

# *Buttercup Gold & Other Stories*

## **The Little New Year**

by *Ellen Robena Field*

One cold morning Maurice awoke from his dreams and sat up in bed and listened. He thought he heard a knock at his window; but though the moon was shining brightly, Jack Frost had been so busily at work that Maurice could not see through the thickly painted panes. So he crept sleepily out of bed, and opened the window, and whispered: "Who is there?"


"I am," replied a tinkling voice. "I am the little New Year, ho! ho! And I've promised to bring a blessing to everyone. But I am such a little fellow I need somebody to help me distribute them. Won't you please come out and help?"

"Oh, it's so cold!" said Maurice; "I'd rather go back to my warm bed;" and he shivered as Jack Frost, who was passing, tickled him under the chin with one of the frosty paint brushes.



"Never mind the cold," urged the New Year; "please help me."

So Maurice hurried into his clothes, and was soon out in the yard. There he found a rosy-cheeked boy a little smaller than himself, pulling a large cart which seemed to be loaded with good things. On one side of this cart was painted the word "Love," and on the other "Kindness." As soon as the New Year saw Maurice he said, "Now please take hold and help me pull;" and down the driveway and up the hill they traveled until they came to an old shanty.



“Here is where I make my first call,” said the New Year. Maurice looked wonderingly at him. “Why, nobody lives here but an old colored man who works for us; and he hasn’t any children!” “He needs my help,” said the New Year; “for grown people like to be thought of just as much as children do. You shovel out a path to his door, while I unload some of my blessings; and the little hands went busily at work, piling up warm clothing, wood, and a new year’s dinner, the New Year singing as he worked:—

”Oh, I am the little New Year; ho! ho!

Here I come tripping it over the snow,

Shaking my bells with a merry din;


So open your door and let me in.”

Old Joe, hearing some noise outside, came to the door, and when he saw all the nice gifts the tears ran down his cheeks for gladness; and as he carried them into the house, he whispered: “The dear Lord has been here to-night.”

“Where am we going now?” asked Maurice, as they ran down the hill. “To take some flowers to a poor sick girl,” answered the New Year.

Soon they came to a small white house, where the New Year stopped. “Why, Bessie, our sewing girl lives, here,” said Maurice. “I didn’t know she was sick.” “See,” said the New Year, “this window is open a little; let us throw this bunch of pinks into the room. They will please her when she wakes, and will make her happy for several days.”

Then they hurried to other places, leaving some blessing behind them.



“What a wonderful cart you have,” said Maurice; “though you have taken so much out, it never seems to get empty.” “You are right, Maurice, there is never any end to love and kindness. As long as I find people to love and be kind to, my cart is full of blessings for them; and it will never grow empty until I can no longer find people to help. If you will go with me every day and help me scatter my blessings, you will see how happy you will be all the long year.”

“A happy New Year!” called someone; and Maurice found himself in bed, and his sister standing in the doorway smiling at him. “Have you had a pleasant dream, dear?” she asked.

“Why, where is the little New Year?” said Maurice; “he was just here with me.”

“Come into Mamma’s room and see what he has brought you,” answered his sister. There in a snowy white cradle he found a tiny baby brother, the gift of the New Year. How happy Maurice was then! But he did not forget his dream. Old Joe and Bessie had their gifts, too, and Maurice tried so hard to be helpful that he made all his friends glad because the happy New Year had come.