

Between The Old Year And the New

ALONE—alone at the midnight hour sitting, my soul and I, Harkening sound of the wind's complaint, listing the time go by.

Fronting each to the other's thought, with the moon's face, sweet and thin, A-watch at the space of the window place, waiting the year begin— Waiting us usher the Old Year out and welcome the New Year in.

Heavy my soul with grief and pain—heavy, and bowed with tears, Worn with the weight of Sorrow's hand, not with the weight of years; And 'twixt us many a thing of woe, many a thought of sin, While the moon outside, like a pure-eyed bride, was waiting the year begin— Waiting us usher the Old Year out and welcome the New Year in.

My soul it spoke in the still dark—spoke, and I shrank and heard, The chords of my being pulsed and leaped, affrighted like captive bird; I heard, and I knew that such words were true—while the new moon, sweet and thin, With sad surprise in her tender eyes was waiting the year begin— Waiting us usher the Old Year out and welcome the New Year in.

And I plead with my soul: "Judge not—judge not!" and I prayed: "New Year, bring grace." I fell on my knees in the hush and dark—I wept and hid my face; For out of the finite bounds of Time, from the realms of "the might have been," To sepulcher of the infinite past bearing mistakes and sin, The Old Year stole as the church bells chimed—and the New Year entered in.—Mary Clarke Huntington, in Good House-keeping.

ANNIE'S CURLS

A NEW YEAR STORY

BY ELLEN FRIZELL WYCKOFF.

"Oh, if my darling could only have the wine! How hard it is to be so poor, so poor."

Annie heard her mother's words, although they were not intended for her to hear. She saw her brush away the tears from her eyes and then go back to Teddy's room.

"What did the doctor say, mother?" asked Teddy, in a weak voice; "did he say I will get well?"

Annie heard the reply: "He says that the fever is broken, and that all you have to do now is to get well."

Teddy's voice trembled as he replied: "Oh, mother, I was afraid he would say I might die, and I wondered who would take care of you and little Annie. I am glad God is going to let me live to do it. Now I must begin to get strong! Can't you give me lots to eat?"

Annie saw her mother's lips quiver as she turned her face from Teddy.

"Yes, my son, but not too much at once, you know," she said.

Teddy looked very thoughtful.

"But is there anything in the house, mother? I have been sick a good while, and my last wages must be nearly gone, and you haven't had time to color many photos lately, have you?"

The boy's mother answered, bravely: "Sick folks mustn't bother about these things, you know." Then she left the room, and Annie saw that she did so to hide the tears which were streaming down her worn face.

"I must do something; I wonder what it will be?" murmured Annie to herself, and, crushing her hat down over her curls, she slipped into the street.

Annie thought constantly of wine for poor Teddy, and wondered if she summoned courage to beg a bottle whether anyone would be kind enough to give it to her for a poor sick boy, her only brother. She knew that sometimes grocers kept wine, especially around holiday time, and felt sure if they only knew how very, very much it was needed at home by her poor sick Teddy that some one of them would surely give her a bottle. Then there were other places where they sold nothing but wine and such stuff, for she had seen big windows full of the bottles, with pictures of great bunches of beautiful grapes standing behind them.

Annie wasn't a bold, forward child; she was timid, but brave and resolute; her love for her brother, at least, made her brave for the time; so she resolved in her heart to beg for the wine which the doctor said would bring back strength to Teddy. Christmas had come and gone, but Teddy was so ill with the fever that Annie thought nothing about the absence of the gifts usual to that happy day; but now Teddy was to grow better, and she did long to be able to make his New Year's and her mother's brighter than Christmas had been. As she wandered down the streets revolving these thoughts in her mind and wondering how she might get the necessary wine she passed many a gay scene.

Early evening had closed down on

the city, and all the shops were aflame with light and brightness. Annie gazed wistfully at the pretty things in the great windows; she was but a little maid, and could not help wishing for pretty things for herself and for her mother and Teddy.

But the wine—she must not linger; she would only look in one more shop and then—then she would seek the great shop where wine was sold in bottles; surely the big, rosy-faced man whom she had often noticed standing in the doorway of his shop would listen to her story of poor Teddy and give her the wine.

So she stood before this last store—it was a jewelry store—and, oh, how beautiful the jewels looked—sapphires and rubies and diamonds—how they glittered. The sight was enough to fascinate older eyes than Annie's.

Presently something in one corner of the window caught her gaze—it wasn't a jewel, it was a switch of lovely hair; not one, but several, and below them in pretty, shallow, satin-lined boxes, were clusters of curls. A sudden thought came to Annie; she pressed her little hands together and held her breath, then paused a moment to gain courage, and passed resolutely into the great store. A kind-looking man came forward to meet her and said: "What can I do for you, little lady?"

"Do you buy hair?" she asked.

"Sometimes, little one; why do you ask?"

"Will you buy mine? See, I have plenty!" she answered, taking off her hat and shaking her curls down over her shoulders, and looking up with anxious eyes.

"But, my little girl, are your curls yours to sell?"

"Oh, yes, sir; if you only knew why I must sell them, I am sure you would buy them. Teddy is so ill that he needs things, and mother—" and here she choked up so she could say no more.

"And you want to sell your beautiful

days to see her curls in their pretty satin-lined case. After they had both kissed her and thanked her over and over again she crept away.

"I'm glad I did it; but how lonesome my pretty curls will be!" said the child.

But the curls were not at all lonesome. The kind man was looking at them when one of the boys showed a gentleman in. The visitor was a big man and he had gentle eyes, though his face was somewhat rough to look at.

"I'm quite out of heart, Alfred; I can get no clew; but what's that you have there? Pretty, aren't they?"

"Yes, beautiful!"

Then the kind man told all about the little girl who sold the curls to him, so she could have money to buy things for the sick brother.

"Alfred, this hair is just the color of Ellie's; could it be? Could it be Ellie's child's hair?"

"She's coming here day after to-morrow to see her curls in their satin-lined box; then if you will be here you can find out who she is," answered the jeweler.

Sure enough, Annie came to see her curls as they looked ready for sale; she wanted to see the box. While she was admiring it and telling about Teddy, and how the wine was doing him good, the stranger with the gentle eyes arrived. He talked to the little girl for a while, then surprised the jeweler and little Annie by bursting into tears.

"They've told you about Uncle Luke, haven't they?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, often," replied Annie. "He is in Australia, where the bark falls off the trees and the leaves stay on, and where the birds have no wings, and everything is so queer!"

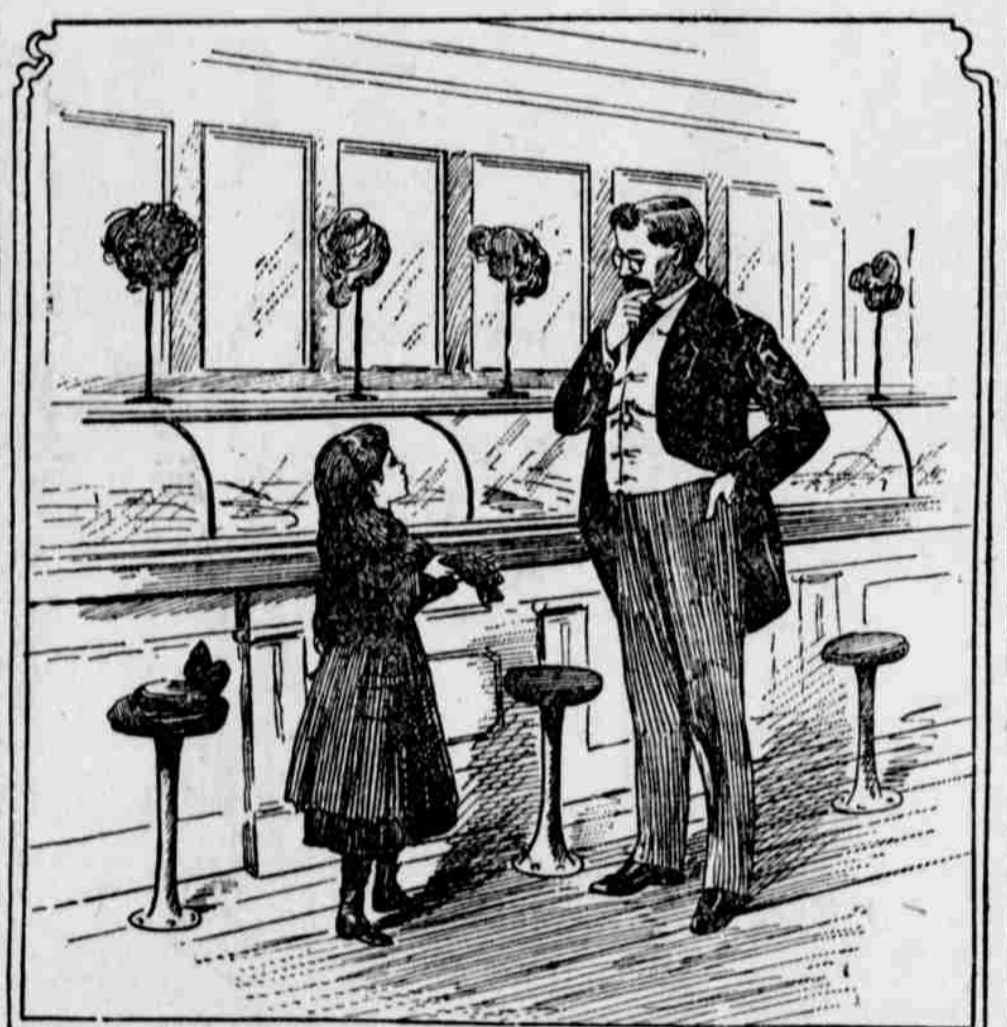
"But what if he came home?"

"Oh, he won't," she said; "mother has lost him completely."

"But he has come home. I am he."

Then there was what Annie called "a time."

That was how it happened that just



"DO YOU BUY HAIR?" SHE ASKED.

hair to buy things for your sick brother; is that it, little one?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wouldn't take it, but—"

"Please don't refuse me, sir; my hair will grow in again; it grows awful fast; see, it is below my waist!"

"It is beautiful, a very rare color, and so curly," said the man, stroking the rippling mass of shining hair.

"Mother's is just like mine, only it is a little fady here and there. You will take my hair, won't you? Please do; it will surely grow again, and my brother needs things so very, very much; the doctor says so!"

The man led her into a back room and himself cut the glossy locks, laying each curl carefully down. Then he called a man who wore a white apron and gave the little shorn head into his charge.

"I believe that you are prettier than before," the kind man said, when the hairdresser had finished. Then he laid a little roll of bills in the child's hand and bade her be careful not to lose it on her way home.

Annie hurried home. When she arrived mother was reading to Teddy, and Annie crept in like a little mouse. She removed her hat carefully, so as not to spoil the hairdresser's work, then dropped the bills in her mother's lap, with a "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, mamma!"

"Oh!" screamed Teddy.

"Oh!" screamed mother, as they both saw and knew all.

"How could you, Annie?" they both cried at once; but the child looked as pretty as ever.

"How came you to think of it, my poor baby?" asked the mother.

"It's for wine—wine is better than curls any day," answered Annie; then, turning to Teddy, she hugged him in joy and said, softly: "Get well, Teddy, and pay me back some day!"

Then she told how it all happened, and how she was going in a couple of

as the doctor was praising Teddy's patience, and saying how the wine had helped him, there was a great flutter in the hall, and Annie bounced in, dragging a big man with kind eyes in a rough face by the hand.

"My curls found him. It is Uncle Luke, mother, and he has money enough to buy my curls back two or three times. I know, because he said so."

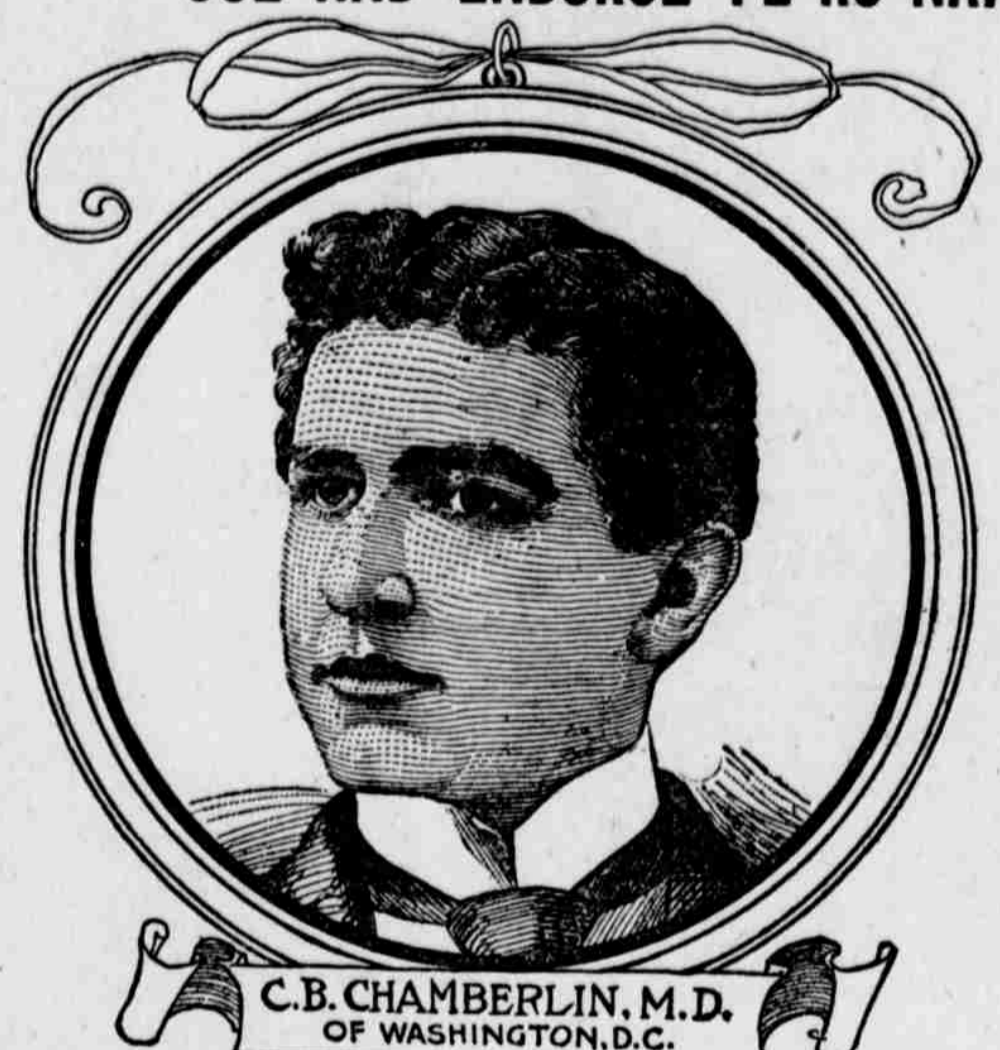
And then there was much more of "a time." And the doctor held Teddy's hand while Uncle Luke told about his long search for his sister, and mother explained about father's death and her removal to the city, and how she lost Uncle Luke's address and could not get a letter to reach him. Then they talked about Annie's curls, and the doctor blew his nose furiously and dug at his eyes, and Annie heard him say: "Old idiot that I am! I guess I'll try to see about a way of getting wine when I prescribe it again for a boy whose mother has that frightened look in her eyes."

Annie tucked her little shorn head under the doctor's arm and whispered: "But you see how it was best, don't you? My curls found so much for us—they brought us an uncle. Just look at mother; don't she look happy? Isn't a good uncle the best New Year's present in all this world?"

Wine is a good medicine when one needs it, and Teddy improved rapidly—so rapidly that he was almost ready to try the new sled that Uncle Luke brought home to him on New Year's eve. As for Teddy's mother, the roses began to tint her cheeks again, and Annie was sure she was the prettiest and best mother in all the world.—Ladies' World, New York.

Supply Unlimited.
"Give me a kiss, my charming Pearl." A young man said to a blue-eyed girl; said she: "You great big lazy elf, Pucker your mouth and help yourself."—Chicago Daily News.

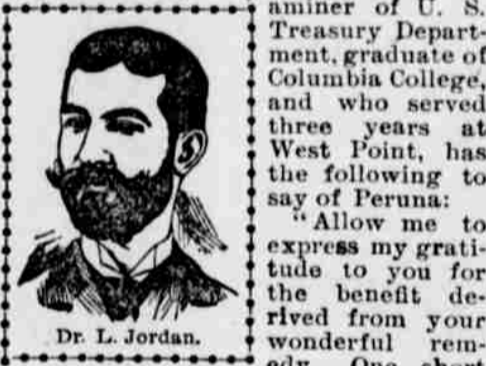
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Medical Examiner U. S. Treasury.



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The Hello Habit.

A nervous-looking girl consulted a doctor, who asked her what she was suffering from. Her answer was as follows:
 "I am a telephone girl, doctor, and the work is a terrible strain on my nerves. The monotony of having a receiver constantly at my ears, and saying 'Hello!' tells upon my nerves. When off duty I am always having 'Hello' ringing in my ears, and I am constantly saying it. When I go to bed I wake from my sleep saying 'Hello!' and when I kneel down to say my prayers I instinctively say 'Hello!' before I commence them."—Sporting Times.

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The Intelligent Artisan.

"And what are you making?" we asked of the intelligent artisan, as we admired the play of his brawny muscles.
 "Makin' cowcatchers for milk trains," he replied, without looking up from his work. Whereat we passed on, marveling greatly at the intricacies of modern science.—Baltimore American.

The dime museum man doesn't mind having a skeleton in his closet, especially if it is alive.—Harlem Life.

Greatness magnifies a man's mistakes.—Chicago Daily News.

Not in His Line.

Gayboy — I say, parson, this lady and myself want to get spliced. Will you oblige us by tying the knot?
 Parson—Um—let me see! If I remember correctly, I married you and this same lady two years ago.
 "Right you are, parson. But you see we were divorced six months ago and now we want to couple up again."
 "Well, you'll have to go elsewhere. I'm not running a repair department in connection with my business."—Chicago Daily News.

To err is human, but to rub it in that we did is inhuman.—Puck.

Few of us live to learn; and fewer learn to live.—Wrinkle.

JUST THINK OF IT!

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