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Ready for the Kick-off

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IT WAS New Year's Day and the snow began to fall in blustery fashion about the street corners of Milltown. At the Simmons Corner Grocery the morning business was rather dull and it was now ten o'clock, when Isaac, or "Ike" as he was familiarly called, sat in his dingy, dusty office, shut off by himself, looking over his past year's accounts. The young clerk, "Bill" Wilkins, was a little more idle than usual and he sat quietly on a cracker box, interested in the story of "Huck Finn," having a broad grin upon his round, mischievous face.

"Ike" Simmons, it was true, had a sour disposition, even to a sense of meanness, and sometimes if his friends greeted him kindly, to be obstinate and hateful he would think of some act of meanness to counteract goodness and generosity. If it were not for bargains "Ike's" trade would go on

the decline, but he possessed a keen insight for business and often marked his goods some pennies below the selling price of his competitors. So, on New Year's morning, "Ike" Simmons was in no pleasant mood, and who would dare to wish him a "Happy New Year," and especially in a snowstorm and business dull?

All was quiet within the little grocery office and a great stack of papers was eagerly examined, when "Ike," with his specs laid up high on his brow, leaned over quietly onto his desk in a thinking way. In a few minutes he saw the trapdoor open and an arm with a revolver appeared. Then a face, with a handkerchief covering it, showed to the horror-stricken "Ike" Simmons. A real burglar sprang out! He took a heavy rope and bound "Ike" to the stool. "Now, old Sourhead," the burglar said, "I'm not here only for your money, but to flog you—you, who cares not for the pleasant things of life. You are ugly to your friends. Now I am going to beat you." And he thrashed "Ike" with a heavy rope, and the pain was awful. He knocked "Ike" from his stool.

There was a dull thud. The clerk ran into the office and found "Ike" Simmons struggling on the floor, surrounded by his books and papers. About the same time Lemuel Haskins came into the store and exclaimed: "A Happy New Year, Ike!" "Ike" scrambled up and looked amazedly about him. "Happy New Year, Lem, and many more." Both persons stood aghast! "Ike" Simmons was a transformed being. He had learned, in a brief dream, the lesson of the cost of being unkindly, when the real cost of being kind was nothing, and he kept the New Year happy, and other New Years following, with an increased business to bless his efforts.

THE NEW LEAF

By MARTHA B. THOMAS

WE TALK about turning over a new leaf at New Years. How about turning over our brains? Most of us work these factories in our heads about half-time and half-capacity. When a new idea walks in we hustle him out before he disturbs the quiet of the place. Why not let him ramble about and stir up the old machinery? If he makes a racket and starts a fight with all the old ideas, let him scrap it out. You can clear up the damage afterwards, and will probably feel amazingly refreshed. The trouble with most of us is a deep-rooted aversion to enlarging the works!

Let's put in a new window now and then, oil up the cogs, find a place for new thoughts and have a grand time with ourselves!

Luther not only turned his brain over when he nailed that famous letter on the church door, but about the whole world, as well.

Newton only needed an apple as a self-starter towards the idea of gravitation.

Shakespeare looked about him at the everyday doings of "high folks and plain folks," and see what he accomplished.

You never can tell whether you're a genius or not until you scrabble around in your own head and produce something!

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Starting Off the New Year

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

THEY had known each other for only a little while. But both of them knew that through the long stretch of years ahead they would grow happier and happier as they knew each other better and better.

It was on New Year's day that they announced their engagement. It was such a beautiful day upon which to announce such a glorious, romantic fact.

"My dear one," he whispered, "no man could care about a girl as I care about you."

"No one could love a man as I love you," she said. "Other girls, I know, could never feel the love I feel. It is a new feeling—to feel so much, such great, great quantities of love for another."

"No one will be as happy as we will be," he said.

"No one," she agreed.

"I don't think any one ever loved as I do you," he said.

"I'm sure no one ever loved as I do you," she said.

For to both of them love was new, even as the year was new.

What mattered it to them that others had said the same—that to everyone to whom love came it came as something fresh and new and beautiful and unusual?

For the continuing of romance in life is like the continuing of the years. They come along, ever, ever new because they carry with them new hopes and new joys.

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A NEW YEAR HOMECOMING

By KATHERINE EDELMAN

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"HAPPY New Year, everybody!" Stella Mayfield cried, as she entered the room, glowing and rosy from the long drive from the station. "My, but it seems good to be home again!"

It was New Year's eve and Stella had been away four whole weeks visiting Aunt Sarah in the city. But if she had been away four years, instead of four weeks, the family could not have made a bigger fuss over her. Everybody was just as excited as could be, all talking at once and wanting to know all about what she had been doing while away.

And Stella had lots to tell them—about the wonderful shops she had visited, the buildings that were taller than the old meadow field was long,

the hundred and one things she had seen and heard during her absence.

"The city must be something like the places in the fairy stories mother reads to us and the heaven our Sunday school teacher tells us about," little Margie cried, her eyes opening to their widest.

For answer Stella took her little sister on her lap, and very solemnly she began speaking: "Margie, dear," she said, "it was all very wonderful and very beautiful, but when it comes to comparing it with the places you mention I can't see it that way. To me the only place in this world that can compare with heaven or fairyland is this little home of ours here in the valley, and I'm the gladdest, happiest girl on earth to be back here with you all again. I had a lovely visit in the city, but—its not like home." Stella looked shyly, but lovingly, at her mother as she ended her little talk.

Mrs. Mayfield smiled back at her in return, then, going to the window, she looked out at the lovely moonlit landscape. Yes, it was like fairyland, she thought, for everything was covered with a beautiful, glistening mantle of white; a master artist's hand had touched all within view. But Mrs. Mayfield knew that all this would not make Stella think their home the best place on earth if it lacked love and peace and happiness. And there was a deep content and thankfulness in her heart that the dawning of the New Year was bright and rosy and promising for them all, and that she had fulfilled the mother-mission that she felt was hers—to make home the best place on earth for all of her family.

Need Determination

Among the best of New Year resolutions is to save money. It may be easier in 1925 than in any recent year, but the job needs determination and perseverance.

NEW YEAR'S MORNING

By Martha Banning Thomas

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BEN SAWYER always came down the back stairs the same way.

New Year's morning was no exception. There was a rush, a clatter and a general tumbling noise—and Ben emerged into the kitchen.

His mother was just putting the last things on the table for breakfast.

"Happy New Year, mother!" called Ben, disappearing into the dining room.

His mother, strange to say, did not reply.

Polly Sawyer, the youngest of the family, and Harry were standing around the dining room waiting for breakfast to be served.

"Mother's sort of queer this morning," whispered Polly to Ben. "She looks just the same, but there's a kind of difference about her. She hasn't said 'Happy New Year' to one of us."

Ben frowned and looked at his boots. "Oh, well, I guess she's a little tired after the party last night. Shouldn't blame her."

Ben really began to feel uncomfortable and he attempted a timid question.

"Mother, don't you feel well this morning?" he asked.

Mrs. Sawyer looked up, surprised.

"Why, yes, Ben. What made you ask?"

"You seem so—so sort of, well"—he floundered—"sort of quiet."

"Quiet?" asked Mrs. Sawyer.

Harry and Polly looked at each other uneasily. What was the matter with breakfast, anyhow?

"Yes," said Ben, "and you haven't wished one of us a Happy New Year."

"Dear, me, smiled Mrs. Sawyer, "I'm sorry. I forgot all about it. Well, I'll do it now. Happy New Year, Ben and Harry and Polly!"

But this was not at all what they wanted. She did not say it that way when she meant it. She shouted it up the stairs the first thing in the morning, to get ahead of everybody else.

The children felt strange and out of tune. Mother was always so jolly. It took all the fun out of things to have her this way.

"We had a fine party last night, didn't we?" asked Polly. "Every one said they never had a better time."

Ben looked hard at his mother. He was the oldest and, though careless and noisy, loved her very much. "It was because mother worked so hard to give it to us," he smiled. "Those little cakes were just the ticket, and the ice cream—oh, boy!"

The other children nodded. "Sure thing," mumbled Harry, looking as solemn as an owl.

NEVER a thing to make you mad,
Never a trouble to make you sad,
Never a pain to hurt or kill,
Never the need of a dollar bill,
Never a worry or never a fear—
All through the days a happy year.

KATHERINE EDELMAN

(© by Western Newspaper Union.)

Mrs. Sawyer glanced from one to another. "Children," she said, "I've got something to say to you New Year's morning. I think this is the best time, for it is the very beginning of the New Year."

"Yes, mother," they all agreed.

"It is the custom to say that we make new resolutions, but I wish we could make new faces."

"New faces!" exclaimed the children together.

"Yes—just that. But new faces are not made from the outside; the molding has to come from within. Faces are made by thoughts, and thoughts are our only tools. I worked for two days to make it a happy one for you and your friends. I grew very tired, but I did not mind that, if it gave you pleasure. You say you had a good time, but this morning is the first I have heard about it."

"Oh, mother!" they wailed, conscience-stricken.

"You take too much for granted, children. And if you don't begin to think a little about other people and what they are doing and feeling, you will grow up having very disagreeable faces. I want you all to try to have 'new faces' this year. Make your eyes see nice things about others; make your mouths say kind words whenever you can. Next New Year's morning I'd like to shout a 'Happy New Year,' and mean it. I want to see happy faces not because you have a good time, but because you have helped to 'shine up' the world for others."

"Yes, mother," replied all the children, and then they got up with one accord and ran around the table and kissed her.

A GOOD RESOLUTION

By Emily Burks Adams

IT WAS New Year's Eve and Uncle Ben—everybody called him Uncle Ben—said he didn't think he'd make a resolution, and then he'd have none to break.

"Well," said Mrs. Smith, his neighbor, who had brought him a loaf of bread, "If I were you I'd make a resolution to marry before another year. I'm going to quit sewing your buttons, so you'd better think about it."

Uncle Ben did think about it, and mused to himself: "Well, if I had resolved long ago to get married, I'd be married. Other folks keep their resolutions. By jolly! I'm going to resolve to marry before a year and I won't break my resolution, either."

New Year's day Uncle Ben put on his best bib and tucker and started to church. As he turned the corner he met Widow Bender.

"Well, Uncle Ben, Happy New Year," said she.

"Thank you, Mrs. Bender, and Happy New Year to you. Mine will be a happy New Year, for I'm going to be married."

"Oh, fine!" said the widow, with a look of disappointment. "My New Year resolution is to get married, if I can."

"Well," said Uncle Ben, "that is a provision in my resolution—if I can."

They looked at each other, kitten-like, talked a short time and went on to church.

Every one was surprised to witness a wedding that morning.

When they were congratulating Uncle Ben he said: "Well, a resolution is a fine thing if you make a good one and stick to it."

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New Year Eve

Prosperity begins to shine;
The business outlook's bright;
For everywhere I want to dine
They boost the price tonight.

The New Year

by Anna Deming Gray

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JANUARY 1 was not always New Year's Day, and even now in Greece and Russia it does not arrive until twelve days after the new year has started.

It took longer to agree upon a common day to celebrate New Year's than it did to select a common Christmas.

It was late in the Sixteenth century before January 1 was accepted universally. The more ancient nations had always had a preference for this date, and Egypt, China and Rome celebrated the day with public rejoicing.

In Russia the day was made sacred to Janus and was a time of special sacrifice and prayer at his shrine. He is pictured as a god with two faces, one looking backward and one forward