

## Goodwill's Holiday.

Ever on this Christmas morn  
Holy birth and joy are born;  
Still the Earth bears, as of old,  
All the quivering Angela told;  
Still float to us from above  
All they sang of peace and love,  
All the blessed gladness Earth  
Caught from our dear Saviour's birth.

Therefore is the day-dawn bright  
With a heaven of dear delight;  
Caro and evil from us flee  
In these hours' felicity.  
Ago and manhood, girl and boy,  
All forget but love and joy;  
Anger hence and hate away!  
This is Goodwill's holiday.—C. W. B.

## A Country Christmas.

The bright moonlight sleeps on the long range of hills and the stars glitter in the clear atmosphere; the window is open, and as the curtain sways softly in the air that has nothing of winter in it, we hear, a long way off, curious sounds of music, that appear mystic and beautiful in the middle of the night. Presently they come nearer. We can hear that "Starry night, stilly and bright," is the carol, and we recognize our pet tenor, and Mary Smith's soprano, and we know exactly where the notes will be too high for them, and where they will go off in a shrill squeak: and as we lie awaiting the fiasco, that no amount of patient teaching could make them avoid, we feel horribly guilty, for to our tuition is due the fact that they are singing at all. And under our window, to do us honor, extra voice is put into the carol; and we feel inclined to shriek wildly and grovel abjectly under the bed-clothes, when we suddenly realize the danger is over, and the carol ended victoriously. There is a pause—a clearing of throats: a handful of gravel alights on our dressing-table, and "Wish you Merry Christmas, Sir," is shouted: then we hear footsteps crunching away on the gravel; the avenue gate swings for a good ten minutes, aggravating us immensely; and presently, next door, uprises "Stilly night" once more, and once more do we wait in agony that especial high note. So it goes on all through the town. We recognize the scroop of the Rectory gate, which always moves surlily on its hinges. We know exactly when the Doctor's house is reached, for they are not allowed to reach the second line there, owing to that hard-worked functionary rising in wrath and promising them any amount of physic when called in, as he inevitably will be, to attend them for bronchitis, caught in their present occupation, if they don't away; and by the time we know they are safely shouting their worst at that particular portion of the town where dwells our arch-enemy, we almost exult in the harsh note that by now must be inevitable, and, exulting, fall asleep, to be awakened once more by the sound of the bells ringing in Christmas morning.

It is now quite dark. The atmosphere seems tremulous with chimes; our own particular peal leading the way, followed across the hills by another chime, and then another comes swaying along from a yet farther church, standing grand and solitary, gazing down on the wonderful, unchanging sea; then a monotonous trio from a tiny edifice in the cleared, stripped wood speaks out—ding-dong bell, ding-dong bell; the chapel-of-ease joins it too; and as we gaze across the darkness, where a low red line in the east speaks of the coming dawn, it is easy to imagine the spirits of Christmas singing joyfully as they float hither and thither on the chimes, that literally appear to fill the clear, keen air. The red dawn spreads; splitting up here a great grey bank of clouds, there a soft white line of mist; the sparrows twitter uneasily; two or three starlings emerge from the chimneys in the empty cottage opposite; and down in the garden a jolly little robin is pouring out its jovial little soul in honor of the day. It is a green Yule; there is nothing Christmas about it; save a delicate powder of frost that quickly creeps away before the spreading sun. We find a couple of primroses in the rockery, and should not be surprised to discover a

snowdrop; but we do not, and have to content ourselves with a dozen violets and meagre bunches of laurustinus not yet out in blossom, and have to seek in an apology for a conservatory for anything brighter—though we cast a greedy eye at our Christmas roses, that, protected from dirt and wet by a hand-light, turn their beautiful pale faces up to ours, looking like a very perfect animated Christmas card. By this time the real Christmas cards have arrived; for we are superior in our country town to the usual delays, and have our portion delivered to us at our breakfast-table; and we are a good hour before all those belonging to the household are severally admired or criticised. Of course heaps of people have

visible in the squire's, the rectory, and sundry other pews; everyone is anxious to see if other folks' children have done better or grown more while they have been away than their own have; and most of the afternoon is taken up with mooning down the lane towards the harbor discussing these and other topics of vital interest with friends, all of whom politely urge the superiority of your children, and are deeply offended if you placidly accept what you consider a bare statement of facts, without insisting, in your turn, on their Tommy's superior stature, or their Jane's extra number of accomplishments.

It is an unwritten law in the country that no stranger is asked to dinner: each

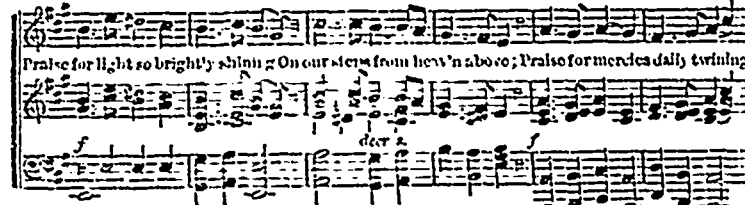
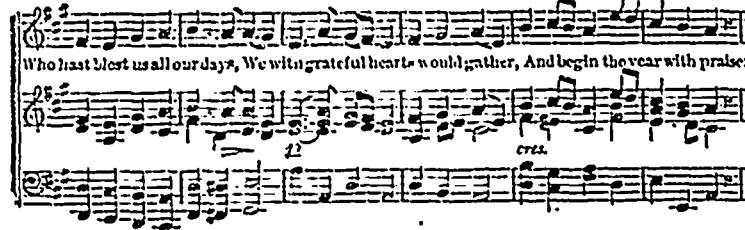
## HYMN FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Written by the late Rev. J. D. BURKS.

Composed by E. L. SNODGRASS.



At Thy feet, our God and Father,



2 Jesus, for Thy love most tender,  
On the cross for sinners shown,  
We would praise Thee and surrender  
All our hearts to be Thine own.  
With so blest a Friend provided,  
We upon our way would go,  
Sure of being safely guided,  
Guarded well from every foe.

3 Every day will be the brighter,  
When Thy gracious face we see;  
Every burden will be lighter,  
When we know it comes from Thee.  
Spread Thy love's broad banner o'er us,  
Give us strength to serve and wait,  
Till Thy glory breaks before us,  
Through the city's open gate.

sent us cards who are now doubtless heaping opprobrium on our devoted heads because we have forgotten them; and heaps of other people who ought to have sent them, and who are just now revelling in ours, are, we hope, conscience-stricken, and resolving to make up to us at New Year what they should have remembered at Christmas.

Then comes the walk to church, made bearable to the children by the thought of the decorations, which are always an immense fund of joy to them—berries, unexpected string, scissors, and knives being often found in our paw, forgotten in the heat and scurry of putting last touches to the fabric; and a delightful amount of excitement being caused by the wonder whether wreaths will catch fire, or sprigs fall on the bald heads of the patriarchs and the fine bonnets of the ladies as they sit through the service. The pews are very full indeed on Christmas day. All the boys and girls are home from school; strange pale London faces are

family keeps distinct. Anyone hardy enough to leave the roof-tree for an alien shelter would be considered a dangerous Atheist, or, at least, guilty of attempting to undermine that sacred institution—an Englishman's home; for Christmas is only Christmas if all these observances are duly kept. Into the somewhat dreary blank of the evening the mummings break, and are received with a rapture that must somewhat astonish them. We rush en masse into the front kitchen, seriously embarrassing the domestics all arrayed round the fire entertaining friends who are allowed to leave their homes, and sitting on flour-bins, tables, or anything we can obtain, await the entrance of the troupe. They are preceded by an ancient person, who strikes two into the boldest of us, he has a large simulated hump, a sheepskin hangs over his back and covers his face, two holes being slit for his eyes; and he stumps about, leaning on an immense club, with which he clears a circle for the rest. On his head he wears a venerable

tall hat, decorated with ribbons, and ribbons are twisted round his arms and legs. Indeed, ribbons play a mighty part in the attire of the rest, who seem all ribbons; their heads are decorated with great square erections like the old grenadier cap, and wooden swords, and a general air of uniform, casts a military aroma over the performance. This is one of the most curious description, and commences with a chant, of which it is impossible to understand one word; then the old man comes forward and makes a statement, also completely unintelligible; and then, one by one, the company is engaged in combat with the tallest actor, who represents a curious mixture, as far as we could gather, of Napoleon I. and St. George of England, and who invariably conquers his foe. All the time the fray lasts the non-combatants keep up their extraordinary chant, and every now and then the old man comes forward and makes a statement that we take on faith, for distinguish a syllable we certainly cannot. It could not be the Dorset twang, for we had an audience versed in that vernacular, but was some curious dialect, made evidently purposely unintelligible to keep the mystic entertainment strictly within the district that provided us with the mummings. No amount of praise or judicious questioning elicited any information, and, at last, we came to the conclusion that the words were really lost, and that nothing was left except the rhythm of the sentences handed down from father to son, from generation to generation. The only thing we did discover was that the old person, who was exactly like the chorus in a Greek play, was supposed to represent Father Christmas, into whose bag, slung over his shoulders, we were to drop our contributions, while he looked the other way, and that all they knew themselves was that they did the performance just as the old folk had been used to do it, and with that we had to be content.

With the mummings Christmas in the country ceases to be Christmas: for Boxing Day sees a general exodus from within the walls of the town. Everyone who can go shooting, from the grocer's apprentice, with his muzzle-loader aimed at a sparrow, to my Lord and the pheasants; and the female portion stays at home to nurse the juveniles who have over-eaten themselves, or pays visits to compare their experiences or presents: all awakening the next day to an ordinary routine that lasts—bar fair-times—until Christmas comes round again.—Illustrated London News.

## BRIGHT THOUGHTS.

The history of all the world tells us that immoral means will ever intercept good ends.

Take care to be an economist in prosperity; there is no fear of your being out in adversity.

No action will be considered blameless unless the will was so, for by the will the act was dictated.

They who do speak ill of themselves, do so mostly as the surest way of proving how modest and candid they are.

I look upon indolence as a sort of suicide; for the man is efficiently destroyed, though the appetite of the brute may survive.

Money and time are the heaviest burdens of life, and the unhappiest of all mortals are those who have more of either than they know how to use.

Carlyle said, "That a good man be free and permitted to unfold himself in works of goodness and nobleness is surely a blessing indispensable to him and those about him; but for a bad man to be free and permitted to unfold himself in his particular way is, contrariwise, the greatest curse you can inflict upon him,—a curse upon him and upon all his neighbors. Him the very heavens call upon you to persuade, to urge, to compel into something of well doing; and, if you absolutely cannot, the one blessing left is the speediest gallows you can lead him to."