

When We All Made New Year's Calls



HEREAS, experience has taught us that on New Year's day and May day from the firing of guns, the planting of Maypoles, and drunken drinkers, there has resulted unnecessary waste of powder and much intoxication, with the bad practices and bad accidents; therefore we expressly forbid any firing of guns and beating of drums.

This is the beginning of one of the many New Year's proclamations of Peter Stuyvesant, director general of New Netherlands—his farm, the "Bouwerij," on Manhattan island gave the Bowery its name—by which he hoped to "prevent more sins, debaucheries and calamities" in New Amsterdam during his 17 years of administration, 1647-64. For it was in old New York that the American custom of New Year's calls had its beginning. And when the fun got too boisterous old Peter would come stumping along on his silver-banded wooden leg and try to make an unwilling rattle-watch enforce his proclamation.

New Year's day was the holiday par excellence in old New York. It was a day peculiarly dedicated to family congratulations and the renewal of friendships in expressions of sympathy and good will, which, following so closely the sacred festival of Christmas, inspired all with peculiar significance. Washington Irving has said: "New York was then a handy town. Anyone who did not live over the way was to be found round the corner." So the making of New Year's calls was easy. Let us glance at the New Amsterdam of that day on the first day of the new year.

The sober, older citizens, sturdy figures, richly and warmly clothed, walk, slowly smoking, to the fort to render New Year's wishes to the officers of the garrison and then to the White Hall by the Battery to do the governor the same honor. Ever since daybreak a noisier element has revealed up and down the narrow lanes and by the banks of the canal (now Broad street), shouting greetings, beating drums, firing muskets, blowing horns, shaking "rumbling-pots" and drinking rivers of beer. A group of young burghers, with some clumsy firearm, a snaphance or a murderer, have gone from door to door of each corbel-roofed house firing blank volleys, gathering recruits, drinking more beer, till all repair to Beekman's Swamp (known to this day in New York as the Swamp) to fire at a target.

Noise and New Year's continued to be closely connected in the days of the American colonies. New Year's day was a favorite day for shooting at a mark, for shooting for prizes, and "target companies" of very respectable citizens rose early in the morning for these contests. For it was deemed most selfish and rather disreputable for a man to spend the entire day in such shooting. He could go with his "target company" in the morning, but he must pay a round of calls to the fair in the afternoon.

In the days of New Year's celebration in New York, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the town seemed a great family reunion, in which each man vied with the other in boisterous delight. Shops were lighted, windows garlanded, streets crowded. Great vans—stages with four and six horses—were crowded with groups of men, often a group of kinsfolk, or old neighbors, or a hilarious mob of men allied in politics—or some "target company" or "band of old firemen." The acquaintances of each were called upon in turn.

It was about the beginning of the nineteenth century that the change from a neighborly observance to one of pure fashion began in all the large cities. The younger women of such households as had daughters were hostesses, and great was their rivalry, one with another, in respect to richly loaded refreshment tables and elegance of toilet. The dudes of those days—they called them "beaux" and "dandies" and "gallants"—attired themselves in their best and started out early in the morning on their calls.

It was not until about the middle of the century that the abuse which finally led to the custom's decline began. For years the dandies of New York and other large cities rivaled one another in the length of their calling lists, and the calls soon came to be nothing more than hasty stops—mere rapid gorgings of cake and gulplings of wine—instead of the old-time friendly calls of men upon the families of their friends and acquaintances.

Then the ladies—the matrons as well as the young women—began to vie with one another in the number of their callers. This led to the most extraordinary practices. Callers were recruited, indeed much as customers are drummed up by dealers in soap. Cards announcing that Miss This-or-That would be "at home" on January 1 were sent out almost indiscriminately.

Then the Sunday papers of the time began to print lists of those who would receive and the houses of those mentioned in the lists were sure to be besieged by numbers of men whom the ladies had never met or heard of and desired never to meet again. Men would go calling in

BEFORE WE WENT DRY

couples and parties and even in droves of 30 or more, remaining as short a time at each stopping place as possible and announcing everywhere how many calls they had already made and how many they expected to make before they finished.

At every place they drank. The result was a most appalling assortment of "jags" long before sundown.

Late in the fifties the abuse came to be so great that the newspapers and the ministers took it up, and many were the editorials written and many the sermons preached against it. This crusade speedily brought results.

It was not many years before the smart set of young men in most cities stopped calling. The hospitable door that had been open from morning to evening was adorned with a basket of cards. Gentlemen were driven all over town depositing their visiting cards in these baskets. In a year or so servants were delivering these cards. Then the baskets disappeared and the mail carrier delivered the few cards sent out. Of course this process was not at all uniform. It was fast in some cities, slow in others.

A belle of the eighties, sitting in her easy chair, thumbing over an old scrapbook filled with faded cuttings from the newspapers of those days; her husband, a beau of the same period, in slippers and dressing gown, smoking and listening as she spoke and read, now and then nodding his head and smiling at some memory recalled; and the daughters of the house, planning for the watch party festivities of 1920, listening with curious interest and laughing and chatting about how odd it all seemed now—such a scene was doubtless to be witnessed in many a city all over the country with the closing days of 1919.

"We didn't go in so much for the watch parties in those days," the matron said. "The whistles blew and there was some noise, it is true, among the downtown folk, but we girls, as a rule, retired early—we had to save ourselves for the trying ordeal of the next day, for New Year's day was the great social event of the year. It was 'receiving day' in all the homes of the town. We called it 'keeping open house'."

"It was a day of lavish entertainment and the doors were supposed to be open to everybody that called, whether friend or stranger. We prepared for it weeks in advance. It was a period of great conviviality. Aside from the fact that the conviviality was somewhat overdone, at times, that old custom of the New Year's open house was quite an old-fashioned, sincere expression of good fellowship to friend and neighbor and visiting strangers—opening the portals of the New Year, as it were, with a greeting and a home welcome. And as a social function, it was most delightful—it helped to bring people together."

"It was the fashion to give each of the callers a souvenir to carry away with them and all sorts of ingenious little devices were used. Some had silk badges with the names of the girl painted on them; some had dainty metal souvenirs specially struck off, others ornate cards with mottoes, and some went in for the oddities, like the clay pipes that papa tells about. I remember the gentlemen used to wear these souvenirs pinned or tied with ribbons to their coats—as the knights of old wore their ladies' favors—and late in the evening the callers looked like foreign diplomats, with all their decorations, or, perhaps, like South African chiefs would be the better simile."

"Of course, only the gentlemen called—they were never accompanied by ladies. The ladies remained in their homes to receive them. The gentlemen were supposed to be in full dress—the younger set wore swallowtails and crush hats, and the older gentlemen Prince Albert coats and light gray, pin-striped trousers—that was the vogue. The old timers, I remember, did not take very kindly to the crush hats. And everybody, of course, had to have a hack or a sleigh."

"The hostess of the house usually called to her assistance a bevy of the young girls who made up

the receiving line and helped to dispense the hospitality of the home. I remember one season when we had more than 200 callers. The custom was to stay a few moments only, chat, drink and eat, and then go on to the next house. One of the rooms, however, was cleared for dancing and in the late hours the callers would select partners and whirl through a waltz, a polka or a schottische, or perhaps a set of the quadrille. Every house had a band of musicians.

"The 'open house' function was a very elaborate dress affair—the women vied with one another in beautiful costuming and the month before New Year's was a harvest for the dressmakers."

"From 2 o'clock until late in the night the parlors were filled with guests. The lower portion of the house had been previously beautifully decorated with flowers and exotics and all who called were made to feel perfectly at home. In the dining room was a table with all sorts of eatables and dainties, with rare wines and punches. At 2 o'clock, when the reception opened, the blinds were drawn and the gas lighted. During the day favored callers were invited to return at night for a dance."

With the gradual abandoning of New Year's calls came in the gradual growth of the eating, drinking and revelry that before the war and prohibition marked New Year's eve in the cities. Here is a glimpse of Philadelphia in 1894:

"After the reserves and the Third district policemen had taken their positions the enormous crowd began to swell in size. In front of Independence hall, filling the street, was a jostling mob that became noisier the nearer the hands of the clock came to the midnight hour. Up Chestnut street there were two black masses that moved victoriously toward the statehouse."

"The gay and comic 'shooter' (mummer) did not put in appearance to any considerable extent until about 11 o'clock. Then he came from all directions."

"The thousands packed in the roadway sent up an answering cry to the first stroke of the big bell, and the rattle of pistol shots, despite the police orders against using weapons, was like the sound of musketry. The screams of whistles added to the din and on every side through the miles that the eyes could pierce fireworks went blazing upward."

And here is a glimpse of New York in 1906:

"All New York came out to celebrate the birth of the new year. Nothing like it was ever seen before for numbers or for enthusiasm. From the hour after dinner until long after midnight the celebration lasted. It consisted of noise, eating and drinking, with noise by far the predominating element. Men born in New York, who have lived here all their lives, looked at the carnival in wide-eyed astonishment."

"At least 50,000 men and women packed Broadway and the side streets near Trinity church from half past eleven o'clock until long after midnight. To hear the chimes? Oh, no. To blow horns and whistles and spring rattles and yell and thus drown out the very pretty chimes of old Trinity that welcomed in the New Year. Every table in every big restaurant was taken weeks in advance."

In 1914 the police in most of the large cities ordered "same" New Year's celebrations. In consequence there was a marked diminution of the revelry; in many cities midnight closing and community celebrations marked the occasion.

Thus the celebration of New Year's day in noise, drinking, eating and calling—has grown to be a climax and become "sane." What next?

STONE HEADS FARMERS UNION

Resolutions Were Adopted Declaring Revaluation Act Oppressive in Its Present Form.

Greensboro.—Electing R. W. H. Stone, of Guilford county, president of the North Carolina Farmers' union, and adopting a number of resolutions pertaining to economic and political affairs, the delegates to the annual convention of that body concluded their sessions at the O. Henry.

Resolutions were adopted denouncing the state revaluation act in its present form and calling for very material changes in the law. The resolutions set forth the conviction that the act bears oppressively upon the farmers of the state.

The Co-Operator, former official organ of the state union, and which has recently been published by J. A. Smith, of High Point and Greensboro, was disowned by the state body.

It was proposed that the union "stay out of the newspaper business" for a year, at least, and that, instead, educational programs be sent out to the various locals from state headquarters. The proposal was adopted, it being agreed that the state union is not responsible, financially or otherwise, for the Co-Operator or any other newspaper. In other words, the union has no paper.

Mr. Smith had indicated a willingness to publish the Co-Operator, using it largely for the dissemination of publicity in the interest of the state union. One of the delegates declared that that proposal should be accepted, with the proviso that the state union would determine the reading matter to be printed in the paper. That proviso, however, was objectionable to Mr. Smith, and it was then announced that the union would not agree to have an official organ which it could not control, but which would be controlled by one individual.

Charlotte.—A total of \$1,164.17, unclaimed witness fees, will be turned over by the clerk of superior court to be used as a school fund. This amount represents the fees that have not been called for at the clerk's office for the years 1914 to 1916, inclusive.

Greenville.—Mr. James Allen Sutton, a well known citizen of this county, was found burned to death in his home in Pitt county. He was alone, and it is thought that he must have had a stroke of apoplexy and fallen into the fire.

Hertford.—Hertford disposed of \$700,000 of public improvement bonds, to Bruce Craven, of Trinity, and at the same time, entered into a contract with engineers and contractors for a first class electric light system, and two miles of concrete streets and sidewalks.

Laurinburg.—At the recorder court a new drink was in evidence. Put up in pint bottles with a small label about the size of a dime with S. & D. manufacture printed on it, the concoction had an unusual effect, according to defendants for being drunk. It is called the "no name drink" and sells for \$2 per bottle.

Rockingham.—The daddy rabbit still of this section was captured by federal officers and the blockaders were also bagged.

Rutherfordton.—Spindale is planning for a new modern Baptist church. The fund is being collected now and work will begin soon. The town is just finishing a new \$9,000 modern school building.

Forest City is to have a new \$100,000 modern hotel at an early date. Work is going forward rapidly on it now.

Asheville.—Unless the government takes extensive steps at once to curb the advance of the chestnut blight, a disease that attacks the chestnut tree and kills it in a short time, there will not be a chestnut tree in North Carolina by 1930.

The blight, one of the most dreaded and feared diseases of the woods, is now on the North Carolina-Virginia line and is advancing southward.

WHEELER LAUDS DRY RECORD

Greensboro.—It was not until Wayne B. Wheeler, general counsel for the Anti-Saloon League of America and Advisory Counsel of the world Prohibition and Law Enforcement Movement, at the State conference here last week marshalled North Carolina's prohibition assets, did the 175 workers and delegates present, realize the value of her estate. Commenting on the fact that State Director Mebane and Organizing Director Holleman had succeeded in getting 100 counties organized.

Bid for Hotel Accepted.

Shelby.—At a meeting of the Cleveland Springs company, bids were accepted for the plumbing and heating of the new 50-room hotel.

Bids were submitted for the construction of the building, but on account of delay in receiving shipments of brick, the contract has not been let as yet for the building. Considerable stock has been subscribed, but more is being solicited in order to complete the proposed building with all modern improvements and beautify the grounds.

N. C. MARKET'S

PRICES PAID BY MERCHANTS FOR FARM PRODUCTS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

Ash-ville. Corn, \$2 bu; soy beans, \$2.50 bu; Irish potatoes, \$2.50 cwt; sweet potatoes, \$1.20 bu.

Charlotte. Corn, \$2 bu; wheat, \$2.25 bu; oats, \$1 bu; peas, \$2.50 bu; Irish potatoes, \$2.50 bu; sweet potatoes, \$1.50 bu.

Fayetteville. Corn, \$1.80 bu; wheat, \$2.50 bu; oats, \$1 bu; soy beans, \$3 bu; peas, \$2.50 bu; Irish potatoes, \$2.40 bu; sweet potatoes, \$1 bu.

Hamlet. Corn, 1.90 bu; peas, 2.25 bu; sweet potatoes, \$1.25 bu.

Raleigh. Corn, \$1.90 bu; wheat, \$2.75 bu; oats, 98c bu; soy beans, \$2.50 bu; peas, \$2.50 bu; Irish potatoes, \$1.75 bag; sweet potatoes, \$1 bu.

Scotland Neck. Corn, \$1.90 bu; oats, \$1 bu; soy beans, \$2.75 bu; peas, \$3 bu; Irish potatoes, \$3 cwt; sweet potatoes, \$1.75 bu.

PRICES OF BUTTER, EGGS, POULTRY, HOGS, ETC.

Asheville. Country butter, 45c lb; creamery butter, 60c lb; eggs, 75c doz; spring chickens, 92c lb; hens, 20c lb; hogs, \$19.40 cwt; country hams, 50c lb; turkeys, 35c lb; geese, 30c lb.

Charlotte. Country butter, 60c lb; creamery butter, 70c lb; eggs, 60c doz; spring chickens, 35c lb; hens, 30c lb; turkeys, 40c lb; geese, 35c lb; country hams, 40c lb.

Fayetteville. Country butter, 60c lb; creamery butter, 65c lb; eggs, 65c doz; spring chickens, 40c lb; hens, 35c lb; turkeys, 40c lb; geese, 25c lb; country hams, 50c lb; hogs, \$25 cwt.

Hamlet. Country butter, 50c lb; eggs, 65c doz; spring chickens, 35c lb; hens, 30c lb; turkeys, 35c lb; hogs, \$18 cwt; country hams, 40c lb.

Raleigh. Country butter, 60c lb; creamery butter, 71c lb; eggs, 65c doz; spring chickens, 35c lb; hens, 25c lb; turkeys, 40c lb; geese, 30c lb; country hams, 50c lb.

Scotland Neck. Country butter, 60c lb; creamery butter, 70c lb; eggs, 65c doz; spring chickens, 35c lb; hens, 25c lb; turkeys, 40c lb; geese, 30c lb; hogs, \$25 cwt; country hams, 45c lb.

Hogs—Monday's quotations from Northern markets indicate that prices were lower again this week as compared with prices a week earlier, however, at Chicago Saturdays prices were 25c higher than on Monday, Dec. 8th, which should have a stimulating affect on Northern markets.

PRICES OF COTTON, COTTON SEED AND COTTON SEED MEAL.

The past week has seen large fluctuations in the future market. The last and final estimate of the U. S. Department of Agriculture published on Thursday, was 11,030,000 bales and was larger than expected, which caused a sharp decline. Another disturbing feature was the inability for ships at Southern ports to obtain coal. This caused a decrease in exports for the week. The settlement of the coal strike and continued bad weather over the belt, has affected the bearish features to a certain extent. Listed below is the price of middling cotton of a few of the spot markets, as of December 12th: New Orleans 39.50; Galveston 40.50, Memphis 38.50, Little Rock 38.50.

Following are prices paid in North Carolina markets:

Charlotte. Middling cotton, 38c; cotton seed, \$1.20 bu; cotton seed meal, \$80 ton.

Fayetteville. Middling cotton, 35c; cotton seed, \$1.20 bu; cotton seed meal, \$80 ton.

Hamlet. Middling cotton, 37.50; cotton seed, \$1.20 bu.

Raleigh. Middling cotton, 37c; cotton seed, \$1.20 bu.

Scotland Neck. Cotton middling, 37.75; cotton seed, \$1.15 bu.

Coal Tied Up At Reidsville.

Reidsville.—For the past few days 65 cars of coal have been standing on the sidetracks in the Southern yards at Reidsville. This coal was consigned to Reidsville manufacturing plants—30 cars to the Edna Cotton Mills, 17 to the American Tobacco Co. and the balance to R. P. Richardson & Co., and other concerns. The shipments are held by the railroad administration on orders from the U. S. regional committee.

Orders for release of this coal are expected soon.

New Co-Operator Editor.

Greensboro.—Dr. H. Q. Alexander is now president and editor-in-chief of The Co-Operator and E. C. Fair is secretary and treasurer of the paper, and of The Farmers Union.

John A. Smith, who bought the paper some time ago did so under an agreement that the union officers would try to get union dues raised so as to make every member of the union a subscriber. This plan failed. It is said that the paper will be independent and non-political.