Robbers' Roost."

To describe even the small portion of the Painted desert visible from Robbers' Roost is as hopeless as to describe an Arizona sunset. As far as the eye can carry is a succession of buttes, terraces and castellated hills that seem to display all the colors of the rainbow. Pervading all is the mystic purple haze of the arid lands that blends chaos itself into a symphony of color more celestial than this sordid earth. Away off to the northwest is a black, flat-topped mesa, beyond which lies the land of the Hopi Indians. To the north is the land of the Navajos—the American Bedouins. But this is desolation itself, uninhabited even by the hardy tribes that find in the desert a congenial home. At one's feet is the sandy, boulder-strewn bed of a forgotten river whose healing flow ceased ages ago, when this gorgeous land of desert here a far different aspect—green with tropic vegetation and melodious with the songs of birds. From the parched desolation rise shimmering heat waves, so that one shrinks from the descent into the canyon as from a fiery furnace.

However, it is not as bad as it looks. A circuitous path leads to the canyon floor, over glittering beds of gypsum and thick deposits of mineral paint. Near the bottom, the edge of a vast deposit of silicified wood is reached. This is not the famous Petrified forest of Arizona, which is 15 miles south, but in many respects it is not less wonderful. Officially it is known as the North Sigillaria forest. It is proposed to set aside 72 square miles of it as a national monument, that it may be forever preserved as a public possession.

If one's eyes be sharp he may find many strange and curious things mingled with the sand, silex and rock fragments. There are corals and the fossil bones of fishes that disported themselves in ocean depths when this lofty Arizona plateau was far below sea level. There are the fossilized remains of prehistoric birds, animals and reptiles for which science has not yet invented names. On a larger scale are a thousand freaks of erosion—the work of sandstorm and rainstorm, of wind, water, frost, snow, heat and all the irresistible forces of nature. Yonder stands a host of gigantic, silent, stone figures—some of almost angelic beauty, and others diabolic in their grotesqueness—among which Colorado's Garden of the Gods might be lost and passed by unnoticed, so numerous are the greater wonders.

Its coloring is as rich as that of the Grand canyon, and more varied. The prospect is limited only by the powers of human vision. The wind and storms and rushing waters of ages have chiseled basalt, clay and sand-

VISITS WITH UNCLE BY



The Ashes of Death. Charles Dana Knottington, the itinerant "type sticker," was weary, hungry and footsore—but not discouraged. He was a man of many towns, a perigrinating printer, known from Kalamazoo, Mich., to Butte, Mont. He was not only known of men but by his own acquaintance was wide, varied and reminiscent. He knew a man who worked with Horace Greeley and once he had held cases "longside 'o Lazarus" on the Butte Miner. With the "perfish" he was a man of many ties, typographical and railroad. In fact his knowledge of great editors and association with "swifts" was as endless as the railroad ties over which, during a nomadic career, he had passed on the bumpers.

Thus it was, in the course of events, he had landed in Podunk and sought the usual employment. But, alas! the deadly machine had shown its head in the "beautiful little town on the Cedar" and Charles Dana Knottington had been turned down. The alley wherein once were heard "the silent messengers" of the gang was "clicked, clicked" in the sticks, was no more—the invention of man, with ruthless clank and clang, had usurped the bread and butter of hundreds like Charles Dana K.

Having been refused work he asked for a "pan-handle," but the cruel heart of the editor was petrifying fast, and Knottington turned from the office of the "Podunk Mirror" with sorrow in his very soul.

But he was not discouraged. Had he not successfully combated the stern realities of life innumerable times, and, exultant, rose joyously above the sordid obstacles that barred his printrailway? Aye! aye! indeed!

"It is to think," said Charlie, who was a faithful subscriber to the colored supplement.

"It is ten miles to Bumperville and no freight train before midnight." Ere the starry stars burst through the canopy of night he would starve like a common hobo who chafed gate posts and begged for "doodles" of the kitchen mechanics. "Nay! Nay! Panline," he would not let the gnaw of hunger eat at the vitals of his inner self like a rat chewing an old shoe in the garret.

Philosophically Charles Dana Knottington tapped his forehead with the index finger of his right hand and, sinking down beside a pile of ashes in the back lot of the Mirror office, he pulled from his pocket the "Morning Tribune" and began to read!

"Horrible! What's this! 'Mt. Pelee swallows up a thousand lives!' Life is but as candles snuffed out in the twinkling of an eye! The entire island buried in a storm of ashes!"

"ASHES!"

The recumbent form of Charles Dana arose vigorously to a rectangular figure!

"Ashes!" he gasped, "Ashes!"

"Ha! Ha! Ashes!"

In a moment he was gone, but in the dusky shadows of evening a dark form might have been seen diligently engaged at the ash pile in the alley back of where the "Podunk Mirror" had its abstract being!

And in the next issue of the Mirror appeared this notice:

"A DASTARD'S WORK!"

A miserable tramp printer of the name of Charlie Knottington filled several hundred envelopes with ashes and cinders from some Podunk ash-heap last Tuesday evening and sold them to our inhabitants for ten cents each as souvenirs of Mt. Pelee. Hanging is too good for such hoboese."

But many miles away, like Sheridan, Charles Dana Knottington was calmly smoking a clear sauer-kraut-leaf cigar in the rear of the office of the "Strawberry Point Herald"—and beside him rose, full high, another pile of ashes and cinders, or Mt. Pelee after the eruption!

○ ○ ○

Rhapsodies.

One way to lose your rich relatives is to stay poor.

A telephone girl will accept a ring from any old man.

That man who comes up on a New York elevator is well brought up.

A man who has been divorced always takes especial interest in problem plays.

Some people should play on their pianos as they pay for them, in installments.

Most people start right. What we need in this world is a few more to finish as they started.

Improved Mad Dogs.

Boston has a hospital for the treatment of dogs suspected of having rabies and several cases have been improved, though the veterinarians do not say they have cured the dogs of hydrophobia. They have merely improved some dogs suspected of the disease.—Worcester Telegram.

Look to Royalty for Example.

A letter from Berlin, speaking of the birthday of the empress, says: "The empress gave her hand to Prince Wilhelm February 27, 1881, and time has demonstrated that the report which spoke of it as a love match was true in its broadest sense. The Germans, on occasions like this, like to remember the words with which Wilhelm introduced his consort: 'Our house of Hohenzollern must furnish the German people an example of all virtues, and especially must it furnish a pattern for the sacredness of family life.' In anticipation of the birthday the sentence has been often quoted and the qualities of the kaiserin as an ideal hausfrau are always enlarged upon. Her home, her husband, her six boys and her daughter have her interest beyond all else, and the people of Germany love her on that account."

Put Truth to Use.

The greatest homage we can pay to truth is to use it.—Emerson.