

PROGRESS.

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PROGRESS wishes its many friends and readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

ON THE THRESHOLD.

Each generation which has witnessed the end of a century may have felt as we feel, that its own period was the grandest in the history of the world. Succeeding ages, with the advantage of a longer perspective, have sometimes modified the verdict, as time may alter our own estimate of the century just closing. In the light of the present, however, no period of the Christian era except the first seems worthy even to be compared with the last hundred years in the richness of its fruition and the extent of its influence on human life.

The material progress of the century has been amply set forth. There is not room even to summarize it here. All the modern wonders of electricity, the railroad, the steamship, the daily paper as we know it, most of the machinery which lightens labor the discovery of anaesthesia, with the miracles of surgery—these and a host of other things occur to every reader.

But it is in another direction that we must look for the real significance of the age. It lies in things moral and spiritual and intellectual, rather than in things material. It is in the feeling of pity for the suffering of animals, the growing opposition to war, the better care of the sick and the insane, the changed attitude of the state toward criminals, the growth of temperance sentiment and the more general feeling of fellowship and brotherhood between man and man. The nineteenth century might well be called the age of compassion. Therein lies its true glory.

This is the thing to keep in mind as we step forward into the new year: To remember those whose work is the noblest legacy of the age, and to strive to carry into the new century, and to intensify, the spirit with which they blessed the old.

READING ALOUD.

The season of the shortest days and the longest evenings has come, and the leisure hours which are always given so largely to outdoor recreation during the summer will now be devoted more to indoor reading.

The occasion seems a fitting one to say a word on behalf of a practise never so popular as it ought to be, and perhaps somewhat less followed now than in former times: the practise of reading aloud.

The habit, like mercy, blesses him that gives and him that takes. To read to one's self is often to be satisfied with a knowledge of words as they appear to the eye. To read aloud is to acquire also a knowledge of words as they sound. There is nothing which will so surely correct mispronunciation. Nearly every reader will recall words which he has long known by sight, but with which he has never taken the trouble to acquire a speaking acquaintance. While he reads only to himself he can slur them over or give them some makeshift pronunciation, which serves to identify them and saves the trouble of consulting the dictionary. But let him adopt the practice of reading aloud, and sooner or later some of these old verbal acquaintances will meet him face to face, to reproach him with his neglect and shame him with his ignorance of their names.

In the cultivation of the voice lies a further recommendation. The practice of reading aloud brings increased vocal power and tends to establish the habit of an agreeable inflection and a distinct enunciation. Lastly, it makes the other members of the

family partners in the pleasure and mental stimulus. It is not alone the reader who is enriched. The tired mother, busy with her mending, is borne into far, strange lands. The stirring scenes of history or fiction march before her, and while she works she is also uplifted and refreshed.

It is one of those games at which "any number can play," and in which the pleasure increases as the circle of players widens.

HEROES IN HUMBLE LIFE.

A cloister has recently been built in Aldersgate street in London, on the walls of which are to be placed memorials of the deeds of heroism of English men and women in humble life.

Four such tablets have already been erected, the inscriptions on two of them reading as follows: "Walter Pearth, and Harry Bean, fireman of the Windsor Express, on July 18, 1898, whilst being scalded and burnt, sacrificed their lives in saving the train." "MARY ROGERS, stewardess of the Stella, March 30, 1899, self-sacrificed by giving up her life-belt and voluntarily going down in the sinking ship.

Nothing can be more inspiring than this public recognition of the bravery and self-sacrifices of obscure heroes and heroines. Westminster Abbey is crowded with the tombs of England's mighty dead—her great warriors on land and sea, her poets, her statesmen, her authors. Each puts forth a silent claim to have helped mankind, and pleads to be remembered by his country; but until now there has been no public recognition of these humble heroes.

Why should not Canadians follow the example of the builders of the church in Aldersgate? In almost every village church in England are tablets recording the names of men belonging to the old county families who have died in battle in India, Africa or the Crimea. Above the memorial often hangs the torn and blood-stained battle-flag under which they fought and died.

Why should not every Canadian village keep a record of its sons who have sacrificed their lives for their brothers, not only the soldier, but the physician, the poor engine-driver, the hospital nurse? It would be a proud story which would furnish inspiration to every boy of the village in years to come.

Safe Betting.

He was a bashful youth, and, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer, when he tried to propose to the girl of his heart, his tongue glued itself to the roof of his mouth and refused to be loosened.

One day in the early autumn they talked of politics, and then of election bets. His eye suddenly brightened.

"Wh-what do you say," he stammered desperately, "to making a little bet with me?"

"I've no objection," she sweetly answered.

"Then," he went on, "let's go ahead and make a bet. If McKinley is elected you will agree to m-m marry me?" He could get no farther.

But she nobly came to his rescue. "I'll make a bet, too," she softly murmured. "If Bryan is elected you will agree to marry me."

There was a brief silence. Then a queer smile struggled across the face of the agitated youth. Another smile lighted the countenance of the happy maid.

"Why wait for the election returns?" he chuckled.

"Why, indeed?" she echoed. And they were married the next week.

The Salt Lake of Larnaca.

In the island of Cyprus is a basin cut off from the sea, although sunk slightly below sea-level, which contains a salt lake from which a considerable harvest of salt is annually obtained in August, when the fierce summer heat dries up the water. Mr. C. V. Bellamy, who recently visited the lake called Larnaca, thinks sea water percolates through the rocks into the basin, thus supplying the salt. A single heavy rain in midsummer has sometimes sufficed to ruin the salt crop, and the Cyprians, in order to protect the valuable lake as much as possible, have constructed channels to carry off the flood water of rains from the slopes of the basin into the sea.

Her Remedy.

"Junson has developed into a confirmed kicker, but his wife can handle him every time. He kicked last night because his dinner was cold."

"What was his wife's play?"

"She made it hot for him."

Bobbs—There is something intoxicating about money-making.

Dobbs—I suppose you want me to ask you why, and then you'll say something the mint julep.

"King Solomon's millinery bill must have been something prodigious."

"Yes, but he died in time to miss the shalakin wrap era."

VERSES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

On The Night Patrol.

A clang, and a clang, and a trample of feet, Shod with iron and eager to meet The bracing air of the midnight night— And the police patrol is off to the fight. They are two boys that whirl through the street, Straining the tugs with a-dloping feet, With a-hy! and a gee up! and clashing gong As the night patrol is hurled along.

Maybe the fight of a drunken gang Awaits to welcome the bell-ringing clang That bounds through the night its avenging lay And echoes its story far away. Maybe the sight of a struggling soul, Ebbing to Death and Life's last goal, Despair or hunger the suicide's toll— Afraid of life's battle array

Or a ghastly form in a darksome place, Silent and still with a colorless face— Inseparable to the galloping pace Of the horses travelling fast. Or a thief or a thug with a bloody knife, Caught in his act of his murderous strife, Is bundled into the wagon at last, And the drama begun, the first scene past.

The night patrol on its homeward way Feeds its rumbles to coming day. Not so do the horses with plumed feet Dash madly along the deserted street. Or the feverish snash of the "urd-rick's" strike; And past is the gisnor of liquor's light— Forever gone is the suicide's might That carried a soul away. —Theodore Stearns.

Touching 'Tals of the Tipper.

He tipped the porter on the train, He tipped the waiter when he ate; He tipped the able bodied man Who tossed his satchel through the gate.

He had to tip the chambermaid, The buttoned bellboy, too, he tipped For bracing water that was death To thoughtless fools who freely sipped,

He had to tip for sleeping, and He had to tip for rimes to eat; He had to tip to get a chance To occupy a decent seat.

They made him tip to get the things For at the start, And every tip was like a nip Of some sharp-fanged thing at his heart.

And while he tipped they fawned on him And stood in smiling groups about But when his change was gone at last, They turned and coldly tipped him out.

The Eve of Christmas.

I sit alone before the dying embers, My memory is here With all her shadow troops of dead December, That bring me back the dreams of every year. And those dim, pained visions to me cling, Break the memories of a child's Their whispered words and silent gestures bringing A thousand fancies, rich and sad and wild.

'We are that time of childhood unenlightened, Of little stockings hung with simple faith, Of mother eyes that smiled in yours and brightened With holy love, and every still, white wreath Has filled your days with youth's cooing gladness.

And brought the dear old Christmas as of yore, And then with tender thoughts and pensive sadness Passed gently from your life forevermore."

The last red ember crumbles into ashes; Without the peals of jolly chimps I hear; Across the hearth of rose-light flames, And lo! another Christmas tide is here. The sleeping world to throbbing life has started, The morning finds me wrapped in pensive mood; The spirits of that childhood have departed, And left my soul its dawn of womanhood. —Ella Bentley.

Snakes.

I wouldn't live in town for all the gum 'At I could see 'em poppin' bricks an' some Red-monade besides. Why, jest to think I You never could steal melons—couldn't crack Sweet elder from the fasset when yer paw Brings home the bag for apple butter. Haw! I'd rather be a girl 'at cries, 'I Don't please!' Than be a boy an' not fight bumblebees.

I know a feller, an' he lives in town, An' wears his shoes in summertime, an' down Here when he comes he dassen't take 'em off Because his n-aw says he'll ketch whoop'n' cough Or stub his foot. He don't know much, I bet, 'bout tumble tines ne turtles; worse yet, 'bout hornets—fereest tings at ever go A-lookin' fer a feller—guess I know.

Besides, he's 'fraid o' snakes—bet he ain't seen As many as Sam and me. Course I don't mean Big bore constrictors, like the ones you see All pictured on my n-aw's graphos. I bet, 'Ner dragons, with their wings an' forked tails An' red-hot teeth and shinin' fiery scales. I kinder guess I'd run if I should see One scootin' down the road there arter me.

But snakes—jest snakes—I ain't afraid o' none 'Cep't rattlesnakes or copperheads or one Our hired man says gits in feller's boots— Jest a wail! Boo—a shiver kinder shoots Up my backbone to think of that! It takes A lot of things to scare me. Common snakes Can't do it. Of course, you don't ketch me A-lookin' fer 'em often—no-sir-ee! —Edward M. Wilson.

Winter Sunshine.

What mock is this of summertime, Toat blue like August's melting deeps Broods softly where earth's still heart sleeps Beneath cold meadows white and wide!

From out gray skies this wind should blow, That chills the soul within my breast; Yet radiance on the snow, And shadows lie across the snow.

It is no mock—this Sky, this Sun, But promise of the hastening days When down the waiting woodland ways The waking thrill of spring shall run!

Weed Fires.

Now every little garden holds a haze That tells of lonzer nights and shorter days. Handfuls of weeds in the corner garden folk Yerd up their lives and pass away in smoke. The leaves of dandelions, deeply notched, Burn with the thistle's purple pinnace, unwatched Of any eyes that loved them yester evening; They light a sullen flare, and pass away.

The small fires whimper softly as they burn, They murmur at the manner that will not turn Back on the dial and bring to them again June's turquoise skies and April's diamond rain. 'Aias! the weeds are crying as they smoulder, 'We are grown wiser with our growing older; We know what summer is—but, ah, we buy Knowledge too dear; we know because we die.'

Japanese Paper Plants.

It is said that the introduction of European methods of manufacture threatens to destroy the distinctive qualities of Japanese paper. It is a wood or bark paper, made from several plants, having no English names, which are cultivated for the purpose. In Japan its varieties are numerous and its uses innumerable. It serves for window lights, and for light partitions between rooms. Brilliantly colored lanterns are made of it, and umbrellas are covered with it. It is used for printing bank-notes. Oiled, it makes waterproof garments, and covered with paste it forms tapestries. When varnished it can be made to imitate Cordovan leather. Handkerchiefs, cords and pressed articles resembling papier-mache are among the things formed from this most useful paper.



FREDDY'S PRESENT.

The Kid Wanted was for the House and not for Him.

The following short story will excite various emotions. Some readers will laugh at it; others will be indignant; and every boy that reads it will be glad his name is not Freddy Keedick.

"I think I shall have to get a Christmas present for little Freddy Keedick," said Mrs. Dillingham to her husband one evening early in December.

"Don't you think you have enough little nephews and nieces to provide for in that way?" asked Mr. Dillingham.

"We have enough, that's true, but Mrs. Keedick was so very kind when Nellie was sick in the summer, that I feel somewhat under obligation to her."

"Then I would get Freddy a Christmas present by all means. What do you suppose would be suitable?"

"I have not been able to make up my mind as to that. What do you think?"

"Oh, don't ask me!"

"I have an idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Dillingham. "I'll make a call on Mrs. Keedick this afternoon, and try to find out what sort of a present would be acceptable to Freddy."

In pursuance of this resolve, Mrs. Dillingham was shown into Mrs. Keedick's parlor on the afternoon of the next day and after a few preliminary exchanges of opinion on unimportant matters, the conversation was led around to Christmas by the caller.

"I suppose Freddy receives quite a number of gifts each Christmas," said she.

"Oh yes," replied Mrs. Keedick. "He has a few relatives who always remember him, but really the presents we appreciate the most are those his papa and I give him."

"That is because you know what pleases him best," said Mrs. Dillingham.

"Yes, that's it. I haven't much patience with the toys that his Uncle Henry and Aunt Polly bring."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I prefer something useful! Now that French clock on the mantel there has given me more satisfaction than any other present Freddy has ever received at Christmas."

"Was that a Christmas present to Freddy?" asked Mrs. Dillingham in surprise.

Yes, we needed a clock in this room, and I told Mr. Keedick that as we had to get Freddy a Christmas present we might as well buy him a clock.

"Does Freddy like it?"

"Well, he doesn't exactly go into raptures over it, but I find it very useful indeed. Then Freddy has plenty of trash given to him at Christmas, so that it really doesn't matter. Then I like him to have useful things, you know. That writing-desk there was another Christmas present to Freddy."

"But that is a lady's writing-desk."

"I know it is. You see I had decided that he ought to have a writing desk because it would be so useful, but when I went to buy it, I could not find a desk suitable for a small boy. However, I saw that lovely lady's desk for sale at a bargain, and I thought it would be sinful to lose the opportunity of getting it for Freddy, as I had gone out for the very purpose of buying him a desk."

"I see," replied Mrs. Dillingham.

"Then those lovely vases in the parlor, which you have admired so often, are also some of Freddy's Christmas presents. The way we happened to get them was this; Mr. Keedick could not think of anything useful to buy for Freddy last Christmas, and I happened to think of those vases, which I had seen at such a very reasonable price in a store down-town. The parlor was so bare of ornaments that we needed them very badly, and so I went straight out and bought them for Freddy."

Mrs. Dillingham rose to go, and as Mrs. Keedick followed her caller to the door, she continued to explain how much more sensible it was to give children useful presents rather than gimcracks, which are broken in a week or two.

Mrs. Dillingham went home, and surprised her husband with the announcement that she had decided to give Freddy Keedick a handsome sofa pillow for Christmas.

An Australian Dog Story.

An Australian tells in the London Spectator the story of a dog, which is interesting to those who love to study canine char-

acter and intelligence. He writes from Melbourne.

While walking with a lady friend along Studley Park Road, Kew (a suburb of Melbourne), on a very quiet afternoon some time ago, we were surprised by a large St. Bernard dog, which came up to us and deliberately pawed my leg several times.

Our perplexity at his extraordinary behavior was perhaps not unmixed with a little misgiving, for he was an animal of formidable size and strength; but as he gave evident signs of satisfaction at our noticing him, and proceeded to trot on in front,—at intervals looking round to make sure we were following,—we became interested.

When we had followed him about forty yards, he stopped before a door in a high garden wall, and looking round anxiously to see that we were noticing, reached up his paw in the direction of the latch.

On stretching forth my hand to unfasten the door his pleasure was exhibited in a most unmistakable manner; but when he saw me try in vain to open it, he became quiet, and looked at me with an expression so manifestly anxious that I could no more have left the poor animal thus than I could have left a helpless little child in a similar position.

With eager attention and expectancy he listened while I knocked, and when at last some one was heard coming down the garden path, he bounded about with every sign of unlimited joy.

Now here was one of the so-called "brutes," which, failing to get in at a certain door, cast about for a way out of the difficulty, and seeing us some distance down the road (we were the only persons in sight at the time), came to us, attracted our attention, took us to the door and told us he wanted it opened.

We agreed that the animal had shown a play of emotion and intelligence comparable to that of a human being; and, indeed, we felt so much akin to the noble creature that we have both, since then, been very loath to class dogs as "inferior animals."

Electric Shocks.

A lineman on an electric road, who had received a slight shock, described it as follows: "I felt as if I had swelled up and burst." An experienced electrician, writing in the New Orleans Times-Democrat, gives his sensations more fully.

The sensation of an ordinary severe shock is familiar to the majority of people and is not especially peculiar, but a knock out dose of the current is something entirely different.

I was splicing a connection in a powerhouse and mistook an arc-light feeder, which had sagged down, for a dead wire. I had a pair of pliers in my left hand, and attempted to push it out of the way with them. So much I remember perfectly.

Then all of a sudden I had a most extraordinary sensation. I felt as if my blood were expanding and swelling every vein in my body to the last pitch of tension.

The great arteries in my neck seemed to stretch until they were as big around as ship cables, and were suffocating me with their pressure; and I had the same bursting feeling in my eyeballs, my tongue, my nostrils, and even the roots of my hair.

All this came over me with terrific swiftness, but it was nothing like a stroke of lightning or the twinkling of an eye. On the contrary, several seconds seemed to elapse, and the feeling was so entirely different from what I had always imagined it would be that it never entered my mind that I had been shocked by a high power current.

Then, as nearly as I can describe it, my overstrained tissues appeared to give way, something exploded in my brain like a hundred-ton gun, and everything became black. Almost immediately, or so I could have sworn, I opened my eyes and found myself on the floor, fully conscious, but very weak.

As a matter of fact I had been hurled a dozen feet. What I imagined had consumed at least a tenth of a second, and I had been unconscious fully two hours.

My experience simply shows what we have often observed in dreams, that under abnormal conditions the brain loses all conception of time. I am pretty positive from questioning a number of people, that everybody who survives a shock from a current over a certain voltage has an experience very similar to my own.