

## TO THE NEW YEAR.

I.  
What! thou, so soon,  
New Year!  
That by thy oft appearing haunted  
Our dream of glad continuous youth;  
What welcome boom  
Bring'st thou? what cheer?  
Thou art so quick of pace, so proudly vaunted  
Thy coming, without look or thought of ruth.

II.  
We try to rob,  
New Year,  
With show of mirth and festive greeting  
Thy fated visit of its gloom;  
We hush each sob,  
And dry each tear  
Of natural regret for time fast fleeting,—  
Watching the cradle we forget the tomb.

III.  
When thou dost add,  
New Year,  
Another to the world a life-number,  
And show us time unknown before,  
With hearts grown sad,  
And hopes grown sore,  
We mark our sun stride westward to the slumber  
That wraps the dead with night and darkness o'er.

IV.  
Yet, wherefore fault,  
New Year,  
Thy coming thus? Thou too art mortal,  
Thou too, like us, hast youth and age  
Thou know'st no halt  
In thy career,  
Thou travellest unceasing to the portal  
Where fit the ghosts of earlier pilgrimage.

V.  
Thou too shalt die,  
New Year,  
And to thy grave be rudely buried,—  
Another in thy place shall rule:  
So shall pass by,  
In order drear,  
The funerals of the Ages, till, all buried,  
The graveyard of the years of Time be full.

VI.  
We'll hail thee then,  
New Year,  
All grateful for the time and chances  
Thy fleeting life will furnish ours;  
Nor shrink again,  
With foolish fear  
From thy benign approach, and blest advances  
For thou dost bring fit work for all our powers.

VII.  
When thou no more,  
New Year,  
Shalt come as now, and we inherit  
The land that knows nor sun nor night  
Nor pent-up store  
Of Time as here,  
We will remember in the world of Spirit  
Thou cam'st as Earth's restorer, not its blight.

## THE GRASP OF A WITHERED HAND.

AN IRISH STORY.

Aw, bedad, sir, I don't mind tellin' yeh a bit. Shure now that we're safe out av our thrubble it's only too glad I am t' tell th' story t' any wan that'll jist let ivry wan know that me good husband, Pat Cassidy, niver had act or part in th' murder av his ould uncle Tim—God rest his soul!—this fine Christmas eve; for it's he that wasn't th' bad coast!

Well, sir, me an' Pat was coortin'—jist pullin' a cord, as th' sayin' is—for close on two years. Not that he sed much t' me for a long time; but shure, sir, usen't I t' see th' heart in his face whin he'd meet me in th' chapel-yard after mass av a Sunda, or at fair or market, or whin we'd sit discoorsin' anundher a hedge av a Sunda evenin'! He was a fine ashroppin'-lookin' boy, wid th' best behavior av any wan ivir I met; but shure, sir, he'll be in a minit; he's only jist gettin' a creel av turf from th' stack.

It's jist about three years ago sence Pat asked me av I'd marry him. Av coarse no dacint girl cud say she would all at wanst; that 'ud be a disgrace t' her. So I kept quillin' up a bit av me atern as we war sittin' anundher th' hedge that Sunda evenin', an' th' sorra word I sed. An', bedad, I don't mind tellin' yeh, sir, that I cud say a word wid th' joy, for I loved Pat—well, sir, no, not as well as I love him now that he's me good husband; but I loved him as well as any girl cud love any boy before she's married t' him.

"Mary Rooney," sez he,—shure it's well I rimber ivry word he sed; an' throth I cud hardly hear his voice,—"faith it's th' brakin's o' me heart yeh are intirely! I'm that fond av yeh, Mary, that I'd live an' th' clippins o' tin wid yeh, sooner nor in a slated house wid any one else."

Well, bedad, I knew Pat was in airnest, an' it's no matter what I sed meself now; anyhow, we agreed that as soon as it was conveynant that Pat was t' spake t' th' priest. I don't know whether or not yeh know it, sir, but Pat's people war all dead, an' he was an orfin, an' he always lived wid his ould uncle, Tim Sullivan. He was allways called ould "Tim the Smad-dherer," becase he used t' whitewash an' to do jobs av plasterin' all through th' counthry. Av, but it's he was the miserly ould chap! After a while he was near bein' kilt wan day, be raison av an ould wall that he was plasterin' up givin' way an' fallin' on him. He was near dyin', so he was. An thin whin Docthor Crean sed he was as well as ivir he cud be, what d'ye think, sir, but it was found out that poor ould Tim's right hand an' arm was no use t' him at all; an' there they used to hang for all th' world as dead an' as withered as av he got a fairy blast.

"Mary," sez Pat t'me wan day, "d'ye know I'm onaisy about me uncle Tim? He has such a quare look in his face sometimes, jist as though he was hidin' somethin' from me, or thinkin' somethin' quare."

"Throth, Pat," sez I, "me mother sed th' same thing last Sunda when we saw him."

"Did she now?" he sez, quite glad-like.  
"Ay," sez I; "an' d'ye know me mother says she thinks yer uncle must have some money saved somewhere, an' that he's afeard av bein' robbed av it now that he's not able t' use his right hand an' arm, av any wan was t' come t' thry and take it from him."

Pat looked at me, an' then he gives a smile, an' he sez in his own quare way,

"Well, now, Mary alannah, I don't say but what yer mother's as cute as a pancake; but shure what'd me uncle Tim be thryin' t' hide anythin' from me for?"

"I don't know, Pat; but yeh know he was allways quare," sez I.

Well, sir, to make a long story short, shure poor ould Tim Sullivan got quarer an' quarer, an' at last Pat spoket t' Father Mulcahy about it, an' asked his advice.

"Lave yer uncle to me, Pat," sez Father Mulcahy. "I'll soon find out what's throublin' him. I know a good dale, but it's under sale av confession; but I'll spake t' yer uncle Tim, an' v'e'll aise his mind betchune uz."

Three or four days after, I was sittin' in th' door, doin' a little bit av sewin', whin who comes along be Dogherty's boreen but Pat? I seen he was in a great hurry, an' I got up an wint t' meet him. His eyes was dancin' out av his head, an' he sez in a whisper,

"Whisht, Mary acushla! Shure it's a made man I am, an' a proud woman you ought t' be this day!"

He looked such a fine handsome boy that I don't deny I did feel a proud girl; but I didn't tell him that, av coarse.

"Arrah, tell me what it's all about, Pat," sez I.

"Just this," he sez, still in a whisper, as av he was afeard av any wan listenin'. "Father Mulcahy got the soft side av me uncle Tim, an' what d'ye think, Mary alannah? but th' ould fella has been puttin' money by for many a year, an' he sez it's all for me, as I was like a good son t' him."

Poor Pat got very red when he tould me that, an' I sez an shure it was only th' truth, not a word more or less—

"So yeh war, Pat, and as good a son as ivir brathed."

"Well, th' say a good son makes a good husband, Mary," sez he; "anyhow let me tell yeh the rest av me story. What d'ye think but me uncle Tim has close upon a hundred an' twenty pounds, an' he keeps it all in our own cabin?"

"Pat!" sez I; for who'd ivir think ould Tim Sullivan cud have such a fortune?

"Ay," sez Pat, "he has been hidin' it away iverywhere, an' now Father Mulcahy got him t' promise t' take it in t' Mither Bradley t' th' bank in Clonmel where they'd take care av it for him, an' there'd be no fear av him bein' robbed."

"Bedad, it's a great day for us, Pat," sez I.

"It is, Mary," he sez; "an' now what I want yeh t' do is this: me uncle Tim wants t' go th' bank t'morrow, so I can't go wid him, for I have t' go t' Bracken fair wid the two pigs, so I want yeh t' take me uncle into th' bank wid yeh."

"Av coarse I will," sez I; for throth I'd do more than that for Pat.

"Yeh see, because av his withered hand an' arm I don't like him to go alone," sez Pat; "for it's lonely crossin' th' mountains; an' thin some blackgards might know he had th' bit av money an' set on him."

"Throth I'm not much use av th' did, Pat," sez I, laughin'; and Pat laughed too, for it was only in fun what he was sayin' about any wan doing anything t' th' ould uncle.

Och! Wirra, wirra! Shure wasn't it th' black bither mornin' that riz th' next day? Ould Tim kem down t' our cabin, drivin' the low-backed car with a chaff bed an' it, an' a blue quilt over that for me t' sit on.

"Well, God be with ye both!" sez me mother, as we war goin' away; an' she threwn an ould shoe after uz for luck, an' it hit ould Tim Sullivan's withered hand.

He turned round quite quick, an' his face got red, an' he was goin' t' throw t' shoe back; only I cried out.

"Tim aghra, for th' love av God, an' don't throw back th' luck!"

"Arrah, whisht, girl," he sez, in his quare angry way, "why wouldn't I throw it back?"

"Bease it's unlucky," sez I; an' shure, sir, I cudn't say more nor that. But Tim Sullivan wasn't like other people.

"Divil may care," sez he, "as Punch sed whin he lost mass! I'll taiche yer mother t' make game of me dead hand—so I will!" an' wid that he threwn back th' ould shoe, an' och hone a rie, shure not a lie I'm tellin' when I say he threwn back the luck too.

On we wint over the mountains, for it was a good seven miles t' Clonmel. Ould Tim didn't spake much; an' sez I t' him,

"Arrah, Tim, what are yeh bringin' in the sack av piatees for it is not even the market-day?"

"Ax no questions," he sez, quite short, "an' ye'll be tould no lies."

"Throth," sez I,—but, shure, I was only in fun all th' time,—"it's me own opinion, Tim,

\* A vehicle without springs, and with wheels formed of solid pieces of wood, the only kind of car which stands the wear and tear of the mountain roads.

that yeh hav all th' money in the sack, an' that it's not piatees at all."

Ould Tim gives a jump, an' sez, "Now look here, Mary Rooney, yer not goin' t' come over me that way. It's nothin' t' you where I keep th' money."

After that th' sorra a word more he sed until we kem t' th' bank in Bagwell-street. It's a grand house, shure enough. So we wint up th' steps, ould Tim carryin' th' sack av piatees on his back. The very first person we met was Michael Neale, a third cousin av me mother's, an' there he was, dhressed like a gentleman, in a blue coat an' brass buttons, becase he was th' sarvint at th' bank.

"Arrah, Mary Rooney," sez he, "it's glad I am t' see yeh; an' how are you, Tim, an' where are yeh goin' wid the piatees?"

"Never mind," sez Tim. "I want t' see the mather; I want Mither Bradley."

"Haden't yeh better have th' piatees here," sez Michael; and shure he was right too.

But no, bedad! Ould Tim tuk no notice av what Michael sed; but in athrough th' glass doors he walked, an' me follyin' him.

"Young man," sez ould Tim t' a gentleman in a glass case, "where's yer mather?"

"Who?" sez he.

"Yer mather," says Tim.

"I suppose yeh want Mither Bradley?" says he.

"Didn't I say so?" sez ould Tim, who had a short temper.

Mither Bradley kem out, an' he sez,

"O, so you're Timothy Sullivan, that Father Mulcahy was tellin' me about. Come in here."

Well, we wint round be th' back av th' glass cases into the purtiest little parlour yeh ivir laid yer two eyes on; an' thin Tim tould th' gentleman that he wanted t' put his hundhred an' twenty pounds in th' bank.

"We'll take th' hoiighth av good care av it for yeh," sez Mither Bradley, that was as pleasant-spoken a gentleman as ye'd meet. "An' yer quite right to take Father Mulcahy's advice, and t' put it in the Bank av Ireland."

"I'll let yeh take care av it," sez ould Tim, houldin' out th' sack av piatees, "av ye'll jist keep th' money the way I give it t' you."

Mither Bradley stan's up an' looks across the table.

"Why, thin," sez he, in a wondherin' voice, "an' have yeh th' full av that sack av money, me good man? It must be all in coppers!"

"Th' divil a copper!" sez ould Tim, quite smart. "It's all in gold."

"A sack av gold!" sez I. "Why, Tim, shure it's piatees yeh have in that sack."

"Now wimmin is too fond av talkin'," sez Tim. "See here, sur; an' he opens th' sack, an' there was nothin' t' be seen but piatees."

"Let's hear all about it," sez mither Bradley, an' throth I think I seen a laugh in his eyes. But who cud help it? For whin I tell yeh all, ye'll say it was no wondher, sir, that I cudn't help laughin' meself.

## CHAPTER II.

"Ay!" sez ould Tim Sullivan, lookin' at me, "yeh may laugh av yeh like, me dacint girsha. But I wasn't goin' t' be such a fool as t' tell yeh what was in th' sack whin we war comin' down th' mountains. Who did I know might be listenin'?"

"Let us come t' business," sez Mither Bradley. "Where's the money you want to put in the bank?"

"Here, sir; an' ould Tim takes up a fine piatee—a Scotch Down—an' out av it he takes a sovereign."

"Well, that bates!" sez I.

"Bedad, Tim," sez Mither Bradley, an' he thryin' t' keep down th' laughin', "yeh have a way av yer own av keepin' yer money safe. That's not th' way th' Bank av Ireland keeps its money."

"Well, sir, it's about that I want t' spake," sez Tim. "Yeh see, sir, there's a hundhred an' twenty goold sovereigns there in that sack, an' ivry wan av them is hid seprate in a piatee. It's th' way I kep thim this many a year; an' whin th' piatees begins t' get bad, thin I change thim, and put the sovereigns into fresh piatees. Now, sir, I don't mind a bit lavin' th' money wid yeh, av ye'll keep it jist as it is, an' I'll come reg lar an' keep an eye after it meself, an' change th' piatees, not t' give yeh th' thrubble av doin' it."

"Me good man," sez Mither Bradley, "yeh make a great mistake! Shure we cudn't take yer money in that way. Yeh must thrust the bank—shure yeh don't think th' Bank av Ireland 'ud rob yeh av it?"

"Now see here, sir," sez Tim Sullivan. "I don't mane no offence in life; but yeh know, sir, that whin people has th' handlin' av money it offen sticks to their fingers."

"Look here, Sullivan," sez Mither Bradley. "Only I know it's ignorance makes you speak so, I'd be angry with you."

"No, sir, I'm not as ignorant as yeh think," sez Tim, "an' I'll only lave me money wid yeh in th' way I say; so that I can come down any day an' see that it's not touched. An' I'll change th' piatees meself, not to give yeh th' thrubble, sir."

Well, me jewil, shure there was great talk betchune ould Tim Sullivan an' Mither Bradley. Th' sed a lot that I didn't understand about interst, whativir that is, an' it's me own opinion that Tim didn't underherstand it either; an' th' long an' th' short av it all was, that Tim wouldn't lave the money in th' Bank av Ireland, unless he was let keep it safe in th'

piatees, an' come an' look at it whinver he liked.

"Go out, Mary," sez Tim t' me, "an' look after th' car. We must be gettin' home afore nightfall."

So out I wint, an' found th' horse stanin' quite quiet; an' there was Michael Neale at th' top av th' steps, an' shure I cudn't help tellin' him av th' foolishness av ould Tim Sullivan.

"Arrah no Mary!" sez Michael; "shure, yer not in airnest!"

"Bedad, I am," sez I; "an' shure here we're goin' home agin with Tim's hundhred an' twenty sovereigns stuck in th' sack av piatees."

"Throth, he's th' quare Tim," sez Michael. "Yez'll hardly be home afore dark."

"Bedad, we won't," sez I; "for the crows comes home airly jist now."

"Ay, faith; but here's ould Tim."

"Don't tell him I towld yeh," sez I, in a whisper, knowin' th' ould fella's quareness.

An' thin, shure, aff we wint again across th' mountain road. It was about a week afore Christmas, an' there was a little snow an' ice an' th' roads that med it hard for th' baste. The crathur was tired too, so that it was dark night afore we kem t' th' pass av Creevagh, jist a mile an' a half from my mother's.

"Tim," sez I, "I'm awful cowlid."

"It's a hard night," sez he.

An' so it was; it was freezin' fit t' kill any wan, an' th' stars was sparklin' up in th' sky.

"D'ye know, Tim," sez I, "I'm that cramped an' cowlid here sittin' an' th' car, that I think I'll get down an' walk th' rest av th' way home."

"Jist as yeh like," sez he.

"Come in an' have a cup av tay or a taste av whisky t' keep th' life in yeh, whin yer passin'," sez I.

"Thank yeh kindly, Mary; so I will," sez he.

Well, off I wint, an', bedad, I soon got fine an' warm, whin all av a suddint I missed me footin' an' th' ice, an' down I kem. Me hands was all scraped, an' a sharp stone ran right into me left hand.

Whin I got home I saw I was all bleedin', but I put a cobweb an' a bit av a rag an it, an' didn't mind it a bit.

After a while who comes up but Pat. I towld him all about what happened, an', shure, he was angry at first, an' thin he laughed. We got th' tay ready, an' some beautiful griddle-cakes an' fresh butther, an' we war waitin' for ould Tim Sullivan, for it was apast th' time for him t' come.

"I don't hear th' car," sez Pat, goin' t' th' doore an' listenin', "an' me uncle ought t' be here by this."

We waited another while, an' thin sez Pat.

"Bedad, I'm gettin' onaisy! Maybe th' horse fell on th' ice; th' roads is so slippy, an' me uncle hasn't th' strength t' help it up. I'll go down by the Creevagh Pass."

"Ay, do, Pat," sez me mother; an' as soon as he wint out she sez t' me.

"Throth, Mary alannah, I didn't like ould Tim throwin' back his luck this mornin'; people may laugh, but no good cud come from doin' such a thing. Why, even didn't somethin' happen t' yerself? Yeh fell an' cut yer hands."

"Ay, faith, mother," sez I, "an' me hands war smartenin' me; but shure yeh don't think anythin' happened t' ould Tim Sullivan?"

"Throth, I dunno," she sez; "but shure he ought t' be here now."

I don't know why it was, but I cudn't rest aisy after me mother sayin' that; an' I cudn't take a mouthful av tay, or a bit av th' griddle-cake, but kep goin' backwards an' forrards t' th' doore. It was freezin' hard, an' there wasn't a breath av air, nor a sound anywhere; an' jist as I was comin' away from the doore wan time, I thought I heered some wan runnin' up th' boreen.

I was right too. The steps kem nearer an' nearer, an' in a few minits who comes runnin' up but Pat, an' ketchin' houl av me he comes into th' kitchen.

"For th' love o' God, what's th' matter?" sez me mother; an' gev a schreech, for Pat's face was as white as th' snow outside, an' his eyes burnin' like two coals, an' there was blood on th' front av his shirt, an' on his hands, an' on the rest av his clothes.

"Pat! Pat darlint!" sez I, "an' what's this for at all, at all?"

"Me uncle Tim," he sez, in a hoarse soart av a voice—"he's kilt there beyant near the Creevagh Pass, an' some wan ran away wid th' sack wid th' money in it."

"Kilt!" sez me mother. "O Pat, what'll we do?"

"I'm goin' t' run over t' Paddy Closkey's, t' ask him an' th' boys t' come," sez Pat, runnin' t' th' doore as he was spakin'; an' you, Mary, run aff for Father Mulcahy, an' he'll bring me poor uncle up here, Mrs. Rooney."

Av coarse that was all settled, an' me mother got th' bed in th' room ready, an' Pat an' th' Closkeys, th' father an' th' three sons, wint aff t' th' Creevagh Pass for poor ould Tim, an' meself set aff t' th' chapel-house for Father Mulcahy.

"Now, me girl," sez Father Mulcahy, as we war comin' along over th' mountain road, "tell me all about this terrible affair."

Shure, thin, sir, I towld him rivrence all about me goin' wid poor ould Tim t' th' bank, an' how he wouldn't lave th' money; an' thin about how I was so cowlid on th' way home, an' got down an' walked th' rest av th' way; an' av how Pat kem in an' thin wint down t' th' Creevagh Pass, an' kem back t' say his uncle was there, kilt intirely.

"It's a bad business, Mary ma gra gal," sez