"FOLLY"

A Tale of a New Year's Eve Ball

"I'M to go as the New Year," said Alison Thorpe. "Rose colored satin, you know, to signify the dawn of the morning and pearls sewed on in all sorts of fantastic shapes for snowflakes."

"And I," eagerly added Celeste, the second scion of the house of Thorpe, "am to be Lucy Ashton, the Bride of Lammermoor."

"Mr. Hale is coming as Richard Coeur de Lion," said Alison.

"And Will Liscombe is to be Folly, with his cap and bells and a costume of violet velvet," said Celeste.

Theolyn listened with big eyes and cheeks glowing with excitement. "Oh, I think they might let me go to the New Year's eve ball," said she. "It's awfully hard to be left here all alone, with Dorcas and the dogs."

"Now, Theo, don't compel us to go all over the ground again," said Alison severely. "Do you suppose we want to go in a regular drove?"

Theo had eaten her cold supper and was sitting staring into the fire with an unperused book in her lap when there sounded the gay chime of sleigh-bells under the window, and presently old Dorcas hobbled in with a countenance of dismay.

"It's always the way," said she. "My missus never goes away from home but what something is sure to happen. Here's a young man fetched in here with a broken leg or something."

"Don't believe a word she says, Theo!" cried a cheerful voice as Mr. William Liscombe himself hobbled in, leaning on the shoulder of the little red-headed stable boy. "It's only I, and it's nothing on earth but a sprain. Don Pedro, the new black horse, hasn't had quite exercise enough of late, and he took it into his head to shy at the old burned stumps by the waterfall

"HAPPY NEW YEAR, MR. LISCOMBE," SHE SAID GAYLY.

and flung me out with my leg doubled awkwardly under me. I held desperately on to the reins, though, and"—

And by way of proving satisfactorily that there was nothing the matter with him Mr. Liscombe fainted away.

The red haired stable boy ran for the doctor. Old Dorcas sent Theolyn relentlessly up to bed.

Theo obeyed the old woman's injunctions to go upstairs at once with ominous docility. But she did not go to bed. She had taken up a certain flat pasteboard box which had been unloaded from Liscombe's sleigh in the hall and discovered what its contents were, and she was waiting at the outer gate when the stable boy guided old Dolly between its stone posts on his way to Mandeville manor.

"It's only me, Tom," said Miss Theo. "I'm going to the ball, you know. I've got such a costume here, but it is to be a dead secret. Quick, let me get in!"

Miss Celeste Thorpe's eyes brightened when Folly, with his cap and bells, his violet velvet tunic, belted with a cable of Roman gold, and his violet satin mask, asked Lucy Ashton to waltz with him. She leaned languishingly on his arm. She whispered fascinating nothings to him as they promenaded between the waltzes.

"Go and dance with some one else," whispered she. "You'll set every one to gossiping."

"Let them gossip," said Folly. "I care only for what one person says."

"Do you really care for me?" giggled Celeste.

"Really care for you? I love you. Will you be mine?" murmured Folly in flute sweet accents.

"Yes, my darling," sighed Miss Celeste, who at seven and twenty had determined that a good match was the only thing desirable. "But you haven't deceived me. I know who you are—dear Will."

"Let me bring you an ice," said the dear Will, and Celeste sank rapturously on a red plush divan to ponder on her good fortune and await the return of her lover.

Meanwhile mischievous Theo, half frightened at what she had done, was speeding home through the evergreen glens.

She was down early the next morning as quiet and dignified as a princess, with a bunch of mistletoe that Alison had chanced to overlook in her hands.

"A happy New Year, Mr. Liscombe," said she gayly. "And here is your present."

"English mistletoe!" said he. "And for me?"

"The partaker is as bad as the thief!" cried Theolyn gayly. "I stole it out of Alison's room. It's a part of her masquerade dress!"

"And I have missed the masquerade after all," said Liscombe, looking with bright, appreciative eyes at her dimpled young loveliness. "But I haven't missed you, Theolyn. Do you know, dear, I dreamed of you all night."

Theo turned her face coquettishly away.

"If you were going to dream of anybody," said she, "why didn't you dream of Celeste?"

"Because I don't love Celeste—because I love you."

"Me!" Poor Theolyn turned pink and white like a sweet pea blossom. "Mr. Liscombe, it isn't right for you to laugh at me."

"Sweetheart, I am not laughing," said he. "Come nearer to me. Remember that I can't come to you and be merciful. Let me hold your little hand in mine and answer me. Will you be my wife?"

And Theolyn, in great confusion, owned up that she thought she could.

Mrs. Thorpe and her two elder daughters, who had remained all night at Mandeville manor, returned to lunch. Their amazement at finding an unexpected guest in possession of the house was unbounded.

"Were you not at the ball last night," demanded Mrs. Thorpe, "as Folly, in a violet velvet suit?"

"I? No, certainly. I was here with a sprained ankle, under the care of Dorcas and the doctor," declared Liscombe.

"Then who was it came as Folly? Who was it asked our Celeste to marry him?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mr. Liscombe, leaning comfortably back in his easy chair. "But I asked Theo this morning to marry me, and she has consented."

Mrs. Thorpe went back to where her daughters were unpacking their finery in their own rooms and related the annoying tale.

And to the end Celeste Thorpe never was able to unravel this New Year's mystery.

But there were the facts. At the identical hour in which the tender proposal had been breathed Will Liscombe lay under the doctor's hands at the old Thorpe homestead. And he was now Theolyn's affianced husband. Celeste knew that she wasn't mistaken, and she knew that every one else thought that she was. And the only person that can unravel the riddle is Theolyn herself, if she chooses.—Shirley Browne in Fireside Companion.

"Blowing the Bubbles of Fate"

At the mystic threshold of life's climb
The New Year sits sedate,
A-blowing through the pipes of Time
The bubbles of our fate.

Quaint New Year's Ceremony of the Indians

THE new year of the Iroquois Indians commences nearly a month later than our own. The first sun of the moon, Nis-ko-wuk-ni, rises on the 25th day of January, and to the Indians this symbolizes the dawn of another year of the Iroquois confederacy and that a week of festivity is at hand.

With the rising of the sun a company of "buffalo heads" break up into four pairs and march to their assigned

THE HEAD FEAST WOMEN DEDICATE THE MEAL.

district to notify ceremoniously the people that the old year is gone and the new is come. With heavy striped corn pounders they smite the doorposts and sing the buffalo song: "Yey-hey, yey-hey, Gwa-a-won-dey, Gwa-a-won-dey! Hail, nephews! Hail!" With their ash paddles they sprinkle the corners of the house as they enter it in token of its purification from past evils and then light the fire of the new year.

The fee for the buffaloes is a handful of Indian tobacco, the host explaining as he gives it, "It clears the mind and sobers the thoughts."

The next day the whole nation enters into the game of peach stone dice. Each brotherhood of clans gambles against the other, gambles religiously and furiously. Their particular brand of betting, however, is in conformity to religious custom, and the result of the game determines clan precedence and supremacy for the year.

The third morning of the new year is devoted to the burning of the white dog. The white dog of the Indians is extinct, but the ceremony continues for, as Chief Crow says: "Our religion is greater than any of its incidentals or ceremonies. They are not essentials—the thankful heart is." In the present ceremony tobacco is offered to the Great Spirit as a thank offering and is thrown in the sacred fire by handfuls during the white dog chant. The white dog ceremony is a recital of man's obligations to the Maker of all things for the things of his creation. Thanks are given for every force in nature and every plant and animal useful to mankind.

On Thursday morning, the fourth day of the ceremony, the ha-jast-ta-gy, or high priest, begins a three day sermon that runs up into the one hundred and thirtythly before it closes. Three entire mornings are consumed by the sermon, which, although it has been preached each year for 109 years, has never varied even a word.

The ceremonies of Friday and Saturday close the feast of the new year. For several days the feastmakers have been pounding corn for the great feast days. The milling process is primitive and is done with a wooden mortar and pestle, the head feast woman striking a few blows with the pestle to dedicate the meal. The corn is taken from the braided strings and prepared in various ways for the mill. Some is soaked in a weak wood ash lye to remove the hulls, some is parched, and some is merely soaked a little. Whatever method is used eventually yields a tempting dish that even palefaces enjoy.

IMPOSSIBLE NEW YEAR NOTES.

Your latest poem is so pleasing that we beg your acceptance of the inclosed additional check.

We have decided to give you two weeks' holiday and to raise your salary 30 per cent.

Please accept this deed to a house and lot. We are sorry that you have had to pay rent so long.

As you have a few holiday bills to meet inclosed find our check for $50, which, we trust, will help you out some.—Atlanta Constitution.

NEW YEARS THOUGHTS.

No minute or hour of solar time begins the new year. The sunset of one place is the sunrise of another. Time's true calendar is in the spirit of man. Then every day should be greeted as the dawn of a new and better life—greeted with new sensibilities, new ideas, new purposes—so that life may never wither, but keep eternally young and ready to leap, and as full of wonder as the eyes of the Child who sits in the Sistine Madonna's arms.

God's mercy flows over the past year, blotting out its failures and sins. Let us, then, set our faces hopefully toward the new. Pass out of the book of resolutions into the book of acts and so inscribe upon its fresh, fair pages a better record! May there be in all the coming year no bud that shall not burst into blossom and no blossom that shall fall without being filled into fruit.

The old year, with its lights and shadows, has drawn to a close. As we look in review we cannot but sincerely regret any stain on its pages, knowing that they must stand until that great day "when God shall judge the secrets of men." Then let us turn our eyes toward the new year with resolution and hope, with faith and love, and the victory is ours. There will be the same old foes to meet, the same old temptations to encounter and the same old battles to fight. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, and going forth in "His name" we will wear the victor's crown.

THE NEW YEAR'S— DINNER OF OLD JAPAN

AS Christmas is the greatest holiday of the year with us, so is New Year's the time of great rejoicing with the Japanese.

And no wonder, for to the folks of Old Nippon January means rest from the labor and toil of gathering the harvest. For this reason and because it is supposed to be the beginning of all things new the Japanese have made it their festal month.

At the very end of the old year great pine branches are placed by all gateways and hearths and the numerous shrines of their gods.

The pine bough signifies constancy and is hung with a straw circle made to resemble a gem, having rays of light coming from it, and stuck with a sardine, edible seaweed, a leaf of evergreen and many bits of paper.

The straw rings are also placed upon a great many articles of furniture and a number of kitchen implements because at one time these things were thought to be endowed with life.

New Year's is a busy time for the housewife, who has to cook and prepare the dishes which have a special significance for the great day.

First comes clam soup. The clam, which opens when cooked, typifies the opening of good fortune.

The Japanese word for health is "mame," and so beans, which are called by a name which sounds like this, must be eaten.

Radishes and fish, salmon and sweets must be eaten also, for on this marvelous night the Japanese believe that a whole year is added to one's life.

For this evening the children may be as troublesome as they please without fear or reproof, for no sound of scolding or quarreling is ever heard in a Japanese home at this time.

When the great meal has been made ready the gods of the household are first served. Many lights are lit before them. Sake is offered in little vases. Before the shelf on which are the gods the family hang colored leaflets, each possessing a supposed power for luck.

Seaweed, which means rejoicing, is also offered in bundles.

When the family have duly honored and worshiped their gods they set about eating the great meal.

"Once you have partaken of this feast," say they, "a whole year is added to your life!"

Thus, if a child is born in December, his family will gravely declare him to be two years old after this meal.

The Years.

They come, they pass, with snow soft feet,
And deathless youth illumes their eyes.
Alike to them are chaff and wheat,
Alike the foolish and the wise.
They bring the wound, they bring the balm,
They light our smiles, they dry our tears,
Careless of death or life, the calm
Servants of time, the patient years.

The winds that rend and strew the rose,
Dissolve the sweetness through the air.
This wind of time that beats and blows,
Leaves all the past still fragrant fair.
Though hopes may fail and hearts may break
And fruitless all the striving be,
One golden gift is left to make
Man's bliss—consoling memory.

Hail and farewell, farewell and hail,
The going and the coming guest.
Welcome to daybreak's shining sail
As to the night beyond the west.
The years may come, the years may go,
And bring the sad or merry mood,
Merry or sad, one thing we know—
That life is good, ah, life is good!
—St. Louis Republic.

Here Tom Johnson, wise and gay,
Spent a happy New Year's day.

THIS is a tale of New Year's day, a day when people should be gay, when aching cares should be forgot and sighs and frowns and tears be not; a day when smile and joy should reign, when pain should not be, nor pain; when everybody should be fed and every one went up his head. Good resolutions should abound; good things to eat, too, should be found, and from the hour when morning's light is shed upon the town till night is well advanced all persons should indulge in "times" that some call "good."

Now, Thomas Johnson was a man who every New Year's used to plan to see the sights and hear the clinks of glasses while he drank the drinks that almost any person may more freely take of on that day than any other in the year without the shadow of a fear that any one of him will judge, "He's got to taking too much booze!" A hundred dollars was the sum Tom Johnson spent to make things hum, and with it in his pockets he would always start out merrily at 10 o'clock sharp to the minute, and then till midnight he'd be "in it."

This day Tom started out alone. He felt quite friendless and unknown. The day was cold, and driving sleet went whistling up and down the street, and ere he'd sauntered half a block Tom Johnson had a dreadful shock. A man he'd known in other times stood on the curbstone begging dimes. His clothes were thin and mean and old; his jaws were chattering with the cold, and when he met his old friend's gaze he tried to hide his pallid face.

But Johnson would not have it so. "What is the trouble, old friend Joe? Down on your luck? I didn't know what had become of you."

Then Tom took his friend's arm and led him from the pavement to a cozier spot where it was warm and dry.

"Great Scott!" said Tom when they had sat down, "I thought that you had left the town. Here, waiter, bring a good hot lunch and brew a bowl of good strong punch. Now, Joe, just tell me what you need. I'm glad we met—I am, indeed."

Then bit by bit the facts came out. Hard times had downed Tom's friend. Without a cent he'd found himself that

A man he'd known in other times
Stood on the curbstone begging dimes.

morning—without a job, too—so, forlorn, he'd started out to beg for bread. Tom Johnson sadly shook his head.

"You should have come to me," he said. "But say goodby to days of sorrow. I'll find a place for you, to-morrow. You shall begin the world anew; your sky shall once again be blue."

Then to his rooms Tom Johnson led and in warm clothes from foot to head he clad his old time friend, then said: "This is New Year's day, old pain. This town is doubtless full of good men down. Let us two see if we can't find some others who have run behind. We'll take a cab and drive about and hunt them up and get them out, and if they don't enjoy this day it won't be my fault anyway."

To this Tom's friend gave quick assent, and up and down the town they went, and before evening they had found of friends of both a dozen pound on whom Dame Fortune fate had frowned. Did they accept Tom's bid to dine? Would ducks swim? Would you decline a chance to change from grave to gay New Year's or any other day? At the table every one ate and drank till he was done; smoked and joked and stories told; some were poor and some were old. Then, to wind up the New Year's day, Johnson took them to the play, and when the curtain was rung down his friends agreed that in this town Tom's equal never could be found.

And when at last he sought his bed Tom missed his usual New Year's head. What he thought was far more funny—he had not spent all his money, but to his friend he made remark:

"To these my words I pray you hark: Never before, I desire to say, have I passed a happier New Year's day."—Davis Dexter in Philadelphia Press.