

Poetry.

For the Baptist and Visitor.
The New Year Bells.

Nor for conqueror crowned with laurel,
Nor for victor from the fray,
Not for glory of a people
Comes the voice from tower and steep—
Speaking in the bells to-day.

Listen as they ring their story,
Ye who hear the chorus sweet;
Listen with the heart and spirit,
Give the praise their tale doth merit,
Then with joy your loved ones meet.

Once again the golden circle
Of the year hath closed its round,
Many are the words unspoken,
Many a heart lies cold and broken
Since the last year's sound.

Friends have vanished from our vision,
Gone are some we used to love,
Now, we hope, with joy they're singing,
Where the golden harp is ringing,
High in Heaven above.

Some have lives with sorrow clouded,
Others tread a pleasant way,
Some with sad but sweet forewarning,
Looked their last this glorious morning,
On a New-Year's day.

Have you spent the old year's moments
With a purpose good and true;
You shall feel the love of Heaven,
By the great Creator given,
To commence the new.

If in deed, or thought or action,
You this year have gone astray,
Strive anew with zealous ardor,
Struggle more when 'tis the harder,
For the better way.

Listen now, and heed the lesson,
Which our notes would tell,
Till you join the good in story,
Up in yonder world of glory,
And with Jesus dwell.

Shouts of praise now ascending,
Fall upon the listening ear,
While from every clime and nation,
Men with joyous acclamation
Hail the New-born Year.

Family Circle.

[From the Wisconsin Chief.]

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

BY T. W. BROWN.

CHIME FIRST.—BRIDAL DINNER.

Clear, cloudless, and singularly beautiful,
The sun rose over the range of hills which
lay eastward of the valley of —; first
glinting upon the hemlocks as it leaped
to the opposite range; then sinking until
it tipped the bent spire of the old village
church with a flash of flame; then the
windows until they glowed with burning
gold; finally flooding the whole valley with
the baptism of beauty, the snowy fields
dazzling with their myriads of frost crystals,
and the smoke from the chimneys curling
up like fleecy banners in the still, cold at-
mosphere. The trees were white with the
heavy frost, each branch and twig glitter-
ing with the jewelry which the magical
workers of the night had wrought out and
fastened there.

Such a morning, with the associations of
the day, seemed to fill all hearts with the
sunshine of gladness, and out upon the air
burst the cheery voices of happy exuber-
ant childhood. "Merry Christmas!"—
Out it came from the open door; from the
windows as yellow locks were thrust into
the sunshine; from over the fences where
merry groups were shooting on runners
down the hard crusted slope; from the
mill-race where the skaters were already
sweeping; up and down the streets, around
corners, the shout was like a shuttle,
back leaping from lip to lip, and drawing
nearer in the web of kindred joys the
hearts where the wish had deep and full
gushing founts. All night long, and while
the children had been dreaming of the
morrow and what they should find in their
stockings at break of day, the jolly god
with his steeds had been skimming over
the earth, and stealing down the chimneys
his loads of gifts to all. Even into the
late home where the firelight had gone
out in gloom, and the sleepers were haun-
ted by the nightmare of want—of hunger
even—the emptied parcels and baskets,
chuckling to himself as he thought how
weary eyes would first open wide with as-
tonishment, kindle with the breaking light
of hope, and then flood with gratitude to
the unseen giver. And so the good angels
were all busy in thousands of human hearts
scattering joys thickly by the hearthstones
where children eagerly waited their coming.

Clear, yet as sweet as the low rush of
waves on the beach, the bell rang out from
the old stone church, and in waves of in-
extinguishable melody chased each other away across
the furnace and over the white hills. It was a
melancholy chime; gentle too; tremulous and
sweet, touching with the voices of a hundred
years; stealing down into the hearts with
hearing where events joyous and sad
had been sacredly garnered; memories of
the marriage and the death; of the cradle
and the bier.

Up by the tuft of hemlocks where a
broad rift had gashed the rugged hill, was
a farm house; old, weatherbeaten, and the
chimneys falling away, but still substantial
looking and surrounded by evidences
of wealth and comfort. The orchard had
for half a century given its golden crops to
the press and cellar; almost as long had
the red cock on the barn turned to the
wind, and the swallows worn the half-moon
down in the gable and nested under the
rafters within. Large, tall, and their
trunks covered with moss, the old poplars,
like a column of knights, sentinelled the
farm, and stood by the gate where the
beaten path went up to the stone steps at
the front of the house. They had looked
down when a happy couple went in to
commence their journey of life together;
had seen their shadows upon the children
at play; as happy years went and came;
upon the group who slowly here and there
went to their rest upon the hill, the same
happy pair whose hair had whitened
and whose faces were marked with the
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without cloud and left a benison of crimson
and gold like a kiss of happy promise to
the bride, and the fire burned brighter for
the shadows creeping in, and the old walls
were ringing with the music of happy
voices, the two entered upon their journey
together. Will the sun always set as cloud-
less?

CLOUDS.

"Well, Mattie, what's the matter now?
You look as though you hadn't a friend in
the world—seen a ghost?"

It was Guy Moore who spoke; bantering
his young wife upon the cloud which, like
that of a summer day, had so suddenly set-
tled down upon her countenance. But his
light words and manner, and the kiss he
gave her as he somewhat roughly caught
her in his arms, failed to chase the shadow
away. As he held her in his arms, and
looked steadily in her face, her lips quiver-
ed with some deep sorrow, and tears slowly
pushed out between the lashes which had
been closed as if to shut out some horrible
dream. Guy pinched her cheeks and pat-
ted her under the chin, and laughed loudly
but the tears still dropped steadily down
and the throat worked as if choking with
painful emotion. At last she impulsively
flung her arms over her husband's neck,
kissed him with a quivering lip, and burst
into a fit of weeping as she fled up stairs.
The darkness found her weeping still as
she remained upon her knees and her face
bowed in her hands. Throwing herself
upon the bed, she wearily sank to slumber
with the tears drying upon the flushed and
feverish cheek. Oh, that the prayers
which burn their way up from the fiery
furnace of affliction where poor hearts are
giving way to the rending shaft, could be
heard; how many erring ones would be
brought back to the shelter of their change-
less love!

The spell of the tempter was upon Guy
Moore. Young, noble hearted, gifted in-
tellectually, and highly educated, he yet
was crossing the first circles of the mael-
strom, and drifting more swiftly towards
the fatal center. A strong man, richly
dowered by God, rich in worldly means,
loved by a noble woman, and respected by
all, he was already a slave to a foe cruel
and remorseless. The badge of the terri-
ble vassalage was upon him. The charm
of the glittering eye under the bubbles of
the wine cup, was working its weird in-
cantations, and while the captive was revel-
ing in a world of beauty and song, the
deadly folds were reaching towards him and
the ready fangs bared with a hiss of tri-
umph.

Guy Moore had engaged in the exciting
political canvass with all the ardor of his
young heart, and had triumphed. While
intoxicated with the sudden fame his elo-
quence had won him and the noisy homage
of the populace, the temptation had been
placed to his lips. On the evening in ques-
tion, he had returned from a celebration
over the victory of his party, a good deal
intoxicated. His face was flushed, his
speech rude and faltering, and his manner
silly. His step was unsteady as he crossed
his threshold, and appeared before his
young wife reclining. The fact, long strug-
gled against by the true and clinging heart
of woman, burst upon her in all its stun-
ning reality. We have often wondered
how the wife can live under such blows for
a day; God only knows how they survive
for years and each hour drink to the dregs,
the draft in the bitter cup. Yoked to the
living dead, and with each new day feeling
again the ragged iron in the stricken heart,
they still live and suffer; watching, and
praying by the broken shrine; weeping as
Hope and Faith give way and the tide of
scalding agony wear their channels over
the cheek.

Guy Moore returned to the village, and
until a late hour, engaged in the exercises
of the celebration. The affair dwindled
into a revel, and nearly every one present,
became more or less drunken. After mid-
night, Guy was carried to his dwelling,
"dead drunk."

The presentation of the wife proved true.
After awaking from the slumber of the early
evening, she had returned to the sitting
room, and there awaited the passing of the
weary hours, expecting her husband, and
yet shuddering at dread of his coming. As
she heard footsteps without and a rap on
the door, her heart ceased to beat, and
there was that strange suffocating sensation
which heralds some terrible trouble.

As she opened the door and the light of
the lamp flared out over the group, the flood
went back to the heart, and left the
features bloodless, looking ghastly with
white as she saw the form before her. She
uttered no sound; wept not, while the
abashed companions bore the body into the
hall, and calmly closed the door as they
turned away. She even placed the lamp
on the mantel. Then closing the door, as
if to shut in the darkness with her own
night of woe, she staggered to where her
husband lay, uttered a low wail as if
the heart had broken under the blow, and
sank sobbing by his side. And while that
pale and holy love burned in the long, clinging
kiss, the leprous touch of the wine-cup
answered back from the lips of the husband.
Poor heart! How many are feeling the
same torture in our christian land.

Prematurely, and while the hour thick-
ened with gloom, the first-born of a happy
bridal came to the old homestead and was
placed in the arms of the half happy, half
sorrowful mother. It was a boy, and while
the mother kissed, and with warm drops
baptized the velvet cheek of the little one,
she closed the eyes to the dark specters
which thronged by, and her weary and
bloodless lips murmured to God in prayer.
When the babe was placed in the arms of
the father, the mother watched him with a
steady gaze. Reaching out the hand, she
caught his, and pulling him down, whisper-
ed in his ear:

"For the babe's sake—our child, Guy?"
The husband understood the question;
the red glow reddened on his brow, but
without nodding assent to the eager whisper
of the wife, he made some light remark and
turned away. The proud man did not
dream that he was in danger, and felt griev-
ed that his wife should suppose it possible
for him to change his habits. And that
hour, the Demon of the Wine Cup, crept
nearer the heart and tightened the unseen
fetter upon the victim.

Years wore wearily away, and in their
course, brought trouble and desolation to
the old homestead. The brain reels in
trying to realize the changes they witness
where once was a happy home. Slowly
the wife withered; the cheek paled year
by year, and was furrowed with lines of
care; the step grew languid and heavy. How
the happy home, long out of the dream, was
now a reality.

storm, slowly snapped and gave way, and
every dream of life was going to pieces on
the beach. Prayer, such as only the drunk-
ard's wife can put up; holy ministrations,
such as she alone can give; tears scalding
and bitter as only she can shed, were all
in vain. Farther and farther away the lost
one drifted, reckless of all human obliga-
tions, and oblivious to the love of those who
clung more closely as the way grew more
thorny and the night more dark. Friends
turned away from Guy Moore when prop-
erty, and reputation, and manhood were his
no more, and the now besotted drunkard
spent the most of the time in the dramshop.
Twice, the wife had hunted him out and
led him home, but it only aggravated the
abuse which was now heaped upon her
whenever he was in her presence.

And the old mother of Moore—poor
stricken one!—how her head drooped and
the old eye grew dim in tears, as she sat in
the corner and moved her lips in whisper-
ings as she watched the embers waste into
ashes, like the hopes around her.

The homestead, under the accusing hand
of intemperance, had become smitten with
blight. The fields had run to waste; the
barns were dilapidated and the fences broken
down; the fertile farm overgrown with
weeds. Like frost-work under the sun, all
thrill had vanished—the flocks and herds
also. At last, the homestead itself went
down the Moors, and while the fall winds
were sighing and sobbing around the cor-
ners, and the leaves falling in the walks,
and the rain weeping from the old eaves,
and the lone, leafless branches of the old
poplars, the family, writhing under the
brand of poverty and sorrow, with a few
efforts, went out from under the old roof.
The Eden had had its temper, and they
were driven over the threshold, into the
world which was as cold and dreary as the
day.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"A LETTER FOR YOU!"

"A letter for you!" It must be a cold
heart which does not bound at such an an-
nouncement.

A letter! penned by the hand of an ab-
sent loved one, and speaking out the soul's
thoughts in such a manner that our friend
is before us.

A true letter is a daguerreotype of the
soul, in the one phase of feeling and cir-
cumstance in which it is penned, else it
might as well be written by another.
What a mighty power has the pen! How
much happiness and how much anguish is
thus scattered through the earth! And,
dear young Christian, what a field for
doing good is here spread before you! Is
it not true that absence makes the heart
more tender? We forget the faults and
remember only the virtues of each dear
one from whom we are separated. Every
letter is eagerly perused, and the very
spirit of the writer seems in communion
with ours, through the medium of the pen's
tracery. How deeply we sympathize in
the sorrows and trials of which our friends
speak, and when they tell us that the hope
of a glorious future illumines the cloudy
present in thanksgiving. We can bear reproof,
listen to advice, heed warnings from the
absent, as perhaps we would not from those
very friends if they were present. What
their letters are to us, ours are to them,
and in this affectionate remembrance how
much we may do for Christ! In this sim-
ple manner we may comfort the sorrowing,
strengthen the faith of the faint-hearted
disciple, and by the blessing of God upon
our efforts, we may lead sinners to the
"Lamb of God." An affectionate appeal
from a beloved absent friend will do much
for the soul, and a well-selected tract, or
scrap of poetry slipped into the letter, will
seldom give offence, and will be read for
your sake, and may do much to deepen the
impressions made by your letter. It is not
necessary to fill a letter with an exhortation.
A few brief sentences, plainly yet delicately
spoken, are sufficient. And these words
should never be written from a sense of
duty merely, they should be the outgush-
ing of a full heart. A cold form of duty-
doing never converts souls. But an ex-
pression of interest, full and warm from the
soul, must find its way to the heart, and is
often the means by which God answers the
petitions of his children.

Let every letter of friendship, then, dear
young disciple, be to you a sweet and holy
messenger of love, breathing out the ten-
der solicitude of your heart, for your friend's
spiritual welfare, and you will be surprised
to find how God will give you access to
the heart, and abundantly bless this simple
means of doing good.

Only be sure to have your own heart so
full of the spirit of Jesus, that the words of
solitude will really be heart-spoken.—S.
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came on. The rain fell very heavily, the
thunder was very loud and the lightning
sharp, but he did not seem afraid. And
when late in the evening they reached home
wet and tired, he would not be undressed
until he had knelt down to thank his
kind Father in heaven for taking care of
him. That boy was happy, because he had
learned to love and trust his ever-present
Friend.

May every one of you so learn to love
and trust Him! Come to Him just as you
are.

"Weak and sinful, Jesus will forgive,"
and then each day and hour as you try to
do His will, ask Him to be with you and
help you. Often you will be tempted to
sin, but remember the words of the hymn
which I am sure you have all heard:

"Oh do not be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend,
He will give you grace to conquer and keep you
to the end."

Thus happily you will go through life
and reach the happy land at last.

M. A. H.

—Standard-Bearer.

KIND ECHOES.

There is a very pretty little saying,
which, if not very common, is, I am sure,
very true. It is this: "If we speak kind
words, we hear kind echoes!"

"How is this, and what does it mean?"
I fancy I hear a little child exclaim. Suppose
I want to put you in a deep valley between
two high hills, or put you in some little nook
between lofty mountains, or if I could place
you in a boat on the lovely waters of our
quiet lake, and then bid you shout your
name with all your might, you might hear
it repeated once, twice, and several times,
growing fainter and fainter each time,
till it died quite away upon your ear.
You might think that only you had spoken
and yet several seem calling. Surely it is
some one mocking; but no! it is only
yourself, with your own little voice,
doing it all; so there is no need to be
fretted. You see what a wonderful power
you have of making yourself heard. This,
then, is the echo. If you were not to
speak, you would hear no echo. God has
kindly made all these wonders, and they
ought to teach us a useful lesson, if we
would only think about everything we see
and hear. Kindness is like a sweet soft
echo: if little children speak loving words
to each other, loving words come back
again to them; and if they do kind actions,
kind actions come back again.

I suppose I must add a little tale by way
of illustration; so here it is:

There was once a little girl at school in
France, a great many years ago, and she
was walking one day with her com-
panions in some beautiful large garden.
It happened that a poor soldier was there
on duty, and not being able to leave his
post, he begged the young ladies to be so
kind as to bring him a little water. The
companions, however, heeded him not, ex-
cept to say how exceedingly impertinent it
was of a common soldier to speak to them.
The little girl, however, had a kind and
tender heart, and could not think of leaving
a fellow-creature to want, when she might
assist him. She therefore ran and procured
some water, her companions meantime
deriding her for doing so. When she
brought it to the poor soldier, he could not
utter half his gratitude, he was so sur-
prised and thankful; but he asked her for
her name and address, and then she went
away.

Not many days after, a dreadful mas-
acre took place in that city, of all the Pro-
testants, but the little girl was saved; and
how do you think? The poor old soldier
had not forgotten his little benefactress;
the kind action had gone down deep,
even into the heart of one accustomed to
scenes of cruelty or bloodshed, and the lit-
tle girl felt the glad echo amidst the
desolation and gloom of that very sad day.

Now go and practice my story, dear
children, let your little lips breathe forth
only gentle tones and words, and be ready
at all times to do any act of love and kin-
dness toward any human being.

Speak gently! It is a little word,
Dropt in the heart's deep well;
The love the joy that it may bring,
Eternity will tell.

—Merrys Museum.

Miscellaneous.

"Mother," exclaimed a little poet of four
summers, "listen to the wind making music
for the leaves to dance by!"

PURITAN SORE THROAT.—Good fresh
yeast taken internally, is said to be a sove-
reign remedy for puritan sore throat. It is
claimed that it will give almost instant re-
lief.

HANDKERCHIEFS were first manufactur-
ed at Paisley in Scotland, in 1743. Hats
were invented for men in Paris in 1403.
Knit stockings were invented in Spain in
1550. Linen was first made in England in
1253.

CURE FOR CANCER.—Take a quantity of
red oak bark, burn it to ashes, to this add
water and boil to the consistency of molasses.
Apply it freely to the part affected, and
leave it on for an hour, and afterwards cover
the plaster with wax, remove it in a few
days, and if protuberance appear in the
wound, apply the plaster and wax alternately
until they all disappear, after which apply
any healing salve.

A Friend of ours is near-sighted. At
one of the fairs, the other day, he read a
sign which struck him as very good and
very appropriate. In fact, he approved of
it so much that he read it aloud: "Beware
of Politics." It was such a mistake as
any near-sighted man might make. The
true reading was, "Beware of Pickpockets."

THE BIBLE TO THE POOR.—I am con-
fident that among the poor are those who
find in that one book (the Bible) more en-
joyment, more awakening truth, more lofty
and beautiful imagery, more culture to
the whole soul, than thousands of the edu-
cated find in their general studies, and
vastly more than millions among the rich
find in that superficial transitory literature
which consumes all their reading hours.

Dr. Channing.

Sincerity is more valuable than false speak-
ing. A dog who knows its better company
than a man who knows his better company
than a man who knows his better company

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Agriculture.

The following observations are very appro-
priate at this season. They are from the pen
of a gentleman connected with the agricultural
press of the United States; and contain some
rather startling facts upon the benefit of—

DRY WOOD vs. GREEN.</