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Side Talks by Ruth Cameron

LEST WE FORGET.

A NEW YEAR'S DETERMINATION.
"If I knew you and you knew me—
If both of us could clearly see,
And with an inner sight divine,
The meaning of your heart and mine—
I'm sure that we would differ less
And clasp our hands in friendship;
Our thoughts would pleasantly agree,
If I knew you and you knew me."

How is that for a New Year's thought? I found it in The Sunshine Bulletin, but the author's name I have forgotten. The older I grow (and it is being borne in upon me that every New Year I am growing a bit older if we count age by the number of times the world has revolved around the sun since we arrived, instead of by the way we feel), the more I am impressed by the difficulty of knowing very much about any human being, especially the difficulty of knowing enough to criticize.

Take a husband and wife who have lived together 50 years. You would say that each must know the other like a book. But when you come right down to it, whereas each may have many thoughts and emotions and motives that the other is familiar with, it is not unquestionably true that each has more thoughts and emotions and motives than the other is absolutely ignorant of?

There they sit, side by side in their living room, so close that they need

only reach out their hands to touch, and yet they may be thousands of miles away in thought.

Yet this intimacy is as close as any can be. How, then, can we think to know those with whom our intimacy is but the comparatively casual one of friendship?

Knowledge, we have often been told, brings power. It also brings tolerance. The more we know, the more we understand, the more we realize what foolish things blame and criticism are.

Over and over again I have had the experience of wondering how people could take certain stands in certain situations and then of passing through those same situations and finding out. Nothing weakens the instinct to friendly feeling more than the habit of perpetual blame and criticism. We may find out later why people do certain things under certain conditions but if, in the meanwhile, we have killed the kindly feeling between us by criticism and an attitude of superiority, we have lost something it will be hard to get back.

Of course we ought to go and tell the person involved that we understand now, but that is very hard to do. Better to withhold judgment, not to criticize so much, not to be so sure we know—for, after all, there aren't many things more worth while in life than friendship and love, are there?

To be able to feel tenderly toward those about one, to have a few hands one loves to clasp in friendliness, is to have kept one's hold on the virtues of life. Why not make it a New Year determination (I am a bit afraid of the word resolution) to strengthen that hold this coming year?

Finally may I say that my only resolution is that there will be very few My Columns next year, and that these will be far between. (Overwhelming. —Editor)

MY COLUMN

REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW YEAR.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new" wrote Tennyson. If the poet had lived in the 20th Century, he would have altered that line to "Pay off the old, run up the new." Of course, I am referring to bills. After all, that's the great thing about the end of the year for it is then that the tradesmen start to deluge the poor unfortunate household-er with his unpaid accounts for the year that has past. But bills aren't the only thing the new year is novel for. There are also resolutions. About a week before the end of the year one usually begins an analysis of one's character with a view to discovering all one's bad points and making resolutions to correct them. It is really surprising how few people can be brought to realize the many failings "which flesh is heir to." But even the best of us find some faults which need correcting and we make the necessary resolutions which we propose to put into force after midnight on December 31st. The average man may keep his resolutions for a day or a week. It all depends on the nature of his vow. For instance, a fellow can keep off smokes for a day, but it will probably take him a week to break his resolution against keeping on the water wagon. The strong willed man may keep all his resolutions for a month but finally he forgets all about them and they drop into oblivion.

A favourite New Year custom which is rapidly dying out is that of visiting. In pre-prohibition days this was a very popular pastime. Then, one could go from house to house, taking a wee drop here and a wee drop there so that finally the man, who left his own home sober, returned a few hours later in a condition which led him to suppose that there were half a dozen key-holes, since they were all making faces at him. Now that the land is cursed with prohibition, this good old game is falling from favour. After all, what's the use of going out and getting only an occasional drink? If you can't come home completely drunk, then it's not worth while going out at all. The one thing I detest about the New Year is having to change the date on one's letters. I know that, as before, I shall continue to write 1921 for at least the first month of 1922. It really is an awful nuisance. During the past few days I have been drawing up a set of resolutions for Horace and if he doesn't keep them, it's going to cost him his job. Here are a few of them.

I RESOLVE:—
To wash my hands once a day and my neck at least, once a week.
To get down to the office every morning at 8.30 a.m.
Not to touch the boss' cigarette supply.
To wipe my feet before placing them on the boss' desk when I mind the office for him.
Not to wink at every girl that comes into the office.
Not to call the stenographer "outie."
Not to allow the office cat to go to sleep on the boss' chair.
But I might go on 'ad infinitum'. The above will cover the dear Horace's principal faults. Well here's wishing all my readers a happy New Year, and

RIMES OF THE TIMES.

NEW YEAR SPECIAL.

Perceval Augustus Booth
Was a most untidy youth,
Sandy haired and long of limb,
Mental powers very dim.
Percy never brushed his hair
And he never seemed to care,
If his clothes were full of holes
Or his features black as coals.
Polish never touched his shoes,
'Twas a thing he would not use,
And the trousers that he wore
Must have been ten years, two score.
If you looked you'd always find
That his neckwear lay behind
His collar, and without a doubt
You'd see one sock was inside out.
Percy's mother was distressed
At the way her son was dressed
But in spite of all she said
Percy did his old way tread.

When the year was near its end
Percy went out with a friend
To a dance and there he met
A dainty maiden named Babetta.
Percy, stupefied, stood still
And he felt a sudden thrill
Striking at his very heart.
He was fairly in the cart.
Picture then just how he felt,
What an awful blow was dealt,
How she did his ardour damp
When she asked "Who is that tramp?"

At her words poor Percy sighed,
Even thought of suicide.
Till it flashed upon his mind
That his clothes were ill designed
To attract a fair coquette
Like that dainty maid, Babetta.

So he made a resolution
That there'd be a revolution
In the manner that he dressed.
He'd in future look his best.
So to please that awful 'pash'
Percy gathered all his cash
To a barber first he went
And while there much money spent
On shampoos and on a shave,
They did his hair up in a wave.
He bought new suits and shirts galore
From Kearney's gent's outfitting store
And never since the world began
Was there a finer gentleman.

So Percy went to press his suit
And Babetta told him he looked cute
But when he told her of his love
And called her little turtle dove
She slowly looked at him and said
'I'm sure you are quite off your head.'
And then she swept out from the room
Leaving poor Percy to his gloom.

If you want to know the truth
Perceval Augustus Booth
Tore off all his new made clothes
Even to his fancy hose
And he rushed out upon the street
And there two constables did meet
Who took him quickly to the Station
Much to Percy's indignation.
They did not put him in the pen
And now he's dwelling in two-ten.

So if perchance you lose your heart
Don't with your old time habits part.
For better far to be uncouth
Than share the fate of Percy Booth.

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