

## NEW YEAR'S EVE.

THE dying year, at the supreme command,  
Fades slowly in the dim weird shadow land  
(That mystic home of Time's departed dead,  
Whither the shades of bygone years have fled)—  
Fading with all its actions in its train,  
And sad-voiced Memories alone remain  
To chide the weary drooping hearts which sigh  
For wasted moments in the hours pass'd by.  
Vows lightly made,—ah! better to redeem—  
Plans, roseate once, swift-faded as a dream;  
Weak, erring souls, swerving from Duty's line,  
Dead incense offer now at Honour's shrine;  
And the fair moon, by gath'ring clouds o'ercast,  
Looks down in sorrow on the wasted past,  
As silent vesper-stricken shadows fall  
And veil the year now fading past recall.

The midnight hour has struck. The old church bell  
Has toll'd the past year's sad departing knell;  
Loud sounding o'er the ether sweet and clear  
The gladsome chimings hail the newborn year,  
And sorrow-soilzied hearts their kindred greet  
As from the kirk they pass adown the street,  
The future scann'd, the bitter past reviewed,  
The broken vow, and covenant renewed.  
All vanished now the darkling careworn trace  
Of haunting Restrospection's gloomy face;  
The Old Year's sadness, faded now from view,  
Is merged within the brightness of the New,  
And Luna, radiant Majesty of night,  
Floods the New Year with cloudless streams of light  
That pierce each shadowed path, as though to cheer  
The way-worn pilgrim through the coming year.

HEREWARD K. COCKIN.

## THE PASSING OF THE YEAR.

THE Gates of Day are shut,  
Their Prince hath entered in,  
The night is dark without,  
Dark is the night within,  
The Old Year sits alone, he hath no kith nor kin.

The years are passing now,  
He hears their ghostly tread,  
He hears the night wind call,  
His winding-sheet is spread,  
Phantoms beckon him on, spectres of old years dead.

He goes, the good Old Year,  
The play is near its end,  
Goes as he came alone,  
No courtiers him attend,  
Empty handed he goes—he brought to me a friend—

"Farewell, if thou must go,  
A blessing on thy head;  
Thy hand, departing year,  
All I can say is said;  
At midnight cometh he who ruleth in thy stead."

The Gates of Day are shut,  
Their Prince hath entered in,  
The night is dark without,  
Dark is the night within,  
The Old Year dies alone, he hath no kith nor kin.

NATHANAEL NIX.

## GEORGE IV. ON SHERIDAN.

I SOMETIMES heard of him, said the King, and once saw him by accident, as I shall tell you. He now took to live in a very low and obscure way, and all he looked for in the company he kept was brandy and water. He lived a good deal with some low acquaintance he had made—a harness-maker; I forget his name, but he had a house near Leatherhead. In that neighbourhood I saw him for the last time, on the 17th August, 1815. I know the day from this circumstance, that I had gone to pay my brother a visit at Otlands on his birthday, and next day, as I was crossing over to Brighton, I saw in the road near Leatherhead old Sheridan coming along the pathway. I see him now in the black stockings and blue coat with metal buttons. I said to Blomfield, "There is Sheridan," but as I spoke he turned off into a lane when we were within about thirty yards of him, and walked off without looking behind him. That was the last time I ever saw Sheridan, nor did I hear of or from him for some months; but one morning MacMahon came up to my room, and after a little hesitation and apology for speaking to me about a person who had lately swindled me and him so shamelessly, he told me that Mr. Vaughan, Hat Vaughan

they used to call him, had called to say that Sheridan was dangerously ill, and really in great distress and want. I think no one who ever knew me will doubt that I immediately said that his illness and want made me forget his faults, and that he must be taken care of, and that any money that was necessary I desired he would immediately advance. He asked me to name a sum, as a general order of that nature was not one on which he would venture to act, and whether I named or he suggested £500, I do not remember; but I do remember that the £500 was to be advanced at once to Mr. Vaughan, and that he was to be told that when that was gone he should have more. I set no limit to the sum, nor did I say nor hear a word about the mode in which it was to be applied, except only that I desired it should not appear to come from me.

I was induced to this reserve by several reasons. I thought that Sheridan's debts were, as the French say, *la mer à boire*, and unless I was prepared to drink the sea I had better not be known to interfere, as I should only have brought more pressing embarrassment on him; but I will also confess that I did not know how ill he was, and after the gross fraud he had so lately practised upon me, I was not inclined to forgive and forget so suddenly, and without any colour of apology or explanation; for the pretended explanation to MacMahon was more disrespectful and offensive to me than the original transaction, for he had before told me why Whitbread wished to keep him out of Parliament, namely, lest he should serve me in the object nearest my heart, and yet he had suffered Whitbread to bribe him out of my service with his own money, and had then swindled me out of mine. And, finally, there is not only bad taste but inconvenience in letting it be known what pecuniary favours a person in my situation confers, and I therefore, on a consideration of all these reasons, forbid my name being mentioned at present; but I repeated my directions that he should want for nothing that money could procure him.

MacMahon went down to Mr. Vaughan's and told him what I had said, and that he had my directions to place £500 in his hands. Mr. Vaughan, with some expression of surprise, declared that no such sum was wanted at present, and it was not without some pressing that he took £200, and said that if he found it insufficient he would return for more. He did come back, but not for more; for he told MacMahon that he had spent only £130 or £140, and he gave the most appalling account of the misery which he had relieved with it.

He said that he found him and Mrs. Sheridan both in straw beds, both apparently dying, and both starving. It is stated in Mr. Moore's book that Mrs. Sheridan attended her husband in his last illness. It is not true; she was too ill to leave her own bed, and was, in fact, already suffering from the disease (cancer of the womb) of which she died in a couple of years after. They had hardly a servant left. Mrs. Sheridan's maid she was about to send away, but they could not collect a guinea or two to pay the woman her wages.

When he entered the house he found all the reception-rooms bare, and the whole house in a state of filth and stench that was quite intolerable. Sheridan himself he found in a truckle bed in a garret, with a coarse blue and red coverlid, such as one sees used as horse-cloths, over him; out of this bed he had not moved for a week, not even for the occasions of nature, and in this state the unhappy man had been allowed to wallow, nor could Vaughan discover that any one had taken any notice of him, except an old female friend, whose name I hardly know whether I am authorized to repeat—Lady Bessborough, who sent £20. Some ice and currant water were sent from Holland House—an odd contribution; for if it was known that he wanted these small matters, which might have been had at the confectioner's, it might have been suspected that he was in want of more essential things.

Yet notwithstanding all this misery, Sheridan on seeing Mr. Vaughan appeared to revive; he said he was quite well, talked of paying off all his debts, and though he had not eaten a morsel for a week, and had not a morsel to eat, he spoke with a certain degree of alacrity and hope.

Mr. Vaughan, however, saw that this was a kind of bravado, and that he was in a fainting state, and he immediately procured him a little spiced wine and toast, which was the first thing (except brandy) that he had tasted for some days.

Mr. Vaughan lost no time in buying a bed and bed-clothes, half-a-dozen shirts, some basins, towels, etc. He had Sheridan taken up and washed, and put into the new bed. He had the rooms cleaned and fumigated. He discharged, I believe, some immediately pressing demands, and, in short, provided as well as circumstances would admit for the ease and comfort, not only of Sheridan, but Mrs. Sheridan also.

I sent the next day (it was not till next day that MacMahon repeated this melancholy history to me) to inquire after Sheridan, and the answer was that he was better, and more comfortable, and I had the satisfaction to think that he wanted nothing that money and care and kindness of so judicious a friend as Mr. Vaughan could procure him; but the next day, that is two days after Mr. Vaughan had done all this, and actually expended near £150, as I have stated, he came to MacMahon with an air of mortification, and stated that he was come to return the £200. "The £200" said MacMahon with surprise. "Why, you had spent three-fourths of it the day before yesterday." True, returned Vaughan, "but some of those who left these poor people in misery have now insisted on their returning this money, which they suspect has come from the Prince. Where they got the money, I know not, but they have given me the amount, with a message that Mrs. Sheridan's friends had taken care that Mr. Sheridan wanted for nothing. I" added Mr. Vaughan, "can only say that this assistance came rather late, for that three days ago I was enabled by His Royal Highness's bounty to relieve him and her from the lowest state of misery and debasement in which I had ever seen human beings.—From the "Croker Papers."