

YOUR NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

HOW LONG DO YOU HOLD THE DETERMINATION TO KEEP YOUR TEMPER OR QUIT GOSSIPING OR STOP SWEARING? WISE ONES SAY WE PROFIT BY MAKING RESOLUTIONS SINCERELY EVEN IF WE KEEP THEM BUT A DAY

ANY weakling can make resolutions. It needs a strong man to keep them. That is perhaps why New Year resolutions are so often futile. The strong do not wait for high days and holy days to amend their conduct or carry out their resolves. They obey Goethe's dictum: "Seize this very minute. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

And so it happens that the large army of people who wait for the New Year before effecting a reformation in their lives are seldom successful in carrying out their intentions. They are not possessed of the spirit of energy and resolution necessary to achievement. It may be argued that it is better to make good resolutions, even though they are not carried out, than not to make them at all. This is open to question, however. Unless one is absolutely determined to do what one has decreed, it is perhaps on the whole better not to make promises to oneself. Unfulfilled resolves continually repeated, tend to weaken the character, and to reduce one's faith in oneself, just as resolutions put into practice are conducive to strength and self-confidence.

Very little tends to overbalance the resolutions of the average person. In fact, many people welcome any excuse to exonerate them from the carrying out of their resolves. One individual determines, let us say, never to lose his temper. He comes down on New Year's morning with a set smile on his face. Alas! it is short-lived. The whole world seems in conspiracy to drag him back to his former frame of mind. The coffee is cold, the letters which look so alluring prove to be chiefly bills and begging epistles, he falls over the doorstep as he leaves the house. All these minor annoyances, which, if rightly met, would have helped him to conquer his weakness, serve to throw him back into his original state, and before evening he is as bad as ever he has been.



A PUBLIC NEW YEAR'S EVE REVEL

Or, take another very general New Year's resolution, that of getting up at a certain time in the morning. When the day dawns, any reason whatever is grasped at to evade this. The weather is too cold, the alarm was not loud enough, he is sure his watch is fast, he doesn't really feel well enough to risk getting up earlier than usual, and, after all, he asks himself, is there any real reason why he should? A thousand-and-one excuses the average individual will make to himself rather than perform what he has designed to do. The world is full of wobblers of this kind, and the more they wobble the weaker they become.

Another reason perhaps why the average resolution-maker so seldom achieve their purpose is that they attempt too much. They make two, three, sometimes six resolutions at once, whereas to carry through one resolution successfully is quite an admirable feat.

As Thomas a Kempis says:

"If every year we could root out one vice we would sooner become perfect men." Impatience is at the root of many defeats. It is customary nowadays to sneer at the virtue for which the name of Job is synonymous, but those who say that patience is the virtue of an ass or a beggar's virtue are not so wise as the Spanish proverb-maker, who said:

"Patience! and shuffle the cards." Most people shuffle the cards eagerly enough, but the patience is lacking. Seeking to grasp the stars at a bound they fall back to the earth.

And so, if people at the commencement of a New Year adjusted their desires in accordance with their abilities, and instead of sighing for the unattainable made the very most of the opportunities vouchsafed to them, one would hear less of broken resolutions and wasted lives.

"Do the duty which lies nearest to thee which thou knowest to be a duty," said Carlyle. "Thy second duty will already have become clearer."

The Turning of New Leaves.

Good resolutions have almost gone out of fashion. On the last night of the year we no longer sit down to review our past lives and resolve to be "better and wiser" than we have been in the past. "It is of no use making resolutions, I never can keep them," is the plea that is usually proffered. This is a mistake, however. It is commendable to resolve (an alarm clock helping one) to get up half an hour earlier than usual in the morning, even though it results—as, alas! it too often does—in one getting up half an hour later. It is what one aspires to be that counts.

If people could live more in the present it would help them enormously in the keeping of good resolutions. So many people persist in being just a little ahead all the time.

"Tomorrow," they say, "we will reform," but the tomorrow of their imaginings never dawns. Ancient and modern philosophers have agreed as to the dangers of procrastination. Such widely diverse people as Horace, the Latin poet who flourished in 65 B. C., and pushful persons who flourish (exceedingly) at the present day, join issue in this particular.

"Who begins, possesses half the deed," says Horace.

"Dare to be wise; make a commencement." "Do it now," is the curt command of the modern apostle of "Hustle." Again, Horace says, "If you are ignorant how to live aright, give place to those who have learned the lesson."

"Get on or get out," says a manikin, following in more concentrated, if less courteous language the same line of thought on a somewhat lower plane. The one was concerned with the things of the soul and the spirit; the other with worldly advancement. There are some who contend that the two cannot go together, but if (as has been contended by many men of wisdom) what a man is of more importance than what he has, it is well to make spiritual advancement as the years go by. If we have not made progress, we have gone back. The soul never stands still. Time has no terror for those who have learned wisdom.

Pass thou, wild heart,
Wild heart of youth that still
Hast half a mind to stay,
I grow too old a comrade;
Let us part,
Pass thou away.

Some people drag the follies and immaturities of youth into old age. There is wisdom in adjusting oneself to time, to profit by past experiences, and to acquire that sense of proportion which refuses to magnify trifles into tragedies.

SOMEWHAT HARD TO FOLLOW

Sturdy Veteran's Recipe for Long Life All Right, but for Certain Strong Considerations.

George McBean, a Jamaica negro, seventy-five years old, a sailor for 61 years and still an active and able seaman, veteran of a thousand storms and a score of shipwrecks, has been telling the Philadelphia Public Ledger how to avoid illness and attain old age without losing an ounce of the strength of youth. Here is George's recipe: "Eat as much as you like, whenever you desire."

"Sleep whenever you like, whenever you feel sleepy. No particular hours are necessary. Just live like you want to."

There is no doubt that George has the right idea. Youth—at least until implacable age has broken it off its desire—believes in eating as much as it likes, whenever it likes, and in sleeping when it feels sleepy. But by the time one is more or less able to "just live like he wants to" a lifetime of training in the opposite direction holds up inhibitory hands and robs his liberty of its savor.

George is an example—but he perhaps owes more than he realizes to the belaying pin and the rope's end, both of which aids to good habits were in their prime when his habits were forming.—Knickerbocker Press.

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The Difference.

The mistress of the house found Truda, the cook, very busy writing at the kitchen table, though it was past time for getting dinner. For a half minute perhaps she watched the laborious process of literary composition. Then she spoke with asperity. "How much longer," she exclaimed, "are you going to be over that beggarly post card?" Truda looked up indignantly.

"Beggary postcard!" she said. "Beggary postcard! I'd have you know that this is no beggarly postcard! Not much! It is a field postcard. It is—to the exempt reservist, Hieronymus Weinzler, with the Third Bavarian army corps, Fifth Bavarian Division, Fourteenth regiment of infantry, Second company."

Incredible.

"Nero fiddled while Rome burned." "I don't believe it," replied the man who likes to disagree. "No violinist with Nero's political pull would have permitted a pyrotechnic display to go on as a rival performance."

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Wearing Very Few.

"What did you see at the opera?" "That clothes for women are going out of fashion."

A genius is usually a person who has the reputation that he could do wonderful things, if only—

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THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

DE MAUPASSANT, describing an officer, said that just to look at him made one feel martial. He did not say warlike or bellicose; the idea he wished to convey was much more subtle. In the presence of this officer one assumed the military attitude of mind and body.

This is a phenomenon that escapes the attention of most people—women, however, observe it. Practically every nonmilitary man at the sight of a well set up, fully accoutred soldier instinctively assumes something of a military bearing. And when the drums roll and a marching column of soldiers flashes into view the civilian involuntarily throws back his shoulders and steps out with a tense, measured tread.

And as with civilians, so with soldiers. The ordinary regiment becomes more military in the presence of the crack regiment. The crack regiment itself gains something more when in proximity to a detachment of troops of heroic, almost legendary, fame, such as the Foreign Legion.

The Legionaries handle campaigns of their own, and probably no body of troops has ever done such constant and arduous campaigning. But France over and over again has used them also as leaven among other troops. They stiffen the mass, and men emulate their actions.

The Legion was sent out to the Crimea and got no special credit for covering itself with glory, as that had been expected of it, but did reflect great credit on the judgment of those who had sent it out to help to inspire a whole army.

The queen of Spain 80 years ago was in a hard fix with a civil war on her hands. The Carlists, whom she was fighting, were just as good soldiers as her own, if not a shade better. Then the Queen's generals had an inspiration of genius. If they could only get the French Foreign Legion into their army they felt the shade of advantage would move over to their side. So the queen bought the Foreign Legion from the then king of France, and for four years the Legion belonged to Spain.

In the present war, part of the French Legion has been sent to the trenches of France and Flanders and Alsace and to the Dardanelles. Part of it remains in Africa, its normal habitat, doing some mighty vigorous campaigning in the Moroccan part of France's wonderful new African empire.

The Americans and other foreigners who are enrolled as volunteers in the French army are put in contact with the Legionaries, and this, while giving them scope for their fighting qualities and assuring them an opportunity for genuine campaigning, is the highest measure of protection for them. It guarantees them against foolish rashness, as well as against being led into traps or losing their head in critical moments.

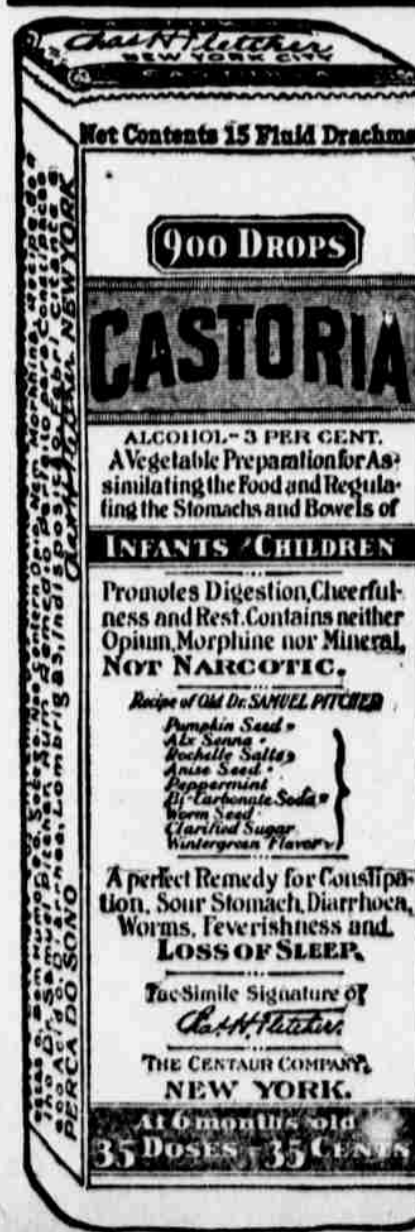
Fighting is routine work with the Legionary, just as sailing a yacht is to the expert mariner. The winds may be different on each trip and the craft is never handled twice in the same way, but the expert knowledge of the technique of his trade makes the Legionary and the skipper each acquit himself of his task in finished fashion.

Officially the Foreign Legion is composed of eight thousand men. In reality it is understood it has nearly double that number, and the Legion becomes readily a whole army corps, with the addition of some of France's colonial troops.

France for hundreds of years had regiments of German, English, Irish, Scotch, Swiss, Italians and other foreigners enrolled in her armies, but the present Foreign Legion may be considered as dating from 1831. One brief rule in its constitution says that the enlisting colonel may accept a man even though he does not present a birth certificate or identification papers. Wherefore the names of the English and American Legionaries have been Smith, Brown and Jones; of Germans Muller, Schwartz and Weiss; of the Italians, Rossi and Grossi; of the French, Petot, Legrand and Leclair, and so on.

The recruiting officer reads the candidate a warning lecture. "Don't you know what the Legion is, monsieur? Surely there is something better you can do. Severe campaigning in Africa or in China for a sou a day, or a few sous as you begin to advance, is no bed of roses. You had better think it over a day or two. No? You already are aware? Very well, mon cher enfant," and his tone changes as he now speaks as a colonel to his soldier: "There is a glorious career down there for the right kind. If you are a good and faithful soldier you may go far. Good luck!"

The recruiting colonel can generally tell at a glance what army the candidate has served in and if he has been a sergeant or an officer. In the latter case he is discreetly questioned on the point, and it is suggested, for his own benefit, that he confidentially inform his colonel when he arrives at the training quarters in Africa. One who has been an officer in a European army is usually taken into the



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