

AT THE DOOR OF THE YEAR.

THE corridors of Time  
Are full of doors—the portals of closed years,  
We enter them no more, though bitter years  
Beat hard against them, and we hear the chime  
Of lost dreams, dirge-like, in behind them ring,  
At memory's opening.

But one door stands ajar—  
The New Year's; while a golden chain of days  
Holds it half shut. The eager foot delays  
That presses to its threshold's mighty bar;  
And fears that shrink, and hopes that shrunk  
around  
Around it wait and crowd.

It shuts back the unknown,  
And dare we truly welcome one more year,  
Who down the past a mocking laughter here  
From idle aims like wandering breezes blown?  
We whose large aspirations dimmed and  
shrank  
'Till the year's scroll was blank!

We pause beside the door,  
Thy year, O God, how shall we enter in?  
How shall we thence Thy hidden treasures  
win?  
Shall we return to beggary, as before,  
When thou art near at hand, with infinite  
wealth,  
Wisdom, and heavenly health?

The footsteps of a Child  
Sound close behind us! Listen! He will speak,  
His birthday bells have hardly rung a week.  
Yet He trod the world's press undefiled,  
'Come to Me!' hear Him through His smiling  
say,  
'Behold, I am the way!'

Against the door His face  
Shines as the sun. His touch is a command,  
The years unfold before His baby hand!  
The beauty of His presence fills all space.  
'Enter through Me,' He saith, 'nor wander  
more,  
For lo! I am the Door.'

And all doors openeth He,  
The new-born Christ, the Lord of the New  
Year,  
The threshold of our locked hearts standeth  
near;  
And while He gives us back love's rusted key,  
Our future on us with His eyes has smiled,  
Even as a little child.

THE OLD YEAR.

BY SAMUEL WRAY.

ONCE was young, and so was  
I; but now it is old, and I  
—? Well, however I may  
boggle at it, I am getting  
older. All things are going  
on—all getting older and  
older. I fain would dis-  
cover something at a stand-  
still. I should much like to rescue a  
breathing time on my own account;  
but, you see, I cannot. It is no use  
trying—I gave it up, in fact, an age  
ago. Perhaps never so powerfully as  
now are we reminded of the unresting  
revolution of the wheel of change.  
We almost can see its motion, and  
hear its noise, and feel it fan the air  
into our faces, with its everlasting  
whirl. We are conscious that all  
things sublunary are subject to vicis-  
situde. The scenes which pass before  
our eyes have all been acted in vanished  
ages. Society, as the centuries come  
round, does little more than readjust  
its drapery. It is still essentially the  
same. "The things that are, are the  
things that have been; and there is no  
new thing under the sun."

There are chapters in the story of  
the Old Year which will long be fresh  
in our recollection. To some it has  
been more eventful than any of its  
predecessors: and to all apt learners it  
teaches lessons that will influence our  
lives through all our remaining years.  
What times, during these twelve  
months, have passed over some of us!  
We have had prosperous times, and  
adverse times; seasons of health, and

seasons of sickness, occasions of joy,  
and occasions of sorrow.

"Full knee deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing;  
Toll ye the church bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly, and speak low,  
For the Old Year lies adying."

The Laureate is right. The tolling  
of bells befits the occasion better than  
the merry peals with which the New  
Year is usually hailed and heralded.  
Why so much boisterous exultation?  
Is it because another important cycle  
in the brief term of our probation is  
rounded off, and we have the happy  
consciousness that we have improved  
it to the utmost? or because we have  
done with much toil and trouble, and  
are sure of a brighter future? or because  
we are twelve months nearer the great  
day of audits, and are satisfied with the  
account we have to render? These  
were good and valid reasons for rejoic-  
ing. Then, indeed, it would be "meet  
that we should make merry and be  
glad."

While, therefore, a few may appropri-  
ately express their sentiments with a  
chime, the condition of the great  
mass of mankind would be better  
represented by a knell.

Let us examine our hearts and  
consider our "work—of what sort it  
is." This, we know, "shall be made  
manifest;" for "the day shall declare  
it"—being "revealed by fire." At  
this season, thousands are anxiously  
making up their accounts for the year,  
to ascertain how they stand with re-  
spect to "profit and loss." How many  
dream of a moral debtor and creditor  
statement, and try to ascertain their  
gains and losses in the faculties of  
their minds and the affections of their  
hearts? How many calculate their  
hopes for eternity, to which they are  
twelve months nearer?

A distinguished foreigner once asked  
a member of the British Parliament  
what had passed during the last session.  
"Five months and fourteen days," was  
the sarcastic answer—deponent, prob-  
ably, belonging to the Opposition.  
What has passed in our lives during  
the Old Year? Numbers could give no  
better answer than, "Three hundred  
and sixty-five days." They have done  
scarcely anything worth doing. The  
world is not bettered by them; nor  
have they improved themselves. Their  
reading has been limited to trash,  
and their energies to the pursuit of  
trifles. They have neglected the  
husbandry of the heart—they have  
forgotten God their Maker. For them  
to ring bells to-night appears as un-  
reasonable as if a condemned criminal  
should meet his executioner with dance  
and fiddle.

As to those of us who are supposed  
to be "up and doing," are we really  
wide awake? While the Old Year  
was a young one, we knew of its  
inflexible successor—predestined to  
supersede it. We knew, though alas!  
we sometimes forgot it, that every  
heart-throb brought the invisible  
traveller nearer. We set out with  
sanguine hopes and magnanimous  
resolutions; but Procrastination, that  
subtle thief, has filched away from us  
invaluable opportunities, and we find  
at last that our purposes are but half-  
performed—our expectations but half-  
realized.

In memory of our mercies, let us  
afresh invoke our souls in the happy  
words of David, "Bless the Lord, O  
my soul; and forget not all his bene-

fits." Our affliction also, and our  
misery—Let us still have them in  
remembrance, and be humbled.

The Old Year is indeed dying, and  
going away—away, to mingle with the  
ghosts of forgotten ages.

"His face is growing sharp and thin,  
Alack! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin—  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
Who standeth there alone,  
And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor,  
And a new face at the door,  
A new face at the door."

Look up and behold the stranger!  
One Thousand Eight Hundred and  
Eighty-four salutes us. It comes  
snowing its congratulations, and whist-  
ling its good wishes. It means well,  
and wants to be a blessing to us! for  
it comes in the name of Another—who  
pities us, and spares us, who created  
and redeemed us, and would sanctify  
and lift us up for ever. Thank God,  
that we live to see it! While a  
thousand have fallen at our side, and  
ten thousand at our right hand, we  
have been kept alive. Wherefore?  
Is it not that we may know the things  
belonging to our peace? that what is  
lacking in our piety may yet be perfected?  
and that we may make known to others  
the truth which makes us free? For  
these reasons, another year of gracious  
opportunities is about to smile upon  
us. Let us use these wisely. In fifty-  
two short weeks, the new year will be  
dead, like all the old ones—dead, like  
them; but, like them, not done with.

"Time himself with all his legions—  
Days, months, years,—since nature's birth,  
Shall revive, and from all regions  
Singling out the sons of earth,  
With their glory or disgrace  
Charge their spenders face to face."

1883—1884.

FEW there are to whom the  
boundary line between the  
old and the new year does not  
become something like a mile-  
stone on life's journey. To some,  
especially the very young or the very  
old, the steps of their pilgrimage are  
measured off by birthdays. Those  
who are more actively engaged in the  
struggles common to humanity, often  
have special periods from which they  
reckon for a season. The young man  
and woman who have agreed to make  
his journey united in the holy bond  
of wedlock, for a few years measure  
their progress by the return of the  
day when they first went forth to-  
gether. Would that the years might  
always continue to come and go, noted  
only by the return of such a happy  
period! But, alas, death is abroad,  
and soon one or both may be found  
measuring the years by the return of  
the day on which a grave hid from  
sight the form of a loved one, for whose  
absence time can offer no healing balm  
to the bursting heart. Then may be  
heard a voice often impatiently crying,  
"Quick time with these cyclical years  
of earth, and give me the cycles of  
eternity in a realm where partings are  
not known!"

Others there are whose sad lot it is  
to remember that so many years ago,  
on such a day, their life was darkened  
by some great calamity, such as being  
plunged into poverty, or suffering from  
disgrace of character.

But the year which we close up with  
the joys of Christmas festivities may  
serve to mark periods in our life's

record disconnected from any associa-  
tion with these sadder experiences. If  
the dying year speaks of any solemnity,  
it should be the solemnity of eternity.  
Let it sink deep into every heart—the  
thought that the year does not come  
back. Soon the last one will be  
measured out to us, and the book  
closed forever.

THE DEATH OF THE YEAR.

A CLOUD came out of the golden west,  
A bell rang over the silent air,  
The sun god hurried away to rest,  
Flushing with kisses each cloud he prest,  
And oh! but the day was fair!

"How bright the year goes out!" they said;  
"The glow of the sunset lingers long,  
Knowing the year will be over and dead,  
Its sad hours over—its sweet hours fled—  
With service of even-song."

"How sadly the year came in!" they said.  
I listened and wondered in dusk of night,  
To me the year that might come instead  
Of the old friend numbered among the dead,  
Could ever be half so bright.

The sun kissed clouds grew pale and grey,  
The bells hung silent in high mid air,  
Waiting to ring the year away  
In strains that were never so glad and grey—  
For me as I listen there.

Oh, hearts that beat in a million breasts,  
Oh lips that utter the same old phrase,  
'wonder that never a sorrow rests  
In words you utter to friends and guests  
In the new year a strange new days'

Is it just the same as it used to be?  
Have new years only a gladder sound?  
For ever and always it seems to me  
That no new faces can be sweet to see  
As the old ones we have found.

There is no cloud in the darkened west,  
The bell is silent in misty air,  
The year has gone to its last long rest,  
And I who loved and who knew it best  
Shall meet it—God knows where!

THE QUEEN HONOURED.

THE following is the second toast,  
following that of the President  
of the United States, at Evacu-  
ation Day banquet of the Chamber of  
Commerce at New York—"The  
Queen of Great Britain! The many  
virtues of her life have won the hearts  
of the English-speaking race, her reign  
will mark an epoch in history more  
memorable than that of England's  
virgin Queen or that of the illustrious  
Isabella of Spain, who pledged her  
jewels to furnish the means by which  
Columbus gave this continent to the  
world!" The toast was drunk stand-  
ing amid cheers.

Thank God the bitterness engendered  
by the war of the American Revolu-  
tion has disappeared. As such acts as  
that above recorded, and the election  
of the Poet Lowell, United States  
Minister to Great Britain, as Rector  
of St. Andrews University, fully  
demonstrate. In an early number of  
the *Methodist Magazine* will appear an  
article by Mr. Gladstone, the foremost  
living Englishman on Americans, "Our  
Kin beyond the Seas," as he calls  
them.

"WORDSWORTH," says Char. Lamb,  
"one day told me that he considered  
Shakespeare greatly over-rated." There  
is an immensity of trick in all Shake-  
speare wrote, said he, "and people are  
taken in by it. Now, if I had a mind,  
I could write exactly like Shakespeare."  
"So you see," proceeds Lamb, "it was  
only the mind that was wanting."