

Origin of New Year's

AMUEL JOHNSON in his history of England gives the following data:

The Druids began the year on March 10, the Persians and Phoenicians at the autumnal equinox, the ancient Mexicans on February 23. The Egyptians reckoned the beginning of the year from the first of Toth (March April), but since the Egyptian year was 365 days, while the tropical year consists of 365.242 days, the Egyptian year constantly lost, and its seasons shifted so that in about 1,507 tropical years New Year's Day had run through all the days of the true year back to the starting point. Thus in 4 B. C. the first of Toth, or New Year's Day, was on August 20. The Greeks of the time of Solon began the year at the winter solstice, December 21, but in the time of Pericles, in 453 B. C., they changed the date to June 21. The Romans began the year first in March and later on January 1. The Jews began and still begin their civil year with the first of the month of Tishri, which roughly corresponds to our September. The Hindoos begin the year with the entrance of the sun into the Hindoo sign Aashwin, now April 12. The Chinese reckon the year from the first moon after the new equinox, which happens not earlier than January 21 and no later than February 19. The present year 1877 of the Mahomedans began on May 22, 1878. In England December 25 was New Year's Day until the time of William the Conqueror. His coronation happened on January 1, hence the year was reckoned to begin on that day. But England gradually fell into disrepute with the rest of Christendom, and began the year with March 25. The Gregorians calculated the 1582 reformed January 1 as the gateway of the year. Catholic countries accepted the change immediately, but Pro-

testant countries were recalcitrant, and it was not until 1752 that England acquiesced the custom of celebrating the first day of the new year is of very ancient origin, and appears to have prevailed generally among the nations of antiquity. **MONIUS MARCELLUS** refers the origin of New Year's gifts among the Romans to Titus Tatius, King of the Sabines, who, having considered as a good omen a present of some branches cut in a wood consecrated to Stranix, the Goddess of Strength, which he received on the first day of the new year, authorized the custom afterward and gave these gifts the name of **Strene**, 747 B. C.

Elmy and other Latin authors tell us that the Romans celebrated New Year's Day with feasting and merrymaking, visiting friends and interchanging presents. When Christianity replaced paganism it proscribed everything that could recall the ancient cultus, and in opposition changed the former day of feasting and rejoicing into one of fasting and mourning. By degrees, however, the Church, in the eighth century, appropriated the fast, and the earlier and more congenial Jewish customs were gradually resumed. Among the other nations of antiquity the social observance of the first day of the year appears to have been in substance the same as among the Romans. The Persians celebrated it by exchanging presents of eggs and bringing offerings. The Druids performed on that day the famous ceremony of cutting the mistletoe, branches of which they distributed among the ancient Britons. Among the Saxons of the northern nations

GOOD RESOLUTIONS

One of the best of good resolutions is not to make too many of them. It is a common experience to find the best of all to keep—followed by the weakest here and there until the year is weakened time and again by the loss of a poor link, becomes a disjointed, worthless thing. Even a single strong link between one's intentions and performance is a better and safer reliance.

What a difference! Sure! Surely a different thing according to differing personal needs. There is a parable, however, in one of Emerson's shortest and most memorable sayings, "Days," to which at the season of good resolutions every one may well give heed. The poem tells of a man in his garden, to whom the days come one by one, offering gifts of varying value—transient and permanent. The man as most men will—chooses the transient and then as the day departs, "under her

What Emerson has said in the poem much better than any definition of it can indicate—Mr. W. H. Lecky has suggested in prose. With some, time is mere duration, a blank, featureless thing, gliding swiftly and insensibly by. With others every day, and almost every hour, seems to have its distinctive stamp and character, for good or ill, in work or pleasure.

If, then, one is confused by the multitude of possible good resolutions, is it not the part of wisdom to seize upon this one thing for the new year to make the most of every opportunity, to practice what Mr. Lecky calls the art of wisely using the spare five minutes, the casual vacancies or intervals of life? This is a resolution which is not lost in the breaking. It is for daily renewal, with constantly increasing power to turn it into act.

ANOTHER YEAR

God is so good to us! When we have sinned and torn With greedy grasp and blood of human life And blurred and blackened with inhuman strife The pure white Year He gave us yesterday— He is so good to us who would not prove The world's redemption by the strength of Love.

He gently lays the Record-Book aside, Close about and sealed and hallowed with a tear, Yet hath such pity for the souls of men He freely gives another pure white Year. Renews the whole sweet world where mortals hide, And fills our hearts with zeal to try again!

NEW YEAR'S GAMES

New Year's Eve is called a night for games. Here is one which will at least keep people wide awake. It is called a New Year's Greeting, and is on the plan of the cobweb party. The fun starts in the parlor, where, attached to a convenient chair, are a number of ends of gay colored twine as many as there are people arranged in a festoon. Each end is the beginning of a ball of the same color which is hidden somewhere in the house. Each person selects a string which he must follow winding up as he goes, to keep free from tangles. If these balls are cleverly put away the whole house may be turned into a hunting ground filled with a jolly throng of hunters, but the guiding cords must be carefully handled or else they will snap, and the clue be lost. At the end of the search each person finds the remainder of the ball in some unexpected place wrapped carefully up with a funny bit of advice to the finder. The one who winds his ball most neatly and quickly should have a prize. The bits of advice may be anything such as:

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth
Children should be seen and not heard
A stitch in time saves ninety-nine
Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you
Nuts to Crack.
Some one must crack a quantity of English walnuts neatly, so that each half is perfect, and the meat in halves or whole pieces can be taken out. Then on slips of paper write out numerous puzzling questions—in rhyme if it is possible—and tuck them away each in two of the empty half shells, which can be tied together with tiny colored ribbons. Each player receives a toy hammer, so when the nuts, or at least the filled nutshells, are passed around they can be easily smashed. A plate, containing the good part of the nuts all wrapped up as bonbons, is then handed around and each player takes one. An answer to one question is wrapped around each nut, and each player then reads in turn his question and the answer. The answer will probably be most ridiculous when read to the question. A vote should decide the best, and a prize be given to the holder.

STRONG TO COME

If the Old Year bide,
Where shall New Year stay?
Open every portal wide,
Let the Old Year pass away.
With sad Yesterday,
Gloom, and all their kin,
Worry, Anger, dull Dismay,
Let our braver New Year in!

Where grim shadows hide,
Flash a sun-strong ray,
From a dwelling purified,
Let the Old Year pass away.
Plead not for delay;
Wake from "What has been,"
Resolute, and blithe, and gay,
Let our braver New Year in!

Fling Despair aside;
Banish Doubt for aye,
With fair memories glorified,
Let the Old Year pass away.
Sorrow for him? Nay?
Tournays now begin,
Bringing armor for the fray,
Let our braver New Year in!

ENVOY.
Look you forward! Facing Gray,
Let the Old Year pass away,
Life's ahead—with all to win!
Let our braver New Year in!



the corner Jan. 1, 1909. Shake, old man! Now that we have met, what shall we do?
Jim—I've a great scheme. If you'll lend me five dollars, I'll borrow it.



FINIS

NEW YEAR'S DAY OF MANY DATES

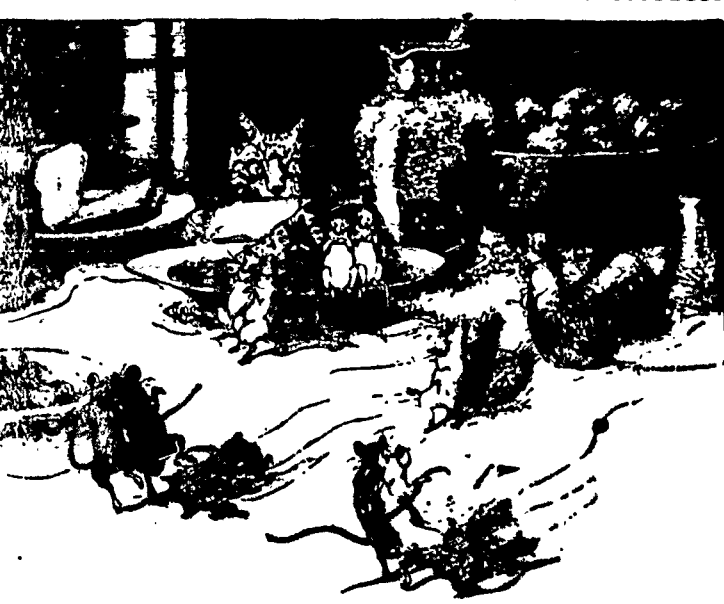
January 1 as the beginning of the new year is a purely arbitrary date, and was fixed in 1582 by Charles IX. who adopted the Julian calendar. In those times and long after many people followed the old Roman custom of beginning the year on March 1. For a long period of time the beginning of the year was fixed at the Annunciation, March 25. The people of Pisa followed this practice as late as 1745.

In still another period Christmas was New Year's Day and in another Easter was so regarded.

The most scientific date for the beginning of the new year would be one of the equinoxes or one of the solstices.

The Roman New Year, falling March 1, explains the names of the months, September, October, November and December, meaning seventh, eighth, ninth and ten months. It was named in honor of Julius Caesar. August was named after the Emperor Augustus.

The year 1909, according to our calendar, will bear the dates 5669 and 5670 of the Jewish era. The latter year commences at sunset on Sept. 4. The Chinese New Year will begin in February, and as the Chinese time their era by the reigns of their Emperors their next year will be called the twenty-fifth of the reign of Kuang Hsu.



WATCHING THE OLD YEAR OUT.

A GOOD RIDDANCE.
When the New Year in at the front door peeps,
And out at the back door the Old Year creeps,
I hope he will carry away on his back
A load as big as a pedler's pack;
And we'll stow away in his baggage then
Some things that we never shall want again.
We will put in the pucker little pout
That drives all the that up and down
And the creaky scowls merry dimples out
Fold nice little foreheads right into a frown;
And the little grumbles on rainy days,
And the bent-up pins, and the teasing jokes
That never seem funny to other folks;
And the stones that are tossed—be sure of that—
At robin redbreast and pussy cat.
And we'll throw in the bag some cross little "don'ts,"
And most of the "can'ts" and all of the "won'ts,"
And the grumpy words that should not be said
When mamma calls, "It is time for bed."
If we get all these in the Old Year's back,
And shot it so tight that they won't come back,
To-morrow morning, when we see
A Happy New Year



A New Year's Call.

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CALL NOT THE OLD YEAR DEAD

Call not the Old Year dead! For his estate
Of power and profit, and of work was great.
About his bier all reverently tread;
"His works do follow him," he is not dead.

Call not the Old Year dead! For purposeful
His long days were. He breathed the beautiful
Of thought and voice where thought and voice were not,
And fashioned roses for our common lot.

Call not the Old Year dead! No specter he,
But with the New is king of destiny.
Wraptured, his the earth whereon he trod,
He slumbers only in the dawn of God.

BY A. L. THOMPSON