

## HER ONE NEW YEAR RESOLUTION.

**D**ID I make any New Year resolutions?" repeated the bachelor girl. "Yes, one. Want to know? Oh, well, I don't mind telling you. I've made up my mind to spend next Christmas differently.

"I intend to make an altogether different disposition of my presents hereafter. The places that knew them shall know them no more, and the wilderness, where no presents have ever been, is going to blossom with mine.

"You see, it is this way: When I sat down to think it all over—the worry and fuss and the money I spent—I came to the conclusion that, outside of the nearest and dearest, I gave only three or four gifts that were really worth while—that is, that gave me any actual happiness to give and brought real joy to others.

"These three or four were the things I gave to—well, it doesn't matter



"OH, WELL, I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU," whom, but they were people who sadly needed them, who didn't expect them and who couldn't make any return except a broken gratitude that hurt you to listen to.

"Why, no, certainly I'm not crying," and the bachelor girl smiled dashing through moist eyes. "But I don't mind telling you it was the happiest part of my Christmas. And hereafter those are the sort of people I'm going to give to.

"I think I shall write a jolly little note to each of the relatives and friends with whom I usually exchange presents. I shall send these notes long enough before Christmas to forestall anybody's buying presents for me.

"In the notes I shall convey my best love and my Christmas wishes. I shall also explain why I intend to send no present this year—that I purpose making all my gifts to those whose only need is their need. I shall add that I am certain they will like this original method of disposing of their gifts. And I shall further say that if they want to make happy and to enjoy the best kind of Christmas they can, they will please take the money they had intended to spend on me and do likewise with it. In this way every dollar we give will be well spent and make somebody really glad.

"So that's my New Year resolve. Unselfish? That's all you know." The bachelor girl laughed. "It's horribly selfish. Didn't I tell you I was going to do it merely because it made me"—Philadelphia Bulletin.

## MARRYING EN MASSE.

is New Year's Custom of Plougastel of Brittany.

the curious and distinctive marriage customs prevail among the Plougastels, a strange race of people (thought by some to be of Asiatic origin) inhabiting Plougastel Daoulas, in Brittany, who are great strawberry growers. They are also noted for intermarrying exclusively with each other. The alliances, which are engineered by an intermediary known as the basralaine, all take place on one day, usually the first Tuesday of the new year. The basralaines start their campaign in September as soon as the harvest is gathered in, demanding on behalf of the intending bridegroom the hand of his bride elect.

The courtship is then authorized and proceeds with ardor during the dark months which follow. Last year twenty-three couples were married in the parish church on Jan. 8.

After the ceremony come dancing and feasting. The great dinner which is served at the numerous inns begins at 2 o'clock and lasts well on to midnight. The favorite dish is tripe, and an inordinate quantity of alcohol is consumed—one would like to know with what results.

The whole place is en fête, and there are never fewer than 2,000 guests. After the orgy the united couples repair to their separate homes. They do not take up their joint life until the following evening (after the service for the dead and a second feast), when they are escorted to the bridal chamber by a large contingent of groomsmen and bridesmaids, to whom soup and cakes are presented by the newly married.—Sphere.

## THE POWER OF ONE EGGNOG.

**T**ALK about the trials of a woman whose husband is late for dinner or doesn't come when he is expected," says the woman who has had experiences; "it is annoying enough at any time, but it is nothing in a civilized country to what it is when you are off in the wilds somewhere and dinner and dinner getting are two of the most important things in life.

"When Mr. Blank took me and the baby some years ago to try life on a Texas sheep ranch we found there were a good many things in the world that we had no conception of before, and life took on a different aspect. It was a happy life, but it was not an easy one. I had to do all kinds of housework, the hardest kind of housework, and cooking in a house situated in a Texas chaparral is not cooking as it is done even in a New York flat. We lived chiefly on game which Mr. Blank shot as we needed it. Our vegetables were all canned—peas, corn and a certain number of things we kept always on hand.

"I suppose I made myself a great deal more work than was necessary and did twice as much cooking, but I was used to everything in eastern style, and it did not occur to me that I could have things in any other way. We always had dessert every day for dinner. I made cake, and practically we lived in the wilds of Texas exactly as we could here.

"Well, the day when Mr. Blank did not come home to dinner was New Year's. There was not so much difference between the days—they were all working days—but I had prepared a special dinner. Mr. Blank was going off to the dipping vats, but he was to be back at 2 o'clock for dinner, and I prepared a good one. It was rabbit, I think, that day. Our nearest neighbors were a family of Alsatians whom we knew very well and who had been very kind to us. That morning before breakfast Mr. Blank had ridden over there on business of some kind. They had made eggnog to celebrate the day, and of course he must accept their hospitality and take a glass.

"Now, a good strong eggnog is not exactly a before breakfast drink for a man who is not accustomed to taking it at that hour in the morning, and the eggnog was a strong one. It was New Year's day, and eggnog ingredients can be found in Texas when potatoes cannot be. When Mr. Blank came home he



HE MANAGED TO CRAWL UP.

could not eat his breakfast and only took a few swallows of coffee and mounted his horse and rode away.

"I went to work and cooked dinner in my best style. I had a little oil stove, for it was always warm where we were, except when a norther came up. Everything was done to perfection and ready to put on the table at 2 o'clock, but Mr. Blank did not come. I looked out, but he was nowhere in sight. Two o'clock passed, 2:30, 3 o'clock, and still he did not come.

"Any one would have supposed that I would have been frightened and think something had happened to him, for he is one of the most considerate of men and this was a most unusual occurrence. But I was not frightened. If anything had happened probably the men would have brought me word. I had a good dinner prepared, and he did not come, and on New Year's day. I grew more and more angry as the time passed, until by night I was hardly in a condition to speak. By and by he rode up. He seemed to feel my mood. Anyway, his first words were: "I suppose you are provoked."

"Yes, I said, I am."

"He was angry then, and he went off to stake out his horse without another word. It didn't last long, however, and we came to an understanding.

"It seems that that eggnog, taken the first thing in the morning, had been too much for him. He had hardly left the house before he was overcome with an irresistible desire to sleep. He says he never knew how he reached the dipping vats, for he slept most of the way on his horse's back. When he got there he found working was simply an impossibility. The men had a little shanty, and he managed to crawl up there, throw himself on the floor, and there he slept all day long without stirring until night, when he had slept off the effects of the eggnog.

"I do not look upon eggnog now as such an innocuous drink as I did at one time, and I know there was never a wife who lived through such a long day as I did waiting for Mr. Blank to come home that New Year's day in Texas."—New York Times.

## MR. SPILKINS' NEW YEAR RESOLVE.

**M**Y life has been the queerest one that ever man has seen. I do not think in all this world its like has ever been. No matter what I try to do, in spite of all my wit, The thing that truly happens is its very opposite.



"I MAKE THE WITTIEST REMARKS." I sit down to write a verse that's brimming o'er with glee turns out to be serious, though why I cannot see, And if, upon the other hand, my musings would be sad My readers read it and they smile as if it made them glad.

**WHENEVER I** meet a woman who is bright enough for kings And try to talk I cannot think of aught but stupid things, But when I have a vis-a-vis at dinner dull and slow I make the wittiest remarks, though she would never know. When I was but a baby I had not a baby face.

I looked the most all knowing kid of an all knowing race, But as I neared maturity a change came over that, And now I look as innocent as any pussy cat.

**AND** people, when they see me anywhere, are not impressed With the idea that I've a mind that's different from the rest Of ordinary minds they meet, wherever they may be. But that is not the thing that's most distressing unto me.

The thing I hate the most in all my weary span of life Has happened to me since I wed my tender little wife. She's tender, and she's pretty; but, by jingo, in my house She rules the whole establishment whilst I'm nixumarouse.

**N**OW, why is it, I wonder—what accursed freak of fate Has settled me in this extremely mortifying state? Why is it that, whatever I try to do, despite my wit, The thing that truly happens is its very opposite?



**SHE RULES THE WHOLE ESTABLISHMENT.** There's but one remedy for me, and now that it is here, This very first of all the days of all the glad new year, I'm going to try it; I'll swear off assaying for to do The things I think I ought to and try what I oughtn't to. —Harper's Bazar.

An Echo of Tennyson. "Ring out, wild bells!" a poet sang. "Ring off!" was blazed into his teeth. "Those same wild bells the poet rang 'Who wore old Athlon's laurel wreath.'"

The poet paused him in his path. Quite angered at the sudden check, "If ring those bells," he said in wrath, "Or else I'll ring your servery neck!" —T. SAPP, JR.

## OLDEN DAYS.

No snake that ever lived with greater fame for the time than Alexander's. Lucian tells the story. Apollonius, a master of the magic arts, had many disciples, among whom was a practicing physician who lived in Abonotichus, a small town on the shore of the Black sea. There Alexander was born of humble parentage and imbibed from the old doctor all that he had learned from Apollonius of medicine and magic. He was a lad of striking appearance, tall, handsome, with a fine head of hair, lustrous brown eyes and a voice sweet and limpid. "God grant," wrote Lucian, who knew him, "that I may never meet with such another. His coming was wonderful, his dexterity matchless. His eagerness for knowledge, his capacity for learning and power of memory were equally extraordinary."

Such was the well favored young peasant who sallied forth from his native town in search of fame and fortune. Soon he fell in with one Coconnas, a shrewd tipster for the races and somewhat of a juggler. The two rogues joined forces and mandered about telling fortunes. Arriving at Pella, they found a great number of huge, harmless snakes which lived in the houses, played and slept with the children and destroyed poisonous rats. Alexander promptly purchased one of the largest, a veritable monster, so tame that it would coil about his body and remain in any desired position. Then he made a human face for it out of linen, painted it ingeniously and shaped it so that the mouth would open and shut by an arrangement of horsehair, letting the forked tongue shoot in and out at the will of the master. Having no further use for Coconnas, he either administered poison to him or let him die from some infection and returned with his snake to his native town. There he declared himself a prophet and announced that the god Aesculapius was about to appear. The people were credulous, excitable and eager for a new divinity.

When the great day arrived Alexander pretended to discover in a puddle of water a goose egg which he had placed there after removing the contents, substituting a small embryo snake just born and carefully sealing the shell with wax. When the multitude had gathered he broke the shell and produced the tiny creature, which in a few moments grew to be the monster from Pella by the simple process of substitution. Thereafter the big snake, believed to be Aesculapius, led a busy life. He gave seances, told fortunes in writing and even spoke freely, with the aid of the prophet's ventriloquial powers. Alexander grew rich and powerful, kept a small army of retainers and spies, wielded no little influence over the government even at Rome and died at a ripe old age in the fullness of his renown. What became of the snake nobody knows. Probably at the last the prophet dispatched the faithful creature to prevent the discovery of his deception after his death.—George Harvey in North American Review.

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