

The change of life

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

This is the time for New Year's resolutions. It is that time when all of us look inside ourselves and pick out those undesirable qualities we would like to do away with. It is also the time of man's greatest failure.

In once knew a man, Ralph Turner, and he was probably the nastiest man on the face of this earth. He used to beat his wife with the same axe handle that he used for beating his horse. He would spit tobacco juice on his wife's begonias just to see the plants die. I remember the day that old man Turner was walking down the street and he passed Reverend Keatly. The good minister nodded his head, and smiled, "Good Morning, Mr. Turner, and how are you today?" Mr. Turner didn't answer. At least he didn't answer directly. What he

did do was bash Reverend Keatly over the head with a watermelon. That Sunday Reverend Keatly's sermon was on WHY WE MUST NOT USE GINGER IN PUMPKIN PIES. Of course it wasn't a very good sermon, but then again...Reverend Keatly wasn't in very good shape.

Old man Turner knew that he was somewhat lacking in social graces. He knew that he wasn't the best liked fellow in town, and so . . . New Year's Eve . . . he decided to make a few resolutions. He made up his mind that a drastic change must come in his outlook and his personality. He pondered just what he could do to make himself a better man. He finally decided that he would stop beating his wife. He would stop beating his horse.

He would stop spitting on begonias, and he would be more civil toward Reverend Keatly. He went to bed that night feeling very noble.

The next day he beat his horse to death, divorced his wife, and tarred and feathered Reverend Keatly.

Now we derive from this story the fact that desire is a little different from performance. Our motives can be very grand but (sometimes) we lack the power to overcome.

Mrs. Henrietta Smith, who lived next door to Mr. Turner, was the nicest person I have ever known. She was so good to the children in the neighborhood and was cordial and polite to everyone she met. And when New Year's Eve came she just didn't know what kind of resolution to make. It is very hard to

better yourself when you are close to being perfect. I thought the resolution that she came up with was probably the sweetest gesture since Christ walked upon this earth. Mrs. Smith finally decided that she would, in the coming year, give her blood to the blood bank, her eyes to the eye bank, and her horse to old Mr. Turner.

Her intentions went for naught, because the Humane Society wouldn't let her give the horse to Mr. Turner. The eye bank said her eyes were in the worst condition of any eyes they had ever seen, and although the Red Cross ladies pricked dear Mrs. Smith in over twenty thousand places...they didn't find one drop of blood.

I, too, made a New Year's resolution. I certainly wasn't as bad as Mr. Turner

nor was I good as Henrietta Smith. I honestly couldn't think of too many things that I would like to change. After many hours of soul searching I came up with the resolution that I would stop yelling at my wife.

For 30 years I had abused this dear woman with my screeching voice and my billious temper. I just couldn't seem to control myself. This was a very cowardly quality because I certainly wouldn't yell at my boss or anybody else that had a degree of authority. But I always felt perfectly free to let off steam when my wife was around and I abused this dear person with profane indulgence. Now was the time to control myself and give to my wife the serenity of a perfect marriage.

On New Year's Day I got up for

breakfast. My wife poured the coffee and after I took a sip, I said, "This is lovely coffee, my dear."

My wife went into shock. I usually scream, "THIS FINKY COFFEE ISN'T GOOD SWILL FOR PIGS."

She put my fried egg and toast before me. The egg was overdone and the toast was burnt. I honestly tried to control my temper. I wanted so much to keep my resolution.

I said, very softly, "This egg isn't too bad...and this toast, although a little burnt, is excellent."

And then I took another sip of coffee, stood up, and screamed, "THIS FINKY COFFEE ISN'T GOOD SWILL FOR PIGS."

My wife smiled, the color came back into her face, she patted me on the head, and we lived happily ever after.