



Superstitions Told About New Year's In Many Lands

Good Luck Offered in Many Ways to 'Believers.'

New Year's Day affords everyone the opportunity to bring himself good luck throughout the year. At least that is supposed to be true according to several old superstitions concerning the beginning of a new year.

The "First Foot"—the first person to enter the house on New Year's morning—plays a significant role in the family's future fortunes. He must be a dark man to bring good luck, but if he also brings a gift and "carries" it more than he "takes out," then the house is assured peace and plenty for a whole year.

The most auspicious gifts as luck-bringers are a lump of coal and a red herring.

Unmarried persons are advised to look out of the window on New Year's morning. If you see a man, it is a sign that you will be wed before the year is out. Should you see a horse, you can have a wish, and it will be realized within the year.

To see a dog is lucky, but a cat foretells worry. A little care will make it possible to bring oneself good luck for the entire year.

Wear something new, if possible, on New Year's Day, but the garment must be put on when you first dress in the morning. Receipt of a gift is certain to carry luck.

Wash every part of your body with soap and water. Meet "A Happy New Year," but remember when the greeting is given to cross your fingers for luck.

Be sure to say "rabbits" as the first word when you wake before anyone else in the house. You will have had a chance to speak to you.

Love's progress will be aided on New Year's Day if you are careful to put on the left stocking before the right. The potency of this charm is supposed to be increased if you do all things as far as possible left-handedly during the day.

To open a bank account on New Year's Day was considered lucky in Old England, the custom growing probably from the belief of many centuries that whatever you do on the first day of the year will be an indication of what will happen during the months that will follow.

In some parts of England and Scotland it is supposed to be unlucky to leave a house until some outsider has first entered it.

New Year's Blessings an Ancient Swiss Legend According to a Swiss legend, the Holy Family is always in the hour of midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

NEW YEARS AT THE CORNERS

"POP," Maw Lewis called from the kitchen, "you get your lazy bones out of that chair and wash up."

"Dinner'll be ready in two shakes of a lamb's tail." Pop managed to lift his six feet of bone and sinew to his feet and headed for the kitchen sink.

"Don't you go usin' that clean towel, neither," Maw admonished. "That's for company. Use the roller towel. Sakes alive, I do believe you'd wipe your dirty feet on the front door mat if I'd leave it out."

"What's a door mat fer," Pop cried. "If it ain't to wipe feet on?" Pop gave the roller towel a vicious jerk. "Y'know tonight bein' New Year's Eve, Maw, you'd me ought to step out somewhere. They're having a big shindig over at the

corners store. Jed Hafey's openin' a keg."

"If it's anything like that keg he opened Thanksgiving, you ain't gettin' any nearer to it than you are right now. Pretty howdy-do, you were about a speck o'clock in the mornin' and shinin' like a shooting star through the roof so it leaks like a sieve. No, sirc, you ain't even gettin' near enough to have a smell of any keg Jed Hafey opens," Maw said.

Suddenly Pop looked up from his plate. "Well, consarn! What you cryin' about, Maw?"

"I ain't cryin'," Maw denied. "I'm just thinkin'—thinkin' back fifty-two years. You was payin' attention to me and kind o' jealous like. I couldn't turn 'round but what you was kiasin' me. You was jealous o' Jed Hafey—jealouser than anything."

Pop snorted disdainfully. "What'd I have to be jealous o' Jed Hafey fer? Tell me that."

"Plenty," Maw said. "I was going to marry him."

Pop dropped his fork. "You was a-goin' to marry Jed?"

"Sure. Only his folks wanted him to marry Edda Stout. She owned all the bottom land nearly in Clarke county. He couldn't marry me until he was of age, on account o' his folks wantin' him to marry Edda. A year he figures he can get all her money and then divorce her and marry me. Meanwhile he said I might as well marry you, then when he got all Edda's money I could divorce you and marry him. Said you moved may anticipate special blessings during the coming year for surely Mary and Joseph have rested within the abode during their flight into Egypt and the Virgin used that spoon to feed the infant Jesus."

Miracle Plays Still Held Among more tradition—observing communities of the world, old-time miracle plays are still performed, often in the form of elaborate dances, in solemn, but lavish, settings against the colorful background of tropical foliage.

Syria Camel of Jesus Blessed by Child Christ

In Syria, water and wheat await the Gentle Camel of Jesus who travels over the desert on Epiphany Eve bringing presents to good children.

Legend says the youngest of the camels which bore the Wise Men to Bethlehem was exhausted by the pressing journey and, as it lay down before the Stable, the Christ Child blessed it with immortality.

Office or Lodge Decorated With Little Effort

Have you been chosen to arrange your office or lodge Christmas party this year? Don't look at it as a chore, or something that can be done in the last few days before the actual holiday. Make preparations for it ahead of time—and you will see how much more enjoyment everyone will get out of it.

Christmas is the season for parties when people spend much of their time indoors either entertaining or being entertained. It is during this season that everyone is looking for new ideas for decorating homes, offices, recreation centers or gathering places.

Christmas greens are the favorite decoration and most universal used in all countries. In America, the holly and mistletoe are displayed in wreaths or hung about the room to give a holiday atmosphere.

Other natural materials may be added, such as pine cones, shells, seed pods, ground pine or fruits. If color is to be added, paint the gourds or pine cones with poster paints and fasten them on the pine boughs with wire or string. Pine cones painted in white and edged with red or blue are especially striking when hung against a dark green background.

Three dimensional posters make effective decorations, and are easily made from cloth, stiff paper or other material. This type of decoration is particularly effective made up in the traditional Christmas scenes such as the bringing in the Yule log, Nativity scenes, or caroling.

Christmas cards are a good source to go to for suggestions if you need a design for a poster or bulletin board as a central piece.

HERE'S HOW TO SELECT A TREE

"How can we select a Christmas tree that holds its needles?" is a question fathers and mothers ask year after year. The answer depends on the type of tree you buy and the care you give it once you set it up.

All trees tend to drop their leaves after they are cut and stored in a dry room. But some kinds naturally hold their needles longer than others. Trees used most commonly on Christmas are the spruces, fir, hemlock, pine and red cedar.

Spruce are the first to shed their needles. A spruce can be identified by grasping a branch lightly. Its sharp needles will prick your hand. The ideal Christmas tree is the fir. It resembles the spruce except that its needles are not sharp. The needles stay on the tree for a long time, and become a golden brown before they finally drop off. Needles of the Douglas fir are fat and soft to the touch. This popular tree can be easily identified by examining the cones which have small appendages on each side.

OLD SPIRIT

IN THE streetcar crowded with holiday shoppers Mrs. Weston couldn't see the couple behind her but their words added to her mounting despair and fury.

Overhead, tinseled placards exhorted to buy fur coats, diamonds, perfumes. She shut her eyes to them but she could not shut her ears.

"That was one swell party last night," sighed the man. "Oh, boy!" the girl squealed. Mrs. Weston cringed. The high laughter was like the whistle in Poppo, the rubber dog they'd given Harvey Jr. His thin Christmas Poppo had become more than a toy. He still lived in glory, a kind of household god enshrined in the whatnot in Harvey's room.

"Love to Poppo," Harvey ended his letters. Poppo always topped the

Christmas tree. There'd be no tree this year. It was worse than childish of Harvey to want one. She wouldn't have it. A package had been sent to Harvey Jr. overseas in October, but there'd be no Christmas at home.

Wicked, horrible, thought Mrs. Weston, that people are going through the old motions of a Merry Christmas. No one has a right to be merry.

"You looked super last night," said the man. "You are super, honey. You're so beautiful." Mrs. Weston turned slightly and caught a glimpse of a flat pretty face surrounded by blond curls. "You rate orchids, honey," the man went on, "and you're goin' to have them."

The constant ache in Mrs. Weston's heart sharpened to a stab. For such focus her Weston was risking his life. Another block of their chatter rounded by blond curls. "You rate orchids, honey," the man went on, "and you're goin' to have them."

"I was not," Mrs. Weston felt compelled to explain. "I am going to town now only to select a wreath for my mother's grave."

Behind her the couple were still shrilling about Jack and the Army. "Tell him we'll give him a farewell party. Tell him if he gets shot he'll have a pretty nurse." The man was chortling. "Let's get off next car to the beautiful. You can buy me a drink."

Liquor, thought Mrs. Weston furiously. That explained their incessant giggling over nothing. She didn't care to drink. How they can drink and laugh and waste money on silly things. Life is so terrible—her voice broke. Heavens, people were staring! "My son—somewhere in the Pacific," she added hurriedly in a low voice. "I'm thinking of him."

She felt a hand on her shoulder. "Lady you have the wrong angle," the man behind her leaned forward. Her eyes met compassionate blue ones in a face curiously pale. "It don't help your boy any for you to have no Christmas. Be as merry as you can. Like as not he'll be back in a few days—like me." He lurched to his feet.

Something caught in Mrs. Weston's throat. He was limping to the door. The car jolted to a stop and the girl thrust a steady little hand under her arm. Drunk, thought Mrs. Weston, drunk with the joy of being alive. She sprang to her feet, without apology pushed through the crowd. "Wait!" But they were getting off.

New Year's Mummers Parade Big Event

The Mummers' Parade on New Year's Eve is to Philadelphia what the Tournament of Roses is to Pasadena—only the Mummers have a priority on tradition.

The earliest settlers in the vicinity of present-day Philadelphia were English and Swedes. The English cherished the traditional Mummer play, "St. George and the Dragon," while the Swedes were fond of masquerading informally on New Year's Eve. The two customs had merged long before the Revolution and it was customary—even among the Quakers—to extend hospitality to the masqueraders or give them a dollar for refreshments.

After the Revolution, George Washington replaced St. George as the central figure of the festivities which continued along the path of spontaneity until 1858 when the parade was sponsored by the Silver Crown New Year's association. The Municipal administration officially recognized the parade in 1901, and representative citizenry began turning out to watch and participate in the festivities.

The number of organizations sponsoring the parade, the divisions and elaborateness thereof increased through the years. On New Year's Eve in 1935, 12,000 participated in the line of march down Bond street and 300,000 spectators watched the parade which lasted from early evening through the wee hours of the New Year.

then vanish into the shadows? He could only murmur a grateful "Thank you, sir, and a merry Christmas to you" before the donor disappeared into the swirling crowd. Duncan reached into his left pocket, pulled out two dimes and five pennies, laid them with the half-dollar in the palm of his other hand and stared at his entire fortune of seventy-five cents.

He smiled ironically when it occurred to him presently that the building in front of which he stood was the United States Mint. He turned and, with a laugh that had a hysterical ring to it, jingled his handful of coins. His mirth attracted the cop who had been standing on the corner watching him. The officer said to him in a brogue so thick that it could have been cut with a knife. "Move on, blash ye!" Mike wandered off down a deserted side street, clinking his money.

After about an hour of aimless roaming through endless alleys, he found himself directly opposite a brightly decorated restaurant. He crossed over and from sheer curiosity looked in the window.

There were only two patrons inside—an elderly man and woman seated at a table to the right, were avidly devouring with much relish a whole roast turkey with all the side dishes.

Duncan's mouth began to water—his stomach seemed hollow—he felt his legs go weak, and his ever-present hunger was getting the best of him. Suddenly he remembered the seventy-five cents. He thought quickly. A bed for the night at a flophouse would cost fifteen cents—would leave him sixty cents. He decided to go in and order a roast turkey sandwich. He gave his hat a few deft pats and opened the door. He hung his battered hat and coat where he could grab them in case of an emergency, and made himself comfortable at a table in a corner. Duncan knew that his appearance was none too prepossessing and that a waiter would not dash up to some one from whom he could not get a tip. After a while a vinegar-faced man deigned to come to him.

"What'll you have?" he asked, staring a yawn. "A hot roast turkey sandwich," replied Duncan. "On toast or rye bread?" "Rye."

"Anything else?" Duncan shook his head. "No, nothing else." "Are you sure that's all you want?" "That's all. Just a roast turkey sandwich."

The waiter returned with the order, placed it before him, shook his head wonderingly and withdrew. Duncan virtually devoured the sandwich in three bites. He delicately wiped his mouth with a napkin, then beckoned the waiter. "Check, please," he said. "Check?" "Yes, the check." Duncan raised his eyebrows. "But there is no check."

"No check? What do you mean—no check?" "There are none tonight. This is Christmas Eve. Didn't you see the sign in the window? Customers can order anything they want. It's on the house. You're the only guy who didn't order the whole darned menu. Well, merry Christmas," he added. Duncan's jaw dropped. His gaze fell on the half-dollar, two dimes and five pennies still clutched in his hand. Stumped in his chair, his eyes followed the back of the retreating waiter.

The Christmas Carolers Welcomed Everywhere

"Here come the Carolers." So it used to be. Young faces pressed against the windowpanes, straining to hear the cheerful carols outside. Perhaps it was the story of the Christ child put to tune of a ballad of love and cheer. When the singers were done the householder invited them in for a bite or gave them a coin or two for their song.

"Then on to the next house, to sing again under the stars or vellel behind slitted snow. And then, in the early morning home again to their own firesides."

It was a good old custom, this midnight minstrelsy in the season of peace and good will. "With the beginning of Yuletide, 13 days before Christmas day, as Percival Chubb tells us in the Standard, published in New York by the American Ethical union, "small bands of musicians went the rounds and in the mid or on the road or in the steps, played the old folk tunes as a lyrical prelude to the great day. To some of the antique ballad airs, like Good King Wenceslaus, says Mr. Chubb, "singers would add a hymn tune or two. Once in David's Royal City or Hark, the Herald Angels Sing. Punctuating the bustle of domestic preparation for the coming feast these ministrations in the still night gave a breath of poetry that touched the spirit of Christmas with an endearing beauty. Day by day the tide of joyous anticipation rose until the crescendo broke into a force of exuberance."

Those simple days of the folk are gone, says Mr. Chubb; the glory is departed. But the custom of making the rounds on Christmas eve to sing carols of peace and good will on earth still prevails here and there.—Literary Digest.

Christmas Gifts

Because a Child was born one winter night, In a small town beyond the East's far rim, All children of the earth should claim our care, Remembering Him.

Because we cannot take our gifts of love Down the long road to where our Saviour lay, Let us seek out some lonely, wifful child, On earth, today.

Let us bring light and gladness to those hearts To you who know your suffering should be, Let us take cheer to some abiding place Of bitter poverty.

Let us not miss one lonely, needy child, Because the Christ was born in Bethlehem, For all the gifts that we would bring to Him, He bids us take,—to them.

Christmas Candles

SYMBOLIC OF THE STAR SEEN BY WISE MEN IN THE EAST

The candle is the true symbol of Christmas. Its flickering taper shining on the sill of the city of peace on earth, quite as much as the chime of Christmas bells. No Christmas tree is complete until the candles, whether of wax or of electric lights, have been fastened to its boughs.

A charming elderly lady gives each child in the neighborhood every year a "Twelfth Night" candle. This is a very large cathedral candle, which is to be lighted on Christmas eve and placed on the wide-sill set in a wreath of holly and so placed that its flame burns at the center of a Christmas wreath hanging in the window. It is then kept burning every evening until the eve of Twelfth Night, January 6th. The Twelfth Night, the unburned portion of the candle and all the Christmas greens are placed in the open fireplace and consumed, thus ending the Christmas season.

The significance of this pretty rite is as follows: The candle is symbolic of the star which the wise men saw in the East, and it is kept shining through the twelve days which the wise men were following the star on their journey to the manger where the young Christ lay. Children especially love this beautiful custom of having a lighted candle represent the Christmas star, and in some of the homes where the Twelfth Night candle is kept burning, each child cares for the candle for an evening, all taking turns. The candle is lighted, the wreath lowered to encircle its flame, and when the child goes to bed it is his duty to blow the candle out.

Observe Holiday In Many Ways

The name January is derived from the two-faced god, Janus. He was originally the god of light and day, however, he gradually became the god of the beginning of things.

The beginning of the year was sacred to Janus and a festival in his honor called Agonia was celebrated. At the beginning of any important undertaking his aid and advice was sought.

He was worshipped as the guardian of trade and shipping and he was the inventor of agriculture.

In addition to secular celebrations, many religious denominations hold special services on New Year's Eve from 9 or 10 to 12 o'clock. The Methodist Episcopal church was the earliest to adopt this custom.

Keeping Christmas

HENRY VAN DYKE

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chance to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

FRENCH VILLAGE PORTRAITS

STORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

Les Baux in France, a village of shepherds, puts on one of the most dramatic Christmas celebrations in the world, and has done it yearly for over a thousand years. The peasants set out the whole Bethlehem story. Joseph and Mary drive into the "City of David" with real oxen. Thousands of visitors come every Christmas eve to see the event.

SUGAR AND WATER STOPS FALL OF CHRISTMAS TREE NEEDLES

It's easy to stop the fall of Christmas tree needles. Saw off a portion of the tree's base—enough so the fresh wood will be exposed. Get a shallow pan of water beneath the base of the tree, in which the base should be immersed. A teaspoonful of sugar should be added to the water. The water provides needed moisture and the sugar nourishes the needles, giving them strength to hold on longer.