

"MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY!"

"Merry words, merry words, ye come bursting
around,
Telling all that Affection can say; [sound,
'Tis the music of heart-chorus that dwells in the
'Many happy returns of the day!'

Though Misfortune is nigh, let the kind words
float by,
And something of Hope will spring up; [gall,
That the hand of the Future may drain off the
And some nectar-drops yet fill our cup.

If we bask in content while another short year
Is recorded with eloquent bliss;
How we prize the fond wishes, all gladly sincere,
That come round with the soul-pledging kiss.

Then a garland—a bumper, a dance, and a feast,
Let the natal-tide come when it may;
Be it autumn or spring, a gay chorus we'll sing—
'Many happy returns of the day!'

ELIZA COOK.



"MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY!"

AS again the New Year comes round, a crowd of
old associations gather to the memory, associ-
ating the Present with the shadows of the
Past. It is a strange, strange mystery—but
no less a mystery than a truth—that one of the
chief sweets of memory is drawn from the melancholy
which follows in its train. In lonely moments of
meditation, does not the union of tender memories,
cheerful and regretful, bring forth an offspring of
tears, children of thought—soothing and sorrowful in
their influence upon the human mind. And what is
the spoken meaning of such tears? Answer springs
to the lips in the marvellously musical language of
Tennyson:—

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more."

But as there are the pleasures of Memory, so also
there are the pleasures of Hope; and whilst we look
back upon what we have achieved or failed to achieve

in the past, we may look forward to achieving again,
or for the first time, in the future. As the year just
passed away is consigned to the archives of the past,
so a new year takes its place, and woos us to achieve-
ments—the ever-willing prize of industry and in-
tegrity. The years are the Kings of Time—and, as
with the kings of men, the king never dies. "The
king is dead!"—"Long live the king!"—is pronounced
in one and the same breath—but the new king of men
is known by a different title, as the new king of Time
is known by a different date.

And whilst with regret we look back on the past—on
neglected opportunities for doing and getting good—
we may look with bright hope to the future, which
presents a path upon which we may march, led by the
proper lights, to pleasant victories and pure pleasures.
Let us then start fair upon the new race for honest
fame and fortune; and on the eve of such race let us—
by the cheerful fireside, over the festive board, sur-
rounded by venerable representatives of the Past,
hearty representatives of the Present, and rosy repre-
sentatives of the Future—wish each other, with all
sincerity, "A HAPPY NEW YEAR!"