

LAMENT OF THE OLD YEAR



ALAS! my time has nearly come; I'm weak and weary, and cold and numb, and sad and sour, and cross and glum, and the world looks dark and drear; I'm short of breath, so I pant and wheeze, and shiver and shake, and cough and sneeze; My limbs creak mournfully in the breeze—For I am the poor Old Year.

Twelve months ago I was young and fair; I ruled the world with a regal air, and every one welcomed me, here and there.

Without a frown or a tear, The boys and girls hurried for me, and I was as happy as happy could be; The world around was fair to see—For I was the glad New Year.

The merry thrush and the bold cuckoo Gave me a song and a welcome true; The white peacock and the violet blue Peeped slyly into my face;

The tulip gave her rich perfume, The larkspur waved her azure plume, The red rose opened her velvet bloom, My royal court to grace.

The brooklet burst its icy bond, The fern uncloaked her greenest frond, The daisy waved her yellow wand, To give me welcome meet;

And summer brought her glowing days, Her bearded wheat and golden maize; The wild bee hummed a song of praise, And sipped the clover's sweet.

Then autumn poured her ruddy wine, And shook the cluster from the vine, And dropped the needles from the pine, To scatter in my path;

The milk-weed burst her silky pod, The partridge piped from the turfy sod, And queen-of-the-meadow and golden-rod, Bloomed gay in the aftermath.

But now, alas! my time has come; I'm weak and weary, and cold and numb, and sad and sour, and cross and glum, and the world is dark and drear; No blossoms spring as I pass along, No warbler sings me a welcome song; But the bells ring out a merry ding-dong To welcome another year. —Helen Whitney Clark, in Golden Days.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR



WE WERE always getting out of wood at Maple Knoll. It was the big fireplace in the sitting-room that ate up all the fuel we could get. I never saw such an insatiable monster. Yet we couldn't make up our minds to close it up and put up a stove instead, because of its radiant cheerfulness. How jolly it was, just when the first touch of a winter's twilight stole on, to pile fresh hickory logs on the old andirons and watch the flames dash up the chimney's throat and light the whole room with a mellow crimson flame.

But the wood! Of course, we three women couldn't very well go out and chop and haul it, and our funds did not always warrant hiring large quantities laid in, besides which the neighboring help we could get was not very dependable on all at times.

Maple Knoll was a lovely place, but didn't bring in much revenue, worked, as we were obliged to have it done, by any Tom, Dick or Harry we could pick up; and the old house was picturesque—but leaky as a sieve. Still, we managed very well about everything else, but for fuel we were obliged to depend on getting a load hauled now and then when some neighbor had the time and inclination to undertake it.

December though it was, we had had a streak of regular Indian-summery weather—a mild atmosphere interwoven with a soft smokiness. Our stove wood had run out, and the neighbors had all been too busy hauling cordwood to attend to our needs. Our chip yard was in good condition, however, and we had been leying on it for cooking purposes, using what little wood we had for the fireplace, as we didn't need much, and had gone jogging along in an easy, grasshoppery way, as if the pleasant weather were going to last all winter.

We woke up the morning of December 30 to find the world nearly lost in a most beautiful blizzard of whirling snow. Not only was the outward world a white desolation, but there were little drifts all over the inside of the house.

"Dora," I shouted, bouncing out of bed and landing with one foot in a snow bank, "how many chips did we bring in last night?"

"About enough to cook breakfast with," Dora answered, with the calmness of despair, as she shook a little puff of snow out of her shoe. I hopped out of my drift and rushed to the window.

"Meantime, let's go down and make a fire and get a good warm-up if we do perish afterward."

"We'd better save the sitting-room wood until after breakfast," counseled Dora, "and just have a fire in the cook-stove till then, and eat in the kitchen."

"Sure," said I, "that'll be a lark." In spite of the dismal outlook we had a cheerful fire and a cozy kitchen when Aunt Laura came down, and then while she began to prepare breakfast Dora and I did ourselves up like Laplanders and plunged out into the blizzard to feed and milk the cows, after which we braved the winter's blast long enough to transport my treasure stump to the house, which we did partly by lugging and partly by rolling it over and over.

Breakfast was ready when we got it safely under cover, and notwithstanding our impending doom, we fell upon the ham and fried potatoes and pancakes, and enjoyed our meal immensely. "Girls," said auntie, when the last potato and the last crispy brown butter-cake had vanished, "I don't want to dampen your spirits, but there isn't a chip left, and how we're going to cook dinner I don't see."

"Nett," said Dora (who was just three months older than I), "we'll cook dinner by the fireplace."

"Dora," I said, "you're gifted. That's what we will, and imagine we're our own great-grandmothers and great-aunts—how lovely!"

"Well, you'll have to help, miss, and I doubt if you think it so lovely before you get through," returned Dora. "You'll be baked a beautiful brown."

We took an inventory of our stores to see what there was we could cook by the fireplace.

"There's a sparerib, for one thing," announced Dora. "We'll hang it up by a string in front of the fire."

"Potatoes we can boil by hanging the kettle on the hook and chain," said Aunt Laura.

"And the sweet potatoes we can roast in the ashes," I added.

"And bake corn in a skillet in the hot coals," finished Dora.

"Goody," said I, "that's a fine enough dinner for a blizzard day like this. Of course, nobody'll come."

But somebody did come, as they usually do when you think they won't; and who of all persons but Rev. Cyrus Melton! Dora fairly squirmed when Aunt Laura brought him right into the sitting-room, for, of course, she couldn't take him anywhere else, unless she wanted to freeze him. So in he came, smiling placidly, and there was the rib cooking in front of the fire with

a scrap of wood nor a chip in the wood box. Relinquishing a wild idea of chopping up a parlor chair or two to make a fire of, I scooted back to the sitting-room chilled to the bone.

Dora, putting as bold a face upon the situation as possible, was bringing in dishes from the dining-room and setting the table right under the eyes of the minister, who was chatting away as serenely as if he hadn't driven us all frantic by his ill-timed call. Aunt Laura had leved on her cellar goodies and produced preserved quinces, apple jelly, pickled peaches and chow-chow, so the dinner wasn't so frightful. The only thing I was ashamed of was the corn cakes; they were so big and clumsy, and Dora had crumbled the edges in turning them. But that good man seemed to think we had a banquet, and even the corn cakes didn't go begging so far as he was concerned.

We all made merry over our predicament as we told him how it happened, and he joked about it, too, but shook his head a little, and said it oughtn't to go on that way. He proceeded upon his errand soon after dinner, and we went about our work with what spirits we might. It wasn't more than two hours after he left that Uncle Jink, a dilapidated old colored man, appeared with a yoke of steers, which he left in the lane while he came plodding through the snow to the house.

"Heerd y'all was out o' wood," he grinned, "so I 'loved I'd come an' snake up a few logs 'n' split fer de f'place 'n' whack up some fer de cook'n' stove."

"It's very kind of you, indeed," said Aunt Laura, "for we are in great need of wood—only I'm afraid I can't pay you for it to-day, Uncle—"

"Dass all right—dass all right," interrupted Uncle Jink; "don't y'all boddah 'bout dat—dass all right," and he scuffed away, leaving us a little mystified, for it was not quite like Uncle Jink to be so indifferent about compensation for his good deeds.

"Of course Mr. Melton went and told him to come, and either paid him or agreed to if we didn't," expounded Dora, and looked as if she were ready to fall in a heap.

"It was very good of him if he did," said Aunt Laura.

"Good—yes; but who wants to be an object of charity," groaned Dora, "especially—"

tion of going or sending to town for the mail, if there should possibly be any news.

Dora and I had an unwritten law that the more downcast we felt the jollier we should force ourselves to be. To-day I think we degenerated into silliness in our efforts to be cheerful. But a lot of smaller troubles followed each other so persistently—such as the refusal of the cook stove to draw, the falling of the light bread in consequence, a slip in the mud on Dora's part, etc., etc.—that when, to cap the climax that evening, our beloved fireplace smoked sulkily and relentlessly, we felt that we might as well wind up the year by going to bed at eight o'clock.

When we were all snuggled down and the lights were out I could have cried just out of low spirits, but I wouldn't. I knew God could see farther ahead than we could, and I put everything into His hands and went to sleep.

I slept so soundly that I was greeted the next morning by a savory, sagey scent of frying sausages coming up the little back stairs before I fairly got back from the slumber world. Dora was down in the kitchen singing "Lightly Row" over the biscuits, and looking as fresh as a peach, with her rosy cheeks and clear gray eyes. And the stove was drawing beautifully. And Aunt Laura came down without a speck of neuralgia and feeling as spry as a girl, to finish breakfast, while Dora and I went forth to do the milking. And behold! the sopping rain had turned into a lovely, soft snow in the night; not a blizzard snow like the one before the rain, that blew in everywhere, but a gentle, fine, thick powder. It had stopped falling now, and the air felt crisp and bracing. The sun wasn't shining yet, but there was a mellow look in the sky, as if it meant to pop out any minute.

New Year's calling was not much in vogue in our rural district; still, it was Aunt Laura's way to make a red-letter day of the opening one of the year, and always to be prepared for any stray caller who might chance to appear. She had a cheerful fire in the parlor, a plentiful supply of coffee and cake on hand, and we all put on our pretty house dresses and prepared to be happy whether anyone came or not.

At half past nine a pleasant melody of sleigh bells jingled along, and the eatest little cutter stopped at our gate, and here came Rev. Cyrus Melton smiling up the walk. We were mighty thankful for the contrast between this call and his last one; but such is the perversity of man. I imagined he looked a little disappointed at not being ushered into the cooking regions again. Still, he smiled very good-naturedly, with those jolly brown eyes of his, as he fished something out of his pocket and handed it to me.

"Miss Nettie," he said, "I felt it in my bones that you couldn't get any mail up here on the hill all yesterday, and I dropped in at the post office as I came by this morning, and found you this."

Maybe I didn't know what it was, even before I saw the handwriting on it, and perhaps I didn't fly to get it and scamper out to the big fireplace and curl down beside it on a little wooden stool to read my letter all alone, Frank hadn't made a fortune, he wrote me, and he didn't know as we could have a big mansion built, but he had dug enough gold to repair the old house and make us all comfortable, and he was on his way home that blessed minute to metamorphose Maple Knoll into the finest little farm in the county, take care of aunt and Dora and (incidentally) marry me.

When I got back to earth again Mr. Melton had taken Dora off in his sleigh for a ride, so auntie and I had a little jollification of our own, and I forgot all about lunch time. It didn't matter, though, for when the sleighing couple came back they didn't seem to know much of anything. I fell on Dora in the hall and told all about Frank's letter, and she hugged me black in the face and said she was tremendously pleased, but he wouldn't have to take care of her, because that was going to be attended to by Rev. Cyrus, who was the dearest man in the world, but crazy as a loon, because he confessed that he had fallen more in love with her than ever the day he came and found her baking hockeak in the fireplace.

We celebrated that night by having the biggest fire of the season in the old fireplace, which behaved splendidly, and we sat up till all kind of hours, Aunt Laura, Dora and I, with no light but the mellow crimson and gold brilliance of that big old black cavern, roasting nuts and red apples, talking about the new paths opening before us, and telling each other how grateful and thankful we ought to be for this happy opening day of the new year.—Hattie Whitney, in Farm and Fireside.

Ancient Astronomy.

When Nineveh and Babylon were in the splendor of their might men in China were predicting eclipses, making catalogues and giving names to the stars. But Nineveh and Babylon were mere mounds of rubbish when China was great, and to this date the civilization and life of the empire is the wonder of the world.

All Gone.

Many a Christmas present is now a thing of the past.—L. A. W. Bulletin.

DWIGHT L. MOODY DEAD.

Evangelist Whose Fame Became World-Wide Passes Away at East Northfield, Mass.—At Kansas City Last.

East Northfield, Mass., Dec. 23.—Dwight L. Moody, the famous evangelist, died at noon yesterday. The cause of death was a general breaking down due to overwork. Mr. Moody's heart had been weak for a long time and exertions put forth in connection with meetings in the west last month brought on a collapse from which he failed to rally. The evangelist broke down in Kansas City, where he was holding services, about a month ago, and the seriousness of his condition was so apparent to the physicians who were called to attend him that they forced him to abandon his tour and return to his home with all possible speed. Mr. Moody first knew at eight o'clock Thursday evening that he could not recover. He was satisfied that this was so, and when the knowledge came to him his words were: "The world is receding and heaven opening."

Sankey Greatly Affected.

New York, Dec. 23.—Ira D. Sankey, who for 27 years was associated with Mr. Moody, was greatly affected at the news of his death. To a reporter last night Mr. Sankey told of his work with Mr. Moody from the time they first met, of their tour through England in 1873, and of their preaching and singing in the United States. "You may say," said Mr. Sankey, "that in the death of Mr. Moody, the world has lost one of the greatest and noblest men of the age. I have labored with him for the last 27 years, traveling with him by land and sea, and a nobler, braver and wiser soul I never know. I can apply Prof. Henry Drummond's remark of a friend: 'D. L. Moody was the greatest human I ever met.'"

THE PROTEST NOT UPHELD.

Secretary Hay Says That Both British and Boers May Purchase Supplies in the United States.

Washington, Dec. 23.—President Kruger's government has formally protested to Secretary Hay against the sale of munitions of war by American manufacturers and merchants to the British government. This protest was designed to prevent the British government from obtaining much needed war supplies, but it has proved of no avail. Secretary Hay has sent a reply to the Boer government, reiterating the neutrality of the United States in the present war, and declaring that American citizens in trading with both belligerents violate no neutrality obligation. The authorities have information showing that the Boer government has purchased supplies in the United States, but the British government, appreciating the right of Americans to sell to both belligerents, has submitted no complaint.

Crazy Man With a Revolver.

Chicago, Dec. 23.—A madman armed with a revolver held undisputed possession of the sidewalk at Twelfth and Wood streets for half an hour and was only overcome and subdued after he had made two attempts at murder and fired point blank into a crowd of passing working girls. Julius Nanzett, 60 years old, was the offender. He threw his cap into the street and tore his hair, uttering imprecations on all who passed.

Passing of an Old College.

Quincy, Ill., Dec. 23.—After a 40-years' existence, marked with struggles against formidable obstacles, Chaddock college, of this city, will cease to exist as a college with the close of the present collegiate year. The trustees say that the college cannot be maintained without an endowment, and there is no immediate prospect for such support. The college and grounds belong to the Methodist Episcopal church.

Admirer of Stonewall Jackson Appointed.

London, Dec. 23.—The Daily News sees immense significance in the fact that Lord Roberts has appointed on his staff Lieut. Col. Henderson, author of a life of Gen. Stonewall Jackson, the confederate leader, and a man who has closely studied the history of the American civil war, especially as he has not served under Lord Roberts before and is but little known to him personally.

Adopting American Ways.

Washington, Dec. 23.—According to official advices, a band of counterfeiters has started operations in Cuba, but to what extent is not disclosed. The officials of the government succeeded in locating their plant and managed to secure a set of plates intended for the printing of United States currency of the denominations of \$5, \$10 and \$20.

Some Doubt Federal Authority.

Washington, Dec. 23.—The regulation of the trusts under both federal and state authority will be recommended in the report of the industrial commission which probably will go to congress this season. There is not entire agreement in the commission as to the power of the federal government to reach the trusts.



THERE WAS DORA WITH HER FACE LIKE A HOLLYHOCK.

a skillet set under to catch the gravy, and there was Dora with her face like a hollyhock, turning a great hockeak in another skillet, and there was I prodding in the ashes with a long fork to dig out the sweet potatoes! Not that it mattered much about me; but some folks were beginning to observe that Rev. Cyrus was a trifle more attentive to Dora than the fact of her being one of his flock warranted, and I knew that in her eyes he was about as near a state of perfection as a mortal man needed to be.

He was just riding out, he explained, to see old Mrs. Hankins, who was sick, and had been delayed a little by the blizzard and been on the road quite awhile; he had brought a bag of oats for his horse, and had come up through the side lane and taken the liberty to put the animal in our barn to eat his oats, while he himself ran in to see how we all fared this inclement day, etc., etc. I slid out while he was thus discoursing and rushed to the parlor with a very forlorn hope of finding a stray stick or two left over there, making a fire and getting him into the parlor while we finished the dinner. The hope died as I poked my head into the arctic desolation of our best room. It was on the east side, where the spiteful wind had been battering at it all night, searching out a hundred crevices about wipdowns and door to hurl the fine, powdery snow through. There were drifts, varying in size, on the piano, on the chairs, and a dainty white powdering all over the carpet, which the wind had puffed in under the door. You could fairly feel the gale whistling about your ears. There wasn't

"Oh, well, I don't suppose he'll preach about it next Sunday," I said, consolingly; but Dora wouldn't cheer up very much. Still, it was very comfortable to have plenty of wood, and I felt grateful to the good man for instigating Uncle Jink to come to our assistance.

Of all the 365 days of that year the three hundred and sixty-fifth was the most dismal at Maple Knoll. It opened with a drizzling, soaking rain, much more depressing than the blizzard from which it evolved; the kind that dampens your spirits in spite of all the philosophy you can bring to bear against it. The sky was a dismal gray waste without a slit of light. Aunt Laura had a racking neuralgia in her face. Dora had been dreaming about charity and wood all night. As for me, I had a little trouble of my own which popped up just now more aggressively than ever. I never had but one lover (I never wanted but one), and he was a poor young man who had gone to the frozen Alaskan regions with the avowed intention of making his fortune and coming back to share it with me, rebuild the old house into a stately mansion and take care of Aunt Laura and Dora, which was quite proper; for, you see, I had been gathered into the family when I was left a small orphan, in Uncle John's time, and he and Aunt Laura had not made an atom of difference between Dora and me in their love and care. But now it had been so long since I had heard from Frank I couldn't help being afraid he had frozen to death or been buried in a snowslide. And this dreadful rainy day I couldn't even have the satisfac-