



Americans are too busy to take many holidays, but few of them fail to observe New Year's day in some way or other. The good old custom of making calls on one's friends fell into disrepute long ago because it was so abused by the over-convivial, but family gatherings usually mark the day, and the church folk all over the country still hold watch meetings in the religious edifices to usher in the new year. Our observances of the day, however, are not so picturesque as are those of many other countries.



ENGLAND and Scotland have retained many of their interesting customs of olden times, this being especially true of Scotland. Weeks before the New Year begins, the village boys, with great secrecy, meet in out-of-the-way places and rehearse their favorite ballads. As the time draws near they don improvised masks and go about from house to house singing and cutting many quaint capers.

The thirty-first of December is called "Hogmanay," and the children are told that if they go to the corner they will see a man with as many eyes as the year has days. The children of the poorer classes go from house to house in the better districts with a large pocket fastened to their dresses or a large shawl with a fold in front. Each one receives an oaten cake, a piece of cheese, or sometimes a sweet cake, and goes home at night with a good supply of homely New Year cheer for the rest of the family.

The Scottish elders celebrate the day with a supper party, and as the clock "chaps" 12, friend greets friend and wishes him "a gude New Year and many o' them." Then, with great formality the door is unbarred to let the Old Year out and the New Year in, and all the guests sally forth into the street to "first foot" their acquaintances.

In Edinburgh a great crowd gathers around the church in Hunter square and anxiously watches the clock. There is absolute silence from the first stroke of 12 until the last.

The old folks now go to bed but the young have other business on hand. Each girl is expecting the "first foot" from her sweetheart, and there is much stratagem displayed in outwitting her occasionally, and having some serving maid or grandmother open the door to her lover.

The weather is carefully observed at this season, for it is supposed to betoken that which is to come. There is a rhyme current in Scotland which runs thus:

If New Year's eve the night wind blow  
With south  
It betokeneth warmth and growth;  
If west much milk, and fish in the sea;  
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;  
If northeast, flee, it man and hute.

During the last century all work was laid aside on the afternoon of the thirty-first, and the men of the household went to the woods and brought home loads of juniper bushes. Each household also procured a pitcher of water from the "dead and living ford," meaning the ford in a river, by which passengers and funerals crossed. This was brought in perfect silence and without being allowed to touch the ground in its progress, as contact with the earth would have destroyed the charm.

The rites next morning were supposed to protect the household against witchcraft, the "evil eye," and other devils. The father rose first, and taking the charmed water and a brush, treated the rest of the family to a vigorous baptism, which was generally acknowledged with anything but gratitude.

Coming back, the thrifty Scotchman closed all the doors and windows and put the juniper bough on the fire. When the smoke reached the suffocating point, the fresh air was readmitted. Then the cattle were fumigated in the same manner, and the painful solemnities of the morning were over.

On New Year's day a superstitious Scotchman will neither lend nor give anything whatever out of his house, for he fears that his luck may go too, and for the same reason, the floor must not be swept. If the fire goes out it is a sign of death.



RUSSIANS have a very pretty ceremony. On each New Year's day a pile of sheaves is heaped up over a large pile, and the father, after seating himself behind the pile, asks the children if they can see him. Upon their replying that they cannot, he says he hopes the crops will be so fine the coming year that he will be hidden in the fields.

The Russian New Year is 12 days later than ours, and is a gala occasion for all. There is a grand celebration of mass in the morning, and the rest of the day is devoted to congratulatory visits. Good wishes that

cannot be carried in this way are inserted in the newspapers. In military and official circles ceremonial visits are paid.

The Russians are great at fortune telling, and on New Year's eve the unmarried ladies and gentlemen send servants into the street, or go out themselves, to ask the names of persons they meet. These will be the names of persons they will severally marry, and many a bashful Russian lover has speeded himself in his suit by taking care to be the first man his lady's servant met.

When midnight is reached, each member of the family salutes the other with a kiss, beginning with the head of the house, and then retire, after wishing each other a Happy New Year.



THE hospitable Norwegians and Swedes spread their tables heavily for all who may come in, and in Stockholm there is a grand banquet in the Exchange, given to the king and his family. On this occasion the monarch throws aside "the divinity which doth hedge a king," and mingles with his people as citizen to citizen, in true democratic fashion.

Danes greet the New Year with a tremendous volley of cannon, and old Copenhagen is shaken to its foundations at midnight. It is also considered a delicate compliment to fire off a gun or a pistol under the bedroom window of one's friends at a very early hour.

Dwellers in Cape Town, South Africa, are an exception to the general run of English colonists. After the custom of the early Dutch settlers, they celebrate New Year for an entire week. Every house is full of visitors, every man, woman and child is dressed in his best, and no one has any business except to seek amusement, which he does frantically. There are picnics to Table mountain and pleasure excursions in boats. There is a dance every evening. At the end of the week everybody settles down to business, and the settlement is as calm and well ordered as if it had never heard of New Year.



AS EVERY one who has seen a Chinese quarter in a large city knows, "the heathen Chinese" celebrates the New Year in a right royal fashion. In the mother country the rejoicings absorb fully a month, during the first part of which there is not an empty mouth in the empire.

But the refreshments are of a light kind—peanuts, watermelon seeds, sweetmeats, oranges, tea and typically Chinese cakes. Presents of cakes are given to the poor, and "brilliant cakes," supposed to help the children along with their studies, are distributed from the temples.

At an early hour on the second of February—their New Year's day—they propitiate heaven and earth with offerings of rice, vegetables, tea, wine, oranges, and imitation paper money, which they burn with incense, joss sticks, and candles. Afterward they worship their household gods and deceased ancestors and living relatives. All this is carried out in the most solemn manner, and offerings are made to everybody except the living.

Images of gods are carried in procession to the beating of a deafening gong, and mandarins go by hundreds with congratulatory addresses to the emperor. Their robes are gorgeously embroidered and are heavy with gold. Numerous amusements are provided for the public, the chief of which are acting, illuminations, and fireworks.



JAPAN'S New Year's day is the twenty-ninth of January. By this time all accounts have been adjusted and all disputes settled. Everybody puts on the regulation dress—a sort of light blue cotton—and starts out to visit relatives and friends. The visiting lasts for three days, and they send letters of congratulation, in stiff, set phrases, to those in distant places.

They go to their favorite tea gardens, and there is a grand procession in which all trades are represented. Drums and stringed instruments are played by numerous bands, and wax figures are sold by the thousand. They amuse themselves with top spinning, kite flying, jugglers, actors and fireworks, and the "ladies of quality" please themselves with the "butterfly dance."

Presents are offered of cooked rice, roasted peas, oranges, and figs. The peas are scattered about the houses to frighten away evil spirits, and on

# THE NEW ENGINEER



By DANIEL W. GALLAGHER

UNDER the old earth's outer crust—  
Mid bed-rock fragments and lava  
dust;  
Watching the axis turning slow,  
The Old Year stood at his dynamo  
In the power plant which time maintains,  
And numbered losses and figured gains.

"I've done quite well," said the aged seer—  
"My record's good as an engineer,  
I've kept things humming, above—below,  
Folks can't complain that I've been slow,  
And now I'm off when midnight calls—"  
Then he started doffing his overalls.

He washed his face and brushed his hair—  
Then leaned far back in his arm-chair  
In pensive mood till a sturdy chap  
Clambered up to the old man's lap.  
And said: "Old Year—they tell me you  
Are sorter thinking of getting through."

"Right you are," cried the aged man.  
"Your task awaits you, little Jan.  
Get into your duds and start right in,  
I will wait right here until you begin,  
For I wish to see if I rightly guess,  
Which of the levers you first will press."

Then Jan marched up to the dynamo.  
He passed the levers of "Want" and  
"Woe"—  
Nor touched the levers of "War" or  
"Fame"—

Stopping the while to read each name:  
"Then a handle grasped—as he turned to go,  
The Old Year's face seemed all aglow.

So when the dawn of that day began  
Man thought of his stricken brother man.  
With ready help and an honest tear.  
For them that knew no glad New Year.  
'Twas the lever of Love in the midst of  
gloom—  
That Jan had gripped in the engine-room,

the fourth day of the New Year, the decorations of lobster which signify reproduction, cabbages which mean riches, and oranges which mean good luck, are taken down and replaced with boughs of fruit trees and flowers. This is to signify the near approach of spring, when the "winter garment of repentance" shall be thrown aside.



AS PREVIOUSLY arranged, the Esquimaux go forth from their snow huts or ice caves in pairs, one of each pair being dressed in women's clothes. They gain entrance to every igloo in the village, moving silently and mysteriously. At last there is not a light left in the whole place, and having extinguished every spark of fire they can find, they kindle a fresh one, going through mysterious ceremonies meanwhile. From this one source all lamps and fires in the district are lighted anew.

In the Indian empire, the day which corresponds to other New Year celebrations, is called Hooly, and is a feast in honor of Krishna. Caste temporarily loses caste and the prevailing hue is red. Every one who can afford it wears red garments. They throw red powder at one another, and mix it with water and squirt it from syringes on passers-by. This is taken in as good part as snow-balling is in northern climes.

Complimentary visits between the merest acquaintances are exchanged in Germany, and New Year's gifts are made to the servants. The eve of the New Year is called "der Sylvester Abend," and while it is deemed not unbecoming for the young and thoughtless to while away the evening by dancing, the day in more serious households takes on a semi-religious aspect. During the evening there is prayer at the family altar, and at midnight the watchman on the church tower blows his horn to announce the birth of the New Year.

The "Jour de l'An" is a great period almost all over France, and many of the customs common with us at Christmastide are transferred to New Year. In many parts of that country masquerading by children continues for three days, the youngsters going from house to house, singing and begging for small presents.

## DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

By CHARLOTTE BEAUMONT JARVIS.

Miserere! toll the bell,  
Let the earth send forth a knell,  
For a great soul takes his flight,  
None knows whither, in the night—  
Miserere!

Stretched upon his snowy bier,  
Dying lies the good Old Year;  
And upon the midnight gale  
All may hear his parting wail—  
Miserere!

In the old king's chequered reign  
There were mingled joy and pain;  
Friends proved false, while foes were  
true,  
Sinners many, saints—a few—  
Miserere!

There were hearts that suffered wrong,  
Bore it bravely, and were strong;  
Hearts there were, so black within,  
Satan wondered at their sin—  
Miserere!

Garners full of fruitful store,  
Measures pressed, and running o'er;  
Famine in the streets at night,  
Doing deeds too dark for light—  
Miserere!

Rang the church bells for the wed,  
Tolled they also for the dead;  
In one home a joy was born,  
From another joy was torn—  
Miserere!

Such earth's sorrow, such its sin,  
All must end where they begin;  
Snow which wraps the New Year's feet  
Is the Old Year's winding sheet—  
Miserere!

Now his spirit goeth fast,  
Midnight hour will be his last;  
To your knees, earth's worn and weary—  
Miserere! Miserere!

## Thoughts for the New Year

We sleep, but the loom of life never stops, and the pattern which was weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up in the morning.—H. W. Beecher.

We are not in this world to do what we wish, but to be willing to do that which it is our duty to do.—Gunsold.

It is the every days that count. They must be made to tell, or the years have failed.—W. C. Gannett.

Soberly and with clear eyes believe in your own time and place. There is not, there never has been, a better time or a better place to live in. Only with this belief can you believe in hope.—Phillips Brooks.

We may make the best of life, or we may make the worst of it, and it depends very much upon ourselves whether we extract joy or misery from it.—Spenser.

The darkest shadows of life are those which a man himself makes when he stands in his own light.—Lord Acton.

Our life is short, but to expand that span to vast eternity is virtue's work.—Shakespeare.

The hour that is gone I cannot recall, but to-morrow I will do better than yesterday; and all to-morrows shall be better than the yesterdays. Let us "leave behind our low-vaulted past."—Dyer.

Life is fruitful in the ratio in which it is laid out in noble action or patient perseverance.—Liddon.

## THE NEW YEAR'S CHOICE

It is Well to Choose Wisely for the Time That is to Come.

Once, long ago, the Lord appeared in a vision of the night to a young man with the offer, "Ask what I shall give thee." And a decisive moment was that in which the young king weighed against all others the thing which he most desired.

Centuries lie between us and the young king, Solomon, but still—and especially on each recurring New Year's—God appears to each of us with practically the same offer, "Ask what I shall give thee." And, as with Solomon, so with every heart, there lies the choice of the gift. Were the question an audible one, what would your answer be?

Each recurring New Year's, in effect, says: "Ask what I shall give thee." And the choice for the coming year may be our choice for all the years of life. It is by choice that men seek wealth and learning and by influence. And it is not a question of this and that, but of this or that. To choose is to decide between, to leave as well as to take. Therefore, what will be our choice for the year before us? God Himself asks the question, makes the offer.

**Christmas Fairies.**  
An old English tradition has it that at Christmas-tide, elves and fairies may mingle with humankind in the festivities, and the holly, bay and ivy are hung that the fays may find hiding places. They are also hung to afford a refuge to the woodland sprites who, at this season, are half-frozen in the forests.

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160 acres good land, \$16,000.	9 room modern residence \$7,000
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Tr. 105—Omaha Express . . . . . 2:23 a. m.	No. 44—St. J., K. C. & St. L. . . . .
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