



**HEAR** the bells of midnight ringing ever sweet and clear.  
Heath the merry fields of snow while the earth is white with snow.  
They open to the nations all the portals of the year.  
And tell anew the story of the ages long ago.  
The wild winds bear their music over hills and valleys far.  
And echo 'mong the dells that lie amid the snow imperial;  
It seems to float aloft and find a lodgment in a star  
That sheds its soft and radiant light upon a sleeping world.

**THROW** the casement wide to hear the anthem of the bells  
That ring at midnight's solemn hour to let the New Year in;  
They breathe of happiness and peace and each glad one foretells  
The dawning of a cycle new above the Old Year's din;  
Methinks I hear the footsteps of the New Year young and strong.  
As radiant, like a little child, he treads the path of night;  
His scepter in his eager hands, his heart a living song.  
He comes to millions waiting by the morning's gates of light.

**THE** Old Year, fitting by us, leaves his foot-prints in the snow.  
I give the parting guest a smile to cheer him on his way.  
Methinks he stops a moment where the winter winds are low  
To catch the music of the chimes that usher in the day;  
He hears the bells at midnight and listens with a sigh.  
The monarch old has left his throne and all his robes of state,  
And onward comes the youthful king beneath the bending sky.  
Earth-welcomed by the gleesome bells, with childish heart elate.

**GOLDEN** bells of midnight! the gladness year ye bring  
Is welcomed by a happy world, is crowned in every zone;  
In every heart the chorus of the chimes is echoing,  
And fills with joy the humblest and the noblest of the throne;  
The pilot on the vasty deep at midnight gazes far,  
And hails the mystic music of the unseen blissful bells,  
And steers his good bark homeward by the New Year's shining star.  
The while upon the distant shore the sacred psalm swells.

**BELLS** that usher in the year! O chimes of love and peace!  
O tuneful bells that ring of change above the fleecy snow!  
Hearts gladness grow and 'neath your sway a thousand sorrows cease.  
As backward from some misty past come scenes of long ago:  
Ring loud, O bells of midnight, that usher in the year,  
The portals of the morning fair, unweathed, are standing wide;  
The Old Year drops upon the snow an unregretted tear.  
As the nations hail the New Year in his glory and his pride.

T. C. HARBAUGH.

**A NEW YEAR'S BASKET**

**"Love Will Find a Way"**  
By ELVIRA FLOYD FROEMCKE

FROM the time I was a boy in kilts, calling on the Steeles formed part and parcel of my New Year's day. They lived in a great stone house across the way. Their windows were larger, their front door broader, and the iron pineapples on their gateposts bigger than any others in the neighborhood. I am sure about the pineapples, for Mary Steele and I measured them one day after a wordy battle. We used the hem of her pinafore as far as it would go, and finished the inches upon my pocket handkerchief.

She was right. Their pineapples were twice the size of ours, and I admired her pretty, exultant face, as it pressed closely to see that I "played fair." She was so near that her breath blew her loose hair across my cheek. Suddenly, I snatched her close and kissed her again and again. She struggled and freed herself. Indignant tears were in her eyes. "You are a very mean boy," she said, "and I'll never speak to you again."

It was a mean trick, and my cheeks flush yet when I think of it; but I was "only a boy," as Grandma Steele said, when she patched up the row; "and boys have impulses, as well as girls."

After that error I felt it my duty to become more winning and agreeable. I tried with my boy's might to keep myself neat, and corrected a dozen small faults, of which mother despaired, in order to stand well with Mary. Strive as I would, there was a lost something that could not be restored, and Mary's distrust of me made my self-love ache. It was only on New Year's day that she treated me with the interest I craved. Dear old New Year's days! I love the memory of them.

Though the Steele house was stately outside, once within those hospitable doors formality was forgotten, until one met Grandma Steele. Her handsome face and fine manner suggested high-breeding, and unconsciously one put forth one's best speech and conduct when in her presence.



"I SNATCHED HER CLOSE"

I thought it a breach of courtesy to cough or sneeze before her, and many a heroic struggle have I had with self to avoid these spasms.

Mary's mother was altogether different. She was a small, fair woman, with merry little ways, a continual laugh, and the manners of a child. The sort of a person that one must pet, and indulge, and excuse. My mother was also a very small

woman, but her manner to Mrs. Steele was that of a tall woman bending to a midget.

Year after year passed in pleasant, even fashion, until I reached the age of 12. Mother awakened me as usual one New Year's morning, but, contrary to her custom, seated herself on my bedside, and, facing me, clasped my hand in hers.

"My son," said she, "you are old enough now to bear responsibility, and learn manly ways and ideas. Your father was a gentleman. He was kind, loving and tender; ever ready to defend a girl, a woman, and the right. He never drank to intoxication, and hoped his son might also be exempt from this temptation. If not, he prayed that strength might be given him to leave it entirely alone."

I wondered why mother was saying this to me, when tears came in her beloved eyes, and she continued:

"I am telling you this, dear lad, because you always visit the Steeles on New Year's day, and there are many young men whom you may see there—young men who drink too much, say too much, and whose manners are not always the manners of gentlemen."

Then I understood, and putting my arms about her neck, pledged myself in the name of my dead father to be temperate, faithful and true. The bells of St. Margaret's broke into a merry chime just then, and mother ran away crying:

"Up, up, Jack! My son must not be a sluggard on New Year's day."

The day had been dull and gray. A whitey sense of snow thrilled through the sharp, wintry air, which made the warmth and comfort within intoxicating. From nine o'clock in the morning a line of callers had poured over the door-sill of the Steele house. Carriages emptied their loads of elegant looking men at their curbside, the tails of rich coats flourished like black wings behind the flying figures, while white satin waistcoats and light gloves gleamed in contrast as the callers rushed up the steps. Few little boys were among the guests, and my jealous heart absorbed a grain of comfort from this knowledge.

I hurried from my outlook, and into my hat and raglan, when mother called:

"Come, Jack! It's four o'clock! Aren't you going over to the Steeles?"

When Pompey opened the door, he showed all his double molars in astonishment at my magnificence. I was clad in broadcloth from shoulders to ankles, instead of the velvet, short trousers and braided jacket that had fretted my masculine dignity for two years. Some one has said that "a sense of being well-dressed gives one a self-possession that religion cannot bestow."

I felt this as I entered the parlor, and caught a glimpse of Mary. The fact, too, that Mary's pink sash exactly matched my necktie added warmth to the atmosphere; and made me accept Grandma Steele's formal kiss and Mrs. Steele's laughing greeting: "My! O! My! Jack, but you are a swell," as my rightful due.

Mary was especially nice and glad to see me. She had two or three little tricks of speech lately that I liked, and her laugh was getting so sweet and low.

Through the long parlors, under both the big prismatic chandeliers, was spread "the table," that wonderful feature of New Year's hospitality in olden New York. It was laden with substantial and delicacies, all beautifully arranged; and on a side table steaming coffee and chocolate, and rich punch were dispensed by Pompey, who made a capital bronze cup-bearer, in color and figure, always ready to "serve de gentlemen."

Mary and I were getting on very well. Grandma Steele had taken us to the pretty table. We feasted, girl and boy fashion; I had proposed a philopena, and was about asking for one of those pink ribbons, when a party of gentlemen came in, and suddenly the air changed. In a moment it became evident they had imbibed too freely, and were too hilarious for the society of ladies.

Grandma Steele drew herself up very tall, proudly so. She smiled and talked, but her smile was like the frost on a window-pane, and her words were like bits of ice striking the sides of a thin goblet. In a quick undertone she gave Pompey to understand the punch-bowl needed replenishing. It disappeared as swiftly as if he had been a prestidigitator; and the black conjuror forgot to bring it back. Clever Pompey!

Mrs. Steele smiled and jested gayly, exchanging badinage in her light-hearted



HE LAY PROSTRATE.

way, and looking very fair and pretty. She ripped out a merry laugh, as one young man fell to his knees while making a gallant speech over her extended hand. Across Grandma Steele's face came a flash of color. She stepped quickly toward her daughter-in-law, exclaiming:

"Mary! Be careful!" but she was too late. The daring young man was on his feet, and made a rush for the now frightened lady. He caught her tightly in his drunken embrace, and started to run off with her. The other men were laughing helplessly, treating the matter as a huge joke.

Mary gasped and covered her face with

both hands, and I, in a fury of rage, dashed in front of the young man and tore open his arms with the power and ease of some mighty avenger. Mrs. Steele, thus freed, fairly flew up the stairs, her face filled with terror and distress.

I stood by the newel post a second, flushed and panting; gazing down in disgust at the prostrate man. Then, as Pompey lifted the drunkard to his feet, a volley of curses, black and deep, that were intended for me, befouled the air.

The memory of my morning's pledge came to my mind. I walked to the parlor, and said to the three gentlemen:

"Your friend is ill. He is in his carriage. Pompey is waiting at the door. I will make your excuses to Mrs. Steele."

They bowed themselves out in a maudlin fashion; and it was the proudest moment of my life when Grandma Steele laid her hand on my yellow head and said, quietly:

"My boy! My little protector! I thank you."

Mr. Steele came in shortly after that. Grandma Steele met him at the door, and his order to Pompey, as I went home, was:

"We are not at home to-night, Pompey."

That same month I went to boarding-school, carrying my lady's color with me, in the shape of a pink hair ribbon. Mary had worn on New Year's day. Surely, there never was a prouder knight than I.

Year by year the good old custom dwindled; killed by just such sights as had disgusted my young soul. The gorgeous toilettes moderated to modest gowns. Luxurious tables shrank to trays of cakes and wine, or cakes and coffee. Men walked, or rode in street cars, to pay their calls. Family reunions began to be popular. Still I made my annual call on Mary and her mother, and grew no nearer.

The stately Grandma had passed away, and Mary sometimes wore her pearl-set miniature. Then my home was desolated. My mother's death left me sad indeed. Mr. Steele was a kind friend in my trouble, and when the worst was past Mr. Steele

showed herself still merry, childlike, and young. Mary, alone, I could not fathom.

I had been in Paris two years, and had corresponded with Mary in fraternal fashion for more than a twelvemonth; when I suddenly wrote an impassioned letter, telling her of my life's love, and imploring her to be my wife.

She responded briefly, and in the tone used through all her letters: "I thank you for the high compliment," she wrote, "but why not keep on in our old friendly way?"

This was too much. I was hurt deeply, never answered her letter, and resolved to keep aloof, now and forever. Toward the end of December I became uneasy, and resolved to go home, or, at least, to "old New York. We landed on New Year's eve, and on New Year's morning, as the bells of St. Margaret's were chiming for service, I found myself opposite Mary's house, looking over at the old place, with the same old boyish interest.

What a change from the old days! Every shade of every house on the block entirely covered its window, and on each bell-pull was a tiny basket fastened with a bunch of gay ribbons. I was indignant. "A nice way that," I argued, mentally, "to treat visitors on New Year's day." A closed house, indeed! It should open to me! And that basket! Probably it was the gift of some fond lover, like the Mayday baskets of the olden times. Tied with Mary's favorite color, too! Very well! I would take it down and offer her my congratulations, when I handed her the basket!

So I mounted the steps and gave the bell knob a vigorous pull. Old Pompey opened the door. He knew me at once, and smiled broadly, as he said:

"Miss Mary, she'll be delighted. Davist's so on-reglar; jee what she likes."

When Mary came, she seemed a little tremulous and confused. I remembered the basket. It had fallen to the floor. I pounced upon it viciously. In it lay a card:

"Mr. Stewart Kingsley."

"Mary," I gasped; "surely you are never going to marry the man who insulted you, mother 12 years ago," and I held up the card before her astonished eyes.

"You silly boy," said she, and with that years vanished; we were young again.

"This" shaking the basket, "is the way people receive to-day. We put out our basket, and anyone who wishes may drop his card in it."

"Then he did not send the basket?"

"Oh, no!" laughed Mary.

"Well," said I, "what a silly fashion; to tie five yards of ribbon to one's bell-handle, that a friend may not pull it!"

"No. Only two yards," said Mary.

"Five," I protested, and then said: "Come; let's measure it." So I took my handkerchief to measure and finished up the inches on the ribbon that hung from her belt. This brought us very near each other; my hand trembled, but I had gained a fine courage. A curl of my yellow, tumbled head brushed Mary's cheek. She flushed prettily, and, putting her arms about my neck, touched my lips lightly with hers.

"That was a mean trick!" I cried, delightfully, snatching my darling to my heart, "and I'll never speak to you again, unless you promise to repeat it every day of your natural life."

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