

Downers Grove Reporter

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Downers Grove people, old and young enjoyed one of the best Christmases on record, if the amount of business done by local merchants in the days preceding this great festival is any criterion. All up and down Main street one meets with the same story—the best Christmas trade in the history of the store.

A little inquiry develops the fact that most of the buying was of a practical nature. The children, of course, received many toys, little things to delight the childish heart. But mother, father, big sister and brother received useful gifts. Mother in many instances was pleased with some long wanted electrical labor-saving device for the household; some cherished extra nice garment or something to wear which she herself would not purchase because "it would be extravagant." And so it went all down the line—in a majority of cases practical, wanted gifts were the rule.

The large amount of trading done at home this year is an indication of the spirit of Downers Grove. It shows the progressive idea is taking root. Trading at home means bigger and better stores, a larger selection of merchandise and a bigger and better village. For it is up to the public, in a general way, whether or not a community progresses by their support of the local merchants. Business makes for expansion. Without your support the town stands still. Every thing points to a bigger and better Downers Grove for 1923. Let's all get behind and go.

Pulling the Throttle By Christopher G. Hazard

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IT IS the custom of a certain railway engineer to have his boy with him now and then in the engine cab. The youngster states that he has "ringed the bell and blown the whistle," but that he has not yet "pulled the throttle."

This seems to be the matter with a good many older ones of the present generation, and it may explain their lack of progress. They have rung the bell and they have blown the whistle, but they have neglected to open the throttle.

That invisible force that is in us all responds wonderfully when we call upon it, but it is only a useless and dimming energy until we do. Bell and whistle may advertise that we have steam up, but they cannot get us along. They may both be active while we are really stowing up, like the train that approaches a stop.

The station may be a permanence for us when we could go a good deal farther, we may arrive at a dead line in life while yet young, because we have shut the throttle instead of opening it, turned off steam instead of turning it on.

There never was more chance for progress than this New Year is offering. Never before did opportunity beckon more earnestly. Never was talent so much in demand, never was capacity so much needed. Never was ability so largely rewarded. Great positions wait for those who can fill them. Ambition may plan. Aspiration may hope.

But I wouldn't want a fast young man on my road. I wouldn't have a loud young woman in my office. Cigarettes shut off steam. The call is not for noise, but for efficiency! I can watch a young man smoke when that is about all there is of him. I can hear a belle ring when I would prefer to have her busy!

BANISH THAT STRAW MAN

Supposing you thought you had been able to ward off all bad luck during the coming year by merely throwing a straw image out of your house on the last day of December. You would have thrown out not only one image, but a dozen. And supposing that with the discarding of the straw effigy you had thrown away all your sins. This is what the people of far-away Korea believe. On the day before New Year's the wise and far-seeing head of each family carefully makes a rough image of straw, which, with great ceremony, is taken to the door and thrown away with all the vigor a man would exert when he threw away ill fortune.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Customs and Their Origin; Happenings of Long Ago.

All Peoples Have Ways of Amusing Themselves on Special Occasions and at Fixed Seasons.

AN OLD philosopher, who was none the less a philosopher for his constant and close observation of men, remarked that we can best judge men's temperament and ideals by watching them at their work and at their play. A keen observer would have very little difficulty in judging Americans by their work. One such has aptly called this country "The Land of the Strenuous Life." Even our sports partake so much of this strenuousness that the medical profession is beginning to warn us of overindulgence in the more violent forms of athletics.

But all peoples have ways of amusing themselves on special occasions and at fixed seasons after a manner so well established that it has come to be regarded a kind of ritual, says the New York Herald. This has come down to us from the ages when our forefathers first pushed their way out of the dry tablelands of civilization. Even the mighty power of the churches has not been able to brush aside some practices that have their roots deep in paganism.

Old Customs That Continue.

Probably after Halloween and Christmas there is no festival of the year so glib about with long-established customs as New Year's day. Among the best known of these are the auguries drawn from what was called the "Candlemas bull." In Scotland and other northern countries the term Candlemas, given to this season of the year, is supposed to have had its origin in religious ceremonies performed by candle light. The candles used were very large and highly ornamented, and were brought in at the midnight hour to the assembled guests, who, since the falling of dusk, had been drinking freely of the wassail bowl. Then, in procession, they marched out into the night, and to their imaginations the passing clouds assumed the shape of a bull. From the rise and fall and general motions of these clouds the seer foretold good or bad weather. Sometimes, too, auguries for the future were gathered from the state of the atmosphere on New Year's Eve, and also from the force and character of the wind.

In the imagination of most primitive peoples, especially those of the North, who were forced to battle against the elements of nature for life and sustenance, the eyes of great feasts were considered occasions when the spirits of good and evil were in deadly conflict. The moment of midnight on New Year's Eve was always considered a time of special activity for the spirits of evil. In order to overcome them bolder and more powerful influences had to be invoked. The evil spirits, or gents, as can be gathered from the Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon folklore, and even from words in their dialect, could be overcome by an appeal to the good gent, the hogmen, or hillmen.

Probably imported from Italy was the superstition that on New Year's Eve the "evil eye" was all the more malignant. Then, too, there was a widespread practice of the "setting of meads or drinks by night on the benches to feed Alhilde or Goldyn." In some of the dialogues of the famous medieval morality play, "Dives and Pauper," we find mention of this and many other New Year's customs intended to counteract the activities of the forces of evil.

Christmas Cheer Continued.

Perhaps what contributed most to this general fear of sinister influences was the deep drinking among the people, which continued almost unintermittedly from Christmas until New Year's day. Up to the ninth century, except in the Scotch and Celtic churches, New Year's was not celebrated as a special feast day, but was looked upon as merely the octave of Christmas. Therefore the Christmas cheer was continued throughout the entire octave without abatement. It flickered up for the last time on New Year's day, as is clear from the one hundred and ninety-eighth sermon of Augustine, bishop of Hippo.

In England on New Year's Eve the young women went about carrying the "wassail bowl" and singing from door to door certain verses—a custom which had much in common with the hogmanay practice in Scotland. Her pint, the strange brew which in that country was carried about in the streets at midnight, was composed of ale, spirits, sugar, nutmeg or cinnamon. It was a powerful potion, the effects of which were almost immediately evident. Ritson in a collection of ancient songs gives us a few sung to the quaffing of this "prince of liquors, old or new." One such is:

A jolly wassail bowl, A wassail of good ale, Well fare the butler's soul That seteth this to sale; Out jolly wassail!

Notwithstanding the opposition which it has met since the year 1811, when many abuses were discovered in the practice, the custom of hurrying first across the threshold of his sweetheart has been practiced by many a young lad in Anglo-Saxon countries. The young lady listened attentively from the time the midnight bells ceased to ring to catch the first footfall on the floor.

Old and New Year by Mary Graham Bonner

"WELL, well, well," said the Old Year, "it is so nice to see you, New Year. I congratulate you, and as the good people say, I wish you a Happy New Year."

"Thank you, thank you," said the New Year, in a sweet young voice. "I have great respect for you, Old Year. You have been so wise and so good. You have done so much that is fine. Now, how I shall be I do not know at all. I feel so uncertain of myself."

"Oh, you'll get over that," said the Old Year; "you are a little nervous now, but you will be all right in no time at all."

"Why, I remember last January—my very first month of all—I was all over my nervousness before the month was over."

"Were you, indeed?" said the New Year. "Well, that is most encouraging to hear."

"Yes," said the Old Year, "one gets over one's nervousness very quickly when one is a year. I don't know how it is with people, but I know how it is with a year."

"Of course, I suppose a person might need more than a few weeks to get over nervousness, but then a person is about so much longer than a year. After all, a year isn't so long."

"Where are you going now?" asked the New Year.

"Why, don't you know?" the Old Year asked.

"I've never been told," said the New Year. "You see, I have lots to learn. I'm so young," and the New Year sighed a little.

"Oh, you mustn't sigh," said the Old Year. "It's so beautiful a thing to be young, and strong, and new, and brisk."

Of course, too, it is especially nice for a year, because so much is learned in advance, as it were.

"You don't have to begin and learn everything over again, as though you were the first year that had ever been. And people help you so much, too. They go on just as they were going on before, and try to keep you from feeling sensitive and shy."

"People make it so easy for you. You'll discover that."

"But you were asking me where I was going, so I must tell you."

"I would so much love to know," said the New Year.

"I am going," said the Old Year, "to the Beautiful Valley of Memories. Oh, you tell me it is so wonderful a place, and because it is so beautiful"

no one minds growing older or anything of that sort. "That is why I am not sad and why I can greet you so gayly and so cheerfully. "The Beautiful Valley of Memories has ever so many living there. Of course, all the old years are there, and what good times they do have comparing notes. "Then they have hurried visitors from away, too. You will notice from time to time how people will remember some lovely thing that happened some time ago. "It is then that we receive hurried visits from these people, so hurried, sometimes, they scarcely realize they have come to visit us as they're so quickly off again. "But they are with us long enough to know how beautiful is this Valley of Memories. "You can't imagine how lovely it is until you have been there. I was

given just a little look at it today, and you see already I talk as though I were an old inhabitant. "There are houses there, and they are so sweet and so pretty, with lovely flower gardens filled with favorite flowers. All our flowers have wonderful memories. There are forget-me-nots in one bed, because they are the favorite flowers of one who has so many memories about them. "The trees are favorites. There are favorite pines. And there are all sorts of lovely things there. "Oh, the Old Year is not sad to leave, for the Old Year is going to have so good a time. And you have no idea how our valley is loved. Everywhere around it is known and many people know of it, though they do not know just where it is. "The Beautiful Valley of Memories," they say, "oh, it seems to me I know of that. Didn't I spend a part of my childhood there? It sounds so very familiar. I am sure I spent happy days there once."

"So, New Year, I wish you well. It's a splendid world, and you'll meet ever so many fine men and women and boys and girls. "Goodby, and the best of luck!"

The Old Year was gone, and every one was shouting "Happy New Year," and the New Year felt especially happy to think that the Old Year, too, would be happy!

BEGAN NEW YEAR MARCH 25

March 25 was the usual New Year among most Christian peoples in early medieval days, but in Anglo-Saxon Europe December 21, was New Year day. William the Conqueror, ordered the observance on January 1, at the time of the German conquest, but later England, with the rest of Christendom, began her new year on March 25.

THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR

The adoption of the Gregorian calendar, in 1582, restored January 1 as New Year day and this was accepted by all Roman Catholic countries at once; by Germany, Denmark and Sweden about 1720 and England in 1751.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

THE storm-wind sank, the moon rode high. Set round with silver haze, Where, late, sky spaces wonderful Showed green as cityspray.

Within the old gray church anon The gathered folk would sit, I met the old year on the hill, And bade farewell to it.

The woods around stood stark and dim, But at my feet white birds Flattered, the wreaths of kindly dead And sweet, remembered words.

Above me, from Orion's belt, A great gem flashed and fell, Was it a sapphire prince sped by, Michael, or Gabriel?

Then, though my lonely heart must mourn For some that come no more, White sails of Hope I seemed to see Set to a sapphire shore.

As he who dreamed a New World called On an uncharted sea, From Palos with his caravels Lured by a mystery.

So, under flaming Asian skies, Or by the still, white, and fell, That Great Adventure, the New Year, Beacons the human soul. —L. M. Little in Boston Herald

Reduces Counterfeiting. The idea of imbedding sun!! picks of silk in the paper of which bank notes are made was the means of reducing counterfeiting by 90 per cent.

Life as I See It. Don't fuss with your neighbors about a few shortcomings. I know a very distinguished man who says "let" for "ate."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Expression The Power of Clear and Forceful Expression brings Confidence and Poise at all Times. —Efficiency in any Undertaking— Lelia Teloir Hendren 406-B 56 Grove Street

HAIL TO 1923! May it bring you prosperity and 365 days of happy health. May it bring you new friends and pleasures This then is our "Happy New Year" to you. Downers Grove Hardware Co.

1923 Welcome 1923 New Year The old year passes and we soon forget its twelve months of toil, happiness and perhaps sadness; but we always welcome the new year with the same feeling of gladness. We start anew on things. Good resolutions, carried out, will make it a better year for each of us than the one passing. We wish all our friends and customers everywhere their full year's share of health, happiness and prosperity.

Potter Mfg. & Lumber Co. Manufacturers & Dealers LUMBER COAL MILLWORK Building Materials of All Kinds Phone One Five

There are still a number of accounts which are due us, accurate memorandum of which was lost through the stealing of our safe last December. Over \$800 was outstanding at that time, \$300 having been paid since. It is the desire of this store to have these accounts closed and we are willing to have them settled at your own figures. Just drop in the store or send a check for the amount and we shall be pleased to accept same, as is.

H. E. McAllister & Co.

GUARANTEED PURE Japanese Silk Hosiery 4 PAIRS FOR \$5.00 E. W. PERKINS Local Agent—Phone 84-R Real Silk Hosiery Mills Indianapolis, Indiana