

CLIFTON.

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THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

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 a-dying.

Old year, you must not die :
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.

To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own,
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold, my
friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you ;
What is it we can do for you ?
Speak out before you die.

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
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my
friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

Alfred Tennyson.

WOODS IN WINTER.

When winter winds are piercing chill,
And through the white-thorn blows the
gale,
With solemn feet I tread the hill,
That overbrows the lonely vale.

O'er the bare upland, and away
Through the long reach of desert woods,
The embracing sunbeams chastely play,
And gladden these deep solitudes.

On the gray maple's crusted bark,
Its tender shoots the hoar-frost nips ;
Whilst in the frozen fountain—hark !—
His piercing beak the bittern dips.

Where, twisted round the barren oak,
The summer vine in beauty clung,
And summer winds the stillness broke,—
The crystal icicle is hung.

Where, from their frozen urns, mute springs
Pour out their river's gradual tide,
Shrilly the skater's iron rings,
And voices fill the woodland side.

Alas ! how changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay ;
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day !

But still wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods, within your crowd ;
And gather'd winds, in hoarse accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs, and wintry winds, my ear
Has grown familiar with your song ;
I hear it in the opening year—
I listen, and it cheers me long.