

deposit an offering; the person doomed to die first will be warned by the presence of his image in the procession. There are many other traditions, but lack of space prevents their being recorded here.

From time immemorial the French-Canadian race has taken advantage of the midwinter season, when the exacting labors of field, bush and barn have ceased to weary the honest *habitant*, to dispense with toil, and speed the enjoyments of life, with all the resources at command, either in his own home, or at the festive hearth of his neighbor. This season is made merry with songs, dances, games and stories, and forms memorable milestones in the path of life, lightening the arduous routine of the peasant's daily duties during the rigorous Canadian winter.

The most notable holiday of the year is New Year's day (*le Jour de l'An*), rendered specially attractive by tradition and the recollection of ancient customs, many of which are intertwined with religious and domestic observances. Free rein is given to the spirits of the people as the last night of the old year wears on, its successor being as joyously hailed as though it were the advent of a valued friend. Then comes one of the most characteristic and notable features of Canadian life. Those polite and cordial visits, beginning early in the morning of the first, and lasting some days of the new year. In the olden times, it was quite a picturesque sight to see, on a New Year's morning, some of the citizens of Quebec paying their calls carrying their hats under their arms, indifferent to a temperature of 20° below zero, with the *queues* of their wigs blown to and fro by the wintry winds.

The formula of good wishes for the New Year is, usually: "*On vous la souhaite bonne et heureuse, avec le Paradis à la fin de vos jours.*" (We wish you a prosperous and a happy New Year, and may you see Heaven after your death.) Refreshments are liberally served, often quite beyond the peasant's means. Such hospitality is not to be refused, and one must partake freely, in compliment to his successive hosts. The result is often a personal discomfort which furnishes frequent illustrations of that "killing with kindness," that has passed into a proverb. The greatest courtesy is manifested on either side, the marked friendliness often effacing the result of previous coldness or differences during the preceding year, stimulating mutual regard, and promoting even the interests of business, so largely dependent upon such feeling in a limited community. In the evening, every device which ingenious good nature can suggest is employed to beguile the hours. It is no marvel, therefore, that, after the adieus are spoken, *le jour de l'An* is esteemed the brightest spot in the year's picture, by both old and young. In a sense, also, it is regarded as marking a step towards spring,

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