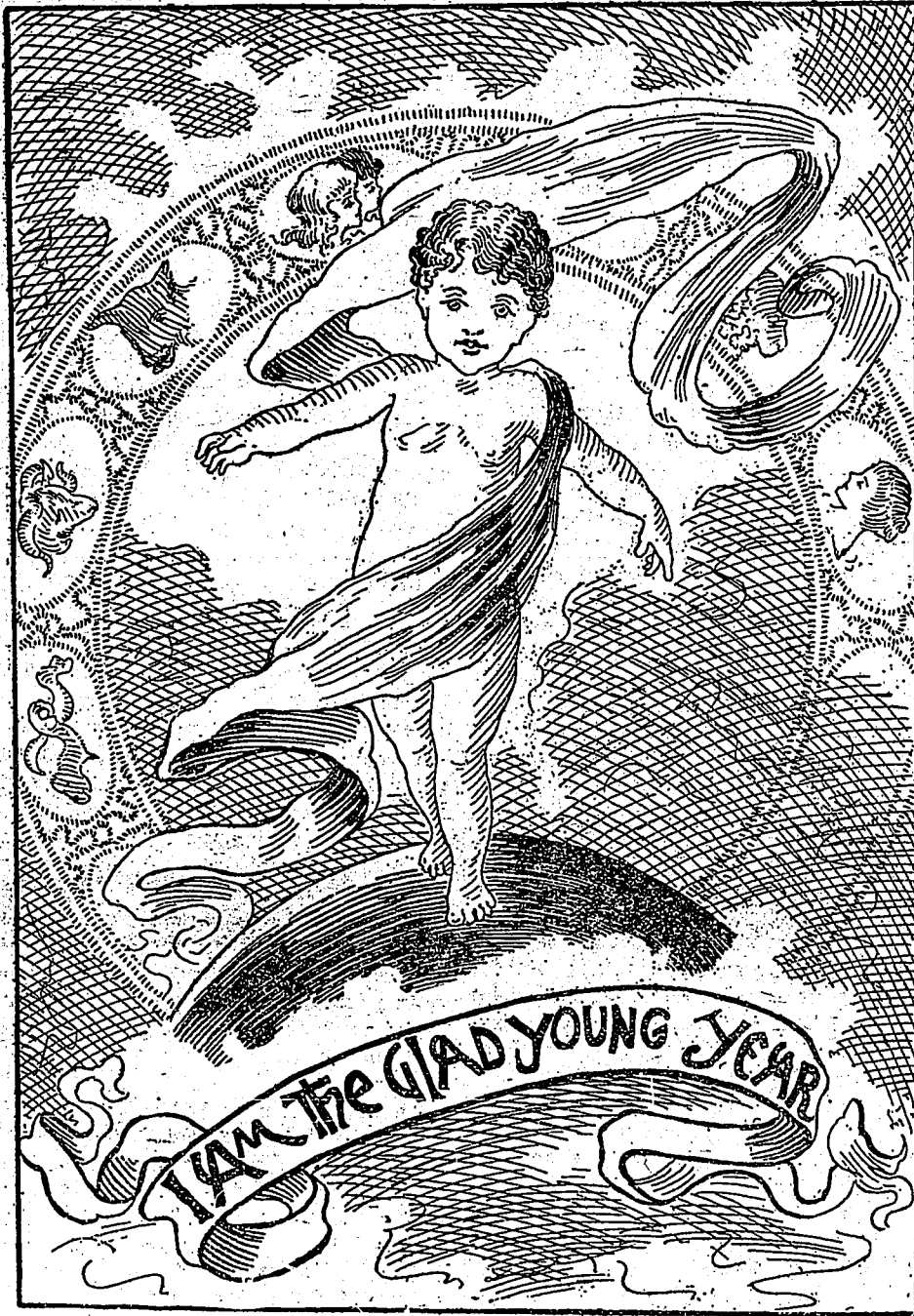


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The Little New Year

Oh the little New Year had a cradle all white!
And the wind tried to rock it with roar and with might,
And the clouds gathered near a tight curtain to keep,
While the snowbrds flew downward to sing him to sleep.

But the wind blew the New Year far out of his berth,
And chased him, and followed him over the earth;
And then, when the wind fell, all tired, away,
The New Year stood where he was; he'd come to stay!

He grew high as the heavens and broad as the land;
And scattered rich gifts from his great right hand;
In his left hand were troubles, but mixed with good things,
For trouble most always some good with it brings.

He strode o'er the earth, at the beckon of spring,
And afterwards saw all that summer could bring;

But when the sweet dreamland of autumn was past,
He turned him toward home, toward his cradle at last,

And there, while he watched, the big wind tossed about
Another young New Year, as strong and as stout,
Who swiftly passed on, just as he had before;
And our friend went his way, and we saw him no more.

I wonder if New Years are messenger boys
Whom God sends to bring us our work and our joys?
Why then—we must look out for every good thing,
And see what this New Year for us has to bring!
—'Mayflower.'

The Stranger At the Gate.

'When one by one the stately, silent years
Glide like pale ghosts beyond our yearning sight;
Vainly we stretch our arms to stay their flight,
So soon, so swift, they pass to endless night!
We hardly learn to name them, to praise them or to blame them.
To know their shadowy faces, e'er we see their empty places.'

True, very true! We scarcely accustom ourselves to getting the right figure at the end of the current year of our Lord, when lo! it must be changed again! And so hurried are the events of the passing year in this age of rush and activity that it is plain prose fact 'we hardly learn to name them, to praise them or to blame them, to know their shadowy faces, e'er we see their empty places!' This means a very great deal for every earnest, thinking man and woman. We all know the simple fact that on every first day of January the last figure on the date of the calendar for the year has advanced. There is no retrograde movement, no going back, never the standing still of that last figure, never a smaller numeral except when at the end of each decade it begins with zero again, but with the significant advance of a figure on the tens instead of the units. So, as they do not return, these fleet-footed years that are speeding away

'As silent and swift as a weaver's thread,
Or an arrow's flying gleam,
As soft as the languorous breezes hid
That lift the willows' long golden lid,
And ripple the glassy stream,'

the question becomes, what shall we do with them?

If there were any such thing as retracing our steps, as retracting the error, recalling the sorrowful mistake, such extreme caution might not be needed as does exist all along the way. But because time is fleeting, because it is subject to no recall, and the past is irrevocable, humanity at large is far too feeble and faulty to trust to its own strength and guidance. And because action and duty become more hurried and decisive as we grow older, and life grows fuller of care and responsibility, how plain becomes the lesson that each day and each hour is a thing momentous because of what must be crowded into it. No wonder Whittier writes:

'The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing;
Like the patriarch's angel, hold it fast
Till it give its blessing.'

Then we need not fear to let the present step into the past, when we feel that it goes with a blessing. There is no bitterer sting than conscience can inflict when, communing with one's own heart, the deeds of the past point an accusing, disturbing finger. The time to prevent all such trying reminders is now, at the present moment, at each moment as it flies. Some fault was found with a noted evangelist of late because he spent so much time in striving to convince Christians that the lack of a revival was due largely to the unfaithfulness of church members, those who had fairly enrolled themselves as the followers of Christ. Yet the evangelist