

New Year's Calls

The genial custom of making New Year's calls has some privileges "more honored in the breach than in the observance," but there are few persons in society who would wish to abolish the time-honored license of that festive season, however strenuously they may counsel wise reforms.

The formalities enforced in polite circles at other seasons are relaxed with the coming of the New Year, and it is proper to define the privileges of the day.

Guests on their entrance to the hall are expected to remove overcoats, hats and gloves, so that they can enter the drawing room free to receive and offer salutations.

The reception-room would be warm and beautiful for the festive season. There are many forms in which refreshments may be presented with but little danger for even the weakest, and the palate is not the chief means for social delight. The veriest anchorite would prescribe refreshments for callers on New Year's Day, but some most estimable ladies in fashionable society are now favorable to the use of coffee, tea, and other harmless liquids, instead of the dangerous stimulants which a few years ago made it impossible for the caller to speak his mother tongue after he had made his calls.

When a hurried call is intended, the outer wraps may be left in the hall, and in such cases, although refreshments may be offered, they should not be urged.

Gloves should be retained on their right hands by gentlemen whose business and pleasure for the day will consist mainly in meeting and offering salutations to their friends. Cards must be presented by callers, and should be sent up to the reception-room while the visitors are preparing to be ushered into the presence of the ladies. Gentlemen making calls will present their cards, neatly written, engraved, or printed in script.

Calls may be made on New Year's Day as early as ten in the morning, and as late as nine at night, but before that time evidences of fatigue become common.

Carriages may be used when making calls if the round of acquaintances is large, for the purpose of saving time as well as strength, but people may walk if they wish and their calls are few. Sometimes young gentlemen who have no carriages of their own unite to hire for the occasion.

Adapted from "Gaskell's Compendium of Forms," G. W. Borland Publishing Company, 1884