



## The Ella Wheeler Wilcox Society Newsletter

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Richard A. Edwards, Editor

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Welcome to another issue of the Newsletter. One last issue before the New Year. It's been a banner year for The Ella Wheeler Wilcox Society and our web site and the birth of our newsletter.

Ella wrote many stories and poems about Christmas and New Years, so it seems warranted to devote an issue to them. In addition, I have a special gift for all Ella Society members again this Christmas. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season, wherever you may be.



First, the gift. In 1904 Ella Giles Ruddy compiled a book of Ella quotes. This book, entitled [Around the year with Ella Wheeler Wilcox](#) was a calendar book. Each month begins with a quote from Ella and then there is an area for each day with an Ella quote and space to write your engagements. A few months ago I managed to obtain a copy of this book and have created a web version of it as my holiday gift to you all. I even went one better than Ella Giles Ruddy and created links from each quote to the full version of the chapter or poem wherever I had a copy. I am still missing a small percentage of the full text for all the quotes, but most of the 366 days are linked.

So, whenever you wish you can go to the book's [Table of Contents](#) and select a particular month and day and read the Ella "quote of the day" and if it proves interesting to you, click on the title of the work and go to the full text. Ms. Ruddy quoted from many Ella writings, including prose and poetry. It makes for interesting reading. If you happen to have the full text of those quotes that are not linked (because I don't have the text) please contact me so we can add that text to our website. Thanks!

Around the year with Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Chicago, W.B. Conkey Co., c. 1904. Compiled by Ella Giles Ruddy.

<http://192.211.16.13/individuals/edwardsr/ella/books/year.htm>

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Happy Holidays to all the members of The Ella Wheeler Wilcox Society.

Rich

## This month in Ella's life:

### December 1885

Mal moulée, Ella's first novel, was finished and she wrote the Preface at her home with Robert in Meriden, Connecticut. In 1886 it was published by G.W. Carleton & Co. and S. Low, Son & Co.

In her preface, she said: "It is more than two years since the outline of this simple story first suggested itself to me, and since the first chapters were written. Many times since then, conscious that I possessed no talent as a novelist, I have resolved to abandon the work. Yet an unaccountable and mysterious impulse (which no doubt my severe critics will declare as unfortunate, as unaccountable) compelled me to complete it.

"I have attempted no fine descriptions, no rare word-paintings, no flights of eloquence. These things lie not within my province. As simply and briefly as possible, I have endeavored to relate such events as occur almost daily in our midst."

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### December 1886

Ella "was shopping in New York and was shown a very beautiful opal, the first she had ever seen, by a Mr. Marcus, a dealer in precious stones, who remarked that he wished she would write a poem about it to be used in a book on gems which he was preparing. He added that the opal had always seemed to him the child of the sunbeam and the moonbeam, but though he had mentioned this idea to several New York poets, none of them had been able to make anything of it. Mrs. Wilcox said she was sure that she could, and the next morning, in about half an hour's time, wrote" the Birth of the Opal.

From: Stevenson, Burton Egbert, 1872-

Famous single poems and the controversies which have raged around them.

Freeport, NY : Books for Libraries Press, [1971]. p. 225-242.

<http://192.211.16.13/individuals/edwardsr/ella/bio/bsingle.htm>

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### December 4, 1897

Ella was staying at The Gerard, 125 West 44th Street, New York City. While there, she wrote a letter to a Mr. Hoyt which says:

" Last year one of my songs was successfully sung at your theatre-- 'Laugh & the world laughs with you.' Another-- a lullaby -- I wish might be introduced this year. I send you a copy of it and if you can make use of it. I shall be pleased for the sake of the musical composer -- a gifted woman whose talent would be recognized more readily if this were done. It would of course give the song great vogue if sung in your theatre."

Transcription by Richard A. Edwards

Courtesy of the Rare Book, Manuscript, & Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, NC

The original can be seen on our website at:

<http://192.211.16.13/individuals/edwardsr/ella/letters/1897124.htm>

**December 7, 1914**

"On Monday, Dec. 7th., the moving pictures of "Summer Days with Ella Wheeler Wilcox" and the photo play of my poem, "The Price He paid" will open in one of the New York Theatres, I believe it is the New York. I loathe the play. It was written by a man famous in the photo play field but my poem was quite lost sight of in the thing he constructed. However the Warner Features people who have it in hand, think it is going to be a great money maker and hereafter I will, at least, oversee my scenarios, before they are put into films. It was shown at The Globe Theatre last month to the bookers, and I rather dread seeing it again, so I am not going to stay over for it but hurrying home to my three "H's", Husband, Home and Harp." From a letter from Ella to Elsa, December 1, 1914.

The Price He Paid (1914) Directed by Lawrence B. McGill, Writing credits Ella Wheeler Wilcox (poem)  
Credited cast overview: Thomas V. Emery as Charlie Duke, Reeva Greenwood as Patrice , Philip Hahn as Richard, Edith Hinckle as Mrs. Lyons, Julia Hurley as Granny, Gertrude Shipman as Lucie, Hahn's wife, Jack Standing as The doctor.

Black and White Silent Film

Ella's Filmography is available at: <http://192.211.16.13/individuals/edwardsr/ella/bib/bibfilm.htm>

Poems:

DECEMBER

Upon December's windy portico  
The Old Year stood, and looked out where the sun  
Went wading down the West, through drifting clouds.

'I, too, shall sink full soon to rest,' he sighed,  
'And follow where my children's feet have trod;  
Brave January, beauteous May and June,  
My lovely daughters, and my valiant sons,  
All, all save one, have left me for that bourne  
Men call the Past. It seems but yesterday  
I saw fair August, laughing with the Sea,  
Snaring the Earth with her seductive wiles,  
And making conquest, even of the Sun.  
Yet has she gone, and left me here to mourn.'  
Then spake December, from an open door:  
'Father, the night grows cold; come in and rest.  
Sit with me here beside this glowing grate;  
I have not left thee; thou art not alone;  
My house is thine; all warm with love and light,  
And bright with holly and with cedar sweet.  
My stalwart arm is thine to lean upon;  
The feast is spread, I only wait for thee;  
God smiles upon thy dead, smile thou on me.'  
Then through the open door the Old Year passed  
And darkness settled on the outer world.

[Poems of Progress and New Thought Pastels.](#)

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

London: Gay & Hancock, 1911.

ONCE IN A WHILE

Once in a while, in this world so strange,  
To lighten our sad regrets,  
We find a heart that is true through change--  
A heart that never forgets.  
Oh rare as a blossoming rose in December--  
As a bird in an Arctic clime,  
Is a heart, a heart that can remember  
Through sorrow and change and time.

Once in a while we find a love  
That will live through life and death,  
Ay! that will follow the soul above,  
Not passing away with the breath.  
But rarer, oh rarer by far and stranger  
Than a spring in the desert sand,  
Is a love that will last, with toil, and danger,  
And strife on every hand.

Once in a while we find a friend  
That will cling through good or ill,  
Whose friendship follows us e'en to the end,  
Be it up or adown the hill,  
But the heart so true, and the love so tender,  
And friendship's faithful smile,  
Whether we dwell in squalor or splendor,  
We find but "once in a while."

1872

[Shells](#) by Ella Wheeler

Milwaukee: Hauser & Storey, 1873.

## RESOLVE

As the dead year is clasped by a dead December,  
So let your dead sins with your dead days lie.  
A new life is yours, and a new hope. Remember,  
We build our own ladders to climb to the sky.  
Stand out in the sunlight of Promise, forgetting  
Whatever the Past held of sorrow or wrong.  
We waste half our strength in a useless regretting;  
We sit by old tombs in the dark too long.

Have you missed in your aim? Well, the mark is still  
shining.

Did you faint in the race? Well, take breath for the  
next.

Did the clouds drive you back? But see yonder their  
lining.

Were you tempted and fell? Let it serve for a text.  
As each year hurries by let it join that procession  
Of skeleton shapes that march down to the Past,  
While you take your place in the line of Progression,  
With your eyes on the heavens, your face to the  
blast.

I tell you the future can hold no terrors  
For any sad soul while the stars revolve,  
If he will stand firm on the grave of his errors,  
And instead of regretting, resolve, resolve.  
It is never too late to begin rebuilding,  
Though all into ruins your life seems hurled,  
For see how the light of the New Year is gilding  
The wan, worn face of the bruised old world.

[Poetical works of Ella Wheeler Wilcox.](#)

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Edinburgh : W. P. Nimmo, Hay, & Mitchell, 1917.

December, 1870

[Shells](#) by Ella Wheeler Wilcox  
Milwaukee: Hauser & Storey, 1873.

## A GOLDEN YEAR

Linger, linger, oh royal year!  
For I grieve to see you dying.  
Rest on the hilltops---loiter near;  
Wait, O Time, in your flying.  
For never, in all the twice ten years,  
You have brought to build my twenty,  
Never was one so free from tears--  
So overflowing with plenty.

Filled to the brim with the purest draughts,  
That I sip in fearless pleasure;  
While an unseen spirit watches and laughs,  
And again refills the measure.  
My brightest dreams, and my fondest hopes,  
The year has gathered together,  
And right bountifully they have come to me,  
From the Spring to the Autumn weather.

The rarest of flowers, subtle and sweet,  
That grew in the world Ideal,  
Have dropped their seeds in the soil at my feet,  
And blossomed among the Real.  
And Love, like a rose, still blossoms and blows,  
Passion-hearted, yet tender.  
And my path is strewn with the glories of June,  
And I'm hedged about with its splendor.

Care flew over the hills, one day,  
And I sang, as he swift retreated;  
And Hope took his crown, and Joy settled down,  
On the throne where Care had been seated.  
Contentment hedged me all round about,  
And Love built his blazing fire;  
And Happiness poured his treasures out,  
And left me with no desire.

I have walked breast high in a sea of bliss:  
I have loved my God, and my brother.  
There never before was a year like this--  
There never can be another.

Linger, loiter, a little while,  
For I grieve to see you dying!  
But even in grief, I can only smile,  
For my heart is too light for sighing.

Prose:

**Christmas and Christianity.**

Nearly two thousand years have passed since Christ came to earth, and while His natal day is becoming more and more widely known and celebrated, the world is still far from understanding

His simple philosophy of brotherhood.

In tens of thousands of churches on this Christmas day as on preceding ones all over the civilized world, professed followers of Christ--good meaning people, who believe they are Christians--will say with lip and heart, "Peace on earth and good will to men," and they will go forth from the churches to fight their fellowmen on bloody battlefields, or in the more silent conflicts of the business world.

Millionaire Christians who have just planned a corner on wheat or pork, which shall pauperize

thousands of their brother men but shall swell their own millions into billions, will bow their gray heads reverently on the velvet backs of costly pews, and glorify the name of that gentle Being who was born in a manger, and who bade his followers to "Do unto others as they would be done by."

Men who lie awake nights to perfect schemes of getting the better of competitors, will join in hallelujahs sung to the simple Carpenter who lived only to do good to mankind, and who said, "Love your enemies."

Men who have put away wives of whom they were weary and married others for whom they had conceived a passion; women who have bribed lawyers to divorce them and clergymen to remarry them, will go to church and worship the Christ whose religion proclaims against a plurality of wives and husbands.

Meantime, in spite of all these unwholesome facts, and many more as disagreeable ones which could be mentioned, the world is slowly but steadily advancing toward the Christ standard.

Humanity is cleaner and kinder than it was even a few hundred years ago.

In the early days of Christian rule there was a deep-seated objection in the church against cleanliness.

Because the pagans had been devoted to baths, the church considered bodily purity synonymous with impiety of the soul.

Monks were allowed two baths a year in the middle ages, and a moistened corner of a towel, which was common property in the convents, served for the nuns' occasional ablutions.

Even in the seventeenth century it caused a sensation in a convent, when a duchess who had turned her thoughts to religious matters for a season demanded a foot bath.

The desire for clean extremities was deemed unregenerate.

That was less than two hundred years ago, and to-day our churches believe that cleanliness is next to godliness, and an untidy Christian is as rare as a clean native Indian. Indeed, the generally accepted idea to-day is that some moral slackness pervades the mind of one whose person is not clean.

And just as we have progressed in neatness, so we have in kindness and tolerance.

One hundred years ago we burned as witches people who possessed clairvoyant powers. To-day we call them "psychists," and science studies them with interest. A century ago good Christians put insane people in dungeons and fetters, believing them to be possessed of devils.

To-day we know better--we know they are diseased sufferers, and we bring science and sympathy to bear upon their misfortunes.

Yet our prisons, our insane asylums, our reform schools and our poorhouses, all of them supposed to be conducted on Christian principles, would startle the tender Christ were He to return to us this Christmas day and make a visiting tour among them.

What consternation would ensue were His calm eyes to penetrate the dark corners and His hand to reveal what lay behind closed doors.

Meanwhile we can only thank God and progress that things are so much better than they used to be, even while we are filled with wonder that they are not better than they are.

Christ never asked for forms and conventions and complicated dogmas. That is all man's doing.

Christ does not want you to give largely to the church while you grind your fellowman in the mill of business.

He does not want you to make generous gifts to the poor on Christmas day while on every other you indulge in selfish, sordid methods of dealing with humanity.

Here are a few suggestions for practical Christianity during these holiday times.

If you are a married man, do not starve your wife's heart and brain by giving her no affection and no recreation during eleven months of the year, and then expect to make her happy by an elaborate Christmas gift.

Pay your iceman and your milkman, and your paper bill and all other bills before you display your generosity to churches, hospitals, fresh air funds or personal friends.

It is better to be called stingy than dishonest.

A little consideration, a little affection, a little thoughtfulness, and a continual regard for the feelings and rights of others in your home and business relations every day of the year, is more acceptable to Christ than a large display on His birthday of piety and benevolence.

Though the world is full of sinning,  
Of sorrow and of woe,  
Yet the devil makes an inning  
Every time we say it's so.  
And the way to set him scowling  
And to put him back a pace,  
Is to stop this stupid scowling  
And to look things in the face.

If you glance at history's pages,  
In all lands and eras known,  
You will find the vanished ages  
Far more wicked than our own.  
As you scan each word and letter,

You will realize it more  
That the world to-day is better  
Than it ever was before.

And in spite of all the trouble  
That abounds on earth to-day,  
Just remember it was double  
In the ages passed away.  
And these wrongs shall all be righted,  
Good shall dominate the land,  
For the darkness now is lighted  
By the torch in Science' hand.

Forth from little motes in chaos,  
We have come to what we are,  
And no evil force can stay us--  
We shall mount from star to star.  
We shall break away each fetter  
That has bound us heretofore,  
And the world to-day is better  
Than it ever was before.

Every-day thoughts in prose and verse . by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Chapter LVII.  
Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1901. Typed for the web site by Kimberlee Cook.

### Your Subscription and Printed Copies

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For those of you without email systems that can read HTML/Web code, the newsletter will also be available as a web page and an Adobe PDF file (for printing) on our web site at <http://192.211.16.13/individuals/edwardsr/ella/news/nindex.htm>

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