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Thoughts for New Year's Day.

The sun hath set on the last day of the year; twilight had faded into darkness; midnight was drawing nigh. A young girl sat alone in her chamber; her head was leaning on one hand; in the other she held a picture, on which her eyes were fixed. The expression of her face so beaming in its glissh brightness, told of a past without trial, of a present without care. The clock had struck eleven more than half an hour ago. It chimed for the third time it was a quarter to twelve. The minute hurried past, rapid and noiseless: a few seconds more and the Old Year would be over. Through those still and solemn moments the girl sat there immovable. What was she thinking of? If we could have had those bright but sunshiny, bright moments, hopes brighter still, the record of a happy youth, the promise of a yet more happy manhood. Well for her that there was no voice of prophecy to mar her bliss, for on her musings to another New Year's Eve, and show her the future, not as she pictured it, but as it was to be. Already the sun had gone forth; the Angel of Death was near at hand. Well for her that she knew it, or she would have kept her in her solitude to see the bright vision of her life dispelled. Yet, was it well?

At night those solemn moments came to us; we counted the pulses of the expiring year; we stood upon the threshold of the new. Whether those seconds were passed in the privacy of our chamber, or in the pleasant companionship of the loving and loved, it can hardly be but that a feeling of awe came stealing over us that, clinging for a while from the immediate exits of the passing hour, our thoughts wandered back to the past onward to the future. And if so, on what did they chiefly dwell? Was it, like her of whom we have spoken, on the joys of life, the remembered pleasures, the expected bliss? Soaring on the wings of hope, did we go forth to meet the coming year with a song of earthly gladness?

More probably, far more probably, especially to such of us as have passed the sunny days of youth, and whose feet are traversing the drearier pathway of maturer age, the thought of life's sorrows. Perhaps the is a vacant chair by our own fireplace, the hearth of these for the sake of whom life itself would be a willing sacrifice. Perhaps we thought of this as the hours of yester-evening flitted by, and sighed as we remembered that never more for us, or them, would the New Year dawn as brightly as of old. Or perhaps we looked forward to the months before us, and thought of the lengthening spring days, and the sun's brightness, and the calm of autumn, and remembered that through all those seasons, by day, and hour by hour, at morning, at noon-day, and at even, the struggle went on; the hard battle against the aboriginal hill, and the longing which seems to gather fresh power from our efforts to resist it. Or perhaps there is an object, the sight of our eyes, and the desire of our heart, struggled for, prayed for, yet withheld from us, and to be withholder, in spite of ourselves; we cannot but believe it, all through the days of our pilgrimage, even unto death. It is more to us than any earthly treasure ought to be; and looking on to the coming year, and seeing no slight token of its presence spread on life's horizon, we cannot but feel our heart sink within us, and our courage fail.

But whether last night our musings were of joy or of sorrow, the moments passed, and they are gone. They cannot be recalled; they will return no more. If they were wasted in fruitless despondency, or idle dreaming, let us rouse ourselves now to a more vigorous combat, and let the remembrance of former clothfulness awaken in us increased energy of thought and deed. Happy those who thus seek to atone on New Year's morning for the failings of New Year's eve. But happier they who spent that evening as He whose eye upon us would have us spend it. There is no sin in the remembrance of the gladness or the sorrow of our lives; but if religion do not sanctify those feelings to us, they can have over us no influence for good. And after all, they are, in one sense, but shadows, fleeting as the mist that passes away. At the last great day, when the dead arise from their graves, and stand before God, what will it matter to us whether we have laughed or wept? There are other questions which will concern us all more nearly then, and surely they must be more fitting subjects of consideration for the dying and the dying year. Our sins and our duties, it were well for us to remember them.

In that awful moment, when all the things of life, whether of joy or sorrow, appear but as a dream, we shall stand face to face with them in terrible reality. If we would learn

to view them now, so that their remembrance then shall have for us no terrors, kneeling at the foot of the Cross, we must ask pardon for the sins, strength to fulfil the duties.

Then mindful still of those occasions where in we have fallen, yet cheered by the hope of forgiveness, and strengthened by belief in a protecting Hand, we shall go forward day by day, and year by year, with renewed and a firmer will to strive and to achieve.

Brother or sister, whoever you are whose eyes are resting on the lines I have traced, I wish you, from my heart, a happy new year, and a good, untroubled life, but I wish you more earnestly, and on bended knees I pray to Heaven to grant you an inheritance in that tearless land where night will no longer succeed to day, no year to year, and where one element of its unutterable bliss will surely be the consciousness that there can be for us no possibility of change, save perchance a wider knowledge and a deeper love.

To know that we ourselves and all who are dear to us, are safe, and for ever: we can hardly realize the blessedness of that thought.

The happiest life on earth must yet be darkened by many clouds; even were it not so, death would still come, and the joy would cease.

Death would come, as it will come, more surely to each of us; it may be soon, before this year is past; it may be that the sentence is already uttered; for it may be that many years must come and go before it is pronounced. We know not the day or hour of the summons; but this we know, that only in the path of duty can we await it safely. If death finds us there, it will not take away joy, but give it.

The gloomy light that any Christian is leading here on earth may be cheered, nay, even rendered bright and joyous, by two sources of consolation; both are great, but one infinitely greater than the other, which, indeed, derives from it its charm.

The one is belief in the Communion of Saints; the other, the Thought of Love, the Love of God.

Surely, we may trust our earthly future undoubtedly to Him who has so loved us, who has added to all His other blessings, this holy Communion of the Saints.

Only can we be certain that our earthly course is acceptable in His sight, if year by year our hearts glow more warmly with love to those for whom Christ died; above all, with love to Him who sanctifies our joys, and teaches us to bear our sorrows; who pardons our sins and strengthens us for the performance of our duties who has promised to be with us always, as we pass over the waves of this troublesome world; and to bring us purified, forgiven, to the land where He dwells.—[D. F. in the Penny Post.

THE AGE OF OUR EARTH.—Among the astounding discoveries of modern science is that of the immense periods that have passed in the gradual formation of the earth.

So vast were the cycles of the time preceding even the appearance of man on the surface of our globe, that our own period seems as yesterday when compared with the epochs that have gone before it. Had we only the evidence of the deposits of rocks heaped above each other in regular strata by the slow accumulation of materials, they alone would convince us of the long and slow maturing of God's work on earth; but when we add to these the successive populations of whose life this world has been the theatre, and whose remains are hidden in the rocks into which the mud or sand or soil or whatever kind which they lived has hardened in the course of time—or the enormous chains of mountains whose upheaval divided this period of quiet accumulation by great convulsions—or the changes of a different nature in the configuration of our globe, as the sinking of land beneath the ocean, or the gradual rising of continents and islands above; or the slow growth of the coral reefs, those wonderful sea-walks, raised by the little ocean architects whose own bodies furnish both the building stones and cement that binds them together, and who have worked so busily during the long centuries, mountain chains, islands, and long lines of coast, consisting solely of their remains—or the countless forests that have grown up, flourished, died, and decayed to fill the storehouses of coal that feed the fires of the human race—if we consider all these records of the past, the intellect fails to grasp a chronology for which our experience furnishes no data, and time that lies behind us seems as much an eternity to our conception as the future stretches indefinitely before us.—[Agassiz.

DEATH ON THE WEDDING DAY.—The Providence Press gives the following mournful paragraph, under its Newport head:

“One of those rare and sad instances has

recently occurred here, in which a young lady was buried on the day appointed for her bridal. The person alluded to, Miss S., had been in feeble health for several months, but the disease was consumption, that most deceptive of all diseases, and her immediate friends, as well as her self, flattered themselves that youth and medical skill combined would prevail, and the object of their affections be spared to them for many years. All the arrangements had been made for her bridal, but when the appointed day arrived, death, the grave, claimed her for his own, and in her last sleep she was arrayed in what was to be her bridal attire.

HOW TO DRESS FOR SKATING.

The New York Evening Post in article on skating affords some valuable suggestions to the ladies as to the mode of dressing for the proper enjoyment of skating. Some of the hints given might well be taken into consideration by the St. John fair, and we therefore reproduce them:—

“In the first place dress warmly, and have besides a cloak or an overcoat, to be thrown off when skating and put on again when resting from the exercise. Skating itself will not give any one a cold, but there is danger of standing on the ice while perspiring after skating. Pilot cloth makes the best skating costume for gentlemen. Ladies should wear close fitting cloaks (except for extra services, to be used when not skating) are very much in the way, and apt to impede progress. Ladies who skate much should wear dresses without hoops, and with short skirts, and if the Bloomer costume were not stigmatized by fashionable society, it would prove the best kind of skating dress. The Polish and Dutch, and Russian women, who go much on the ice wear short dresses. In skating scenes at the Paris opera and ballets, the short dresses are always worn, as much from their propriety for the scene as from stage conventionalism. What would an opera-goer think if, in the skating in the ‘Prophete,’ the performers wore long dresses and hoops!

“The English ladies' dress, worn so much at present is well adapted for skating. It includes a rather tight dress, not reaching below the ankles—which are hidden by laced up boots—light cloak, and the pork-pie hat, with its jaunty feather. A woman skating in a sky scraper bonnet is a shocking inconsistency, and appears as much as out of place with such an article on her head as would a lady on horseback. Ladies have riding habits, which they can wear only on horseback, and they should also have skating dresses which they would expect to wear only on the ice. As to the extra expense, that is very slight; because a stout serviceable dress would last several seasons, while the ordinary dress—with its long skirts and wide expanse of crinoline—is sure to suffer from the collisions inevitable on a skating pond; and a lady skater in ordinary costume generally finds some work for her needle before her evening or afternoon on skates is over.

“Wear light colors. The skating pond is intended as a scene of enlivening enjoyment, and funeral black or dull gray by no means enhances this effect, which by the way, must depend upon the ladies. A gentleman would look very absurd with light blue trousers or a crimson coat; but ladies can wear their brilliant colors with propriety. Ribbons tell well in skating. They stream out from a skating cap with a very pretty effect. Muffs look pretty, but should only be used by experienced lady skaters, as others use their hands to balance themselves with. Of course these remarks are principally intended for the ladies, who, graceful anywhere, look doubly fascinating when, appropriately dressed, they skim along the ice. As to the sterner sex, there are few hints about dress, which it is worth while to give to them, as they are awkward and ungainly everywhere; and we would only remind them that the chief duty of man during the coming season will be to accompany with or his own or somebody else's sisters to skating ponds, and administer to the necessities of those fair charmers who wish to indulge in our national amusement.”

FRANCE AT ATHENS.—A GREEK BATTLE.—Miss Frederica Bremer visited Athens in 1859, and while there moved in the highest circles of Grecian society, having been the guest of Prince Otto and his Queen on several occasions. We make an extract from her journal:

“November 14th.—England's young Prince Alfred makes sunshine at Athens. Yesterday a great ball was given for him at the Palace. I also was amongst the guests, in consequence of an invitation from Her Majesty. I had already seen the young Prince in Malta, but I was very willing to see a Royal ball at Athens; and at eight in

the evening I accordingly went to the Palace. The Prince had grown since I saw him last—now a year since—but had still the same charming characteristic, the unpretending boy united to the gentleman in bearing and fine tact. It was beautiful to see the graceful, simple lad, out of uniform, and without the slightest distinguishing ornament, leading in the polonaise, which always here opens the ball, the Queen of Greece, resplendent with jewels and good humour, a real Semiramis, a queenly figure, captivating all eyes. This evening, however, perhaps the greatest number were captivated by the unpretending son of Queen Victoria. * * * Amongst the men I became acquainted with some Pelicans from the time of the War of Independence, who were here, it was said, merely to see the young English Prince.”

ROTHSCHILD AND THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

An amusing adventure is related as having happened to the Bank of England, which had committed the great disrespect of refusing to discount a bill of large amount drawn by Asselin Rothschild, of Frankfurt, on Nathan Rothschild, of London. The bank had laughingly replied “that they discounted on their own bills, and not those of private persons.” But they had to do with one stronger than the Bank. “Private persons,” exclaimed Nathan Rothschild, when they reported to him the fact. “Private persons! I will make those gentlemen see what sort of private persons we are!” Three weeks afterwards Nathan Rothschild—who had employed the interval in gathering all the £5 notes he could procure in England and on the Continent! presented himself at the Bank at the opening of the office. He drew from his pocket-book a £5 note, and they naturally counted out five sovereigns at the same time looking quite astonished that the Baron Rothschild should have personally troubled himself for such a trifle. The Baron examined one by one the coins, put them into a little canvas bag, then drawing out another note, a third, a fourth, a hundredth, he never put the pieces into the bag without scrupulously examining them and in some instances trying them in the balance, as he said, “the law gave him the right to do.” The first pocket book being emptied, and the first bag full, he passed them to his clerk, and received a second, and thus continued till the close of the Bank. The Baron had employed seven hours to change £21,000. But as he had nine employees of his house engaged in the same manner, it resulted that the house of Rothschild had drawn £210,000 in gold from the Bank, and that he had so occupied the tellers that no other person could change a single note. Everything which bears the stamp of eccentricity has always pleased the English. They were, therefore, the first day, very much amused at the little pique of Baron Rothschild. They however laughed less when they saw him return the next day at the opening of the bank, flanked by nine clerks, and followed, this time, by many drays, destined to carry away the specie. They laughed no longer when the king of bankers said with ironic simplicity: “These men refuse to pay my bills! I have sworn not to keep them.” “At their leisure—only I notify them that I have enough to employ them for two months!” “For two months! Eleven millions in gold drawn from the Bank of England which they have never possessed!” The bank took alarm. There was something to be done. The next morning, notice appeared in the journals that henceforth the Bank would pay Rothschild's bills the same as their own.

Tobacco a Foo to Matrimony.

One of our exchanges inquires, with much alarm, “how is it that there are so many nice young girls in our cities unmarried, and likely to remain so?” Our answer is comprised in one word—Tobacco. In old times when you could approach a young man within whispering distance without being nauseated by his breath, he used—when his day's work was over—to spend his evenings with some good girl or girls, either around the family hearth, or in pleasant walks, or at some innocent place of amusement. The young man of the present day takes his solitary pipe and puffs away all his vitality, till he is as stupid as an oyster, and then goes to some saloon to quench the thirst created by smoking; and shades crocodile tears every time his stockings are out at the toes “that the girls now-a-days are so extravagant, a fellow can't afford to get married.” Nine young men out of ten deliberately give up respectable female society to indulge the solitary, enervating habit of smoking, until their broken down constitutions clamor for careful nursing; then they coolly ask some nice young girl to exchange her health, strength, beauty and un-

impaired intellect for their yallow face, tainted blood and breath, and irritable temper and mental imbecility. Women may well hate smoking and smokers. We have known the most gentle and refined men grow harsh in temper and uncivil in their personal habits under the thralldom of a tyranny which they had not love nor respect enough for women to break through.—[American Paper.

SMOKY CHIMNEYS.—A correspondent of the London builder gives the following cure for a great and common evil.—“A smoking chimney and a scolding wife are two of the worst evils of domestic life, says the old proverb, and to obviate the first ingenuity is ever racking its brain. Hence, Regent street and every part of the metropolis has its house tops bristling with pipes and deformed by cowl in every conceivable and inconceivable variety. Now, I have built many chimneys, and have found one simple plan everywhere succeed, the secret being only to construct the throat of the chimney, or the part just above the fireplace, so small that a man or boy can barely pass through. Immediately above, the chimney should be enlarged to double its width, like a purse, to the extent of about two feet in height, and then diminished again to the usual proportions. No chimney that I ever constructed thus smoked.”

LIABILITY OF SUBSCRIBERS.

A recent case tried before the Supreme Court, shows the liability of Subscribers. The Publishers recovered the amount of their claim, and the delinquent Subscriber was obliged to pay upwards of two hundred dollars costs. Alluding to this case, a contemporary observes:—

“It is surprising that so few subscribers fully understand their responsibilities to publishers of Newspapers. The law which governs in this decision is a law of Congress, and therefore applicable to every State in the Union. Many subscribers seem to regard the bill for a newspaper, the last to be settled, especially the last, when the law will enforce. Responsible men, even, under trifling whims, refuse to take their papers from the P. O., regardless of the payment in the arrears, and when half a dozen more years have been added to the arrears at the time of stopping, think it hard to pay the increased bill with interest and cost of collection.

The law holding subscribers to a rigid responsibility is a wise one, and essential for the protection of the publisher. His dues are in small sums scattered so widely, that positive and decisive law is absolutely necessary in his behalf. People sometimes complain that they find a great deal of trouble in stopping newspapers. This arises in nineteen cases out of twenty from a failure to pay what is justly due the publisher. No man who sends \$2 at the end of the year with the request to stop when \$2.50 is due, has any reason to complain because his paper is continued.

FROM THE STATES.

BAXTER, Dec. 30. Reported Federal brigade captured Knoxville, Tenn., destroying 4 bridges and portion of railroad.

Rosecrans driven Confederates into Murfreesboro.

Supposed Morgan is leaving State. Reported 7,000 Confederates detached from Fredericksburg army, was approach Gloucester Court House, to assist Gen. Wise.

Federals awaiting attack. Emancipationists triumphant in Missouri Legislature.

Gen. Blunt and Heron moved over Boston Mountains and advanced to Van Buren, drove enemy across Arkansas River, captured 8 steamboats, 100 prisoners and a quantity of stores.

Rumors current of attack made by Stonewall Jackson on Sigel's forces near Stafford Court House and being repulsed, drew portion of Sigel's force into ambush, capturing large number of prisoners.

Secretary Chase reported will issue another of the \$200,000,000 treasury notes.

Dec. 31. Intelligence from Alexandria represents that Stewart's Cavalry force with artillery, were encamped within twelve miles of there on Monday.

Governor of Missouri congratulates the State has nearly 40,000 men engaged in the war for the Union. He advocates substitution of free for slave labor, and recommends measures for gradual emancipation.

New Madrid is to be re-occupied. Wells, Fargo & Co. will charge eight (8) per cent. for shipping gold from San Francisco to New York by next steamer.

Anticipated shipment to New York will be light, the bulk going on British steamers from Aspinwall.