

NEW YEAR'S AROUND THE GLOBE

EVER since man knew enough about astronomy to divide time into years which more or less agreed with the earth's annual revolution around the sun, he has in various characteristic ways regarded the first day of the new year as a day of rejoicing and well-wishing.

It was the great day for exchanging gifts until, in some Christian countries, Christmas day was substituted. While in America New Year's day is generally observed as a holiday and as an occasion for paying ceremonial social calls, in France, even now, New Year's presents have not entirely disappeared.

New Year's day is not observed on January 1 in every country, although most nations nowadays use the Gregorian calendar, and consequently begin their new year on that day. In Russia the Julian calendar is still in use, and as a quarter of a day in each year is lost by that system, there is now an accumulated loss of 13 days. January 1 in Russia, then, corresponds to January 14 of our calendar. The Mohammedan New Year, the Jewish New Year and the Chinese New Year, owing to the peculiar systems of keeping time by those people, are very elusive dates, or seem so to persons familiar only with the Gregorian calendar.

AS TO THE CALENDARS.

The Jewish year is solar-lunar, and may consist of as few as 353 days and as many as 385. New Year's day usually falls in September. The Mohammedan year usually consist of 354 days, being purely lunar, and the leap years, which occur in certain twelve-months of a cycle of 30 lunar years, contain 355 days. The first day of Muharrem—New Year's day—may in course of time make a whole revolution of the seasons. An instance of this may be given. The first of Muharrem, 1906, fell on February 25, while the Mohammedan New Year last year began on March 7. Inasmuch as it is purely lunar, the Mohammedan year is almost unique in the calendars of the world. While the Chinese year conforms to the eastern idea, being founded upon lunar months, a month is added to every 30, to make time conform with the solar year. Consequently, the Chinese New Year may begin any time between January 21 and February 28.

REVOLVING NEW YEAR.

The ancient Egyptians had a year more or less conforming to the Julian style, inasmuch as it contained 365 days. In course of centuries this made New Year's make a complete revolution of the seasons. This fact, only recently properly appreciated by Prof. Petrie, the Egyptologist, led to many misconceptions and retarded the solution of mysterious feasts and rites which now are perfectly well understood by archaeologists.

Anciently, in Rome, the new year began in March, in the neighborhood of the vernal equinox, which would seem to be a reasonable, if not logical time to begin the annual cycle. March 25 was, until the latter part of the sixteenth century, the day when the new year began in most Christian countries. Numa is said to have made the Roman year begin on January 1, the day held by pagan Rome sacred in honor of Janus, who was thus supposed to turn at once back upon the old year and forward into the new, and subsequently New Year's day was, at various times and in different Christian countries, celebrated on the present Christmas, March 1, March 25 (the Feast of the Annunciation), and Easter day.

CUSTOM OF GIFTS.

Almost everywhere the custom of making presents on the first day of the new year has been observed. When it originated, or where, it would be extremely difficult, if not actually impossible, to say. It is sufficient to know that the observance has the sanction of remote antiquity. In the eighth century B. C. Tullius, king of the Sabines, according to traditions, began the custom among the Romans. At first the gifts were merely emblem-

atic and of little price, being branches cut from the wood consecrated to Strenia, the goddess of strength. These were presented to the king as an omen of good fortune. The gifts became more pretentious as time went on, and in later centuries some of the Roman emperors demanded New Year's presents of great value from the "magnates" of those days. As the Roman rulers were gentlemen who were not to be trifled with, the presents usually appeared on time after notice to the wealthy was given.

It was in Rome, too, that the habit of masquerading at New Year's appears to have originated. The custom still observed in Italy now is confined to the celebrations at the Epiphany and at the carnival time.

FESTIVITIES OF THE DAY

In some countries, notably in Great Britain and in some cities in Canada and the United States, the new year is welcomed in by festivities on the eve of the day. In Scotland, for instance, it is customary to celebrate New Year's eve with some festivity, which is prolonged until past midnight. At the stroke of 12 every one present wishes each other a "Happy New Year." The custom is also common in many parts of Germany, where the salutation is "Prosit Neu Jahr."

Similar to this custom are the religious "watch meetings" held in some of the churches in this country on New Year's eve. In England on New Year's eve, in some houses, a curious custom, or superstition, is observed. At the stroke of 12, which ushers in the new year, the party, already waiting on the stairs, begin to ascend the stairway backward, taking a step at each stroke. Every step successfully mounted means a happy month, every stumble a reverse. Of course, it is one of those playful superstitions which are not taken seriously.



Glucose Fondant for Christmas.
Two cups sugar, one cup water, and two tablespoons glucose. Boil all until a little dropped in cold water will form a soft ball. Remove from fire and heat till creamy.

Seven ways to use the fondant:
Make into balls and dip in melted chocolate.

Roll them in cocoanut.
Roll them in chopped nuts.
Fill figs with fondant and slice thin.
Fill dates with fondant, or put the fondant around the stoned date.
Make into squares and place a nut on top.
Roll nuts in the fondant and then in sugar.

Tie Racks for Men.
A present that will be greatly appreciated by a man is a tie rack. This may be mounted embroidered linen, burnt wood, decorated leather or painted cardboard. The only thing to be guarded against is not to make them too elaborate. The more simple the pattern is the more sure to please.

Room for Lots of Presents.
"I wish I could be a landress," said little Dorothy.
"You would have to work very, very hard, my child," observed her mother.
"But just think, mamma, of all the stockings I could hang up."

Greeting.
Now while the surging, deep-toned bells lament
The past year, e'er tickle, they shall change
Their solemn burden for a round of joy,
Chiming the praises of the year new-crowned.

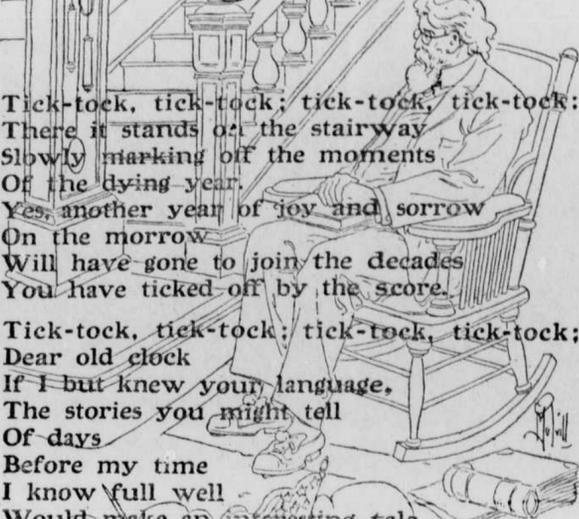
—Edith Thomas.

New Year's Greetings



GRANDFATHER'S NEW YEAR'S REVERIE. CLOCK

By JOHN B. CAIRING.



Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
There it stands on the stairway
Slowly marking off the moments
Of the dying year.
Yes, another year of joy and sorrow
On the morrow
Will have gone to join the decades
You have ticked-off by the score.

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
Dear old clock
If I but knew your language,
The stories you might tell
Of days
Before my time
I know full well
Would make an interesting tale.

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
Methinks I hear the call to war
That sounded round the world
When you were young
And in your prime
The clash of Bunker Hill
And Valley Forge
Where brave men fought
To victory
And then through passing years
In slow and measured cadence
You calmly warned
Your hearers
Of the golden moments as they flew.

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
In memories deep recess
I see again the days of old
When first I knew
And learned to open up my heart to you
As to a friend.
And then again
I see
The loved ones of a later day;
With your protecting hands
You seemed to guard them
From all harm
As round your feet they played.

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
When Mary
Went to join the hosts above
Your deep voice seemed
To offer condolence
To the afflicted ones
And bid them cease their tears.

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
Old rascal!
Remember you the time
When John was wooing Nell
How we connived
To tell him when 'twas time to go,
How loudly you proclaimed the hour
When I did wind you
For the coming day?

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
Now we're alone,
The child of yesterday has gone to grace
Another home
For other children just as fair
As she was
When with chubby hand she'd point
At your round face and laugh
With glee
When you would toll the passing hour.

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock, tick-tock:
And now
While we are waiting here
To welcome in with loud acclaim
The new-born year,
Let's hope
That in His mercy He will be
A shield and guide
To both of us
As in the days agone.



JANUARY

When skies are cold with wintry stars, and hills
Are white with yester-even's snow, and lie
In ghostly state beneath the ghostly sky;
When many a gusty blast the darkness fills
With ever lonely, homeless sound, and chills
The window panes with frost; when crackling fly
The sparks about the hearth, and glow and die,
While in the pause his note the cricket trills;
Oh, then how dear is home! and what a sense
Of ruddy warmth and peace beguiles the mind!
And what a charm in listening while the wind
Blows fierce outside, through winter's starry tents,
And dies away around the window-pane,
And ever rises loud, and dies again!

—Ernest Warburton Shurtleff.

The Newness of the Year

"Happy New Year!" The glad greeting rings out on every hand. A new twelve month has been ushered in with all its mystery of "the things which are to be." We need then for ourselves and for others to put the emphasis upon the word "new" rather than upon the term "year." That another year has come is relatively unimportant. The stress is to be laid not on the quantity but on the quality of one's life. All that an earnest soul can do is to live each day of the new year by itself, as it comes in its turn, trying, if so it may be, to put a month's effort in one day, and a day's victory into a single hour. The time is short, and it remaineth that all who know Christ and partake of his gift of new life should be diligent always, watch unto prayer and boast not themselves of the morrow. Sufficient unto each day is the burden and blessing thereof.

The newness of the new year is essentially a newness of spirit. A new man will always enjoy the new year. When another January arrives it is distinctively the time to slough off the old and to put on the new. There is an old nature to be discarded, and a new spiritual manhood to be assumed. The trouble with many people, however, is that they try to remake and to reform themselves, forgetting that a few good resolutions, more or less loosely kept, can at best only touch the outside and possess no interior efficacy in the recesses of the spirit. The new man who is really worthy of the name is the new man in Christ Jesus. Where Jesus is there is always newness of experience, renovation of the moral nature, freshness of hope and a resiliency of elastic joy. It is not necessary to wait until the first of January in any approaching year to win the wisdom of such a heavenly faith or to experience the benefits of such a spiritual quickening. The promise of God is now, to every one that believeth. Each morning may be a resurrection day, each evening a time of golden promise fair, yet not as fading, as the sunset. The New Year joy is for all of life, all the time.

It is stimulating and encouraging to feel that a brand new year is offered for happy employment, and that the old records with their motley pages, some still vacant and other marred, and, perhaps, here and there blotted with tears, may be put away, and fresh, unstained pages substituted in their place. It is helpful to remind oneself that those broken resolutions of 1908 may be renewed in 1909, and, what is better, reinforced by more of that prayer and divine grace for want of which the idealizing resolves of the past year were soon forgotten or went so sadly unfulfilled. The new year means, accordingly, a new hope, a new song, a new endeavor, a new outlook, a new inspiration, a new determination and a new grace—every new thing that is good appears to be possible in its gift. A hope like this makes any doubter optimistic, and gives to existence the character of a life worth living.

A wide chasm seems to intervene between the old and the new. Into its depths should be cast every regret, every halting doubt, and every hampering fear which belongs to the past period of our experience and which would burden and hinder our worthy efforts and spiritual progress in the new year. Let us take up our new duties and meet our fresh opportunities in free, glad and hopeful spirit, knowing that God, who has purposed them for our uplift, will give us grace to carry us safely through.

Happy New Year! The message is sent far and near. Let the glad greeting be heard on all sides. There is a prophecy and a promise in the New Year. Even to those who are bent with grief, or lonely by reason of bitter bereavement it is possible and timely to say, though with lowered tone and softened accent: "Happy New Year!" Every year will be a happy, or, at least, a peaceful, one in which the presence of the Lord is realized—which is spent under the protection of his wings, while its duties are discharged in his fear and its responsibilities are borne with the assistance of his grace. For the Christian every year should be an improvement on the past, and offer its additional opportunities for growing in grace and Christlikeness. The Christian is a convinced and convincing optimist for, having a heavenly hope which the world can never give or take away, he can in every condition of life find a basis for an assured happiness expressing itself in the oft-quoted dictum: "The best of all is, 'God is with us!'"

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A. E. JAQUET
"The Old Reliable"