

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

The wintry moon was streaming
Through the window, silvery-clear,
And I sat in my study, dreaming
Sweet dreams of the coming year.

There was no sound save the laughter
Of flames on the gusty hearth,
As hour followed fleet hour after
To welcome the Year with mirth.

Then, sharp through the solemn quiet,
I heard in the gloomy hall
The scamper of mice run riot,
And I heard them in the wall.

I leaned on my hands and listened
To hear the cravens go.
While paler the moonbeams glistened
And the fire on the hearth burned low.

And was I awake or sleeping,
That, close by the door, I heard
The voice of a woman weeping,
The sigh of a farewell word?

And was it the night wind mocking
That tapped and opened the door,
Or was it a woman knocking
And a light step on the floor?

I saw at my side a maiden
With tears in her gentle eyes,
And her shapely arms were laden
With gems from time's argosies.

On her brow was a white star shining,
On her breast was a lily fair:
But of rue was a sad wreath twining
Among her golden hair.

From my chair to her dear side springing,
I greeted her with a kiss,
For I thought her the New Year, bringing
New uncut jewels of bliss,