

**AN
ORIGINAL YEAR**

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An Original Year by Charles E. Jefferson

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CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

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**"THERE IS NO NEW THING UNDER
THE SUN." — Eccl. 1:9.**

**"O SING UNTO THE LORD A NEW
SONG." — Ps. 98:1.**

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THE man who wrote Ecclesiastes begins his book in a terrible humor. He starts with an outburst like this: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." What is the matter with the man? He is sick of the irritating repetitiousness and unending monotony of life. He is disgusted with the everlasting sameness of the world. Life, he says, is the same old thing over and over again. A generation comes and goes, still another generation comes and goes, and one supposes that there is going to be something new. But he finds himself mistaken. The earth abides. The world does not change, the framework is fixed, the stage is never altered, the scenery continues the same, the lights remain constant. The sun rises and sets, rises and sets, rises and sets. It is incapable of originality. The wind is called variable, but all its changes are within narrow limits.

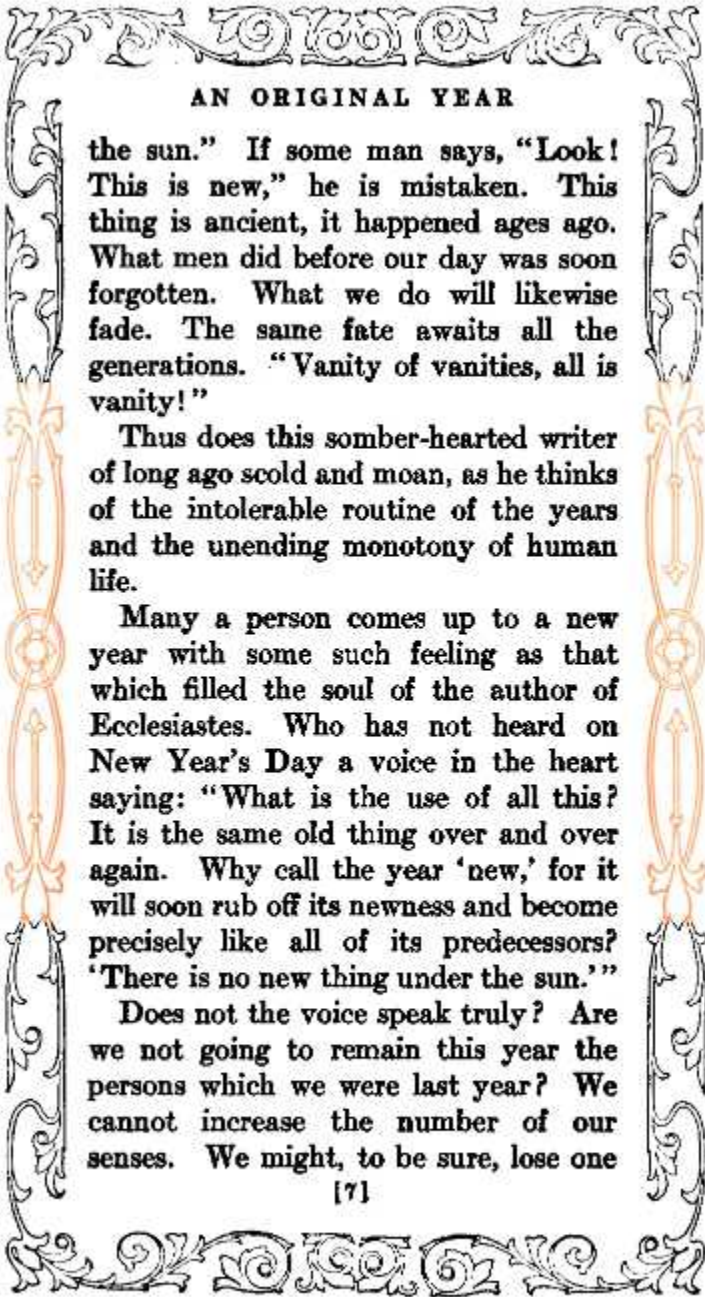
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It veers from the north to the south, but soon comes back to the north again. It is always blowing out of one of the same old quarters. It travels everlastingly round the same old circle.

The rivers flow into the sea. All of them do this, they keep doing it all the time — but what does it amount to? The sea is never full. The sea sends back the water to the hills, and the water flows to the sea again. The ancients supposed that the sea found its way back through subterranean channels, bubbling up in springs and descending in rivers to the sea again. We know that the sea goes into the clouds, falls upon hill and plain, and then runs to the ocean-bed again. But it is the same old circuit, whether you view it as an ancient or a modern.

Man stands upon the earth and watches all this, but his eye is never satisfied. He listens to the music, but his heart finds no rest. The thing which hath been is the thing which shall be, and the thing which hath been done is the thing which shall be done again. "There is no new thing under

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the sun." If some man says, "Look! This is new," he is mistaken. This thing is ancient, it happened ages ago. What men did before our day was soon forgotten. What we do will likewise fade. The same fate awaits all the generations. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

Thus does this somber-hearted writer of long ago scold and moan, as he thinks of the intolerable routine of the years and the unending monotony of human life.

Many a person comes up to a new year with some such feeling as that which filled the soul of the author of Ecclesiastes. Who has not heard on New Year's Day a voice in the heart saying: "What is the use of all this? It is the same old thing over and over again. Why call the year 'new,' for it will soon rub off its newness and become precisely like all of its predecessors? 'There is no new thing under the sun.'"

Does not the voice speak truly? Are we not going to remain this year the persons which we were last year? We cannot increase the number of our senses. We might, to be sure, lose one

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of them, but we will not think of that possibility today. We shall possess simply the old faculties: memory, imagination, reason, judgment, conscience, and taste. We cannot add to the number. Of course we might lose one of them, but that is not an achievement which we shall think about just now. Our disposition will remain virtually what it has been. We shall have our jubilant days and our days of depression, our ugly moods and our moods of serenity and peace. Our temper will tug at the leash, and now and then will break loose as it always has, and as in all probability it always will. Can a man by making New Year's resolutions add a cubit to his physical or moral stature?

Not only shall we ourselves remain substantially what we have been, but we are going to do in the main the same old things which we have been doing for a long time. The boys and girls will go back to school. The mechanics will go again to their trades. The lawyers will go back to their clients, and look through the same old law books and search for the same old precedents,