



## The Old Year and the New

The Old Year sat beside the hearth, in thoughtful mood; the hour was late; And ere he vanished from the earth, The past he faintly would contemplate. "I brought a wealth of joy for those Who had overburdened been with grief," He said, "and for unnumbered woes Furnished the cordial of relief."

"To some I gave a garden's bloom, Sweet pansies and forget-me-nots; To some the cypress and the tomb, The barrenness of desert spots. With love I tarried for a while, Breathing the sweet Elysian air; And bidding Hope serenely smile Across the threshold of Despair."

"I entered on my natal hour Burdened alike with bliss and bane, Commissioned by my Lord to do some hearts with ease, and some with pain. Where happiness had rich increase; I shall be honored long, I know; But those I robbed of joy and peace— They will be glad to have me go!"

"I've followed many a bridal train; Have watched by many a lonely bier; With birth and death, with loss and gain, Made up the record of the year. And now beside December's gate, Where hangs the year's alarm bell, I pause to scan the past and wait The sound of my own funeral knell."

"One!—How the hours have slipped away! Two!—Some will weep with sore regret; Three!—Could I still on earth delay— Four!—Some good I might accomplish yet."

Five!—An angelic song awoke! Six!—Surely are the feters riven. Seven!—Soon I shall hear the final stroke— Eight!—Chime sweetly with the clock of heaven! Nine!—I am nearer to my goal! Ten!—Time must eternally begin! Eleven!—Awake, immortal soul! Twelve!—Farewell! and let the New Year in!"

"I come the Old Year's debts to pay! I come his promises to keep; To walk upon the world's highway, And deck the grave where dear ones sleep. Where he gave smiles I may give tears, Life's path with good or ill bestrew; For unto him who views the years The new is old, the old is new!"

—Josephine Pollard.

## New Year's at the Front

By Saidee Estelle Balcom



WELL, what have you done for your country today?" It was the eve of the new year and Dale Webster, hailed by a companion soldier, threw his knapsack within their tent just behind the heavy artillery at the front "somewhere in France."

"Oh, brought in a captive," was his careless reply. "Ran into the skulker, marched him into camp and left him in the guard house. Any letters?"

"Nary a letter. They say the mail packs here are four days overdue, but they're rushing holiday stuff to the camps."

Dale Webster sighed and his face grew wistful. "I've been expecting one letter particularly. You're my friend, Roy?"

"After your carrying me on your back half dead across the worst part of No Man's Land, with the Boches plunging away for keeps, I guess so!" "And you remember Winnie Trask?"

"As a memory sweet and fragrant as a field of daisies!"

"Well, one night in a dugout I just couldn't help but write her way back home there what I ought to have said to her before we left. Three months, and no word. I fancy I was too presumptuous. If I knew that Winnie was caring for me, thinking of me, at home, I'd never get lonesome. I'd fight double to get this mix-up over and back to her—bless her!"

"Don't lose hope," encouraged Roy Bartley. "One of the fellows just got a letter written by his sweetheart last September. It has been chasing him all over the frontier. About your prisoner—make you any trouble?"

"Not a bit of it," declared Dale in a spirited way. "The bear—"

"The bear!" repeated Roy in wonderment.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you that my catch was a bear," spoke Dale. "I came across him curled up in a pit, a performing bear, strayed from some mountebank master in one of the bombarded villages. Soon as he saw me he acted frightened and humble, and when I patted him uttered a jolly growl, turned a somersault and stood on his head."

"You don't mean it!"

"Come, I'll show you."

Dale led the way to the guardhouse. Outside of it was gathered a noisy

group. Half way up the flagpole was a great shaggy monster who cleverly reversed himself, slid to earth, turned a dozen graceful somersaults and walked around on his hind feet.

"Oh, we'll put him on our vaudeville program as the one leading attraction tomorrow!" voted a dozen observers. "What's the row?" as cheering echoed from the other end of the encampment. From a dust-covered, battered automobile two men were throwing off packages.

"Belated mail," announced the driver. "Section A. Throw off the plunder, men, and you hungry fellows grab and distribute."

Boxes, packages, tied-up bundles of newspapers and letters passed from hand to hand. Roy Bartley was most active in the work of sorting out the heterogeneous mass.

"Something for you, Dale," he called, passing a square box before hurling it. "I say," inspecting the marks on the box, "it's been up and down the whole battle line!"

"See if there isn't a letter," directed Dale, placing the box beside a tent, and his eyes were eager and hopeful.

Doubtless the box held remembrances from some home group, but his soul was hungry for something more prized.

"Nothing for you," called out Roy, running over the letters in his hand. "Hey! look out for your box!"

Roy spoke just in time. Old Bruin, unnoticed, had been sniffing intrusively at the box. Then he had pawed it, his claws piercing the frail pasteboard.



He Acted Frightened.

He sniffed again, uttered a satisfied grunt, and, seizing it in his powerful jaws, shook it.

"Whoop! a fruit cake!" yelled a watchful soldier, and grasped it as it rolled to the ground. "Hurrah!"

Some knitted socks and a dozen little packages tied up with ribbon fell out of the shattered receptacle. Dale uttered a sharp gasp. Among them was a letter. He snatched it up and, aflashed and quivering, secreted it in his pocket quickly.

But not for long. When he had divided the cake among his importunate comrades and gathered up the numberless mementoes from home, he got to his tent speedily. He opened the precious missive, his eyes sparkled, he kissed it fervently and his face fairly shone.

What a wild, riotous, fun-producing New Year's day! Old Bruin did him proud, and Dale never sang the patriotic songs apportioned him on the program so thrillingly.

"I say," observed Roy quizzically as the day waned, "you've acted like some wild schoolboy!"

"Reason to!" cried Dale fervently, and his heart beat faster against the cherished missive lying next to it—the letter from Winnie saying: "I have always loved you, and though half the world separates us, I love you now more than ever!"

### WELCOME, 1919!

Nineteen-Nineteen, welcome!  
Oh, I'm glad you've come!  
Though you're yet a mystery—  
Tongue discreetly dumb.

Nineteen-Eighteen, scurrying!  
That's because you're here.  
And I'm glad—but, just a moment,  
Till I dry this tear.

He was kind to me you see;  
Kind as I deserved;  
Though, when it came to punishment,  
His justice never swerved.

But I've let him carry off  
All unpleasant things;  
Keeping safe in Memory's box  
Only that which sings.



## ANOTHER LEAF

By HELEN M. RICHARDSON

Within life's book another leaf is turned;  
Today we face a new and untried year,  
Its secrets and its purpose all unguessed.  
No hand may lift the veil that hides from us  
Success or failure, and no feet save ours  
May tread our pathway, do our several tasks.  
We step into the New Year's outstretched arms,  
And wonder if with all her luring charms  
Truer she'll prove than one we leave behind.  
What we have gained from wrestling with defeat,  
Mayhap will give us strength new foes to meet  
With greater courage. Come, then, storm and stress,  
Defeat and failure, or joy's magic spell,  
To each or all the new year holds in store  
We reach our hands in welcome, for we know  
Our truest blessings from our failures grow,  
And that our share of happiness will be  
What we acquire through self-mastery.

—Farm Journal.

## A NEW YEAR SERMON

By REV. JAMES M. GRAY, D.D.

"AND now, Lord, what wait I for?"—Psalm 39:7.

Another twelvemonth has almost gone, and we are yet in the land of the living. If we give this serious consideration, we must regard it as remarkable. Some think death the strangest wonder of human history, but is not life stranger? When we reflect upon our frame, and the shocks of life it must endure, must we not exclaim with Young, "Strange that a harp of thousand strings should keep in tune so long!"

Is it to be wondered at if, like David, we too should put the question, "What wait I for?" The mystery of being here is not profounder than the mystery of staying here. Let us ask God the question. The psalmist felt he could not trust his own conclusions, and so he said, "Lord, what wait I for?"

It may be you are waiting to be saved. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live.

"O Ephraim, how can I give thee up, how shall I leave thee, Judah?" Behold him weeping over the Holy City, "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" He is so pleading with some of you today. To go back no farther than the past year, has there been no sermon, no invitation or warning, no supplication or exhortation, that has appealed to your intelligence, or moved your emotions, pleading with you to accept Christ? Have you lost no friend or neighbor by death during that period? Have you had no escape from bodily peril or no illness to remind you of the uncertainty of life? Can you conscientiously say that in all these respects God has left you alone?

It may be you are waiting to bear fruit. You are, by the grace of God, already saved, let us suppose. But for what purpose were you saved? Since

God loves you with a "love that passeth knowledge," and since "to depart and be with Christ were far better" than to remain here—why did he not call you to himself at your conversion? Why are you here instead of enjoying your Redeemer's presence? There must be some reason. "Ye have not chosen me," said Christ, "but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." May it be to give you another opportunity to glorify his father by bearing fruit, that you are still here?

It may be you are waiting to be perfected. I ought to explain this, because there is a sense in which every true Christian is perfected the moment he accepts Christ as his Savior. He is perfected in that he is both justified and sanctified; his sin is put away, and by the Holy Spirit he himself is set apart for God forever. The New Testament is very clear on this; notice Paul's words in his epistle to the Colossians, for example.

What, then, do we mean by saying we may be waiting to be perfected? Do we mean the attainment of a state of sinlessness this side of heaven? No; for if a Christian lived to be as old as Methuselah, would he not still require to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?" We only mean that perfectness, in the sense of a ripeness for the sickle, which comes in the lives of some as if a crown of glory had been vouchsafed to them even before they passed into the unseen.

And so may it be with some of you. Though now your pruning, your digging, and perhaps your growing days are over, yet the quiet but potent rays of divine grace are accomplishing a maturity in your experience, so that your Christian life never will have been so attractive as in the hour that you depart hence. "We all do fade as a leaf, but the fall of you, ye glory-crowned ones, is to be illumined by the grandeur of an autumnal sunset."

God bless you, aged brethren! God bless you, young and old, rich and poor, saint and sinner! May you have a "Happy New Year" in the highest and truest sense. "Happy" is the people whose God is the Lord. Accept him, serve him, wait for him. It is only as we stand in such relationship to him that, after employing the psalmist's question, "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" we can confidently apply the consolation in his words that follow, "My hope is in thee."

## PERSONAL STOCK-TAKING

Dawn of New Year a Good Time to Bolster Up Weak Spots

NOW'S the time for a personal stock taking. The habit is in the air around Christmas. The kiddie lives a miserable life from the first of December trying to do his best so that old Santa will be good to him. The average man starts in around Christmas to think about the New Year resolutions he is going to make. All his friends, wise and otherwise proffer advice gratis until the poor chap isn't sure whether the New Year is coming or going and he himself is hopelessly lost. If he's wise he will go off by himself to a quiet corner and turn over the events of the past year and strike a balance on the results. The chances are that he will feel as chipper as a squirrel in May when the job is finished. There will be many instances where the "might have been" will condemn what was.

Life has many lessons that are hard to learn.

One is that you can't put your ability in cold storage until needed for some great scoop. Your present job may be no compliment to your ability, but you dare not slight it for that reason. To keep yourself fit you must constantly employ your talents to the limit. As soon as you begin to go easy on them you start to decline. Unused potentialities deteriorate. Labor saving devices and man-made expedients won't work out with the Divine masterpiece. God never intended ability to be held in reserve for spectacular purposes. The wise man takes stock daily to see whether or not he is measuring up to his privileges. This is the season to begin the practice of it.

Man's measure is best taken when he toils for the good of others.

Much that he does in this line is not appreciated. The knowledge of this kills some folks at the start. Most men do their best when the thing they advocate is popular. A few indomitable souls are fired to the heroic point by opposition. It takes the big souled man to struggle on when he sees few results and gets little thanks. He works for the sake of the thing to be done, and that is the evidence of the master-workman. It takes the stalwart to keep on the job in cloud and sunshine with his best always as the goal. If you are willing to take stock and profit by the results shown, you may be in that class soon.

The fellow that is honest in his stock taking will find many loose connections in his past efforts.

He has failed to keep the pace because his ideals and ability did not mix properly; or he has been short on one or both of these essentials. There are many sincere souls that are failures because they have gone at high speed with a bolt loose somewhere. No wonder they wrack themselves to death. The stock taking will help them to see where their personal mechanism needs repairs. Weakness in any one part hinders the best work of the whole. For the sake of a temporary gain you dare not endanger your future usefulness. The past has been of your making. If it does not please you find what has been the matter and make sure of a better record for 1919. It's unfair to blame your competitors for lack of success. If you had been able to deliver the goods you would doubtless have had your share of the trade. They have won because you have failed somewhere. Most failures begin with the mental apparatus. Look well to yours for the New Year. There is no time for adjustments after the race starts.

When the head is supplied with right thinking the body is apt to be best fitted for its tasks.

To be sure the care of the body influences the thinking, but even that needs right thinking to help it. If your head is off you can't give your body a square deal. You can't booze all night and have a clear head the next day. You can't dance until day-break and have elasticity and sprightliness of body when the rush is on the next afternoon. You can't fill your stomach with cheap candies, creams and chemically preserved fruits and be happy and obliging to a trying customer in busy times. You must have the whole human mechanism working in harmony if you are going to get the most out of the coming year. That's why your old uncle is asking for a mental and physical examination. He's concerned for your welfare and wants you to make good. Think right, and you will generally be right.

If you haven't measured up to expectations during 1918 you must find the reason.

The truth will doubtless jar your self-opinion a little, and you would hate to see the analysis in the news-

paper. But the results will be just as public if you fall and men who stand between the lines know the facts. So if you're concerned about the future you will respect the verdict and honestly set out to avoid the foolish things done in 1918. You will make your corrections at once. If you continue in error you will damage your working ability, not to speak of your reputation and character. It isn't business to toy with things costly. You can better afford to down a foolish self-pride than be downed by tasks too big for you. If you make the corrections to your life at once even the balance of this year will profit by the stock taking and you will start the year with a little practice.

The best assurance of success is found in taking stock of the means of obtaining it.

Many worthy projects are blighted by over-zeal. Faith does wonders, but it's a healthy process to mix considerable good judgment with it. Promises to pay are of no value without the ability to redeem them. You must count the cost before beginning the new enterprise. Scan your personal fitness before undertaking new ventures. If you stand the test you are bound to win. You have no reason to expect that simply because you attempt something beyond you some mysterious power is going to pull you through. The New Year will be full of challenges and for that reason I want you to take stock and be ready for the testing when it comes.

There's nothing like knowing what you dare expect of yourself.

It's just as foolish to attempt jobs too big for you as it is to be afraid of what you can do easily. There are some organizations that put on campaigns these days to help people and themselves. If you want the same results without the publicity go after your own cause and don't be too easy with the subject. The coming year will be full of great opportunities and you won't know what to do when they come unless you take stock in advance. To be sure some lucky turn of fortune's wheel may put you in a high place, but you are far more likely to stay at the top if you rise by merit.

You owe yourself and your friends your best record for the coming year.

It should be a matter of satisfaction to know that you have the ability to do big things. It's equally important to know your weakness if you should be confronted with big things. In any case failure does not add to your credit. Many of life's failures could be avoided if men would only take stock. This is business, and you should not shrink if you want to succeed. Rise to power and criticism go together. You will escape most of the latter if you take time to find yourself and fit yourself for being your best. Take stock before others take it for you and corrections are too late.

### THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:  
Toll ye the church bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly, and speak low,  
For the Old Year lies a-dying.  
Old Year, you must not die;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old Year, you shall not die.

His face is growing sharp and thin,  
Alack! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes; tie up his chin;  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone.  
And waiteth at the door,  
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,  
And a new face at the door, my friend,  
A new face at the door.

—Alfred Tennyson.

### Only Today is Ours.

The opening of the year is everybody's birthday. God has let us share his work. God has gifts for days to come. We may send our thoughts back through the ways of memory; we must send them forth through opening paths of faith and hope. The past will come no more, but today is ours and tomorrow is in the hands of everybody's birthday, then, bring joy and courage! May God's spirit help us, each and everyone, to walk with God and spend a joyful year in the service of his Kingdom.



Wishing You All Every Success for a Prosperous and Happy New Year