

THE EVENING TIMES, ST. JOHN, N. B. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1908.

NEW YEAR'S EVE in GOTHAM'S MILLION DOLLAR HOTELS

BY A. P. PARKINSON JR.



Have you reserved your table yet for New Year's Eve? Well then I am afraid you will have to spend the evening at home, for there is not a table to be had at any of the principal hotels for the love of money.

The foregoing is one of a thousand conversations heard daily around the foyers of these hotels where women of fashion are wont to assemble each afternoon, and it will serve to illustrate just what New Year's Eve in New York means to the proprietors of those hotels which only the wealthy and fashionable folk of that and other cities patronize.

There is one night in every 365 in which the hoteliers as well as the smart set of New York give themselves up to a spirit of revelry and then attend the obsequies of the old year and in the same breath celebrate the birth of the new. All restraint is thrown to the winds and everybody enters into the spirit of the night with an abandon that eclipses even the scenes of the Mardi Gras when New Orleans is in fête. The streets are simply packed with a good-natured crowd of merry-makers and the restaurants and cafes are crowded to their capacity, since everybody either wants to take one parting drink before they climb up on the water wagon for the new year, or else drink a toast to the new-born babe—"1909."

But this story will have to do with those who can afford to pay any price demanded for their night's fun, and in consequence they invariably seek their pleasures beneath the hospitable roofs of the Waldorf-Astoria, the Plaza, the New Astor, the Knickerbocker, or one of the other large hotels for which New York is famous.

Here are to be found those men and women whose names are bywords in the fashionable and official life of the nation's metropolis, and should a stranger happen to be at any of these palatial hosteries on New Year's eve, and have pointed out to him all the celebrities there assembled, he would gasp in astonishment, then rub his eyes and look about him and acknowledge that the stage settings for such distinguished gatherings were in every particular in keeping with the importance of those before him.

For many weeks past these table reservations have been in order at the quarter of hotels here mentioned. At the Waldorf-Astoria every available inch of room is at a premium and were a Croesus to wander in there on the night of December 31 and ask for a table in the cafe, or for a private dining-room for himself and party, he would be told that he was asking an impossibility, for were he to pay a thousand dollars a plate for his party he could not be served there, as every table had been reserved weeks ago. When it is remembered that this hotel has no less than a dozen public dining-rooms and cafes, to say nothing of the many private apartments, such a statement might be regarded by the uninitiated as a gross exaggeration. In the beautiful Rose Room the main dining-room that fronts on Fifth Avenue, hundreds of persons can be comfortably seated. The men's cafe on the thirty-fourth street side is just as commodious, as is the grill and the extreme western end of the building. There are also to be found many tea-rooms and palm-rooms, while the grand ballroom and Astor and Waldorf galleries are invariably converted into cafes for this occasion and hundreds of tables dot their floors, while

the boxes overlooking the main floor are invariably occupied by gay parties of men and women who are there to observe and to be observed. It is estimated that between eight and ten thousand people dine and sup at the Waldorf on New Year's Eve and in each apartment a full orchestra is maintained, and in several of the apartment high-price artists are employed to sing and perform for the patrons here gathered.

Last year it required nearly seven hundred waiters to take care of the wants of the fashionable who assembled at the Waldorf to see the old year out, and according to the maître d' hotel, it will require many more waiters to assist in dispensing this hotel's hospitality this year.

Yet, despite these vast crowds and the politeness of it all, everything moves along like a bit of well-oiled machinery. Everybody is in a gay mood and everybody tends to enjoy himself to the fullest, and this they do regardless of expense.

In former years these fashionable were wont to wander from one hotel to another on this occasion, but times have changed, and experience has taught them where to go. Now they are more particular in their choice of hotel or dining-room, it is better for them to remain there, since there is little or no chance of being so fortunate elsewhere. Hence, when they elect a hotel in which to spend the evening, nowadays, they stay until the cock crows and the annual revel draws to a close.

At the beautiful Plaza, among the newest of the city's several million dollar hotels, fashion holds high revel on New Year's Eve. Here Nathan Frankfort, manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company, holds forth with his splendid

stringed orchestra, and society worships at his shrine as long as he sees fit to wave his baton and draw forth the beautiful strains and melodies from his matchless orchestra. Every available inch of floor space is utilized on occasion for table purposes and the ordinarily large force of waiters is doubled in an effort to care for those who are here for a good time and to get the very best that the market affords in the way of table delicacies. Here, too, novelties are introduced with surprising rapidity, so that all who here come might find these diversions quite new to them. The Plaza is strictly a home for millionaires, and here they are to be found as thick as bees about their hives.

The very best acts known to vaudeville are always provided for New Year's Eve, and then, too, the table decorations are always suggestive of the death of the old year and the birth of the New Year.

Another new hotel to come in for its tremendous patronage from the city's most fashionable clientele is the Knickerbocker,

which is located at the very crux of the city's tide of travel. An impressive pile of brick and stone, it stands at the junction of Broadway and Forty-second street, and the steady stream of well-dressed humanity that streams in and out of its doors is a source of never-ending wonder to those who know this corner before the birth of the Knickerbocker.

The Marble Palace, as the Plaza is often designated, is not a hotel where the rabble is likely to stroll in to watch the revels of the rich. They know there is no place for them there and no accommodations have been prepared for loungers. Here it is that women—that is, those who are known to the management—are safe to come and go unattended, sure that they will be free from those annoyances that so often beset women in public places.

Invariably some surprise is here planned on New Year's Eve, and just as the sonorous tones of the big clock proclaim the hour of midnight a vested choir of some of the many fashionable church-

es arise reverently to the melody that fills the air and holds the revelers spellbound until the last note dies away. Then the glasses clink, toasts are drunk and all the good wishes incidental to the season are exchanged with the cordiality which makes the pleasure-seeker who has found in the Knickerbocker, a silent reminder to late comers that there is not room for another within that apartment. The beautiful main dining room on the first floor is no more popular on these occasions than is the tea-rooms adjoining, or the grill beneath, or the beautifully proportioned ballrooms and ball rooms above. Each has its devotees and here they gather and enjoy themselves as only a well-bred and wealthy group of men and women can.

Outside the ceaseless stream of humanity that is confining its celebration to wandering up and down Broadway, contributing their mite to the din that arises from every quarter, paces, wanders in, looks about and then strolls forth to seek refreshments at some more modest establishment, recognizing, at a glance that there is no place within for them.

Some say that New York goes crazy each New Year's Eve, and to judge from the thousands upon thousands of people who stream through the streets from sunset to sunrise, one would not think that there is no place within for them.

Reservations for between six and eight hundred persons have been made here for New Year's Eve, and, in fact, were tables here that as much as one hundred dollars is frequently offered for such reservations. The beautiful soft lights that flood this house shed their lustre upon perhaps the most beautifully gowned aggregation of women that are wont to assemble beneath one roof in a single night. Here are to be found the most exclusive grand dames of society, touching elbows with some stage celebrity, while nearly all the song birds of the two grand opera companies located in New York make their headquarters. Naturally unusual preparations have to be made for caring for a crowd made up of so many nationalities and of so many celebrities from this country as well as those from foreign climes.

The task is a difficult one, but it moves smoothly, and the musical and entertainment programmes are arranged with rare discretion and with due care that every manner of taste might be gratified. It is no uncommon sight to see silken ropes stretched across the entrance to the various dining apartments in the Knickerbocker, a silent reminder to late comers that there is not room for another within that apartment. The beautiful main dining room on the first floor is no more popular on these occasions than is the tea-rooms adjoining, or the grill beneath, or the beautifully proportioned ballrooms and ball rooms above. Each has its devotees and here they gather and enjoy themselves as only a well-bred and wealthy group of men and women can.

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Tea is a germicide, according to a Boston physician, who held that the bacillus ally rank enemy of the typhoid bacillus.

FINANCIAL and COMMERCIAL

N. Y. STOCK MARKET.

Thursday, December 31.
New York Stock Exchange.
Report and New York Cotton Market.
Furnished by D. C. Clinch, Banker and Broker.

Amalg. Copper	83 1/2	83 1/2	83 1/2
Am. Sugar Ref.	112 1/2	112 1/2	112 1/2
Am. Steel	112 1/2	112 1/2	112 1/2
Car Foundry	49 1/2	49 1/2	49 1/2
Locomotive	47 1/2	47 1/2	47 1/2
Wire	112 1/2	112 1/2	112 1/2
and C. & P. Co.	110 1/2	110 1/2	110 1/2
Canadian Pacific	117 1/2	117 1/2	117 1/2
Chas. G. Wells	113 1/2	113 1/2	113 1/2
F. & I. Iron	39 1/2	39 1/2	39 1/2
Gen. Electric	157 1/2	157 1/2	157 1/2
Electric Co.	157 1/2	157 1/2	157 1/2
First Pfd.	50 1/2	50 1/2	50 1/2
Gen. Electric	157 1/2	157 1/2	157 1/2
Gen. & Texas	42 1/2	42 1/2	42 1/2
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