

# The New Year.



BY NORMAN W. CRAGG.



STRANGE New Year ! just ushered in  
Amid the clanging church-bells' din,  
With humbled hearts we silent wait,  
Nor greet the Conqueror at the gate.

" With humbled hearts !—each morning's sun  
Lit some new fortress to be won !  
The stars, in sapphire cohorts formed,  
At eve beheld it still unstormed.

" God lent us light that we might go  
Unhalting to our goal. But lo !  
That light against us witnesseth,  
Who made it Priestess unto Death.

" The hopes ye bear will never bloom  
In us ; the Past hath writ that doom.

Our feet, to futile pathways trained,  
May tread no height by worth attained."

Whereto, with ireful voice and high,  
Time's bride, the New Year, made reply :  
" Ye dwell amid the rotting dead ;  
Look to the living Now, instead !

" The Past is flown ; not Christ's dear tears  
Avail to touch its storied years.  
Why mock ye Heaven with idle prayers,  
While in the keen, north-blowing airs

" The dying mother from the storm  
Shields yet her baby.—vainly warm !—  
While, huddled in the wintry street,  
The children perish at your feet ?—

" While one warm word of yours may win  
The faint heart, hovering over sin,—  
While hands of yours may, if they would,  
Break holy bread of Brotherhood ?

" The ancient motto stands to-day,  
Still gold : ' To labour is to pray.'  
The joy that reigns o'er banished tears  
Is the true music of the spheres.

" Tenant no Past, lest, to it knit,  
The Present be made like to it.  
The Future waits undimmed and fair.—  
Live for the vision imaged there !"

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