

The New Year.

Behold the New Year beckons like a flower
Hid in its roots among the untrodden hills;
God show thee how its sweetness every hour
Grows only as thy breath thy spirit fills!

Behold! The New Year beckons like a star—
A splendid mystery of the unfathomed skies;
God guide thee through his mystic spaces far
Till all his stars as suns within thee rise!

The New Year beckons. He, too, beckoning, nears;
Forget not thou that all its gifts are his;
Take from his hand all blessings of the years
And of the blossoming, starred eternity!

MR. HARLOWE'S LESSON.



HELEN.

"Yes, dear."

"Will you come upstairs immediately?"

"Certainly."

And Helen Harlowe dropped her towel and hastily laid down the silver she was wiping, for when her husband spoke in that tone some one had to hurry.

"You'd better not try to make me any more shirts. This one is enough to drive a man crazy. Just look at it!"

"Why, what's the matter with it, Horace?" asked Mrs. Harlowe, mildly.

"Matter? Why, everything is the matter. Do look at these sleeves, they're a mile too long. Neck is big enough for a twenty-inch collar instead of a fifteen. Too high in the back and too low in front. Guess you thought I was a delicate specimen of humanity, by the size of these wristbands." And Mr. Harlowe derisively held up to view a neatly finished wristband, looking about the right size for an ordinary man. "I repeat it Mrs. Harlowe, don't try to make me any more shirts. This is the third time I have been called on to endure such martyrdom. If you can neither make a decent shirt yourself, nor get any one to teach you, I'll go buy me one; yes, I will."

And Mr. Harlowe slammed the dressing-room door as he went in search of another, and, let us hope, less offending garment.

Mrs. Harlowe picked up the much despised shirt, and spreading it out on the bed deliberately proceeded to look it over, and, if possible, ascertain just wherein it failed in its requirements. As shirts go, it was a neatly finished and proper looking garment enough. Certainly it had cost her much time and thought.

When she had assumed the care of her husband's wardrobe a few months since she had found a dilapidated state of affairs prevailing. Not only were shirts much worn and frayed, but worst of all they were conspicuous by their absence.

Although Mr. Harlowe could not truthfully be said to have "not a shirt to his back," still the ones he did possess were but a poor apology for the round dozen with which tradition endows a man.

Mrs. Harlowe had straightway set herself at work to repair the deficiency. At first there were some mistakes made, but now she fondly hoped to suit her husband. Poor thing! she had yet to learn that a "prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own people." Which being interpreted means that a husband's praise is quite frequently very sparing when it is his wife that is concerned, and criticism grows to be his almost second nature.

Mrs. Harlowe has been finding out things during her short married life. Among them she had found out that her husband had a temper. A fine thing to carry to the world's work if a reasonable one. A fine thing to help with all the trials of business, but a very poor thing to bring home to a tired wife, and to join in the discussion of matrimonial affairs.

Mr. Harlowe had a very disagreeable way of presupposing one's inferiority, and especially so

was it the case with his wife. Whether he really thought so or not, the effect was the same on Mrs. Harlowe, and therefore she was exceedingly sensitive on the subject, and inclined to almost doubt her own ability.

Still, when the two traits joined hands as in the present case, her combativeness was roused. Ordinarily she was of fairly even disposition, not one of the women to fly into a passion or dissolve in tears because her liege lord expressed a contrary opinion.

Nevertheless, she was as nearly out of temper as she had ever been, and as she folded away the shirt she folded with it certain resolutions it were well Mr. Horace Harlowe did not know of. She was sure her husband's shirts were all right, and just what course to pursue she could not tell.

"O dear!" she sighed, "If his mother had made them they would have been perfect, and he would have praised them to the skies. Yet I am certain he loves me, and I know he hasn't the slightest idea how terribly he makes me feel. But I'll think a way out of it yet, see if I don't."

And Mrs. Harlowe went back to her silver, and if she rubbed the knives with unnecessary vigor, why it was all the better for the knives, and perhaps for the irate Mr. Harlowe, too.

But the more she tried to think her way out of the difficulty the more exasperated she became, and the little cloud of ill-fitting shirt bid fair to cover the whole matrimonial horizon. At last a happy thought seemed to strike her.

"Why hadn't I thought of Mabel before!" she exclaimed. "If any one can help me out of this, she can."

Hastily dressing, she left orders for Mr. Harlowe's dinner, in case she should not be home in time, and hurried out to catch the morning train to Elmwood, where lived her friend, Mabel Winthrop.

Rushing through the archway leading to the Central Station, she nearly knocked over a tall young lady who was coming towards her with equal rapidity. Turning for the usual apology, she recognized the friend she was seeking, who exclaimed:

"Well, Helen, I should think you were running from fate. What is the matter?"

"I'm only hurrying to meet you, my dear," quietly answered our friend. "I'm more than glad to have met you, too, for if I had gone to Elmwood I should have been obliged to be away at dinner, and my husband especially likes me to be there then, if possible."

"You poor dear, what a tyrant. Does he expect you to always sit behind the teaturn? Don't I wish I had a chance to teach him a lesson on the rights of women, and his wife in particular."

And Mabel Winthrop laughed merrily as she imagined herself training her friend's husband.

"But if you are so anxious to be at home and under the eye of the awful Horace, let's sit down here in this quiet corner and talk over affairs, for I am very certain some new home problem is the cause of that little pucker between your eyes."

And Mabel critically surveyed Helen's face as she flushed a little under her searching eyes.

"Oh, it's nothing very serious. Just a little matter that puzzles me, and I am going to look to your quick wit to think out a course to pursue."

"Well you certainly look as if it did puzzle you. I should think you were trying to solve a problem in Euclid."

"Indeed 'twould be far easier, I fancy," answered Mrs. Harlowe.

The friendship of these two had been of long duration, and was the result largely of different natures; for while Mabel looked on the droll side of everything, and never doubted her own ability in finding a happy solution of every difficulty, Helen was more easily discouraged by things that go wrong. She grew to fear her own judgment in decisive steps, and at the present time

she felt sure that Mabel would see just what to do, and could easily tell her how to do it.

"As I said before, it's nothing, really. But if you were fortunate enough to have a husband, and had made him three sets of shirts, to have each in turn called worse than the preceding one, what would you do?"

"Well, I don't know as I can pass judgment without knowing more about the particulars of the case, Helen. How did you get your pattern, and did you really try your very best?"

"To the first question I will say that I had Mr. H.'s tailor cut him a pattern from his measures. To the second you don't deserve an answer."

"I don't believe your hubby is any more particular than most men, is he?"

"Particular than most men! What do you know about men or their opinions on shirts, anyway, Mabel Winthrop?"

"Enough to show you how to teach this one a lesson, I guess. You have been a long time finding out your husband's faults. I had about decided that you had married a paragon of manly virtues, when, lo and behold, he must be fitted to a shirt, and most breaks his little wife's heart so he does!" and Mabel laughed in her merry contagious way till even Helen's features had relaxed into a smile.

"I should hate a paragon of manly virtues, and I think if Horace has a good wholesome lesson now it may open his eyes to the fault-finding way he has fallen into, for really it is only thoughtlessness."

So will wifely charity seek to cover up the multitude of her husband's sins.

"Well Helen, my dear, if you are really in earnest we will join hands and raise a conspiracy for the cause of woman's rights and the sake of shirts."

For some time longer did the friends talk, and evidently they came to some satisfactory conclusion, for there was many a laugh as they laid their plans against the unsuspecting Mr. Harlowe.

When Mrs. Harlowe took her car for home the little wrinkle between her eyes had disappeared and in its place she wore a smile of amusement.

For a short time matters ran along smoothly at the Harlowes, no mention of shirts ruffling the surface of the domestic calm, Mrs. Harlowe not feeling it necessary to treat her husband like a Pariah because he had lost his temper over a shirt.

One morning at the breakfast table, when the coffee had been unusually good and the stake done to a turn, Mrs. Harlowe remarked to her husband.

"I am so sorry about your shirts, Horace; really I don't feel as if I could make you any more; I am not competent, I guess. How would it do to ask your mother to make you some?"

And Mrs. Harlowe looked at her husband with every appearance of anxiety.

"My dear wife, you have come to a very sensible conclusion at last. I have always told you that shirt making required a very superior ability. Mother will be sure to make something fit to wear. Could you get the cloth ready so that I could take it in on my way to the store this morning?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Mrs. Harlowe as she hastened upstairs to hide a smile.

Mr. Harlowe left a large bundle at his mother's home that morning with a still larger bundle of directions and suggestions and if Mrs. Harlowe the elder had not been pretty well instructed she would have requested him to depart unto his wife, bundle and all. As it was she told him she would try and have the shirts ready in a week, and with that he was forced to be content.

In the course of time the shirts came home, and Mr. H. was as proud as a peacock. He