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A Midnight Vision.

It was the last hour of the passing year, and from the slumbering village, nestling in the hearts of the hills, to the lone summit on which I stood there floated through the moonlit air the chimes of the eleventh hour. Around me all was bright and radiant; below me the base of the hill was merged in a profound impenetrable gloom; in the village light and shade alternated from the brilliance of a silver flood to the cloud of a darkness made more dense. The skies were the skies of noon—a wonderful blue, studded with fleecy white, made glorious by a full and perfect moon. On the lake beyond quivered a long aisle of light, and from the further shore dark and indistinct save where a few groups of scattering moonbeams strayed loomed large the ancient hills. Over the hills and the lake hovered Solitude with peaceful wings outspread, and through the village her twin-sister Silence passed with noiseless tread.

Amidst all the beauty and mystery of the night I stood, and as I gazed at the lake which had 'bared its bosom to the moon,' again and yet again thoughts, often far 'too deep for tears,' came into my mind unbidden and unsought. At last, overcome with the unearthly grandeur, I turned away, and, as I did so, I saw, as one in a vision might see, a large cloud descending rapidly from the starry vault. Swiftly and ever more swiftly it came towards me, and when it neared the earth it suddenly opened, and a company of radiant spirits appeared in its midst. It came still nearer, until it disappeared as suddenly as it had descended, and that spirit band stood upon the earth.

They advanced towards the hill on which I stood, and I stepped aside so that I might feast my eyes on this unwonted glory. Each one was clad in spotless white. Some had the form of men and some the of women; some were young and some were old; all had the appearance of angels. At the head of the host was one of kindly mien, who was as a victor passing from triumph unto triumph. They were divided into twelve companies, and at the head of each of these was a spirit more glorious than they who composed it, but whose glory was not the glory of the royal leader. The first was a ruddy youth in the exultant pride of manly strength; the second was a woman, whose face expressed confidence and trust; the third a man in the full prime of life, well able to withstand the storm winds of trouble and trial; at the head of the fourth was a maiden—'a gentle maiden with a graceful brow'—with eyes full of tenderness that ever seemed trembling on the border-land of tears; the fifth and sixth were also maidens, the one fair as a bearer of promises the other with bright blue eyes and waving golden hair. Then followed a woman in the full pride of her beauty, her promises fulfilled and her joy realized. A gentle youth, with a fair and delicate countenance, and the eyes of a dreamer, preceded a matron who seemed to sorrow for the years of her beauty fleeting or fled. The last three were men, one who was passing from his prime into the first downward decade, one who was growing enfeebled with the ever-increasing load of years, and



THE OLD AND THE NEW.

The old year laid upon the portals of the past
A trembling hand,
And said, 'Oh, let me die and be at rest
Within the misty land!'
Then all the years that lived and died
before
Reached forth, and drew the wanderer
safe within the door.

The New Year laid upon the portals of to-day
A firm young hand
And said, 'Oh, let me come and live and work
Within thy shining land!'
Then all the years that are to be replied,
'This is your world,' and drew the youth
inside.

—Kathleen R. Wheeler, in 'Lippincott's Magazine.'

the last one a tottering greybeard, bowed by the cold frost of age.

Each company consisted of thirty or thereabouts, and, to a certain extent, they each had the appearance of their respective leaders, but, to a certain extent only, for in some cases there was great diversity indeed. The whole host was swiftly advancing, and in the silvery moonlight, under the starry sky, through the silent night, their radiant forms produced an effect of ineffable majesty and splendor. They had now passed beyond me,

and, as I turned to again behold them ere they were lost to mortal sight, I saw them stand still, as if in expectation, beside the margin of the lake.

Then on the brightening crest of the dark hills appeared the figure of an old man, white-haired, bent, and tottering. A long grey beard reached to his middle, and he leaned heavily upon a solitary attendant who seemed almost as weary and feeble as he. Their robes once white, were stained with the dust of the way. The two came over the hills, and slowly des-