

at the gay company, but without himself joining in drinking the wine. Long before my brother had told me that Philip had never drunk a drop of liquor in any form. I had thought it was simply some puritanical notion, and had often laughed at him for his strict ideas. To-night, however, was no common affair. I resolved that he should drink with the rest on this first morning of the New Year which was to witness our marriage ere its close. At first I only gently insisted, Philip each time as gently, but firmly, refusing. At last, somewhat vexed, I said: 'Before this joyous company, Philip, I pray you to yield this once, and for the love of me, who am to be your wife before another New Year, do you drink a glass of this sweet old Madeira which I have here, in honor of the time and the occasion!'

For one moment all was still as death. I could feel my lip slightly curl in disdain; then Philip stepped forward, took the glass from my hand and drained every drop. No need now to urge him to drink. The first taste of the wine seemed to have changed his very nature. He was the gayest of the gay, the noisiest of the noisy.

The people were beginning to leave, and the last sleigh load had departed, singing on their way, when I came upon my lover and my brother together in the dining room. I can seem to hear Edgar to-night as he said:

'Philip, remember your promise to your mother. Don't drink one drop more.' But Philip only roughly thrust him aside.

'Leave me alone, Ned,' he said, 'I have tasted it; the mischief is done.'

I was hurrying away, frightened at the words and looks of the two when my very heart seemed to stand still at the loud report of a pistol. Oh, the scene that met my terrified eyes! Bending over the stiff and motionless form of my brother was Philip, his own pale face was drawn, and his eyes wild with remorse. As I ran up to them he raised his eyes to mine with such a look as I shall never forget.

'Oh, Marjorie, I have killed your brother; killed him who was my best friend, and who was my strong support through all the temptations of my college life! Oh, Marjorie, darling, it wasn't your fault!' he cried, as he saw the look on my face. 'You didn't know that I had inherited an awful legacy, where a drop of liquor makes one lose all control of one's self. I ought to have told you before. Marjorie, Marjorie, don't die too!' for I fell at his feet in a dead swoon. They thought I was really dead at first, while Philip was almost crazy with grief and remorse.

In the hurry and bustle of that night it was over an hour before he was missed, and it was long days before they dared tell me the truth—how he had dashed out into the gray dawn of that New Year's morning, and, mounting his horse, started to cross the river. The ice was full of air-holes that year, and in his mad ride Philip broke through into the cold waters beneath and was drowned.

Previous to telling me the sad news I was told that my brother was not dead, but had had almost recovered from his wound, which he had received while he and Philip were idly playing with a pistol. So Philip was not a murderer, yet he perished with the belief that he had not only Edgar's but also my blood on his hands.

Many months passed before I could see anyone outside of the family. Then I never spoke of that awful night. Not long after my father died, and Edgar and I were left alone in the great house with the servants. Edgar wished to go to the city, while I was only too

glad to sell the place which will ever be rife with sad remembrance to me.

Here the writing came to an end, but another hand had added:

'I, too, am Marjorie Crosby, niece of the above. I will add these few lines to make the story complete. Crosby Hall was sold and made into a tavern. My aunt went to Boston and devoted the remainder of her life to helping the poor and needy. Her large fortune enabled her to do much good, and ere her death many a poor wretch had reason to bless her name. Especially did those who were slaves to drink enlist her sympathies. My father and I often spend a week at Crosby Tavern, and during one of my visits, while ransacking the old unfinished attic in search of treasures or relics, I found Aunt Marjorie's poor little story and so will put my bit to it, and leave it where I found it, far back under the eaves.'

As Bert finished reading and laid the paper down a hush had fallen on the little group.

'Poor Marjorie! All her fond hopes blighted and all because of a glass of wine!' softly murmured Aunt Jo, who had joined our company.

The old house, which had seen so many strange scenes enacted under its roof, seemed silently to remind one that every act in life may be a link in a long chain full of joy or sorrow.

New Year Superstitions.

The old superstitions connected with New Year are many, and not only harmless but interesting. For instance, no one must put on anything that is soiled, and, if possible, wear everything new. You must not cut your hair or nails, and on no account wear a torn garment. If you should be so unfortunate as to put on the left shoe first, or a garment on wrong side, you must undress, even to the taking down of your hair, and dress all over again. It is very bad luck to be late to breakfast, and worse luck still to stumble or fall, unless it be upstairs, in which case do not look behind you, whatever you do. On retiring, place something higher than the bed beside it, on which you can step when you arise in the morning, so that you may take your first step upward. Be the first to speak to the cook, if you can. To have a basket of eggs or a box of oranges brought to the house unexpectedly during the day is great good luck. The salt-cellar must be clean and full, the bread-basket well supplied, and money in your purse, and the purse in your pocket. Whatever you start to do on New Year's Day you must finish, or else you will half do all the year. It is also a custom to light a candle at sundown on Dec. 31, and keep it burning until the new year is fairly started. It is a very ill omen to have a fire go out with the old year. The finding of money is good if the money is spent for other than the person finding it.—Selected.

The Calendar.

The calendar was first arranged so that the year was composed of 365 days in twelve months. The odd minutes, however, were left unnoticed, till Julius Caesar, and his astronomer, decided that every four years an extra day should be added, which was done by repeating February 24th, and a fresh start was made in the Julian style. But in 1582, A.D., the odd minutes had amounted to ten days, and Pope Gregory ordered this number of days to be taken from 1582, so October 5th became the 15th. But some countries, England among them, did not adopt this rule. George II. passed an act for 'equalizing' our British time to that of continental nations. By this

Act (24 George II., 1751), seven days were omitted after September 2nd, 1752; and, to counteract odd minutes in reckoning, 'the years 1800 and any hundredth year, except every fourth hundredth, whereof the year 2000 A.D. shall be the first,' shall not be reckoned 'leap years.' The 'old style' is still maintained in Russia, and (we believe) in Greece, but all other nations adopted the new.—Selected.

At the Parting of the Ways.

'Go forth in thy turn,' said the Lord of the year, to the year we greet to-day—

'Go forth to succor my people, who are thronging the world's highway.

Carry them health and comfort, carry them joy and light,

The grace of the eager dawning, the ease of the restful night.

Take them the flying snowflake, and the hope of the hastening spring,

The green of the leaf unrolling, the gleam of the blue-bird's wing.

Give them the gladness of children, the strength of sinew and nerve,

The pluck of the man in battle, who may fall, but will never swerve.

Send them the lilt of the singer, the sword that is swift to smite

In the headlong rush of the onset, when the wrong resists the right.

Pour on them peace that crowneth hosts which have bravely striven.

Over them throw the mantle they wear who are God-forgiven.

Shrive them of sin and of blunders; O make my people free!

Let this year among years he thought of as a time of jubilee,

Throbbing with notes triumphant, waving with banners fair,

A year of the grace of the Highest, to vanquish human despair.

For sorrow and sighing send them, O Year, the dance of mirth,

And banish the moan and the crying from the struggling, orphaned earth.

'Go forth in thy turn, O blithe New Year,' said the Lord of the passing days;

And the angels in heaven heard Him, and lifted a paean of praise.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

'Tender-foot' Ted.

(Mary E. Q. Brush, in the 'Congregationalist'.)

Ted sat on the doorstep, looking off toward the prairie. Westward the fresh breeze and the sunset glow made the grass look like a sea of golden waves. Toward the east there was a soft, amethyst tinge with purple shadings. It was this way that Ted's face was turned with a wistful longing for home. Home? That was a thing of the past! Two weeks before he had seen his father buried; then had come a long, wearisome journey, and now he was out on this lonely ranch with relatives he had never before seen. His uncle was very kind, but his cousins—Ted winced, for even now he heard big, burly Jack and roguish Jerry giggling back of the stables. The former was unbuckling the 'cinch' of a restive pony and exclaiming, 'Humph! Guess that "tender-foot" won't brag of his riding again!'

'No, indeed! Wildfire gave him one dose! Say, do you believe Ted was on a horse before?' said Jerry.

'Probably. The fellow doesn't lie—he's a real "Truthful James"! But you see, Jerry, riding East is tame business. Put a dude in a plug hat upon a mild-tempered nag with