A HAPPY NEW YEAR

By JOHN EVERETT
Life

He came back to earn $250—and he found the real gold of life.

GARTH WATERFORD was returning to Little Petersham at last. Considering the high hopes with which he had gone away—the many times he had assured his mother that within two years he would have a business of his own in London—both the moment and method of his return were unusual, to say the least. For the hands of the church clock stood at eleven as the furtive figure slouched along the muddy lane, keeping to the gloom, and darting past the spots where a ray of light showed the presence of a house.

It was his mother who had brought him back to the village. Unemployment, a hard time, his own children, had sharpened his sympathies, and he wanted to know whether she was still alive and well.

Why hadn't he written to her? Well, he had written so hopefully at first, and, somehow, he had shrunk from exhibiting his failure to the one being in life who believed in him. Now he was doing worse than ever; in fact, if anything went wrong that night—He pulled up his thoughts, not daring to pursue them.

What was more important was the fact that, if everything went right, Josh Hooker had promised him fifty quid. With that he could make a fresh start, he and Ellen and the two children.

It was easy, really. They had only let him in because he knew the Grange like the back of his hand, having worked there helping the gardeners in his youth. All he had to do was to meet Hooker's two cronies at the bend in the wall by the brook, show them the way over, and point out the library windows. Then he would keep watch while they were inside, giving a hand only if they hit a snag.

They had all pointed out to him how lucky he was. "Money for jam" the gang called it. Garth Waterford was not so sure. So far, he had never committed a crime, or assisted in one, and the fact that this crime was to take place so near his mother's place, amid the scenes he had known so well in his youth, made him loathe the job.

The straggling group of cottages, with one or two big houses which made Little Petersham, was deserted. Everyone would be at the concert in the hall at the other end of the village, waiting to welcome in the New Year—except his mother, who was too old, and the major from the Grange. He was in London. Hooker had found that out by judicious inquiries some days before.

Garth was by the village store now—the weather-beaten little shop had been his home and his father's home before him.

There was a light shining through the glass panels of the door behind the shop, and the light lit up a flickering flame that had never died within him.

His mother would be there. He must see her just once. It would be dangerous to be recognized; they'd connect him with the robbery. But there could be no harm in slipping into the garden and looking in through the window. If he could be sure she was well, then perhaps he would not hate the rest of the night's work so much. But he hadn't many minutes.

Silently he lifted the latch of the gate and slipped into the gloom beyond. With a queer little thrill, he felt his feet on the old brick path, half overgrown with lichen. He rounded the bend by the outhouse, and stepped into a path of light which made the frost sparkle on the bushes.

The light only came from an oil lamp, shining through the kitchen door, but to Garth Waterford it seemed like the limelight of a theatre. The kitchen door was open—wide open. Mustn't let his mother see him. He made to draw back into the shadow before the white-haired old lady inside that doorway should know he was there.

But already she was peering out into the gloom.

"Garth," she said softly. "It's my boy come home or a ghost. I saw you. Where are you?"

The man crouched down. Why in goodness had he come here at all? He saw a frown overshadow his mother's face.

"Garth," she said, louder, "five years you've been gone, but I knew it was you. If it wasn't I'm going mad—mad from thinking about you. Speak, Garth, if you are here!"

She was clinging to the doorpost for support. Hang it all, he couldn't play a trick like that! Perhaps five minutes, then an excuse to slip away. He stood erect and advanced to the light.

"It's me, mother," he said. "Come to surprise you for a few minutes. I'm"—he searched for a lie, and decided the truth was vague enough—"I'm on my way North."

For a moment the old lady did not move. Then she took two tottering steps to his side and caught his face in her hands, kissing him in between hysterical little laughs.

"I knew you'd come back, Gorth," she said. "You wouldn't forget your old mother because of your grand friends. Come in, my son—come in, and tell me everything that's happened to you."

He led her gently back to her high-backed chair beside the fire. Now he was beside her, he could see how the years or the loneliness had aged her. Very frail she looked.

"You shouldn't have that door open," he said. "It's cold to-night.

"I know, Garth," she answered; "but don't forget it's New Year's Eve. Other folk shut their doors, and wait for someone to call and let in another year. But I say: 'Throw your door open to the world, to show that your heart is open to it as well.' I don't wait for someone to call. I hold the door open in welcome. And my open door has brought me my son. Make some tea, Garth, just to show you haven't forgotten where the teapot is."

As he busied himself about the little kitchen she was looking at him, seeing again the boy who went away. She saw the new lines in his face—the lines of poverty. The grey-flecked hair—the shabby clothes—the anxiety in the restless eyes. Like an open book, she read the story of his struggle and his failure.

Together they sat beside the fire, with their cups of tea.

"And is London so grand?" she said at last.

Somehow, he could not deceive her.

"Things didn't turn out like—like I hoped, mother," he said. "Work is difficult to get. At first it wasn't so bad, but after I married——"

"My boy married!" she broke in. "And his mother never knew! Oh, Garth, why didn't I know?"

He shook his head.

"I couldn't write, mother," he continued. "After I married everything went wrong. I lost my job. Jimmy, the eldest, came. I tramped the country looking for work. Things are very difficult." He pulled himself together. "But the worst's over now. I'm on my way to a job."

But the old lady was not listening.

"Then I was right," she was saying. "My poor boy did need me, and I didn't know wehere to find him. Night after night I saw you in my dreams and knew you needed me, and you never came. Oh, Garth, my son, why couldn't I help? Why didn't you come to your mother?"

She was not looking at him; she was looking at his photograph that still hung over the mantel. Her breath seemed to be coming with difficulty; she was very pale. Shock. Of course that was it. He was a fool to have come back. The clock pointed to eleven-fifty. In another ten minutes he was due at the Grange. He looked at his mother—not safe to leave her until she felt better. Anything might happen if he just went off now.

He knelt beside her, rubbing her hands—hands knotted and old through working for him and the brother who lay in France.

"It's all right, mother," he said, with a curious tightening in his throat. "It hasn't been as bad as that. I'm all right now—fixed up fine. And one day soon I'll bring Ellen and the children down to see you—I promise I will."

She clutched his hand with a grip that surprised him.

"You won't leave me again, Garth," she demanded, stroking his hair. "Never again! You must send for your wife and the children. The shop's too much for me now. I've only kept it on in case you came back. I'm too old to stand all day. It's waiting for you, just as the house is waiting for your children. You must stay, Garth—tell me you'll stay!"

She was clutching him still tighter to her; her eyes were wild. If he cleared off now he might be the murderer of his own mother. He couldn't do it—not for a thousand Hookers!

Gently he released his hand and went to the door, stepping out into the yard. Not a sound broke the silence. Just the canopy of stars, frostily clear above his head, and the hushed world, waiting, it seemed, for another year. Peace—a peace he had not known for five struggling years—enveloped him. He remembered that this place meant home, love, security—all those things he was in danger of losing. It meant——

The silence was shattered by the sound of bells that echoed among the cottages. The New Year! And Hooker's men waiting for him three miles off. Well, they'd have to wait a long time. He had come back to earn $250, and he had found gold—the real gold of life. He was going to take it and fight for it.

He stepped back into the kitchen. His mother had risen from her chair and was waiting for him.

"A dark man comes to bring me New Year luck," she said, kissing him again. "That means a happy New Year for both him and me. Garth, my dear, no need to tell me that you are going to stay. I know now."

He put his arm round her shoulders.

"Yes, mother I'm going to stay—always," he said. "And now you must rest."

He helped her up to her room over the shop; then came down again to turn out the lamp. But before he did and taking something from his pocket so he went to the end of the garden, dropped it down the well. The jemmy he had never used, and which he would never need to use now, for the bad old year had gone and a bright New Year had dawned."—Answers (London).

WORK TO DO.

We are not sent into this world to do anything into which we cannot put out hearts. We have certain work to do for our bread, and that is to be done strenuously; other work to do for our delight, and that is to be done heartily; neither is to be done by halves and shifts, but with a will; and what is not worth this effort is not to be done at all.

"The world crisis is no longer solely economic, but above all is spiritual and moral"—Benito Mussolini.

The art of living easily as to money is to pitch your scale of living one degree below your means. —H. Taylor.

Geoffrey Toye, the composer, and some friends of his were watching the commencement of a race in which the King's yacht was taking part, and in which, incidentally, it made a false start. "Ah," said Toye, "Britannia waives the rules, eh?"

The costermonger smiled happily at the thought that his donkey was enjoying a free feed. "You're a good little girl to be so kind to a dumb friend," he said. "But who gave you those carrots?" "The good little girl smiled happily. "I took them from the back of your barrow," she said, simply.

Aged Bridge Enthusiasts Follow Experts' Play

Even guests in Hebrew House for the Aged in New York follow Lenz-Culbertson tilt over radio and try out each play themselves just to make sure it's okay. These are all over 80.

Big Timber

She's going! . . . Timber! The big Douglas fir, monarch of the Northwest forest, trembles and sags.

Cr-r-a-a-ack! A heart-string of nature one imagines might snap with that rending, echoing snarl.

A tone unlike any other, it makes the heart stand still.

The silent forest thrills to its despair and menace.

Wild things "freeze into instant alertness or spurt forth like living bullets to get out of range."

"Timber!" the lumberjack's warning cry rings out again.

And now the debacle. The venerable monarch, gnawed through by axe and saw, plunges down in a majestic arc amid appalling uncertainty as to its destructive caprice.

With an earth-shaking "Crash . . . Boom!" relates an anonymous writer in The World's Work, "the giant Douglas fir, mightiest tree of the big woods, thundered to the ground."

Nor is the tragedy of the tree the sole tragedy wrought by its collapse, for now we are given this flash of drama:

"Look out—that side-winder! . . . Gosh! it got him."

Wrecking everything in its path, the big tree had snapped off another tree like matchstick, and lay stretched far down the steep, timbered slope. One man was too late, or too unlucky, to get in the clear. The others saw him fall, got him out with surprising quickness. A hush settled upon them as they realized it was useless to administer first aid.

Swiftly the word went round. And though it was all a part of life in the roughest timber country in America, the men were silent and awed when they picked up their axes and saws again. All were thinking the same thing, brooding over the chances men who invade the forests must take, wondering who would be next.

They have a saying, these fatalistic lumberjacks, that another man follows the way of the first, once a killing occurs, and the World's Work writer quotes the woods bosses in the long-log country as declaring that the men, when death is in the air, become anxious, overcautious—and "It don't do to be afraid out here. Something always happens if you are." On the other hand, "You can't be reckless, neither."

Which recalls the remark of "a more educated observer" that what lumberjacks need in their business is "a certain nonchalance."

It is hard to give a name to it, confesses the writer, but "every lumberjack is master of the woods when he goes in. If he loses that notion, 'gets funny,' he'd better lay off for a while" With which we return to the man-killing Douglas fir:

The big tree was down and the work only started. They had to "get the logs out." Across the canyon the big "skidder" roared its challenge. Great armlike booms and long, steel sinews, necessary now to make the lumberjack's job possible, were ready to try their skill once more against the forest giants.

So the "buckers" started to work. The 300-foot fir, fourteen feet through, was lying on a grade, and if one of the forty-or sixty-foot logs cut from it happened to roll—well, that " other man" might find his turn had come.

Incidentally, such a lay can be dangerous in other ways—for instance, if there's a grudge to pay off.

Not much of that sort of thing nowadays, however; the men are too busy. They are paid by the piece, and they are out to "make it." Besides, they have their hands full fighting the woods.

Once in a while, of course—there's a fight they still talk about.

Between two buckers, it was. A burly veteran watched his chance and cut his log for a roll. The man it was intended to crush was at the moment only a little way down, and the grade was steep. He didn't see it, but others who did yelled a warning. His one leap saved him from extinction by just about an inch. He came up the hill fighting—superintendents and bosses mattered little just then.

He was almost as husky as the other, fully as tough, somewhat younger, and a whole lot madder. But he faced one of the worst old-time fighters of the woods. He risked terrible maiming, or more.

The two fought it out in the brush. This is no place for details of lumberjack fights, but neither of the men got stomped in the face of "the corks." The younger man was too fast, and his fists alone sufficed to slug the big bucker into gory, ugly defeat.

It is surprising, exclaims the World's Work writer, "how tough buckers can be. Fellers, too. A certain brawny young fellow—athlete, hunter, mountain climber—took a job in the woods. They put him to falling. On the other end of the saw was a wizened old man, apparently too thin and scrawny to stand the work of the woods." But was the old fellow fit? Listen:

As the day wore on the big fellow's back became lame, his arms dragged as if weighted, and hours before quitting time the saw had become a thing of torture. But the little old fellow on the other end kept sawing away, and only the whistle saved the athlete from collapse.

When a big fir is buckled, or cut, into forty-foot logs, the falling and bucking crew moves on, and later the rigging crew takes up the job. The choker-setter is the man who puts the "necktie" on the log, or fastens the steel choker before giving the "high-ball" to the "whistle punk." The whistle punk, the chap who handles the whistle wire, relays the signal at the proper time to the engineer, who is out of sight of the men in the woods.

Then, when the main line tightens, something like one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of log rises out of the brush and hurtles toward the head tree, with Danger riding the "turns." That log may become a wild thing that can annihilate humans like so many ants.

The high-climber gets the biggest pay in the woods. He climbs, trims, tops, and "rigs up" the trees to which the steel lines are attached, and no high-climber knows which tree may be his last.

His very life-belt may be his worst hazard. If he cuts it by mistake, back and down he plunges. Or if the tree splits and spreads as the big top falls, his life-belt may squeeze his life out against the trunk.

Quick thinking sometimes saves him.

A high-climber in Oregon demonstrated that not long ago. He was up an unusually tall tree, with an extra-heavy top. The tree split as the top started down. Frantically he cut the belt from around him, and in the act of falling backward, sank his axe in the tree's trunk. Then, though the tree jerked violently, he managed to hold on, with only axe and spurs to save him.

That's fast work. And there is fast work, too, in the annual "rolleo" contests, for rivalry is keen. Speed is the essence of that sport, as the climbers go up the great spar trees, top them, and race down again in death-defying leaps.

The best of the outfits in all Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia compete in these contests, and the logging camps are deserted. On July 4 of this year Mike Palanuk won the championship; it took him 7 minutes and 25 seconds to scamper up his tree, top it, and slither back to earth. Try that some time on 150-foot fir.

Experienced men cite a curious fact: that accidents have a way of happening at eleven o'clock in the morning or four in the afternoon, or on Mondays—at times when there's apt to be a physical letdown. The very last load in, or the last log bucked, or loaded, sometimes takes its toll of lumberjacks off guard. Here is an instance:

Lumberjacks had cut out the timber, and the rigging crew had set the choker on the last load. A group of the crew mounted a windfall to watch the last turn come in. Not far away a hemlock had been left intact. As the load drew near, something caught the haulback line, the load swung sharply toward the hemlock, and then crashed against it. The men on the windfall leaped for their lives, but the tree came down upon them and all were killed. No other load in the show had touched that hemlock, nor had any of the men been hurt before.

The story winds up with an intimate personal experience, thus:

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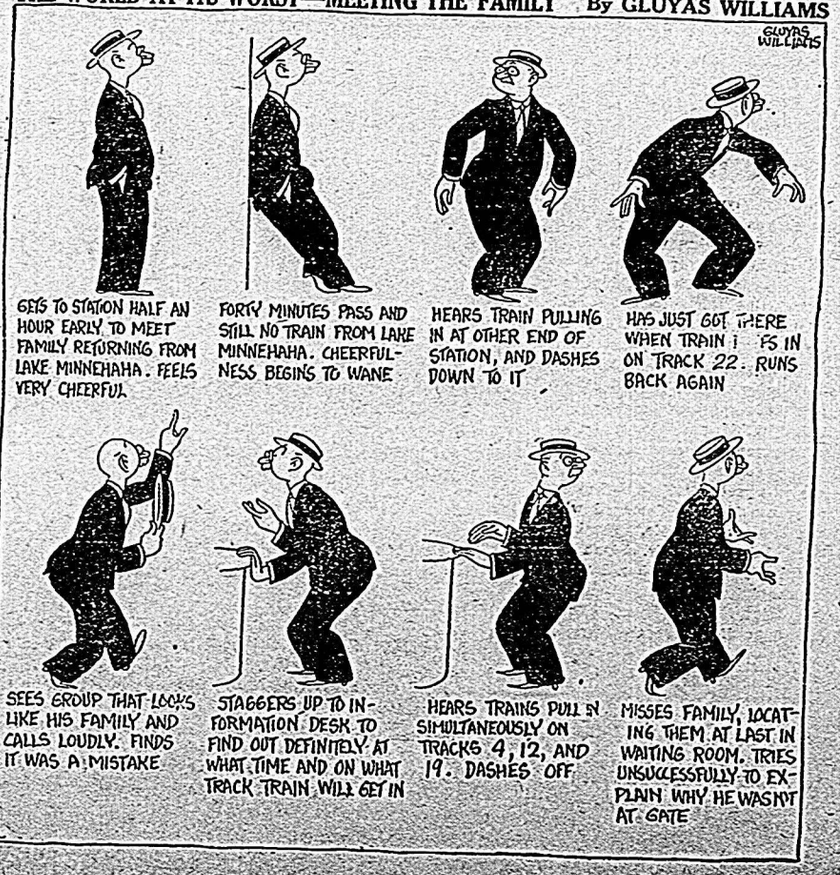
A man was walking along a quiet stretch of track near a logging show one day. To the side of the road a rusty line of wire rope lay curled harmlessly in the rubble. A moment later wire rope lay curled harmless later that steel line, flashing up like a rawhide whip, had become a living thing, taut and menacing.

Through some swift, instinctive reaction, the man threw his head back at the sound, and the line sang past, brushing his corduroys on the way. Had that man been a split second slower, his head would have been clipped off as by a sword.

And in that case this sketch you have been reading would never have materialized, for dead men tell no tales.

THE WORLD AT ITS WORST—MEETING THE FAMILY By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



New Year's Eve

No one ever regarded the First of January with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left. It is the natirity of our common Adam.

Of all sound of all bells—bells, the music nighest bordering upon heaven—most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the Old mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected, in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies.

The elders, with whom I was brought up, were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the Old Year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar ceremony. In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself. But now, shall I confess a truth? I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings . . . I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny.

I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends: to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.—Charles Lamb.

New Year's Eve

I look up in the morning of this year,
And I behold Thee flooding all the sky
With that bright wonder of a heart outpoured.
The night of peace and stars has made me bold,
And from the humbleness of years' defeat,
I dare to rise again and lift a prayer.
O Father of a little trusting child,
Keep Thou my faltering steps upon a way
That is unknown. And teach me how to walk
Forth gladly, with no coldly shackling fears.
Lift me to understanding of thy love;
Give to my mind the firmness and the grace
Of grey stone fences in the morning sun,
Set with all sureness on the warm brown earth,
With little grasses growing by the gate.
Make Thou my heart courageous for its days
As little purple violets blooming low
Beneath their scaredged, frost-chilled leaves.
And if the bending of the bare lean boughs
Shall strike long shadows on the path I choose,
Help me to walk without a shrinking step
Through colder ways than I have known before.
. . . . . .
Great Captain of all those who seek for Thee,
Command my forward march, and lead me on.
—Rachel Dunaway: A Prayer for the New Year.

Arctic Sea Life

The climate of the Canadian North does not adversely affect the sea life, according to the records of the North West Territories and Yukon Branch of the Department of the Interior. During the winter much of the surface of the water is covered by approximately five feet of ice, which forms a clearly defined line of demarcation between the Arctic conditions maintaining above its surface and those in the water beneath, the result being that general conditions in the Arctic waters are much similar to those found in more temperate zones. These conditions are clearly reflected in the character and quantity of sea life found north of the Arctic circle. The herds of sea mammals have not only supported the local inhabitants for many generations, but have also entered the world markets; the fisheries, while as yet undeveloped, have domestic economy of the country; the long been an important factor in the supply of mollusc supports many of the larger sea animals; while the smaller varieties of sea life maintain the fish and some of the smaller mammals. The marine vegetation is plentiful and is drawn upon by all forms of animal life as an aid to their subsistence.

Daughter—"You'll have to give me away when I marry Tom."

Father—"I have already told him how extravagant you are and he isn't discouraged yet."

Gold Production in Canada

Production of gold during 1930 from all sources in Canada amounted to 2,102,063 fine ounces valued at $43,453,601 as against an output of 1,928,308 fine ounces valued at $39,861,663 in 1929. This was the largest output ever recorded in Canada.

GRACE

A great writer has said that "grace was beauty in action." I say that justice is truth in action.

A bargain is a bargain—even if the other woman gets it.

Young Angus had been out late with his girl. When he came home his father was still sitting up. "Hae ye been oot wi' yon lassie again?" he asked. "Aye, dad," replied Angus. "Why do ye look sae worried?" "I was just wondering how much the evening cost." "No more than half a croon, dad." "Aye? That was no sae much." "It was a' she had."

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A New Year's Suggestion

D. D. Twitchell

Most people make resolutions for the New Year. This year when you make your resolutions why not include some for the benefit of our animal friends? These suggestions may help you. Why not resolve that you—

1. Will not allow yourself to be too hurried, too preoccupied or sufficiently unkind to fail to speak kindly to the dog who greets you with a friendly wag.

2. Will not fail to think of the hours of imprisoned loneliness endured by the canary that sings for you and that you will whistle to him or do some other of the many things which make a caged bird happier. A bit of lettuce to peck at or his cage moved to a different window helps to pass the time more pleasantly.

3. Will not be one of those people who put the cat out if it disturbs you, without finding out why it disturbs you. It may be that the cat is hungry, thirsty, or wishes to be played with or petted, or it may be you are disturbed because you are irritable.

4. Will not laugh at, praise, or otherwise encourage, either a child or grown person who torments domestic animals or hunts or traps wild ones.

5. Will point out courteously but unfailingly whenever possible to fur wearers, that the price of the fur that they wear is not only paid for by their money, but is also paid for by the agony, torture, fear, and death of some animal.

Affirmation

It is ending now. I shall watch the year
Lock its cold doors.
And the house of earth grow chill, and the wind
Sweep the white floors.

Snow is so small a house to wall a world
Eternity-hurled!
But there are roots at the wall, and grass, and trees.
I'll trust in these.
—Howard McKinley Corning, in The New York Sun.

Resolutions

The New Outlook (Toronto).—How would it be to put among our New Year's resolutions one to the effect that we will try to be better-natured and more companionable for the next twelve months. Crankiness doesn't add anything to any one else's happiness, and it certainly doesn't make life any smoother for ourselves. If it isn't as deeply-dyed as some of the other vices it makes up by being peculiarly trying on those who have to live with it.

Plan More Trade For Canadian Ports

Ottawa.—The Dominion Government is giving consideration to the question of routing more of Canada's trade through Canadian ports. Sir Alexander Gibb and members of his staff in making a report on Canadian port facilities are particularly studying this phase, it was stated in Government circles. Sir Alexander's report is said to be nearing completion.