



To all—good-by. My task is done.
I've swung the circle of the sun.
I've given all that Life demands.
I've dealt Fate's cards to friends, to foes.
I've touched you each with joy and care.
Drawn wrinkles here, smoothed wrinkles there.
And if I've frosted temples gray,
I've made warm lips to kiss away
The chill. The Death, the strife
I've visited—I've granted Life.

I'm Time. I've robbed your cradle dear.
Yet I ask you—your dying Year.
Have I not filled it? Answer free.
If I've robbed you have not you cheated me?
Have not you sought to kill me—Time?
Have not you wasted me—God's gift sub-
lime?

Misspent me, mocked me, wished me on
my way,
Loathed and reviled me—prayed another
day.
And when I granted it, mocked that one,
too.
Are we not quit at even—I and you?

My Kismet—Fate. Old World, good-by,
My cycle's done—I faint—I die.



Oh, World! dear World—at last my dream
is true.

Through all eternity I've longed for you,
Impatient of the years I had to wait.
Each nerve a quiver, lest I be too late.
And now I'm here—and all of you are
mine.

For my brief reign. Yet, also, I am thine.
For use—abuse—but treat me as you may.
Remember this—I'll give and take away.
And but this moment born—but half awake,
I'll tell you now what I'll both give and take.

I'll take a life from you here and there.
I'll give—a lover true—a sweetheart fair.
Zest of your fondest hopes I'll steal away.
I'll grant a grain of wisdom day by day.
And tho', perchance, I should take Peter's
all.

With lavish hands I'll shower it on Paul.
I'll smite some of you with an iron glove.
I'll purge some others with my tenderest
love.

I'm both your queen and slave. I now
make way.
This night is yours. Tomorrow you'll repay.

The 1915 Boy.

"I will not put pins in my dear teacher's chair." (Tacks will hurt just as much, anyway.)

"I will not quarrel and fight with my big brothers in 1915." (What have I got a little brother for?)

"I will not play hockey from school to go fishing or swimming." (That is, in the winter time.)

"I will be a regular attendant at Sunday school." (At Christmas time and just before the summer excursion, of course.)

"I will not take mother's currant jelly from the pantry without permission." (Her raspberry jam is good enough for me.)

"I will be kind to dumb animals, such as tigers, lions and elephants." (Stray cats and dogs, however, had better keep out of this neighborhood.)

"I will not (Oh, gee, that's enough. They say the good die young, and I want to live until I catch that red-headed boy on the next block who stuck his tongue out at me yesterday!)

NEW YEAR PROPHETS

By GENE MORGAN.

ANYBODY who says the world is growing less superstitious must be talking through the end-lips on his cap. Every year about January 1 old superstition shows itself like a hydra-headed monster in a laundry basket.

To be sure, we no longer take out insurance against ghosts, and if we saw a hobgoblin we'd want to know why the hotel bellhop had grown those whiskers. But there is one kind of superstition which we seem to be giving more encouragement all the time, and that is the New Year prophecy.

The true New Year prophet is a cheerful soul. If he ever has any good news concerning the future, he carefully nibbles at the hard ground with a pickaxe and buries it. Bad news, calamity, disaster, catastrophe, misfortune, these are the staple groceries in which he prefers to deal. And he has such a clever way of making good, too.

The New Year prophet wears crepe to work every morning while he is putting his forecast in order. He also wears a long, sad face and murmurs ever and anon that the worst is yet to come. He does this in order that the world may grow pale and weep and shudder. He just loves to show us a good time.

The way the New Year prophet makes good on his predictions is to promise every kind of bad luck there is, from famine to earthquake, and from plague to war. As this globe of ours has been enjoying a steady diet of these things since the year one, the New Year prophet rarely goes wrong, but just waves his printed predictions upside down and warbles, "I told you so." He is a sure-thing player, and rarely takes a chance that is not a sixty-to-one shot.

For instance, he is safe in forecasting a typhoon in the Pacific ocean, which will destroy shipping, but he wouldn't dare to predict that James Jones will pay me that ten dollars he owes me before the first of next April. He finds it advisable to forecast a famine in China—any old thing can happen in China—but under no circumstances would he venture the belief that I will surely keep all the good resolutions I made on the evening of December 30.

If I thought the pay was steady and the hours not too long for indoor work, I believe I should like to take up the work of making New Year prophecies. For the benefit of enterprising employers, looking for bright young men at this kind of work, I have made up a few sample prophecies for 1915. It makes no difference how I did it, whether by crystal gazing or by scientific methods. However, I accomplished it without the aid of a medical almanac or other weapons.

For instance, I predict that: In January the days will be a little longer, and ice will be cheap. On Jan-



Murmurs Ever and Anon That the Worst Is Yet to Come.

uary 21 the coal bin will be empty, and father will chop up a parlor chair. The month of February will take only 29 days to pass a given point. The weather will be extremely unsettled, and when it is not stormy the air will be quite calm. In spite of the cold spell cherry trees will bloom around February 22 in all candy store windows.

March will come in like a lamb afraid of waking the baby, and will go out like a lioness monster who has just overheard someone say he is getting fat. Rain checks will be issued in case this condition is reversed. There will be some warm weather, which will cause optimists to throw aside their overcoats and shed their thick, prickly underwear. When the cold spell gets back on the job, fresh, frozen optimist will be one of the delicacies of the season.

April will come in with a sore foot, having kicked an opera hat which completely surrounded a brick. April will be a wet month, and early umbrella crops will be reported from many regions. Pido will here begin to shed his fur.

Now there's a prophecy which shows what I can do. To confess up, there was nothing difficult about it. For anyone can be a New Year prophet. Yes, without any previous training, or experience in sending spirit messages

collect, instead of paying the boy your self.

It's safe to prophesize that in the year 1915, A. D., you are going to keep most of your good resolutions if you made them in an earnest, sincere, try-again spirit, instead of in the usual, automatic way, like giving a fence its annual whitewash. It's safe to forecast that you'll keep out of debt, that you'll increase your bank account, and that you'll get your gilt-edged license for health and happiness—if, instead of growing dreamy-eyed and wondering what the New Year may bring



On January 21 the Coal Bin Will Be Empty.

forth, you step out on the right foot, with your eyes to the front. Decide that when old Dame Fortune meets you you'll be plugging along the straight and narrow path, and then she won't have room to side-step you.

Be your own prophet and predict a year of hard work and square living for yourself. You should worry while the professional New Year prophet is dusting off his shelf-worn stock of plagues, famines, volcanic eruptions and crop failures in Helgoland.

ABE MARTIN ON NEW YEAR

Thoughts by a Philosopher About the Man Who Swears Off—Has Hard Time for a While.

Sometimes when a fellow who kin drink or leave it alone gets t' lookin' back o'er th' year jest closin' an' sums up all th' things he's done or undone, all th' energy an' money he's wasted an' all th' things he's missed or neglected in that regretted time, th' past looms up like a piece o' tar soap. Then he quietly resolves t' bid good-by t' th' social cup an' New Year's day, little dreamin' o' th' colossal struggle jest around th' corner.

Th' fellow who has long been used t' fortifyin' himself with a stimulant on over occasion has party tough sleddin' for a while after he swears off. There's th' ordeal o' buyin' a new hat or attendin' a banquet. Th' fellow who kin drink or leave it alone allus smells like a Deer Creek distillery after he buys a new hat, an' he'll often train fer weeks when there's a banquet ahead. Sometimes he'll set clean thro' a banquet, or at least till th' last syllable of an address on "Th' Weddin' o' th' Oceans" has died away in th' cigarette smoke.

But how a fellow's whole style o' pitchin' changes when he once gets thoroughly established on th' water wagon an' begins t' talk natural fer th' first time since th' first baby come! How his patient wife misses his glowin' account o' th' day's earnings when he used t' stall thro' th' evening meal! How his associates miss his decided views on ever question that comes up! How th' one-legged newsboy on th' corner misses his lavish generosity! How he kicks on th' grocery bill! How his waistcoat pockets bulge with segars, each one representin' a 15-cent drink that he's muffed while in th' hands o' friends, an' how his little children miss th' peppermint drops that used t' fall from his overcoat as he flung it carelessly across th' planner.

Late Bud says that gittin' on an off th' water wagon is th' only exercise some fellers ever git—Abe Martin, in American Magazine.

A New Year's Wish.

To become an expert at forgetting, just to forget all the unkind acts, the deep wrongs, the mean words, the bitter disappointments—just let them go, forget them—the memory will become quick and alert to remember the things worth remembering, the mind given to beautiful things, worth-while things, and to remember always that I am in the presence of God, this is my desire for the New Year.

Good-by, Old Year.

Peace to its ashes! Peace to its embers of burnt-out things; fears, anxieties, doubts all gone! I see them now as a thin, blue smoke hanging in the bright heavens of the past year, vanishing away into utter nothingness. Not many hopes deceived, not many illusions scattered, not many anticipations disappointed, but love fulfilled, the heart comforted, the soul enriched with affections.—Longfellow.

Help!

"Gentleman offers to exchange a Christmas present for something useful."

Children and Old-Fashioned Toys



"CHILDREN are conservative beings, even old-fashioned, when it comes to choosing toys. They aren't up to date and as full of the modern spirit of progress and invention as the toymakers believe them to be."

Thus spoke one who is a sort of professional Santa Claus—that is, he has played the part at so many Sunday school Christmas parties that he is sometimes imagined he is growing cotton whiskers.

"They display the same quaint, simple, old-fashioned taste as their grandfathers and grandmothers when they were children," he continued. "Most of them, do, anyhow. Every year the toy manufacturers break loose with a new crop of automatic racing cars, aeroplanes, submarines, fire engines and kicking donkeys. If the children were constructed on the same nervous clock-work plan, they would give old Santa Claus no rest unless he kept up with all the modern inventions. Instead of toy soldiers they would demand mortar batteries, and they would not be satisfied with mooley cows, but would demand that they have pedigree and give only certified milk and cream."

"They would not accept a Noah's ark unless it was a combination of the steamship Lusitania and a modern cement bungalow, with sleeping porches, twin-screw propellers, electric searchlights, wireless apparatus, second chattel mortgage—in fact, all the comforts of ship and home complete. They would require Mr. Noah to carry a pilot's license as well as a college degree in natural history. All the animals would have to be trained to do tricks, and poor Noah's family would have a fine time herding them while wearing wooden raincoats and stove-pipe hats."

"Fortunately children, real children, are not constructed that way. They want their arks on the old-fashioned plan, whereby you lift off the roof and find Noah minus his head, and most of the animals trying to hobble on three legs."

"Automobiles in miniature, with real

upholstered seats and rubber tires may fascinate a small boy for a few hours, but you'd better place your faith in a good, old-fashioned rocking horse, with saddle and stirrups, and a mane and tail of real hair. The rocking horse is not going out of fashion by a long ways, and I predict that in the horseless age, if that time ever comes, our children's children will be jerking the mane of a wooden 'horse' and whipping him on his painted flanks, and trying to feed him crackers. Also, they'll be falling off his back and bumping their little foreheads in the old-fashioned way, and 'horse' will have to be thrashed and locked up in the clothes closet for his bad behavior."

"And as for dolls, you've got to give them real 'baby dolls' and not grand ladies in the latest tango gowns and hats. For the last 50 years or so doting parents who are well to do have been trying the experiment of presenting their little girls with waxen fashion models—only to find the precious one crying for the rag baby of the laundress' daughter. Children show the real mother instinct when they spurn the 'play-child' which is too dressy and up to date."

"I have one friend, the father of a large and lively family. I make him happy every Christmas time by presenting his kids with a bunch of cheap, mechanical toys. After about half an hour of winding them up, the little ones tire of the clicking wonders and return to their woolly dogs, rubber dolls and other simple favorites. That is when father's fun begins. He insists on winding up the toys and running them all Christmas day, ostensibly for the pleasure of his youngsters. He does not cease winding until the toys begin to get out of order, and then he has the additional pleasure of trying to repair them."

Sometimes I think that a manufacturer could make a fortune selling toys just for grown-ups. Seeing a bunch of adults busy working mechanical toys reminds me of the time when the whole family insists on taking Little Johnny to the circus.

TO KNOW FUTURE HUSBAND

Many Old English Customs and Superstitions Center Around Christmas.

All down the ages girls have been eager to find out their future destiny—whether they will be "old maids," or, as they are now called, "bachelor girls," or wives and mothers. Christmas, as well as all the other festivals, has been allotted its customs and superstitions through which the secret of the future may be learned.

To find the answer to the important question, wife or old maid, a girl had to go alone on Christmas eve and knock on the henhouse door. If a cock answered her knock by crowing, she would be married, but if no cock crowed in answer, then she would be an old maid. This undertaking would require a good deal of courage in the old days of superstition, as on Christmas eve evil spirits were supposed to have increased power and ghosts were supposed to prow around.

If a girl wished to know the name of her future husband she took four onions and named each one after a boy friend. She then placed one in each corner of a room and the one that sprouted before January 6 bore the name of the man she would marry.

In some districts this was carried out rather differently. Several onions were selected and named and placed close together, and the one that sprouted first gave the name that was to be hers. We can imagine how carefully the warmest place would be chosen for some special onion.

HE WAS THANKFUL.



"John," said the Loving Wife, "I intended to get you a nice new necktie for Christmas, but I am ashamed to acknowledge that in the rush of the shopping I completely forgot it."

"Thank you, nevertheless," said the Happy Husband.

ANNUAL "HOLLER" DAY.

When children have their Christmas toys The house will ring with laughter gay; And thus, in truth, by girls and boys, Is Christmas made a "holler" day.

A Christmas Carol

by HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

I HEAR along our street
Pass the minstrel throngs;
Hark! They play so sweet,
On their hurdygods, Christmas songs!
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!

IN December ring
Every day the chimes;
Loud the gleemen sing
In the streets their merry rhymes.
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!

SHEPHERDS at the grange,
Where the Babe was born,
Sing with merry a change
Christmas carols until morn.
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!

THESE good people sang
Songs devout and sweet;
While the rafters rang,
There they stood with freezing feet.
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!

NUNS in frigid cells
At this holy tide,
For want of something else,
Christmas songs at times have tried.
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!

WHO by the fireside stands,
Stamps his foot and sings;
But he who blows his hands
Not so gay a carol brings.
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!

HANGING MISTLETOE

Origin of Custom Associated With Christmas Festivities.

Plant Is Surrounded With Many Superstitions in European Countries—Sign of Ill Omen in Some Parts of Ireland.

THE good old custom of hanging mistletoe from the ceiling at the Christmas festivities is said to have its origin in the idea that since the plant did not have its roots in the ground no part of it should ever be permitted to touch the earth.

Among the Saxons the fact that mistletoe was suspended from the roof of a dwelling intimated to the wayfarer that the hospitality of the house was at his disposal, and beneath its branches friend and stranger, vassal and lord, gathered in comradeship and good cheer.

The religious aspect of the mistletoe tradition, which had its origin in the Druidical rites and the gathering of it by the archdruid with his golden sickle, merged later into a purely social symbol, and the idea of simple hospitality developed into one of merrymaking and a somewhat riotous entertainment.

The kiss of the Scandinavian goddess expanded into the custom of a kiss given for every berry that grew on the bough. Small wonder that, in spite of the mistletoe having originally existed in the odor of the sanctuary, the church came to regard it as an entirely pagan symbol and refused to allow it to participate with the lily and the evergreen in the Yuletide decorations.

There is an ancient belief that the mistletoe was the tree from which the holy cross was hewn and that after this was made the plant withered and ever afterward became a mere parasitic growth, clinging for support to other and sturdier trees.

Other stories, however, credit it with divine gifts in the healing of diseases and the expulsion of evil spirits.

Ram, the high priest of the Celts, received in a dream the intimation that by means of the plant he would be enabled to save his people from the plague which was decimating them. To celebrate their delivery he instituted the feast of Noel (new health), a midwinter holiday, which has come to be considered coincident with the new year.

In many parts of the United Kingdom the silver berries and the gray-green leaves of the mistletoe are looked upon as anything but an emblem of good cheer; on the contrary, the plant is regarded with dread as being the bringer of ill luck and the sign of ill omen. This superstition exists both in Devonshire and in Ireland, and, strange to say, in neither of these places does the plant flourish, owing, report has it, to the fact that both incurred the displeasure of the Druids and were in consequence cursed in such a way that their soil became incapable of nourishing the sacred growth.

In the sixth book of Aeneid a lengthy description of the mistletoe is given by Virgil, who makes the Sybil describe to his hero the exact spot in hades where he will find it growing. There is little doubt that the strange ethereal appearance of the little opaque berry is largely responsible for the mystic character it has enjoyed among the people of diverse nations in the earliest historical times.