

New Year's Eve

By MILDRED M'NEAL

Tryst of the Old Year and the New!
Come from the utmost bounds of time,
With briefly clasping hands these two
Pass here amid the frost and rime.

There is no word of destinies—
Of errors past or coming fears,
Yet each reads in the other's eyes
The record of uncounted years.

—Ohio Farmer.

The Red Signal-Flag

A NEW-YEAR'S STORY.

By Annie Hamilton Donnell.

Desire Drummond was writing the first entry in her new diary, for it was New Year's day. She had opened the little book with a queer sense of unacquaintedness and hesitation. She always felt that way about opening a new diary, she told Roxy, the cat.

"I feel as if I ought to be introduced to it, Roxy," she laughed softly. "When you've written in the old one 365 times—summered and wintered with it and told it how bad your rheumatism was,—you feel at home and real intimate with it. But when you open a creaky new one that won't stay open, but keeps shutting up as if it didn't want anything to do with you or your rheumatism—when you do that, Roxy, it makes you feel like a perfect stranger."

In tiny, old-fashioned, neat letters the sputtering pen traced "Pleasant" on the clean page of the new year. Then Desire paused and looked meditatively out of her window searching for inspiration. A faint dab of red caught her eye from



THE SPLUTTERING PEN TRACED "PLEASANT" ON THE CLEAN PAGE OF THE NEW YEAR.

the unpainted house set diagonally across the road. Though for four years Desire Drummond had not willingly looked at the small old house, yet for four years she had always seen it, when she looked out of her window. It was right there, an uncomely blot on her "view"—how could she help it? The splash of red color was in one of its tiny-paned front windows, and for the moment Desire's heart beat a little faster than usual. When had she seen that red signal flag before?—but it wasn't a signal flag of course. Delight was drying something red in the sun; probably she'd washed out a spot in that old red table cover.

Suddenly as if of its own accord quite unannounced by the slender old fingers, the pen began to write again. "There's a red flag in Delight's window," it wrote rather faster than usual, with not so much painstaking attention to dot-dashings and t-crossings. "But it's probably a spot drying in her red table-spread. It isn't likely to be anything else after four years."

The little book creaked shut, as if relieved at the chance, and Desire Drummond gazed out of her window again, not looking at the little old house across the road, but seeing it and its red signal flag, and nothing else. Roxy leaped heavily to the window sill and looked out, too. The big gray head rubbed lovingly against the little gray one.

"I'm not looking, Roxy, but it's there,—I see it," Desire murmured wistfully. "You see it, too, you know you do. You're looking down the road at the meeting-house, but you see Delight's red flag! You think it's a spot in her table-spread drying in the sun, but you don't know it is. You're thinking maybe it isn't, just as I am."

Roxy's soft purr pleaded guilty to the charge. It was for four years—but Roxy only knew it was a long time, a very long time,—since she had been allowed to catch plump mice in the little old brown shed across the road.

"If it should be anything else, Roxy,—not a spot drying,—if it should mean what it used to—" She lifted the big cat down suddenly and opened one of her table drawers, where rows of black-bound diaries were neatly peaked away, and selected one that bore a date five or

six years previous to this new year today. It didn't matter if it were five or six,—or seven or eight,—so long as you subtracted four of the years. The "signal code" was in the back of all the rest. Desire turned the pages to it with trembling fingers. She read it aloud as if to Roxy:

"Red—trouble. Come over.
"White—all's well.
"Blue—nothing but rheumatism. Will come over as soon as it clears off.
"Green—come to tea. Have made pork cake."

The little "code" ran on through one or two more colors. But Desire's eyes went back to the first and third signals. "Red—trouble. Come over," and then the third with its quaint ending—Desire smiled over that. She and Delight had always spoken of their rheumatism as "clearing off." Instead of getting well. She and Delight had always had rheumatism; it had been a strong connecting link between them always. Delight had inherited hers from her mother,—Desire hers from her father. They used to laugh and say they couldn't see that there was much choice between the feminine kind and the masculine! Both of 'em hurt!

How often they used to laugh! That was another connecting link. When they were little bits, they had cried together over their names and made long lists of the beautiful "poetry-names" they longed for, on the walls of Delight's shed—Isobel,—Ethelind,—Jeannette,—Maude Mathilde,—how they had pored over the lovely names and "chosen" again and again! But when they grew older, they had laughed over the quaint old names their mothers had put their heads together and given them. For they had been named on the same day, when they lay, little red-faced, squirming morsels in the same big cradle. The mothers had waited until they were a month old and then met together for mutual counsel.

"Red,—trouble. Come over." Desire shut up the diary sharply, but the words kept saying themselves over and over to her. She could not forget them. Of course it was a spot in the red table cloth, drying in the sun, but it kept on saying: "Trouble. Come over." "Trouble. Come over,"—all the morning. It took the pleasure out of the sunshine and clear, sweet air,—the soft, new-fallen snow and the cheery calls of the chickadees,—out of the whole bright New Year's day. Even Roxy could not get down to her alternate naps and placid meditations in the sunny window. She followed her uneasy mistress about, uneasy, too, and full of wistful sympathy. But Roxy was wise and said nothing. Some things 'tis better not even to purr to one another.

Four years ago a trivial misunderstanding had separated these two lonely women. It had not amounted to much in the beginning,—a little grievance only,—but with true New England pertinacity they had clung each to her own hurt, nursing it into vigorous life. It was four years old now. The narrow width of a country roadway that ran between the two little brown houses might have been the breadth of the sea.

In the early afternoon, Desire and Roxy had New Year's callers. The minister came first and prayed with them in his simple, heartfelt way. He thanked the Lord for peace and goodwill on earth,—for the pleasant old year and the beautiful beginning of the new one. It was a grateful, comforting prayer; there was nothing in it about misunderstandings and trouble and rheumatism. Then the doctor's wife came in with her baby, and stayed long enough to patch a pair of little stockings. Then Mrs. Deacon Blinn came,—then Hopsy Todd's two little girls,—last of all, laughing Jeffrey.

"Merry Chris—I mean Happy New Year!" laughed Jeffrey. "Thought I'd come an' wish it. I've been to all the this-side-o'-the-street houses up to here, an' I'm comin' back on the other side—'ceptin' I shan't go to Tolly Wallace's house."

"Why not to Tolly's, Jeffrey?" Jeffrey laughed,—he always laughed. "Cause we've fell out," he said, cheerily. "You don't go to folk's houses you've fell out with an' wish 'em Happy New Year's, do you?"

Desire Drummond winced in spite of herself. But she had her duty to do to this little laughing child.

"I—I should call at Tolly's, too, Jeffrey," she said, virtuously, "you try it, and see how much happier you'll feel."

"But I'm happy enough now," laughed Jeffrey.

"Then do it to make Tolly happier,—try that."

"M-m—," mumbled Jeffrey, stooping to lay kind red mittens on Roxy's furry neck. It took time to digest advice like that. He hadn't thought of Tolly's side of the question. Tolly was just getting over the measles—Jeffrey remembered suddenly that it wasn't any fun to "get over" the measles. Then Tolly lived alone with his grandmother,—not in a riotous little nest, full of brothers and sisters. Probably you got very lonesome living alone with your grandmother;—probably you'd like to have somebody come in an' say "Wish Happy New Year!"

"Well, I will," laughed Jeffrey, sunnily. "I guess it's time me an' Tolly fell in!" He was off in a little whirl, and Desire and Roxy were alone again.

"Roxy, did you hear that? I thought I was preaching to him, and you heard how he preached to me! 'A little child,'—'a little child,'" she added softly. Her plain, wholesome face grew very thoughtful. Roxy rubbed against her skirts, unheeded.

"A little child—laughing Jeffrey—shall lead them—me," she mused, "across the street—to Delight. Roxy, Roxy, listen to me!"—she began to laugh sobbingly.—"I guess it's time me an' Delight fell in!"

It was sunset when she and Roxy went across the dividing line. From the warm, red west a radiance was falling in a pathway of soft light. It seemed to lead out of Heaven to Delight's little brown door, and Desire stepped lightly along in it, no more bitterness or hurt in her heart. The red signal flag was still in the window, and she saw it was not the red table cover. It was the little old signal flag itself!

"We'll go right in, Roxy, just as we used in—what! you want to go in by the shed door? Well, run along then,—run along then! I suppose catching mice is your way of making up!" She opened the front door briskly—after four years!—and stepped into the dark little hall. Delight was in the sitting-room door, waiting.

"Delight!"
"Desire! Desire! I knew you'd come!"
"Red,—trouble. Come over," quoted Desire, trying to laugh, but crying. They were both crying. "I tried to believe you



"I GUESS IT'S TIME ME AN' TOLLY FELL IN!"

were drying your red table cloth in the window,—oh, I tried not to come fast enough!"

"But you're here,—you're here," sobbed Delight. "Desire, wait!—stand right still a minute, where you are. I want to say some,—Happy New Year, Desire."

"Happy New Year, Delight!" It was all there in those three little words. What need for explanations, protestations, promises? The last red gleam from the west fell across both their glad old faces, like a kiss of peace.

Afterward Roxy scratched her way it with a plump dead mouse, presenting it first to one of them and then to the other, in gentle uncertainty. And they all three sat in the twilight together.

"It was 'trouble,'" Delight said. "That's why I chose the red signal. I said to myself this morning, when I woke up, 'It's New Year's, Delight Wetherill,' I said, 'are you going to do what you've been trying to do so long? Or are you going to wait another four years? And then all of a sudden I decided 'you're going to, Delight Wetherill!' I couldn't move an inch to do it. There I was stiff with the rheumatism. I guess the feminine kind's the worst, Desire!"

Desire nodded. "I guess so, Delight. Go on," she said.

"I couldn't go on! There I was. I didn't crawl out o' bed till noon, and I didn't lumber up until I saw you and Roxy coming across in the sunshine. I forgot I had the rheumatism then! I don't feel's if I should ever have it again."

"So you put up the red signal 'Trouble—Come over!' Desired mused thoughtfully.

"Yes,—oh, I had to! It was New Year's day, Desire, and you and me had been divided long enough. I said to myself I couldn't bear another year. I said the time to make it up was the first day o' the new year. And there I was! I couldn't stir."

"And the beginning and the ending were the first day," Delight murmured, softly. Under the cover of the darkness the two old hands stole together and clung, as long ago two little childish ones had clung together. Roxy purred from skirt to skirt impartially. There are times when 'tis better not to say anything, but a little gentle purring does no harm.—Country Gentleman.

DODGING THE FLYING MACHINE—NO REST FOR THE WEARY.



The Highfliers Are Urged to Adopt the Flying Machine. Well, It Would Be a Relief to Some of Us Here Below, If They Would.

TELEPATHY AMONG INSECTS

Sixth Sense by Which Tiny Creatures Communicate at Great Distances.

Not only the unworthy sluggard might observe the ant and other insects and profit thereby. Science each day adds to the wonders which these little creatures are capable of and puts human creatures to shame, says the New York Herald.

This time it is a sixth sense which a noted scientist has discovered many insects to be fortunate enough to possess. At least they are able to communicate with one another at great distances.

This professor had two allanthurus trees in his yard and these suggested the idea to him of obtaining from Japan some eggs of the allanthurus silk worm. He got a few, hatched the larvae and watched anxiously for the appearance of the first moths from the cocoons. He put one of the moths in a wicker cage and hung it on one of the allanthurus trees. This was a female moth. On the same evening he took a male moth to a cemetery, a mile and a half away, and let him loose, having previously marked him by tying a silk cord about his abdomen, so as to be able to identify him. The idea was to find out if the two moths would come together for the purpose of mating, these being the only ones of their species within a distance of hundreds of miles. This power of locating each other had been previously observed in these insects. In the morning the two moths were found to be in the same cage, the female having been able to attract her mate from a distance of a mile and a half.

Comparatively little is known about the ordinary senses of insects. Most of them see well, the eyes of many being far more elaborate than those of the human being. The eyes of common house flies are believed to be better fitted than the human eye for observing objects in motion, though these creatures are short-sighted. That insects have the sense of taste cannot be doubted when it is observed how nice they are in their selection of foods. That they have smell is a matter of common observation. Most insects are deaf to sounds which are heard by human beings. At the same time, there is no doubt that they make and hear sounds which are entirely out of our range of hearing.

Certain senses in insects appear to be beyond comprehension. The neuterites among ants, known as the "termite," are blind, and yet they will reduce a beam of wood in their burrowings without once gnawing to the surface. An analogy is found among animals. A bat in a lighted room, though blinded as to sight, will fly in all directions with great swiftness and with infallible certainty of avoiding concussion or contact with any object. It seems to be able to feel at a distance.

No Words Wasted.
Nora was a treasure of a servant, whose habit of speech was often indirect, but was frequently picturesque and unexpectedly expressive. One evening "the master" was sitting in the library when the door-bell rang. Nora answered it, and on her return through the hall "the master" inquired who it was.

"It was a young man, sor," replied Nora.

"Well, what did he want?" was the question.

"Oh, he was just lookin' for the wrong number, sor."

"Did he find it?" asked the master.

"Yis, sor; it was next door." Which reply settled the whole question in the fewest possible words.—Lippincott's.

Greatest Meat Eaters.
One of the lines in which the United States now leads the world is that of meat eating. The Argentine Republic used to hold the championship in this particular, but in consequence of the influx of South European immigrants into that country the people have not taken to growing and eating cereals.—N. Y. Tribune.

Furniture from Ancient Timber.
Oak beams a thousand years old, removed from the Blue Bell Inn at Bedlington, England, have been converted into a handsome suite of furniture.

Worry.
Worry is the worst wolf that comes to our doors.—Chicago Tribune.

LITTER IN PUBLIC PARKS.

Reflections of a Park Policeman Upon the Careless Ways of Visitors.

"It's amazing how little interest people take in keeping their own property tidy," said the park policeman, who takes a pride in Central park, according to the New York Sun.

It was in the Ramble, and he was standing in front of a bench. Beneath the bench were one large pasteboard box, one small one, half full of salt; one large sheet of wrapping paper, one strong piece of twine, two chip pickle dishes, two pasteboard pie plates, six egg shells, three pieces of white paper, more or less greasy and crumpled up; four squares of oiled paper, very greasy; three paper napkins, innumerable crumbs and fragments, including ham fat, rye bread, cake, pie crust and cheese.

"Of course, we all know what that means," he went on. "Family party. Mother and two daughters, I guess. Out for a day of it. Take in the animals and the carriages and the pictures."

"Lunch in the sun, where the hill there cuts off the wind. Just as nice a day as three women could have, and yet they must spoil it this way for them that come after."

"They take home the milk bottles, all right. You can bet they had a satchel to carry them, for, you see, it would cost about ten cents apiece to leave them behind. But anything that they could unload without losing money, there it is."

"Do you know, I was talking about it to a man down where I live—he was quite a senator some years ago, and he's quite a man. Well, sir, he told me that one day in Paris—Paris, France, you know—he was reading a letter in the street, and when he got through he crumpled up the envelope in his hand and chucked it away. Well, sir, what do you think, but up comes a Paris cop to him and asks him to pick it up, and tells him, 'police like, that it's a fine and the lockup to chuck things around the streets, not to speak of the parks, there.'"

While he was speaking the policeman had strolled a couple of hundred feet away from the scene of the picnic party. Two well-dressed men passed by. One of them just at that moment took the last cigarette from a flat tin box. He threw the box into the grass just at the border of the path.

"I wonder what that chap would do if I went up to him and told him to pick up that box," mused the policeman. "I don't really know what he'd do—most likely nothing; but I know what he'd say. He'd tell me he'd report me for impudence to his personal friend, the commissar. They're all personal friends of his when you run foul of them."

The park department keeps a force of laborers constantly employed picking up litter in the park. But they cannot keep pace with the industry of the litter makers.

The lawns and shrubberies are constantly made unsightly with papers and cartons of all sorts, flung aside by careless people. One day, not long ago, two full newspapers, three sticks and an empty cigarette wrapper were floating in one of the fountain basins at the head of the mall, all at one time.

Men Wear Them.
The traveler in India is surprised to see that men wear combs in their hair much more than women do. A Cingalese gentleman wears what we know as a circular comb and a very ornamental back comb of tortoise shell to gather his curly locks together. He wears a full beard, also, but his servant must trim his own, and is only allowed to wear the circular comb.

Unting Their Fortunes.
Patience—They have decided to unite their fortunes.

Patrice—Indeed! What are their fortunes?

"Her's is her face, and his is his cheek."—Yonkers Statesman.

More Men Than Women.
Egypt is the only country in the world where there are more men than women. The male sex in the dominion of the khedive exceeds the female by 160,000.

Worry.
Worry is the worst wolf that comes to our doors.—Chicago Tribune.

TALES BRIEFLY TOLD.

During the funeral of an unpopular man in a New England village, a stranger having asked of the sexton: "Who's dead?" and "What complaint?" the sexton replied: "There is no complaint; everybody is satisfied."

"I meant to have told you of that hole," said the kindly host to his friend, who had suddenly disappeared in the course of a stroll through the grounds into a pit full of water. The friend climbed out and shook himself. "It doesn't matter," he said, cheerily, "I found it."

John G. Carlisle, who has a farm on Long Island, was discussing with his foreman the advisability of putting on a new man. "No," said the foreman, "I wouldn't bother to take on Frank. He wouldn't suit." "Why not?" "Well, because you couldn't place no dependence on his stickin' to the job. He's such a freckle-minded cuss he never stays at any one thing."

It was a new voluntary and the organist had been going through it for the first time. After she had finished the organ blower asked her if it had gone all right. With some surprise the young woman answered: "Oh, it went very well; thank you. But why do you ask?" "Well," said he, "I had never blown to this piece before, and I was rather anxious about it."

An Irishman traveling in France was challenged by a Frenchman to fight a duel, to which he readily consented, and suggested shillelans as weapons. "That won't do," said the Frenchman's second. "As challenged party you have the right to choose the arms, but chivalry demands that you should decide upon a weapon with which Frenchmen are familiar." "Is that so?" replied the Irishman, coolly. "Very well, we'll fight with gullottes."

FACETIOUS FLINGS.

Johnny—Pa, what is tact?
Pa—It's the art of letting a person know you know enough not to know.

He—If I had never been in love before how would I have known what all that was?
She—I would have told you.

Higgins—Here's a funny typographical error in this paper. It speaks of a man's "mother-in-law."
Wiggins—Well, isn't that all right? I can't see anything wrong about it.

Miss Passay—You may sneer at pet dogs, but they're faithful, anyway. I'd rather kiss a good dog than some men.
Mr. Sharpe—Well, well, some men are born lucky.

"What would you do if you were a king?" asked the man of vaulting ambition.
"I don't know," answered the matter-of-fact person. "I suppose I'd follow the fashion and wear a look of worry and a bullet-proof shirt."

"Now, if I were only an ostrich," began the man at the breakfast table, as he picked up one of his wife's biscuits, "then—"
"Yes," interrupted the patient better-half, "then I might get a few feathers for that old hat I've worn for three winters."

Possibly.
"I wonder what he ever saw about her that attracted him?"
"Perhaps the \$50,000 worth of diamonds and pearls with which her parents had decorated her."—Chicago Record-Herald.

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