

# THE GREAT SWEAR OFF.

New Year's Resolutions  
In the Town of  
Cactus, Colo.

Summary of Sins Shows Superiority to Spotted Pup.

**W**E like to feller customs out here in Cactus Town. So we sorter been a-takin' stock when New Year time comes round. It's customary at that time your habits had to doff. So we held a public meetin' that we termed the Great Swear Off.

We tackled fust the drinkin', but we couldn't seem to find That there'd been so much carousin' that the public order mind; There hadn't been no killin's—less it was some five or six Who had learned that booze and powder wasn't ever made to mix.



"WE TACKLED FUST THE DRINKIN'." So we 'lowed we'd leave the drinkin' without any swear off clause, And we started in at roundin' up some other sinful cause; We couldn't swear off cussin', fer Bear Hawkins riz to say If that there safety valve is shet you'll bust some worse way. We took up forms o' gamblin' that some people think is crime, But we 'lowed the games was honest, a-follarin' that time When we found some extry aces in the sleeves o' Poker Bill And we give him permittin' quarters on the slope of old Boot Hill. So, after careful thinkin' and a painful summ'n' up, We concluded we was better than the town of Spotted Pup, And as long as we was leadin' in the higher l's, by jing! There was reely no good reason for our swearin' off a thing. —Denver Republican.

## NEW YEAR'S CALLS.

**Levelers of Social Barriers a Generation Ago.**  
"It is often supposed that the practice of making calls on New Year's day is a relic of the barbarous past and that it is dying slowly out," reads the Chicago Tribune of Jan. 2, 1873. "This appears to be unfounded. Never did the streets appear livelier on New Year's day than they did yesterday. Not a vehicle could be obtained from a livery stable for love or money. Every young man who had saved enough money to secure a carriage or sleigh on that day took one, and calls were made with ceaseless regularity throughout the entire day."  
Here the writer indulges in a little moralizing which contrasted the clerk and the millionaire. Of the clerk he says:  
"He was engaged in the same occupation with his boss and was received in the boss' own circle of acquaintances with just as much cordiality and warmth as the wealthy gentleman whose behests throughout the year he had tremulously obeyed. He strayed from house to house, venturing into regions he scarcely would have dared under other circumstances to approach, for custom gives the lowly permission to enter on New Year's day where under other circumstances his appearance would be an intrusion. New Year's is the great leveler of shoddiness, for to stray into the elegant carpeted domain of the rich parvenu after leaving the quiet cottage where the true nobility of culture and breeding is the only claim does sometimes place the ignorant nabob a little lower in one's estimation than one formerly thought possible."  
**Dancing Round the Apple Tree.**  
The Saxons in "ye olden tyme" used to dance around an apple tree on New Year's eve, singing a song, to insure a good crop, and bells were rung to announce the death of the old year and usher in the birth of the new. In other parts of England at midnight the house door facing the west was opened to let out the old year, while the door facing the east was opened to welcome the blithe new year.

## A NEW YEAR INJUSTICE.

**The Barkeeper Complains of the Good Resolution Habit.**  
"John, I'll have to lay you off for the first two weeks of the new year. You, Harry, will have to lay off a week."  
The speaker, a lean man, stood in a splendid and spacious beer saloon, a place of polished mahogany, onyx columns, great mirrors and large paintings of beautiful women. Ropes and wreaths of evergreen twined about the pillars and the electrolors, and on the massive bar stood a bowl of free punch, for it was New Year's day.  
"Yes, boys," said the lean man, "you'll have to go."  
"What for, boss?" asked the younger of the two bartenders. Mechanically with his woolen bar cloth he polished the bar till it shone again, and anxiously he gazed in his employer's face.  
"Why, John, you ought to know what for."  
The saloon keeper spoke impatiently. A fat man entered from the street, approached the bar with reluctant steps, then all of a sudden turned hurriedly and departed.  
"Well, I'll be danged!" said Bartender John. "That's the fourth fellow has done that this mornin'. What's it mean anyway?"  
"You ought to know what it means, John," repeated the saloon keeper. "It's meaning is the cause of your suspension."  
"Yes, John," the man resumed; "your suspension is caused by the New Year's swear off of that fellow and thousands like him. All over the broad land, John, countless numbers of men swear off drinking for a year on New Year's day. Half of them stick to their swear off for a week, and the other half, with just a few exceptions, stick to it for two weeks. Those two weeks of January, John, are always the two poorest weeks on the publican's calendar. He can't pay expenses; hence he retrenches; hence he lays off prudent, industrious young chaps like you—chaps with a bit put by, so that they can stand a little idleness without privation."  
"All right, but," said John sulkily—"but I ain't got nothing put by, and I think it's a shame that my poor wife and innocent babe have got to suffer at this joyous holiday season through the swear off of a lot of foolish, thoughtless men. It don't seem right nor just."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

## THE CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY.

**In China New Year's is the Little Ones' Great Festival.**  
Except at the Chinese New Year, which comes in February, it is very hard to catch a glimpse of children in China. Little beggars will run beside you for miles to earn a cash, a copper coin with a square hole in the middle of it, worth the twentieth of a cent, but children who have parents to care for them seem to be kept indoors all the time or only allowed to play in walled yards and gardens. We used to say to each other: "Why, where are the children? Haven't they got any?" But at New Year's we found out that they had. This is the great holiday of all the year in China, when everybody hangs out flags and colored lanterns and sets off firecrackers. (We borrowed our custom of firecrackers for the Fourth of July from China's New Year's.) All the people put on their best clothes and the children the best of all, jackets and trousers of bright blue or green or yellow or purple, the boys and the girls so much alike that you can only tell them apart by their hair. The boy's of course is braided in a pigtail, and the girl's is done up on her head with silver pins or, if she's a very grand little girl, with gold or jade. Thus decked out, the children go walking with their proud papas and mamas and often go to the theater, which is a rare treat for them.  
Perhaps Chinese children have romping plays together, but they always look as if they were born grown up.—St. Nicholas.

## Where New Year's Lasts a Month.

The celebration of New Year's is carried on more extensively in Japan than in any other country. The reason for this can only be accounted for by the fact that the custom has been handed down to succeeding generations for centuries. The time the occasion involves is quite lengthy, lasting from the 13th of December (Koto Hajime—viz, beginning of things) to the 10th of January (Hokori no yaburi), which is apprentices' holiday. On both of the occasions a sort of stew is eaten, composed of red beans, rice, sliced fish and konnyaku root.

## Every Little Bit Helps.

"You say you encouraged our friend to make another New Year's resolution?"  
"I did," answered the man whose heart is all right.  
"But don't you know he'll break it at the end of six weeks at the least calculation?"  
"I hope not. And even if he does he'll be six weeks ahead of the game."

## A Persuader.

"Did you make any New Year's resolution?" asked Miss Miami Brown.  
"No," answered Mr. Erastus Pinkley, "but I done persuaded Mistah Collyer to make one. After I got thoo with him at de las' parlor social he was willin' to promise dat he'd stop tryin' to pick 'sturbances foever an' ever."

## Revised Version.

I remember, I remember,  
The house where I was born,  
And also the janitor, bellboy, butcher boy,  
baker boy, bootblack, elevator man,  
grocer's boy,  
And newboy Christmas morn.  
—New York Sun.

# A DUTCH NEW YEAR.

Old Time Hospitality In the Mohawk Valley.

CAKES BY BUSHEL BASKET.

**Honest Graft For the Matutinal Milkman—Run Toddy the Official Drink, Festive Day For the Faithful Farm Hand—Open House Everywhere.**

There was no day of the year so generally, particularly and joyously celebrated in the Mohawk valley by the early Dutch settlers and by their descendants as New Year's, and when Jan and Barent met Bjbertje and Engeltje early on a bright, frosty New Year's morning the religious and somewhat formal greeting was when put into English:

"I wish you a happy New Year. Long may you live. Much may you give and happy may you die and inherit the kingdom of heaven by and by."

The preparations for the New Year's hospitalities were begun by the mothers and their daughters frequently as soon as the first frost and snow made their appearance, for there was much to be done to be ready on the joyous day. New Year's cakes, rich and delicious (some of the descendants of the early Dutch housekeepers make them now, using the same recipe and the same ancient dies and stamps that their great-grandmothers used) and about the size and shape of a man's hand and less than half as thick, were made by the bushel basketful—literally. It was not unusual for the hospitable Dutch housewife to give from five to six hundred cakes to the children who called before the noon hour. The early rising by the boys and girls, which a proper observance of the day demanded, is equaled in our day by the early rising on the Fourth of July.

There was one old mansion in the Mohawk valley that was particularly notable for its hospitality (not only on New Year's day, but upon all occasions) and good times. It stood and is still standing on the estate of Alexander Lindsey Glen and was named by him in 1850 Scotia in memory of the land of his birth. The children started on their rounds at sunrise and went from house to house lustily pounding with the great iron or brass knockers. The littlest ones shouted, "Happy New Year for a cake!" but the older ones refrained from so far giving themselves away by leaving off the last three words. It was not at all an unusual occurrence for three or four hundred cakes to be given to the boys and girls before breakfast from the Glen mansion.

Coming down to more recent days in the Mohawk valley, the custom of giving cakes was extended to the milkmen. Each milkman always purchased a new bushel basket to carry about on New Year's morning in his wagon



"HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR A CAKE."

for holding the supply of cakes and the other dainties which were sometimes added. Each house where milk was left helped fill the bushel basket.

At about 10 o'clock in the morning the men began to make their calls after making the most elaborate toilet of the year. A previous acquaintance was not necessary for one to make calls. It was the one day of the year when every home was open to everybody without regard to birth or position. The last day of the old year was spent by the women of the family in preparing dainty confections, solid, rich cake, and in the morning the choicest old wine was brought up from the cellar, and hot rum toddy was made, rum toddy being the official New Year's drink in the Mohawk valley.

The Dutch partook sparingly of the wine and toddy at each house, and, although nearly all the men were "mellow" by the time the festivities ended at midnight, no one was drunk. There was one exception to this rule. The farm hands were usually dead to the world by noon and so out of the way of their betters.

But all this charming hospitality and the delightful customs were made impossible a generation or more ago by the outsiders of other nationalities than Dutch, who flocked to the larger towns of the valley and turned the day of hospitality into a day of drunkenness. —New York Times.

## MIRANDY'S RESOLUTIONS.

She Finds Turning of New Leaf a Thankless Task.

"Now, you know," remarked Mirandy, "I ain't never been one of dese outbreakin' sinners dat's got faults dat ev'body can see needs reformin' in de fall an' dat ought to turn over as many pages as in de dictionary at New Year's."

"Nawstr. It's a pretty good woman, an' ef ev'body was lak me dey sho'ly would be a heaven on earth. Still dere is times when I 'spicious dat I is got some weaknesses. So dat's buccom I got mixed up wid dat New Year's resolution, for I made up my mind dat I was gwine to turn over a new leaf an' speak nothin' but de truth an' be gentle an' lovin' an' tender an' forbearin' to like an' de chillen."

"An' how did it wuk out?"  
"De vey fust dash out of de box hit got me into trouble. You know ole Sis Sairy Giggins, what ain't got but one tooth in her head an' is most bent double wid de rheumatiz an' dat has got wrinkles in her cheeks dat looks lak de plowed ground after a black frost? Well, Sis Sairy come to see me dyked up in a flower bonnet an' a red frock lak a gal of sixteen, an' she axed me how she looked."

"'Huh,' says I, a'memberin' my New Year's resolution to speak de troof, 'you look lak you are mo' fittin' for de shroud dan for all dat piecic gear,' an', ef you believe me, Sis Sairy go away an' tell dat I suttely is de mos' lak a cat of any woman she ever seed an' dat I is dat jealous of her good looks an' her good clothes dat I is done lost my manners."

"An' den when Sis Hannah Jane Simpkins axes me what I thought of her little Thomas Jefferson an' I 'sponds dat he is de skinnest child I ever see an' dat he don't look to me lak he's got real good sense an' dat de hand of de Lord suttely was laid heavy on her, infideln' her wid such an ornery brat, she gits so mad at me for tellin' her de troof dat she don't never speak to me sence."

"Yassir. I didn't stiek to dat resolution to speak de troof but fo' days, but I had to move out of de neighborhood, for a kind of coldness done spring up between me an' all my friends. Yassir, I specks hit's mighty fine an' noble never to tell a lie, but hit will leave you mighty lonesome."

"An' I didn't come out any better wid like. At fust he walked mighty easy, but when hit kinder soaked in on him dat I was gwine to git up in de middle of de night an' let him in when he couldn't find de keyhole for himself an' dat I warn't gwine to say one word, but was gwine to git up in de mornin' an' bathe his achin' brow an' bring him hot coffee—why, what do you think happened along of dat New Year's resolution?"

"Ike tooken to stayin' out ev' night, an' I seen dat de only way to save dat nigger from a drunkard's grave was to turn back de page an' go back to fust principles of keepin' him so skeered of me dat he was afraid not to come home wid de chickens."

"An' it was de same way wid de chillen. De minute dey found out dat I made a New Year's resolution to be kind an' lovin' an' patient instead of takin' de bed s'at to 'em dey got dat outdacious dat dere wasn't no livin' in de house wid 'em, an' ef I hadn't busted dat good resolve dey would all have landed in de calaboose."

"Dat's de reason you don't see me standin' up to be counted when dey calls for dem whitt's gwine to turn over new pages. It's done been mixed up wid de New Year's resolution one time, an' I got my fill."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

## French New Year's Cards.

New Year's cards are very popular in Paris, and they sometimes take queer shapes. The Count of S. has borne for years upon his card these words: "Comte de S., brother of General Z., wounded at Sevastopol." A grocer has the following after his name, "Candidate for the presidency of the republic," thereby following afar off the example of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, who once astonished his friends by getting out a visiting card which declared him to be "candidate for the succession of the kings of Cyprus and Jerusalem." Although it does not run into the love of titles so deeply as in Germany, where a good lady laid upon her card "Frau Oehsenmaulsalat-fabrikant Heinrich Wilhelm Muller," it is nevertheless the French habit to qualify oneself, as "Jenn Vangitard, formerly mayor of the town of Pontoise." The card of a large farmer near the Belgian frontier had inscribed beneath his name, "Decorated with the Order of Agricultural Merit, a decoration which he preferred to that of the Legion of Honor, which was offered to him by President Carnot." An architect whose name is J. Rousseau has "J. Rousseau, architect, whose family is not descended in any way from the implous philosopher." All these are serious, as serious as was the effort of a little French girl who thought she ought to send announcements out when her big married sister had a baby: "Mlle. Irma has the honor to announce to you the birth of her nephew Anatole. Both aunt and child are doing well."

## As to Good Resolutions.

With plenty of principles to which one may hang there isn't such a great need of rules. If you are honest, you won't forget to pay the cook the 10 cents you borrowed of her. If you are truthful you won't tell the woman next door that you paid \$45 for a hat that you made out of the rag bag and a yard of picture wire. If you are sincere you'll never say a lot of gurgling, silly stuff you don't mean. The foundation of good conduct is in principle rather than in resolution.

# LOW EXCURSION RATES

VIA

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