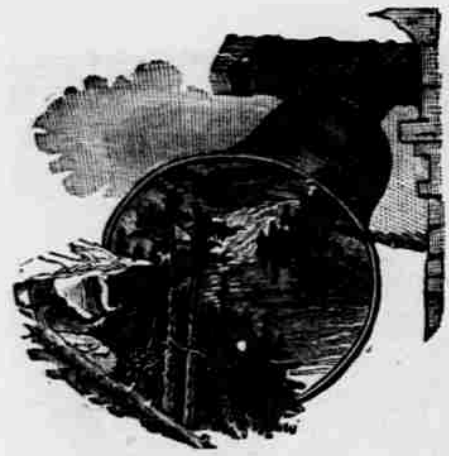


# CHRISTMAS BELLS.



New Year Bells.

Now from every tower and steep  
Clang the bells with a glad sound,  
Showering down on the hearts of the people  
The tidings glad of a year new found.  
Ring away sorrow and pain and care,  
Demons that brood o'er the lives of men.  
Let not the sound of a world's despair  
Fill our hearts with a deeper pain.  
Welcome and greetings: O! new born year,  
With thy fair white page on which to write  
The manifold changes that greet us here,  
Which our hearts in sorrow or joy invite.  
Write them down with a golden pen,  
Blessings many and joys a few.  
Seek thy thoughts from the hearts of men,  
Who have dared to do right and lived to be true.  
Set thy hand to redress each wrong,  
And never falter in doing right,  
If to help a fallen comrade along,  
Or do each duty with all thy might.  
Duties will come with every day,  
Scorn them not if they seem but small.  
From God no action is hid away,  
And He a recompense finds for all.  
So write thy deeds with a golden pen,  
Write them down for the book of life  
Write them down in the heart of men,  
And be a hero in every strife.

## WITH THE OLD YEAR.

"Seven—eight—nine! Do you hear that?" asked the old clock in the corner. "Here it is a full hour after your bedtime, and yet you sit there staring into the fire!"  
In front of the fire sat an old woman—gray-haired, wrinkled, feeble. The voice of the clock did not disturb her, but as she watched the fitful flames one could have read her thoughts.  
"But it's excusable on this night," continued the clock, in softer tones. "Heigho! but it's the last night of the



WAITING TO BE ASKED.

old year! Three hours more and we are done with 1885. You and I are going to watch the old year out together. Let's see! How many years have I seen come and go? Forty—exactly forty with this one. That's a long, long time."  
The woman rocked gently to and fro, and by and by the clock suddenly called out:  
"What! Tears in your eyes! Come, now, but that's no way to end the old year. We were thinking of the same thing. Yes, he was a good and loving husband, and I'll say this for both of you, that I never heard one unpleasant word between you. It is twenty years since he died. I could look into his face as he lay on his

The woman covered her face and moaned in anguish, and the clock continued:  
"Don't grieve so; the dead are at rest forevermore. Life's mistakes may need to be washed away with tears, but the dead have reaped their reward. You are old and poor and broken, but who can tell what new friends the New Year may raise up for you? I cannot tell you to forget the past, for a mother's heart ever goes out for her dead, but the New Year may have some sunshine. Come, now, I am about to strike the Old Year out and the New Year in. Let us greet the New with a smile of welcome as I count—ten—eleven—twelve—a happy New Year!"



AT FOURTH STREET.

dying bed, and if Heaven ever sent its light to lead a soul across the dark valley it was given to him. I remember your tears and means and sobs, and you prayed that death might come to you as well."

The woman wiped her tears away, and there was a feeling of suffocation as she let memory bring up the events of other years.

"Eight—nine—ten!" called the clock after awhile. "How time does fly! It seems scarcely a month since I was striking the last hours of 1884. Let me see! Some one wept with you at that bedside. There was a son and a daughter. Ah! now I recall their faces—their gentle ways—their loving words. Two years later there was another death-bed—more wails and sobs, and I saw the pall-bearers as they carried the daughter's body out of the house. It seemed as if the last blow must crush you, and I well remember of saying to myself that it wouldn't be long before you were called to go."

The woman held her face in her hands and sobbed.

"Come! come!" chided the clock. "Death is ever busy, and it must come to each and every one. The past is past, and we must put it behind us. How happens it that you are alone to-night? Where is the son of whom I spoke?"

The woman choked back her sobs, and her lips moved as if she were speaking the names of her dead ones. For many minutes her reverie was unbroken, and she heard not the tick-tack! tick-tack! of the steady old clock.

"Nine—ten—eleven!" suddenly said the clock. "The son? Ah! how absent-minded I have become! Well do I remember the day a woman with pale face and frightened eyes opened the door and handed you a letter, which bore the insignia of death. You opened it with trembling fingers, and next moment you were like one dead. There were days and days when you hovered between life and death, and for my part I gave up all hopes. Died in a foreign land—buried among strangers over the sea. It was a blow aimed at a heart twice broken."

The woman did not move. "Heigho!" called the clock; "we have left the old behind!"

Her hands had dropped beside her and her head had fallen.

"Dead!" ticked the clock, as the last faint echoes of his bell died away. "Verily, it is so! The Old Year will lead her soul from earth to eternity!"

## CHRISTMAS AND ITS CAROLS.

From the time when the angels inaugurated the custom, hovering over the stall-cradle of the infant Jesus, carols and songs have ever been the favorite music at the festive season of Christmas, and antiquarians with all their researches have not been able to fix a date at which the popular idea of celebrating the Nativity was not carried out by singing and merry-making.

The old carols, however, were not the long religious ballads now popular among the peasantry of England, and which were substituted by those close cropped enemies to music and mirth, the Puritans, but ditties of good eating and drinking and general jollity, as may be learned from a rare manuscript poem of the fifteenth century: The lewid peple than algates agre, And caroles singen everi criste messe tyde, Not with shamesfastenes bot jocondie, And holey bowghes about; and al aydde The brenning fyre hem eten and hem drinke, And laughten mereli, and maken route, And pype, and dansen, and hem rager ne, swinke

Ne noe thynghe els, twalve daye thei woldi not.  
This is the earliest allusion to the custom of keeping up the Christmas festivities for twelve days, which accounts for our modern Twelfth Night, a great theatrical and general holiday in England, but to which no attention is paid in this country. The ancient carol at the bringing in of the boar's head at Christmas dinners, still sung at Queen's College, Oxford, is as old as the first Henry, for at his coronation, in 1170, we learn that it was used as follows:

Caput Apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino,  
The bores head in hand bringe I  
With garlands gay and rosemary  
I pray you all syng merrelli  
Qui estes in convivio  
The bores head I understande  
Is the chief service in this lande  
Loke wherever it be fande  
Servite cum cantico

Almost all the old carols have Latin burdens or intermixtures, showing their monastic origin, and it was when the English Reformation had established the Episcopalian liturgy that these Latin scraps were banished from the jovial songs of Merry Christmas, the time when everybody was feasted, when the meanest serving man, the lowliest peasant was welcomed to the most lordly banquetting hall, placed beneath the salt, and among the nobles and fair ladies, sang his rude carols and played his merry pranks; as we read in an old author, "among the Christmas husbandlie fare, good drink, a good fire in the hall, brawne, pudding and souse, and mustard withall, beef, mutton and pork shred, pies of the best, pig, veal, goose, capon, and turkey, cheese, apples, and nuts, with a jolly carol of the tune of 'King Solomon.'"

Many of the early Christmas carols are rude in structure, defective in rhyme, and of a childish simplicity in matter which appear very comical to our enlightened generation, while some deal with meracles appertaining to the incarnation, of which nothing short of the most primitive purity could permit the recitation. Of this latter class is the Carol of Holy Mary and the Cherry Tree, still, in a somewhat modernized form, sung by the peasantry and lead miners of the Derbyshire Peak. It commences:

Joseph was old man  
And an old man was he  
And he married Mary,  
Queen of Gallilee.

Christmas carols were not confined to the birth and babyhood of Christ, but were moulded on other Scriptural subjects, one being called Dives and Lazarus, commencing in the following whimsical manner, which, when drawn out solemnly by a Derbyshire psalm-singer, has a most ludicrous effect:

As it fell out upon a day, rich Dives sicken'd  
and died,  
There came too serpents out of hell, his  
soul therein to guide,  
Rise up, rise up, brother Dives, and come  
along with me,  
For you've a place provided in hell, to sit  
on a serpent's knee.

Another very curious carol of Christmas time, printed on ballad paper, in black letter, may yet occasionally be found pasted on a Derbyshire cottage wall, which is headed "Christus Natus Est," and which is ornamented with a rude wood cut of the Nativity, in which are seen a number of domestic animals with labels issuing from their mouths. Thus the rooster crows, "Christus natus est." The raven asks, "Quando?" The cow answers, "Hac nocte." The ox bellows, "Ubi? Ubi?" The sheep bleats, "Bethlehem," while a dove coming out of a cloud, bears in its beak the legend, "Gloria in Excelsis."

Very many of the early carols have been irrevocably lost, as they were handed down orally from generation to generation and never became imprisoned in type, and these of the most singular character, too. Old crones crooned them over to the cradled babes, and young maidens learned them from their grandmothers, but cheap literature and national schools have banished these customs, and the carols have gradually faded from



DOLLY MUST BE DRESSED.

memory, a fragment, a stanza, or a line here and there being heard from the lips of a shepherd lad or a Derbyshire milkmaid. Thus the glad songs of Christmas tide which enlivened the festivities of royalty in the days when Christmas had its Christmas carols, and ladies' sides were hooped like barrels, descended to the serving men and humble laborer and have eventually been lost. "The well-belov'd servant," who, as Southey tells us, "in his lord's castle dwelt for many a year," and who

—could sing  
Carols for Shrove-tide or for Candlemas,  
Songs for the Wassel and when the Boar's  
head  
Crown'd with gay garlands and with rose-  
mary  
Smoked on the Christmas board,  
has made way for the modern fine  
gentleman immortalized by Thackeray  
and "Punch," and even the Christmas  
carol itself has not escaped the degener-  
eration of modern times, but has been  
used as a medium for advertising, as  
is seen in "A Christmas Carol on Pekoe  
Tea," wherein we are told

How Christ was in a manger born,  
And God dwelt in a bush of thorn,  
Which bush of thorn appears to me  
The same that yields the Pekoe tea,  
and after a long rigmarole of religious  
fervor and cheap grocery zeal, ends  
with the devout wish that

All who do these truths condemn  
Ne'er taste one single drop of them  
Here, or in New Jerusalem,

with the added information that Pekoe  
tea which is perfectly good and fine  
may be found grateful and useful all  
the year around, from Christmas to  
Christmas, at Francis Hoffman's, at  
the sign of the Golden Caddie on Tower  
Hill, London. This carol was dedi-  
cated to "Queen Caroline and the  
Princess Carolina and all the Royal  
Family," and was published in 1729.

In spite of modern change and novel  
manners, there seems to be a growing  
fondness for making much of Christ-  
mas, and long may it be before its  
celebration shall become obsolete as  
its carols.

## IT IS CHILDREN'S DAY.

It is the children's day. Heap high  
the grate and send the sparkles stream-  
ing up the chimney. Let the roaring  
flame outroar the chilling blast and  
melt with Christmas warmth the frosty  
breath of winter. Bring forth in gen-

erous store good cheer, fill up the cup  
to overflowing with wine of joy, let  
mirth break bounds, and give free  
reins to all that buoys and lifts the  
spirits to above the shocks and weights  
of the experience of other days.  
Where e'er the family takes sanctuary  
let God's love pour its blessed light in  
radiance brighter than in other days.  
Through the wide land may a thou-  
sand times ten thousand hearth fires  
glow on happy faces, and in the genial  
glow may the world of child-life ring  
with a music born of happiness un-  
wonted. For one day let the better  
angels of our natures take the harp  
and make their sweetest melody. Let  
not one strain be lost nor one discord-  
ant note be struck. Let all that  
may make merry with gift and game,  
and greeting and cheer and kindly  
deed. One day out of the year is not  
too much, but all too little to give to  
joyous ministrations, but however  
much it may and should be made to  
be to others, its chief felicity is for



young hearts yet unwrung by the cares  
of life. The green wreath of the Christ-  
mas holly and mistletoe harmonizes  
with the freshness of life's springtime,  
and every memory and association  
make this a May-day of young experi-  
ence. For joy and innocence are sis-  
ters, and they are childhood's angels.  
The Christmas day can be in its full-  
ness what it should be only as the  
children's day, and only thus can all  
its meaning be unlocked to older  
hearts. Give up the day to childhood,  
and giving thus receive its richest gifts.  
Make here a day to hang in memory's  
halls a picture ever bright. Enwreath-  
ed in evergreen, brightened with smiles  
of joy, thrilled with the surprises of  
loving ingenuity, crowned with gifts  
and tenderness, that is the only Christ-  
mas which is illumined by the beams  
of gladdened eyes and made musical  
by the silvery chimes of childhood's  
laughter. Give it to the children, then,  
and make it all the heaven that  
heaven-born love can make it.



AT TWENTY-FOURTH STREET.