



THE OLD AND THE NEW

The old year has gone, with its sorrows,
Its griefs and its pains swallowed up
With the hopes and the aims of to-morrow's
Evening, the sweets of life's cup.
All bitterness, hatred, resentment,
In Oblivion's sea now are cast.
All pleasures, delights and contentment,
Are mirrored in mists of the past.

For a fortnight the earth has slept
Under
A mantle of downiest snow.
A calm, childlike, unbroken slumber.
A dreamless and peaceful repose.
But the mantle grew murky and blackened
By ashes, and deepest of grime,
Just as all of life's pure things are ravaged
And tarnished by cycles of time.

But now as I look from my window,
With an optimist's vision of cheer,
I see fleecy flakes slow descending,
The mantle seems purified, clear.
So the pictures of hope that have vanished
Shall be framed in a network of gold,
And the pure and sweet thoughts of the New Year
Blot out all the sins of the old.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

It was New Year's morn. Andrew Foster was up much earlier than usual; in truth, he might say he was up during the night, for although his head rested on a downy pillow, sleep never visited him during those long, last hours of the old year, nor the first of the infant successor. At the best of times, when a man's or woman's heart is free from the burden of a disappointing conscience, there is something deeply impressive about "old years night." As we watch, passing, passing so swiftly, dying out, those last moments, how many a heart is filled with vain regrets. But there is another chance, a better time, we say, the morrow we will begin anew, make amends for the past, to him or her. Yet, O! if, with the passing year, that one that we might have made happier has gone to—gone beyond recall—then ours are senseless regrets.

It was not thus, however, with Andrew Foster. The particular one whose happiness he had married still was with him. Daily he saw the face, once so bright and beautiful, growing paler; missed the merry, bird-like voice that filled the house with the sweetest music. Yes, although he knew she was fading under his hand, unbending will, he would not bring her back to life—aye, for what is life without love? Constantly during those midnight hours, as vainly he wooed sleep, there would come instead the plaintive little face, with the great beseeching look, why, because pride said Nay. Could he, Andrew Foster, one of the noblest men in the city, give his child to one so far beneath her in position, and possessing nothing more than his own good name?

Harry Landon was one of her father's clerks; and Gertie Foster, despite the great gulf between them, grew to love, with all the devotion of her nature, the handsome young man. Every one liked Harry, and respected him; and no one to Andrew Foster's employ possessed more fully his confidence. Many times he would remark to friends, "Landon is a fine fellow; a noble fellow." But when the truth came to the proud father that this young man had dared to love his child, his opinion must have undergone a great change, for he could scarcely restrain his wrath sufficiently to treat, with any show of decent politeness, Harry Landon when he came to him, in a manly, truthful manner, and told his love.

"Give you presumed to tell Miss Foster this, sir?" asked the indignant father.

"No, sir, I came to you first, scarcely daring to hope you would give me permission to speak. Still, there was a possibility, and I seized it. But I am sure Miss Foster is not ignorant of my feelings."

"Why, why are you sure, sir?"

"Why? Oh, sir, why do the blind know the sun is shining, when their whole being is filled with its warmth? Need we tell them what it is? Every true woman knows when she is loved. Oh, sir, I ask you not to give her to me now—until I can prove my worthiness. But let me speak to her."

"Impossible! I never will consent. This useless to say more on the subject. And after this conversation I suppose you will not feel so well contented in your position with our house."

"I was about to ask, sir, if you would give me letters of introduction to some other establishment?"

"Certainly, certainly, Landon. I will see that you have a position quite as good, to say the least, as your present one. I am sorry this has happened. You must remember and command my services when you wish."

And so the young man and his employer parted.

Days passed until a fortnight had elapsed, and Gertie had not seen Harry Landon. She missed him from the store too, and with her usual straight forward, candid manner, she went to her father and asked:

"Where is Harry Landon, father?"

"He has left us for a better position at Black's," answered her father, with his eyes still on his paper.

"Why did he leave you, father? I heard you say you were going to do more for him."

Andrew Foster raised his eyes then, and looking sternly into his daughter's replied:

"He presumed too far on my friendship and it was desirable to both him and myself that he should seek employment elsewhere."

Her beautiful, truthful eyes were still gazing into his with eager, anxious expression. She sank down on a stool at his feet, leaning her head wearily against him a moment, and then whispered, with a blush suffusing her pretty, child-like face:

"Father, did he tell you that he loved your daughter? And was it that you sent him away for?"

"Yes, Gertie. He might have known I could not listen for a moment to his suit. He is a very worthy young man; but really it was very presuming in him to—"

"Presuming, father, in an honorable, worthy man to love me? I don't think it so. I feel honored by the love of such a one. And, father, he has told you his secret; I will do so too. Although he may never know it, I love Harry Landon."

There was much said between the father and child, she gently pleading for her love, he chiding and upbidding. A year had gone by since then. Occasionally Gertie would meet Harry Landon on the street. Once they stood side by side at the church door, and Gertie could not resist placing her hand in his, and notwithstanding the probability of Mrs. Grundy's declaring it very unmaidenly, she whispered:

"I know all. And although I may never be yours, I will never wed another."

Harry was nearer happiness then, than he had dreamed of ever being again. Now that he was assured of her love, her constancy, he would hope, and work on.

Andrew Foster stood before the window that New Year's morn'g, looking out on the pass—boy, many peasant faces grieved him with a smile, and "Happy New Year, sir."

A moment more, and the room door was thrown open and his boy, his only one, the youngest of his children, came running up, crying out:

"Happy New Year for papa! See, papa Eddie's happy. New Year's day, with new clothes, new boots, new everything. I am going to be a new boy too. Gertie says everybody has to make somebody happy to-day. I am going to make Nellie happy. For I'll stop teasing her. I wish—Oh, I wish mamma was here." His blue eyes filled with tears and his lips quivered, and in a sorrowful voice he continued: "I wish I'd been a new boy when mamma was here."

Was everybody striving to place before him, hold up for his inspection, his harshness? Was every word intended to deal a sure blow? When the little seven-year-old Eddie spoke of "mamma," Andrew Foster could scarce repress a groan.

She was gone. Two years before she had passed from earth. Oh, if she was with him, how different he would be! He has been a good husband, and the gentle wife could not find in him anything to reproach. But he knew how much was left undone. How many little, loving acts, that made life so doubly sweet, were forgotten then.

Again Eddie's voice sounded in the father's ears.

"Papa, are you going to be a new man to-day? Papa, make me happy first with a splendid pair of skates. And Nellie and Gertie must be happy too, papa. Make Gertie be a new girl, please. She won't sing and play with us; she's getting old, I believe."

No argument, no pleading, no matter how earnest, could have made such an impression on Andrew Foster as that child's innocent prattle.

Again the door opened, and Gertie and Nellie were waiting. "I wish," said Gertie, "that you would give me the best of the new year's gifts. The father saw his child was striving to be cheerful, and not cast her shadow over him."

He told them all to speak their wish, what he should give them that day. Eddie and Nellie were quick to tell, but Gertie said, with a smile that threatened to be a tear:

"Give me what you choose, father. You give me so much, I have no wish to speak; but—"

"No, she hesitated—she most dared to breathe it forth. No, no; she would not cloud his heart that day. She cast aside the wild hope, and continued: "Bring me what you think I'd like; I trust to your decision."

After breakfast he said:

"You will lay aside your deep mourning to-day, my child, and help me receive my friends. We shall have many, I think."

She promised she would; but her father knew it would be an unpleasant task—that Gertie would much sooner spend the day quietly with her little ones, or in acts of love and mercy to the guests were all gone. The dreary day was nearly over. Gertie had thrown herself wearily into an armchair. There was no longer need for dissembling; the forced smiles could die away; she could rest and weep. The children had been made happy. Her father had given all save her New Year presents. She had not cared for any; but she had held a lingering hope that he might come to her with a word that would break the long silence, that she might plead anew with him.

Andrew Foster had closely watched his child, as she did, with so much dignity and grace, the honors of his elegant establishment. And he saw, through the mask she wore, never so plainly was visible the changes that the last year had wrought in her beautiful face.

When he saw her sink so wearily into the chair, his heart smote him, and he went out quickly. Possibly he feared, should he linger, he might grow weak and relent.

Gertie heard the hall door close, and she knew her father had gone out for the evening likely.

How long she remained she knew not, dreaming. Not sleeping dreams were there. Her mood of depression had taken wings and she was smiling gently, sweetly. Visions of happier times were before her.

A cautious step approached. She heard it, yet moved not, nor opened her eyes. She wished not to throw off the sweet influence which was over her.

Her father, bent gently, lovingly over her and murmured:

"She is sleeping and happy now, Gertie!" he called softly.

"Father, I've not been sleeping," she answered softly.

"I thought you were, and dreaming—"

"I was dreaming happy dreams—visions, visions," she said, her voice filled with sadness.

"Have you forgotten your New Year's gift I was to bring you, Gertie?" he asked.

"No, sir; I thought you had. Have you brought me one?" she asked, forcing a show of interest.

"Yes, little daughter, I have brought it; I have never for a moment ceased to think of it. It has been a subject of much weight. You left it to my decision, and I wished to be sure of pleasing you. Now put your arms around me, and give me a kiss—one of Gertie's old loving caresses—and then go. Look in the library, and find your New Year's gift," her father said, his whole form trembling with emotion.

She was again a child, clinging lovingly about him; forgetting, for the time, all but her father's effort to please her. She knew not why it was, but she saw and felt his agitation; and she strove to calm and make him happy.

"Go, go now, darling; you are still my own Gertie," he said, with another caress.

"Some one will soon rob me of my darling," he said, smiling sadly.

"Not likely, papa," she answered, thinking, "I shall never leave him. Oh! why will he not relent?"



Cholly resolves—to propose at once.

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She opened the door, passed through the hall, and entered the library. The father strained his ear to catch the sound of joyous surprise. He hears it. It falls on his ear and sinks into his heart, and he murmured:

"Gone! Mine no longer!"

Seeking her father's gift, she raised her eyes, and there, smiling, standing before her, his arms out forth to welcome her, was Harry Landon.

She could not realize the great joy—it was too much. She dared not accept it yet. And withdrawing herself from his encircled arms, she said:

"Come, come to father! Can he mean that we shall be happy?"

Kneeling before him, she asked, between tears and smiles:

"Do you mean—Oh, father! Tell me what it is!"

"Gertie's New Year's gift—her father's choice. Have I succeeded in pleasing you, little one?"

A Happy New Year.

Just at the turn of the midnight.

When the children are fast asleep.

The tired Old Year slips out by himself.

Glad of a change to go into the shelf.

And the New Year takes a peep.

At the beautiful world that is waiting.

For the hours that he will bring.

For the wonderful things in his pocket.

Weather, air, sun, there will be no lack.

And many a marvelous thing.

Flowers, by hosts and armies.

Stars and shining and rain.

The merry times and the sorrowful times.

Quickstep and jingle and dirge and chimes.

And the weaving of joy and pain.

When the children wake in the morn'g.

Shouting their "Happy New Year."

The year will be stirred well on this way.

Swinging along through his first white day.

With the path before him clear.

Twelve long months for his journey.

Fifty-two weeks of a spell.

At the end of it all he'll slip out himself.

Glad of a chance to be laid on the shelf.

At the stroke of the midnight bell.



New Year's resolutions.

Oh, finger of the mellow chimes!

Who erst in joyous numbers,
Cleared all your bells to Christmas
rhymes,
Retelling to the weary earth
The story of the mystic birth;
Be strong to-night, and once again
Ring out a wild and glad refrain,
While all the city slumbers.

Ring valiantly, and loud, and well,
While midnight winds are sighing;
Strike down the keys, till every bell
With iron tongue and brazen throat
Calls up the echoes with its note;
And sleeping dreamers wake to hear
Your psalms for the dawning year,
And dirges for the dying.

Ring peace and rest to buried days—
To vanished joys and pleasures,
To griefs that darkened tranquil ways—
To faded hopes, and every thought
And deed of wrong the old years
brought.

Their burning rancor and their hate—
Ring down and close the lesten gate
On all their cruel treasures.
Ring psalms loud for joys to be.

In loving and in giving;
To laden ships: still out at sea,
Bound homeward on time's tidal wave,
With all that's true and good and
brave—

With loyal crews and honest freight;
Ring cheer to the golden gate
To better ways of living,
Ring bravely out your gladdest psalms,
Nor with reluctant finger
Run o'er the keys, whose speech is
veals

Sad memories of an early loss—
A hopeless path or heavy cross—
But with the dirges, let us hear
A joyous welcome to the year
That comes to those who linger.

TURNING A NEW LEAF

A man in a ragged overcoat and slouched hat, which pretty well concealed his features, was pacing the narrow walk, which stretched in front of a well built house.

It was hard to be outwaded, and it did not ease the pain to know that he had brought the misery upon himself and others. Those garments of shame which he had worn five years seemed to clothe him from head to foot.

Half maddened by his thoughts, Bruce Proctor walked away from the place. But his former home was a magnet. After the streets were quiet he was drawn to haunt the spot again.

Bruce returned round at last to the side door, and sat down on the steps. To be even thus near to them was some comfort.

Five long years since he had held his Grace in his arms. She had not then been able to lip "papa," but he remembered her baby fingers crawling over his face, and her cooing laugh.

She had since been taught that her papa was dead, and already a great wall of separation was built up between them.

There was nothing to hope for from the mother. From the moment that he had been a stranger to her, she had been a stranger to him. No message had come to him from her during his term of imprisonment, which had been shortened by extenuating circumstances.

He had hoped against hope that when his term had expired she would send this word: "Come home, and let bygones be bygones." Surely her love would at last prove stronger than her pride.

It had not, and his love had so far withered he did not think there was a chance of his ever home-coming. In the end, because those dear to him were within.

A startling thought came to him, and he felt with trembling fingers in his pocket. He had a key to this side door. It had been in his pocket at the time of his arrest; it was there still when his own clothes were returned to him with his freedom.

He got up and inserted it in the key-hole. It turned readily. He turned the knob cautiously, and stood inside. Soon he groped his way into the dining room and sat down.

He leaned back in his chair with a sense of restfulness. The house was in slumber, unconscious of its new inmate. Carter and his wife were there yet, of course, in the characters of butler and housekeeper.

But where was Grace sleeping? There was a tiny little room across the corridor, which Agnes had once said should be Grace's chamber by and by. He wondered if she were yet its occupant.

He reached the head of the stairway noiselessly, and stepped along the upper hall. He stopped at the door of his wife's chamber, which was ajar, and applied his ear to the opening. He could hear the slow, measured breathing of deep slumber.

A little beyond, on the left, another door was partially open, and a triangle of pale light reached from it into the hall.

He was repaid for the risk he had taken. A night lamp burned dimly under a rosy globe. His child lay on her low bed in one corner breathing softly.

Her Christmas gifts were all round her. A miniature cradle holding a tiny doll stood in the corner. A train with the engine headed for the doorway was ready to run, while pictures and picture books abounded.

He moved a step or two forward and started at the first glimpse of his own reflection in the mirror. In his shabby overcoat and compromising hat he seemed a blot upon that peaceful scene.

It seemed as if he must rush to the



The old man resolves—to do his duty.

sedate, take her in his arms and do your her with kisses. Yet he dared not press even one light kiss upon her cheek lest she should awake with a scream of terror.

Before the father could make up his mind to retreat, she opened her big brown eyes and fixed them upon him, not in fright or surprise, but with a sweet, slow wonder dawning more and more in their depths.

"You are Santa Claus," she said, in a confidential whisper. "I thought I should catch you some night. Did you come down the chimney?"

He nodded.

"Have you carried Christmas presents to the poor little children?"

Another nod from him.

"Please shut the door," she said, "so's not to wake mamma. Thank you. How surprised she will be when I tell her in the morning. I'm glad you come to-night again. I like all my things, specially my doll, and I'm very much 'bliged to you, Mr. Santa Claus."

"I am glad you like them," he found voice to whisper.

"Why don't you come here and sit on this chair?" she queried, with an impatient little gesture. "You must be tired going around all the nights. Mamma says it takes you a month to get done."

"I've made mamma leave the light, and I've laid away every night in case you should come," she said, confidentially. "I do believe I woke up in time to hear your coat brush out of the door the night you brought these things. But mamma said you'd come again. I'm so glad I woke up and caught you."

"I am glad, too," he said.

"You don't wear a very nice hat and coat," she said presently, "but all the boys and girls love you just the same, don't they?"

"I expect so."

"And I love you so much. You don't look a bit funny, though you look sorry; your eyes are crying instead of laughing. What are you sorry for?"

She patted his cheek with her hand pityingly. Her touch made him tremble with the stress of his emotion.

"Would you like to have me live with you?" she inquired.

"Yes."

"But I expect I couldn't leave mamma," she said slowly, as if fearful of hurting his feelings. "But I do love you a whole lot, dear Santa Claus," and, with an unexpected movement, she sprang from her bed and clasped both her arms tightly about his neck.

He strained her to his heart. He kissed cheek and brow and neck. He was conscious of a wild desire to carry her away with him. She nestled in his arms contentedly.

"I want you to bring me a nice papa next time, she said, presently. "All the other little girls kept me have papa."

Her innocent words were like a stab in his heart.

"I had a papa once," she added, "but he went away when I was a little tot. When I ask mamma about him she sends me off to play. She looks sorry, and cries sometimes when I say, 'Will he ever come back?' Oh! with a fresh caress, 'I think I would like you for a papa. But I suppose the other children couldn't spare their Santa Claus.'"

There was the sound of a stealthy footstep outside the door. Bruce started up in fright, with the intention of escaping into the street again. At that moment the door swung open in his face, and a platoon of light rang out upon the midnight stillness.

Bruce fell heavily to the floor. Grace screamed.

Mrs. Proctor had fired the shot at the man who she thought was attempting to carry off her little one.

She tore open the clothes on the left side, where a dark stain was slowly spreading, and felt the heart. It was beating feebly.

"Oh, mamma, mamma, it's my Santa Claus, who says he loves me a whole lot," said Grace, kneeling down and trying to lift his head from the carpet.

"What have you done to him? He won't speak to me, O, dear!" and she began to cry, with her face on his.

"He will live, said the surgeon, an hour later. 'If he has good care but his heart had a narrow escape from that bullet.'"

He opened his eyes after the surgeon had gone, to see his wife by the bedside.

A New Year's Meeting.

"Do you know how to get to papa?"

"I went on New Year's day—"

You climb the hill where the pine-trees grow.

And grandpa comes half-way.

"He waits in the road for mamma and me."

And plays he's a robber bold.

That's what I can't help laughing.

How grandpa pretends to scold.

"He threatens me with his cane, and says—"

"A kiss or your life, my dear."

And then with a regular beeping

I wish him a Happy New Year!"

Tudor Tenks in St. Nicholas.

Siberian Divorce.

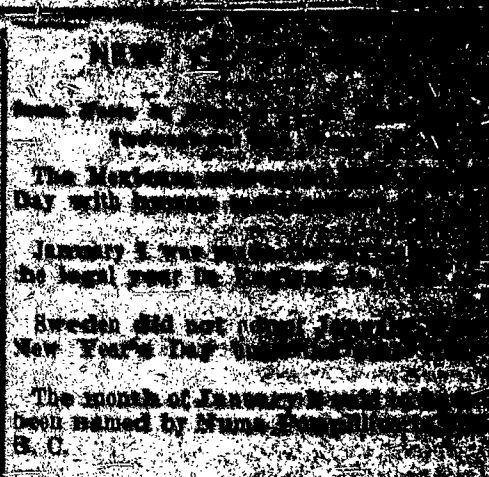
In Siberia, if a man is dissatisfied with the most trifling acts of his wife, he tears a cap or veil from her face, and that constitutes a divorce.

Russian Students.

Nearly 90 per cent. of the students at Russian universities belong to the poorer classes and have difficulty in paying their way.

The Atlantic Cable.

The new cable which has been laid across the Atlantic weighs 800 tons to the mile. This is the heaviest of the cable.



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