

The Immortal Years

WHEN the bells strike twelve times on the last night of December, we say that the Old Year is dead. The mortal part of it indeed is dead—the mere days and weeks and months that measured its duration as a period of time. But is that all of the Old Year? Has it not an immortal part, as we have, a more essential part than mere temporal duration, a part that must live and continue as we shall live and continue when our bodies are things of the past?

The things that chiefly characterize and distinguish any year in the history of the world are not the units of time which compose it. These we justly set aside as dead things, never to be resurrected, never to be lived over again. But the things which characterize a year and make it memorable are not days, weeks, months, but movements, events, living ideas, which have belonged especially to that year and distinguished it from other years in history. Viewed in this light there are no dead years. Their life is organic, continuous, progressive. Each year adds itself to every succeeding year, as a strong current of energy, achievement, discovery, and no more perishes or ceases to be than a tributary river dies when it pours its tide into another stream or into the ocean.

The best things, the distinctive things, of this Old Year to which we are saying farewell cannot, then, die; they are essentially immortal. We shall live on with them, they must live on with us. Every historical movement which has had its rise during the year; every new thought and new discovery and new invention; every vital book, every conference of strong thinkers, every influx of new truth from whatever source, everything that has enriched humanity and made it better and stronger and wiser and freer, during the year that has passed—shall endure, shall reach forward into the time to be, shall be recognized by generations to come as the contribution of the year to history, as the immortal, essential part of it, which could not pass away when the midnight bells tolled the knell of that poor, transient, temporal part, the expired twelve months of the calendar.

For each one of us individually, also, this year of our lives to which we are saying farewell is an immortal year. Something it has surely done for us, or against us, and that something must enter with us upon the history of the new year. Human life is not divided into non-communicating sections, like the water-tight compartments of a modern ocean steamer. Life is continuous and homogeneous. For us the years do not die; they flow into one another, they interpenetrate, they form one continuous stream of personal history. All that is vital to the individual in the Old Year remains just as vital and operative in the dawn of the New Year. Nothing essential perishes when one year dies and another begins. Our regrets over the passing of the Old Year are mainly a graceful and pleasing piece of sentiment, which has entered into literature and become a permanent heritage and custom. No one looks upon the dying of the Old Year as anything really serious. At heart we are quite complacent about it; our tears are crocodiles' tears. And this is as it should be, for we all know that nothing worth weeping for dies with the mere expiration of the calendar year. All that is of any human significance in the passage of time is immortal.

And it is with that immortal element of the years that we should be concerned. How shall we live so as to make what survives and passes over from one year to another a helpful contribution to character and to service? That is the question over which we should bow our heads while the Old Year lies a-dying. The spirit of that hour should be one of outlook, not of retrospect. What are we carrying over from the Old Year into the New? What shall the New Year carry over to its successor? What shall time carry over into eternity?—*Zion's Herald*.

Finical Appetites

A DUTY which every mother owes to herself and to society is to train her child to follow the doctrine of St. Paul, and "eat what is set before him." How disagreeable is the finical notional eater many a house-keeper will testify. One man makes miserable the woman at whose house he chances to visit by his inability to eat of half the dishes set before him. It is not that certain viands disagree with him, but simply that he "does not care for them." Such are tomatoes, raw or cooked, fish in any form, potatoes, unless they are mashed, fruits of all kinds, except peaches, and hot puddings of every variety. Another man can not eat eggs, while a third woman "never tastes a salad." The trouble with all these people undoubtedly originated in their early training. In too many families the small people are allowed to declare that they "don't like this," and "won't eat that," and are humored in their whims. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing to hear a mother speak with ill-concealed pride of the fastidious appetites of her children. In treating their whims as matters of vast importance she is laying on her own shoulder a heavy burden, under which she may some day moan that "it is impossible to suit her family, try as she may."

Unless a child is made ill by a certain article of food, he should be encouraged to eat it, and his failure to enjoy it at once should be deplored, not praised. A six-year-old who had many whims and notions paid a visit to a grandmother who was wise in her generation. The dessert at his first meal in the grand-maternal abode chanced to be strawberries. He shook his head as a saucer of the sugared fruit was placed before him.

"I don't want these, grandma," he said.

"Very well, dear," was the reply, and no further notice was taken of the declination.

The child continued to eye distastefully the saucer of berries, and soon remarked: "Grandma, I'm tired of strawberries."

"Yes, dear," was the only answer.

"Grandma, aren't you going to give me any dessert instead of these?"

"No, dear, of course not," gently, but firmly.

"Not even a piece of cake?"

"Not even a piece of cake."

"Then," with a sorry attempt at a laugh, "I suppose I'll have to eat my strawberries!"

Which he proceeded to do with such zest that the sugared lobes disappeared like snowballs before a July sun. Evidently grandma was not to be tricked and coerced as was mamma.

Among the forbidden speeches at table should be: "I do not like that." And if, from any personal idiosyncrasy a child is really unable to eat a certain dish in which others indulge with impunity, he may be trained to pass the fact by in silence, and to feel that his peculiarity is a misfortune, not a virtue.—*Table Talk*.

Marconi's Tribute to General Booth

During General Booth's recent voyage across the Atlantic in the Virginian a crowded meeting was held in the saloon, at which he spoke for an hour and a half on the operations and progress of the Salvation Army. The chair was occupied by Mr. Marconi, who highly eulogized the Salvation Army's work, saying that it was not only founded on Christ and governed by the feeling of charity and principles of benevolence, but managed on sound modern business principles. Senator Gibson, in moving a vote of thanks at the close, said that perhaps by the time General Booth reached the heavenly kingdom Mr. Marconi would be able to reach him by wireless telegraphy, and a reply of good cheer could be sent back from the Better Land.

Experience is a dear school, but some will learn in no other.—*Rev. E. Davidson*.