

# CELEBRATING NEW YEAR'S HERE and THERE

**C**ELEBRATED by religious observance and festivals among the Egyptians, Chinese, Jews, Romans and Mohammedans many centuries before the Christian era, New Year's day is still the one holiday celebrated by all nations, civilized or savage. While true that the first day of the new year does not fall simultaneously in all sections of the globe, since all countries do not use the Christian calendar, it is, nevertheless, a fact that each nation has its own New Year's day. Even the cannibals of the South Sea islands and savage tribes of Central Africa celebrate the beginning of the new year with some sort of ceremonies. One general characteristic, however, marks all the celebrations, and that is the spirit of rejoicing and feasting. Many of the customs are quaint and unusual, but still fraught with the spirit of revelry and good will.

In our country, of course, especially in the large cities, merriment and conviviality hold full sway, though the watch-night services in the churches appeal more to those of serious bent, to whom the passing of the old year and the welcoming of the new are causes for reflection, meditation and even sadness.

In New York, Chicago and most other cities the New Year's frolic is a veritable flood of noise and revelry. Millions are spent in wine and costly suppers, and as the hour of midnight



CALLERS AT WHITE HOUSE, NEW YEAR'S



"THE HEALTH OF THE NEW YEAR!"

reading of the stars. It furnishes standard time for half the world, and as the new year is born will send its message clear up to Alaska, to South America, to China and to London.

Over in France New Year's day is not entirely one of rejoicing; that is, unless one is able to rise above such mundane things as finance, for New Year's in France means—bills! It is the universal paying-up day of the year. All the dear, familiar old bills that have been jogging along and accumulating during the year suddenly pile in en masse and greet the head of the house on New Year's morning. It is not difficult to obtain credit in France, provided one possesses the externals of a comfortable competence, and the tradesmen and landlords and shopkeepers are content to wait—until January first. Then they drop their gentle little reminders in the mails or, more frequently, present them through representatives. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker—and all the galaxy of "their sisters and their cousins and their aunts"—are to be reckoned with.

Festival, banqueting and merry-making likewise hold high carnival. From New Year's eve until the morning of the second day of the new year the streets of Paris are en fête. Beautifully gowned women, in richly decorated carriages, and groups of beribboned holiday-seekers form a boulevard. Cafe life then is wild and brilliant, happy pageant that throngs the spacious and the students from the Latin quarter contribute their full quota of roistering and revelry in the restaurants and along the streets.

The German celebration of the New Year is not lacking in wholesome good cheer and festive pranks, but it is pre-eminently a decorous one. In Berlin elaborate musical programs are rendered and everywhere anthems and festival songs are chanted, beginning at twilight of the last day of the old year and continuing until the bells peal forth the glad tidings of a new year born unto the centuries. There is one German custom that dates from the year 1848 that has no little of the spirit of the typical "bad boy" in it.

On New Year's eve anyone walking along the streets of Berlin and wearing a high hat need take no umbrage if a couple of German students, who may have endeavored a trifle too zealously to find the bottom of the flowing bowl, slip up behind him and smash the aforesaid hat down over his eyes. This is the penalty he pays for wearing such a hat at such a time and he has no kick coming to him, even if his hat is knocked off his head and kicked until it ceases to be a hat.

The good folks in the Rhenish provinces have an adaptation of this custom that is more gentle and—yes—less expensive, considering the damage done. This consists of stealing up upon a friend as he is walking along the street and whispering in his ear: "Prosit Neujahr." The friend thus accosted straightway comes across with a little present, such as a cigar, or a drink or an invitation to dinner. In Frankfurt-on-the-Main the entire city rushes to its windows as the old year dies, flings them open and, glasses in hand, drinks a toast to Father Time's latest born. Then the windows are slammed down, the merriment ceases and all retire for a peaceful night's slumber.

In England the New Year customs are of very ancient origin and even more generally observed than in this country. Every English family sits up to see the old year out and the new year in, and always there is a bowl of hot punch, etc., with which to drink the toasts to the New Year. The custom is a survival of the time when the head of the house assembled his family around a bowl of spiced ale from which he and they drank each other's health and the health of the New Year. The words used in the toast were: "Wass Hael," meaning "to your health." Presently, the toast bowl came to be known as the wassail, or wassel bowl.

In Scotland the wassel bowl is the center of

the celebration, which is a distractingly mad and merry one. God-cakes, triangular in shape, filled with mincemeat and about a half-inch thick, are eaten on New Year's day in both England and Scotland. They are sold in large numbers and can be purchased for from a penny apiece all the way up to one pound. Feasting is really the chief feature of the Scottish celebration, more so than at Christmas or any other time of the year. Steaming hot wassel, too, is carried from door to door and indulged in by neighbors and friends.

In Russia the Julian calendar is still in vogue and January 1 there corresponds to January 14 of our calendar. The Russian festival begins on New Year's eve and lasts until the fourteenth day of the New Year. At midnight, as the old year is dying and the new being born, the Czar attends public mass, and precisely on the stroke of 12 o'clock a hundred cannons are discharged and the revelry begins. At the end of the celebration—two weeks hence—the people fast and attend solemn religious services, marking on the doors of their houses, also, a cross to prevent Satan from crossing the threshold.

In the rural sections the Russian children make the day peculiarly their own, for, armed with peas and grains of wheat, they safly throw in bands early New Year's morning, stop at every house, enter and wake the inmates with a bombardment of peas or by scattering the wheat over the sleepers. Later in the day they choose the very finest horse raised in the village that year, decorate it and present it to the nobleman who is master of the village. In return he scatters small coins among them. Their elders, too, make presents to the nobleman, such as cows, sheep and fowls. The strangest of all Russian customs, perhaps, is the gathering around a jar of water by each family group in the belief that, if their faith is sufficiently strong, the miracle performed by Christ in Cana of Galilee when he turned the water into wine will be repeated.

New Year's day in Japan is picturesque to the extreme. The emperor holds a formal court reception, much as our chief executive does, which is attended by the foreign diplomats and high officials of the Japanese government. The celebration among the people lasts five days, and preparations for it are begun long before. The fronts of all houses are covered with emblematic decorations; branches of pine and of bamboo are planted in large vases filled with earth and placed before the doors, and over the projecting roofs of the houses are strung garlands of plaited straw. These latter bear leaves of certain trees, shell fish and other charms believed to be potent factors in bringing good luck to the household.

The people flock to the temples, which are open all New Year's night, and there cook their粥, a sort of rice cake, always eaten before the sun has risen. Later, on New Year's day, there is much visiting and tea drinking and exchange of good wishes for the coming year. If he can do no better, even the very poorest of peasants wraps pieces of dried fish in paper, tied with a peculiar red and white string used only on this occasion, and sends them to his friends as his New Year's gift. The Japanese new year date falls simultaneously with our own, they having adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1872.

The Jewish New Year is usually celebrated some time in September and is called Rosh Hodesh, also Yom Hardin, which last means days of judgment. New Year's eve is observed with fasting and the day itself with feasting. "May you be in favor with God this New Year" is the Jewish form of salutation, from which the Gentile greeting, "Happy New Year," is said to be a contraction.

## BREATHE THROUGH YOUR EARS

In those prehistoric times "When you were a tadpole and I was a frog," we breathed through our gills, and if we still did tuberculosis and all kindred germs would have a batting average of .000.

Such are the teachings of Dr. John G. Davis of the University of Virginia medical department, delivered before a local body of medical students, according to a Washington correspondent of the Pittsburgh Dispatch.

"You can exhale air through the ears now. Just take a chest full of air, close the nostrils and try to exhale. The air will come out through the ears. Muscles of this old breathing organ have been out of practice for a few thousand years and it will require some practice to get them in order."

"I would advise mothers to train their children in this new but old mode of breathing. It will greatly help against many troubles, as there would be no chance of getting infectious matter into the lungs or throat. After a little practice a child will be able to close or shut his ears just as a fish works his gills."

"Originally the nose was used for smelling only. After a while man began taking long, generous sniffs, and later developed his breather into a sniffer at the expense of his 'gills.' If my advice were followed man would have three breathing organs instead of two within two generations."

## INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

### LESSON FOR DECEMBER 29

#### REVIEW,

**GOLDEN TEXT**—"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17 R. V.

The golden text is in this case a very good introduction to the review of the work of the past quarter. Jesus had sent his disciples up to the Jerusalem feast, while he remained in Galilee, whither he had gone for fear of the Jews (John 7:1). When they arrived in Jerusalem they found a sharp division among the people, some for and some against him (John 7:10-13). Jesus secretly followed his disciples, and suddenly in the midst of the feast he is found in the temple teaching. That his teaching was different is evidenced from John 7:15. It is also evident that he had a thorough knowledge of culture and the things of the scholastics of his day. The inquiry as to where he acquired his knowledge elicits the reply that, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me," and then as if to prove the accuracy of his assertion, he uses the words of the Golden Text. Those who desire to know the will of God will find that his words express that will perfectly, and as men obey his words the divine origin of them will be demonstrated.

#### His Claim Valid.

The lessons of the past year, but particularly the past quarter, are all strong illustrations of the validity of his claim as well as the truth of this general proposition.

If we omit the temperance lesson, the lessons of this quarter are confined to a few months of time following April, A. D. 29, and in particular present Jesus as a worker and healer more than a teacher.

In the first lesson we read of his command to his disciples to cross the sea. They obeyed though it sent them into the storm. In the midst of their perplexity he appears, superior to the laws of nature.

Lesson two shows Jesus defending himself and the authority of the Word of God. Two ideals are presented of the kingdom, and the proof of the divinity of his ideal will always come to those who obey him.

In the third lesson Jesus teaches this same truth to two Gentiles, the Syro-Phoenician woman and the centurion.

Lesson four gives us the account of the second feeding of the multitude. It shows us how our poverty may be transmuted into wealth as he takes such as we have for the satisfaction of the needs of mankind.

In the fifth lesson Jesus rebukes the materialistic, sign-seeking Pharisees and warns us concerning the leaven (evil) of their hypocrisy.

Lesson six is the temperance lesson, and if a connected review is desired, it will have to be omitted, as it does not belong to the systematic studies of this quarter.

In the seventh lesson Jesus questions his disciples to see as it were how firm a grip this principle has secured upon their lives.

#### Divine Authority.

The incidents of lesson eight follow immediately after those of lesson seven. It is as though he would restore his disciples to a full loyalty that they behold the special revelation upon the Mount of Transfiguration. Those heavenly visitors talked not of the "glory" but of "his disease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," thus adding their testimony to the Divine authority of his words.

The ninth lesson is pre-eminently one that illustrates the fundamental principle of this entire review. "I believe, help thou mine unbelief." 'Twas a faltering reply, but indicated his surrender to the word and will of Christ. The demonstration he received of the Divine authority of the words of Jesus was that his boy was restored to him fully healed.

Again in lesson ten this principle that an absolute and complete submission to God's will is a necessity is shown by the teachings of Jesus which center about the child that was set "in the midst."

Lesson eleven deals with the subject of forgiveness. In reply to Peter's query Jesus taught his disciples that forgiveness is not a mere matter of formal observance, but with God it is limitless and he calls the disciples to a definite testing of his words that they might not only know that this is the divine method, but that they might enter into fellowship with God. Jesus here shows the reverse side of the picture when he reveals the fate of the servant who was compelled to pay "all that is due."

In the twelfth lesson Jesus rebukes the false spirit of his disciples and in his treatment of the would-be disciples he emphasizes the fact that to follow him involves the setting aside of all else. "No man looking back is fit for the kingdom," plainly means that he who came to establish this kingdom has the right to demand obedience, and as we are obedient to the laws of the kingdom we shall come to know to a demonstration its divine origin and to a full realization of its power, and that we should follow and profit by those divine admonitions of the teacher.

## PLEASANT TIME IN PROSPECT

Bachelor Brother Now Knows Something of the Duties That Fall to the Young Mother.

"I was visiting my married sister in Toledo last week," relates "Buck" Hawes. "She's got a three-year-old kid, and, while I am fairly fond of children, I am a bachelor and somewhat sot in my ways. I was rather dismayed, therefore, when my sister proposed leaving me in the house with the child one afternoon. And here's what she said:

"Don't put yourself to a bit of trouble—he can take care of himself. See that he doesn't climb up to the pantry shelves and keep an eye on him so that he won't get into any mischief. He won't annoy you. Don't let him go down cellar and watch that he doesn't get hold of the books in the library, and he'll amuse himself all right. If he cries, give him a cookie, and if that doesn't stop him, ride him on your back. But don't let him bother you a bit. I'll be home in an hour!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

#### What Worried Her.

"You say your wife threw a plate at you?"

"Yes; it was a fine china plate. It broke against my head."

"Didn't she appear sorry after she threw it?"

"Yes, she appeared very sorry."

"Ah, indeed. And what did she say?"

"She said she was a fool not to control her temper."

"Good. And what else did she say?"

"She said she didn't believe she could match that plate again if she hunted the town through."—Photo Ills.

#### Neat Knock.

Hobey Baker, the football star, was tuncing in his native Philadelphia.

A young girl, over her queer alligator pear salad, mentioned the name of a Princeton sophomore who had played rather badly on his class team. "He is an awfully nice boy," she said. "What was it he played on the eleven, Mr. Baker—halfback, quarterback, fullback?"

The handsome and herculean "Hobey" smiled.

"I think he played quarterback," he said.

#### Locating the Fool.

A stout old gentleman was having trouble with the telephone. He could hear nothing but a confused jumble of sounds, and finally he became so exasperated that he shouted into the transmitter:

"Who's the blithering fool at the end of this line?"

"He's not at this end," answered a cool, feminine voice.

#### Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it

Bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Watson* in Use For Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

#### Best Way to Find Out.

He—What would you say if I should kiss you?

She—Why ask for a mere guess when you can easily get the exact facts.—Stray Stories.

#### Liberal.

He—I haven't the heart to kiss you.

She—Well, take mine.—Ulk.

A pretty girl will turn a man's head in spite of the boil on his neck.

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