

The New Year.

BY CAROLINE A. MERRITT.

The winter night is fierce and dark and chill;
Weird voices faintly call and vaguely thrill.

And seem to say,
"Ah, well-a-day!
A soul in flight
Seeketh the night.

There shall be other sounds in other days,
God hath mysterious will and unseen ways
Rejoice! rejoice!
Saith the far voice.

What dieth thus and leaveth naught behind,
Naught but a vague voice on the fainting wind

To say that it hath been,
Is not, nor shall be seen
Of eyes that yearning gaze?
What thing of other days?

It is the Old Year's breath that fails and falls,
It is the New Year full with life that calls!

"Rejoice! rejoice!"
Saith the far voice.

Oh, lost Old Year of varied memory,
To some how full thou wert of ecstasy!
What dreams of love
All words above;

What pain, what tears,
What hopes, what fears,
Dwell in thy archives sealed and all unseen,
As though they ne'er in human heart had been!

And yet, "Rejoice! rejoice!"
Saith the far voice.

There is a little cross upon a lonely grave!
The snows fall over it, the wild winds rave

Of this lost year,
Of love, of hope, of fear.
It came and passed away,
The phantom of a day!

Oh, coming heir of the Old Year, what theme
Of thine shall charm like the sweet vanished dream?

And yet, "Rejoice! rejoice!"
Saith the vague voice.

Yes! up and forward, for the Year is new,
Sighs shall not change the saddened backward view,
And life is given
A boon of heaven,
Not for dull grief,
Nor cold and faint belief,

But for the hope by earnest life to prove
Some claim to heaven's sweet rest, and
highest, holiest love.

"Rejoice! rejoice! rejoice!"
Saith the sweet voice.
—Domestic Monthly.

The Meeting.

BY H. W. LOBOFELLOW.

After so long an absence
At last we meet again:
Does the meeting give us pleasure,
Or does it give us pain?

The tree of life has been shaken,
And but few of us linger now,
Like the Prophet's two or three berries
In the top of the uppermost bough.

We cordially greet each other
In the old, familiar tone;
And we think, though we do not say it,
How old and gray he is grown!

We speak of a Merry Christmas
And many a Happy New Year;
But each in his heart is thinking
Of those that are not here.

We speak of friends and their fortunes,
And of what they did and said,
Till the dead alone seem living,
And the living alone seem dead.

And at last we hardly distinguish
Between the ghosts and the guests;
And a mist and shadow of sadness
Steals over our merriest jests.

Irish Love Song.

[Air: "The Little Red Lark."]

An! awan of slenderness, dove of tenderness,
Jewels of joys arise!

The little red lark, like a ray spark
Of song, to his sun-burst flies:
But till you are risen, earth is a prison,
Full of my captive sight.

Then wake, and discover to your fond lover
The morn of your matchless eyes.

The dawn is dark to me; hark, oh! hark
To me

Pulse of my heart, I pray,
And, gently gliding out of thy hiding,
Dazzle me with thy day!

Ah oh! I'll fly to thee, singing, and sigh
To thee,
Passion so sweet and gay,
The larks shall listen and dew drops glisten,
Laughing on every spray.

—The Spectator.

The Story of "Lorena."

How many songs of sentiment have their basis on fact? Of course nobody can tell. As a rule, however, the verse that assumes to pour out positive experience—that moans and weeps over a bitter past—may be set down as fictitious. The deepest feelings of the heart shrink from utterance, and will not permit full and free expression. What reads like a cry of actual pain, is more likely the semblance of a sorrow that did not exist. So we have always believed; and when years ago we heard often the pathetic, regretful song of "Lorena," we did not think, nor are we now fully convinced, that it was tearful with genuine feeling. Yet what purports to be the true story of it has found its way into print, and *RURAL HOME* readers may care to hear it. Some of them will remember how much the song was sung, from twelve to twenty years ago, and now intense the pathos seemed to be.

In fact the extreme pathos of the words contributed as much, perhaps, as the music to give the composition its wonderful success. It was sung everywhere, in parlors, in concerts, on the streets, and in the camp of the contending armies. In the Northern army it was immensely popular, and it found its way South through Louisville and Cincinnati, and during the rebellion it was almost the only piece sung in Southern homes, and excepting martial airs, about the only one sung in the Confederate camp. Everywhere was "Lorena." A steamer on the Ohio was named Lorena, engines on Western roads were called Lorena, and a person now sometimes meets in society young ladies named Lorena, called that by mothers twenty years ago.

As the story goes, the author of the words was Rev. H. D. L. Webster. He studied in the Columbus academic and collegiate institute, and was editor of the college paper. In the year 1848, being then 24 years of age, and full of poetry and romance, he was enjoying his first pastorate in Zanesville, Ohio. His leading parishioner was a wealthy manufacturer, whose residence was on one of the many hills that surround that smoky town. The house was about half a mile out, and the eminence upon which it was seated was the one referred to in the song:

'Twas flowery May,
When up the hilly slope we climbed
To watch the dying of the day,
And hear the distant church bells chimed.

There lived in this family a younger sister of his wife, who was the leading singer in the choir. She was 19 years of age, small of stature, had blue eyes and light brown hair, and was as fair as a lily. She was not only a sweet singer, but she was as full of poetry and romance as her pastor, and they soon became very much attached. Their loving did not, however "prosper well," for the family were proud and aristocratic, and had "higher notions of the girl's future than to sanction her marriage with a poor preacher." As she was dependent upon them for a home, she was forced to yield to their counsel—Mr. Webster says he now thinks it wise counsel—and they were obliged to give each other up. It was, however, the strong will and proud spirit of the sister, more than the opposition of the brother-in-law, that separated them, or rather kept Lorena from him. Lorena seems to have been passive, indecisive in character, and submissive in the hands of her strong-willed sister. Mr. Webster saw her for the last time at her home, learned of the sister's unconquerable opposition, heard his fate, and took a quiet but painful farewell, very little being said. That night she wrote him a last letter, in which she used the words, so well remembered by those familiar with the song—"If we try we may forget." It was eight years after that he wrote:

For "If we try we may forget,"
Were words of thine long years ago.

Yes, these were words of thine, Lorena:
They burn within my memory yet.
They touch some tender cords, Lorena,
Which thrill and tremble with regret.
There is a future, Oh! thank God,
Of life this is so small a part.
'Tis dust to dust beneath the sod,
But There, up There, 'tis heart to heart.

The effect of the separation was to crush the young man, and, writing to a friend five years ago, twenty-six years after the occurrence, he says: "I doubt if all dark lines are erased from my heart yet." He resigned his pastorate and sought another field, smothering his pain manfully in hard study and work. And the only sign of that pain the world ever saw was the heart-cry in the song of "Lorena." In 1856 he was residing in Racine, Wisconsin, where he met J. P. Webster, the composer, who, though of the same name, was no relation to him. They soon became very intimate. J. P. Webster was writing song music, and was troubled to find appropriate words. Rev. Mr. Webster told him he would write a song and in two days he produced it, entitled "Bertha," a mere fancy name. When the composer came to set it to music he wanted a name of three syllables, accented on the second, and the author then made up the name of "Lorena."

The young lady's name was not Lorena nor Bertha, but Ella. It is said that she lost her vivacity and sunny, witching ways after they were parted, and never regained them, and that she is now a sad, sickly woman, past the prime of life. She is the wife of a judge, and lived for many years at Ironton, on the Ohio. When last heard from, however, several months ago, she was traveling in Europe.—*Rural Home*.

"What Wives the Christians Have!"

John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, was born at Antioch about A. D. 347. He was among the most eminent of the Greek Fathers. He was a remarkably successful preacher, and an able and voluminous writer. He had apparently a very pious Christian mother, and it seems to have been owing to her labors and the blessing of God upon them, that he became a Christian, and a useful minister. His father was a military character and made no profession of Christianity.

Chrysostom's father died soon after he was born, and when his mother was but twenty years old. Loving devotion to a departed husband was a common characteristic among the early Christian women who were so unfortunate as to lose their husbands. Athusa, the mother of Chrysostom, from her fidelity to her departed husband, and from her anxiety for the education of her son, remained a widow. And Libanius, a celebrated teacher of eloquence and literature at Antioch, when he learned the self-sacrificing feeling that Athusa showed for the welfare of her son, exclaimed, "What wives the Christians have!" Chrysostom, himself, thus states the occasion that called forth the expression: "Having heard that I was the son of a widow, he asked me the age of my mother, and the time of her widowhood? But when I said forty years old, and that it was twenty years since she lost my father, he was astonished, and turning to those present, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Oh strange! What wives the Christians have!'"

The Christian mothers in the early church showed a commendable zeal, concern, and self-sacrificing feeling for the literary and Christian education of their children. While fathers were eager for wealth, pleasure, and distinction, mothers were anxious for the moral and mental improvements of their children. And this was especially the case in such instances as that of Chrysostom, whose father was a

heathen while his mother was a Christian. In this, as in numberless other instances, we see the advantages of Christianity over heathenism. While the former animates its disciples with a spirit of improvement and progress which extends to the future life as well as to the present, and which has regard to the mental and moral nature of man, as well as to his physical, the latter gives but little attention to any of the wants of man but his physical.

The Christian woman in the primitive church laboring so faithfully as they did for the spiritual interests of the young, and heathen plainly saw the labors of these women in their families could not fail to advance the cause of Christianity, and hence they spoke against their influence over their husbands and children. And Libanius the popular teacher already referred to, reproached the men of rank at Antioch, because they suffered themselves to be governed by those women whom they ought to govern. And he asked them why they did not embrace the religion of their leading men, such as Plato and Pythagoras, rather than refer to the authority of their mothers and their wives, showing plainly that the heathen feared the influence of Christian women. The influence of Christian females in the church when it is fully consecrated to Christ and his cause, is great, and should be appreciated, and applied as extensively as possible.

The Christian wives, mothers and daughters of the early church perhaps caught the spirit and imitated the example of the pious women that preceded them. The Christian faith of Timothy was received by him from his mother.

"When I call to remembrance," said Paul in writing to him, "the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." He had a good mother and a good grandmother, but his father was not a believer. The faith of Timothy was planted in him by his mother, but the preaching of Paul moved that faith to action and he became a Christian.

Several students, who were preparing for the ministry, were speaking of the influence of pious mothers over their children; and upon looking into their own histories, it was ascertained that out of one hundred and twenty present, over one hundred had been blessed with pious mothers.

Napoleon Bonaparte once asked a French lady of influence "what is the great want of the French nation?" Her reply was short but expressive,—"Mothers."

The celebrated John Randolph of Virginia, some time before his death, wrote to his friend as follows: "I used to be called a Frenchman, because I took the French side in politics; and though this was unjust, yet the truth is, I should have been a French atheist, if it had not been for one recollection, and that was when my departed mother used to take my little hands in hers, and cause me on my knees, to say, 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"

The apostle Peter plainly recognizes the great influence of Christian wives. In exhorting them to faithfulness in order that their husbands may be converted, he says when referring to unconverted husbands, "If any one obey not the word, they may, without the word, be won by the conduct of their wives, by observing your blameless and reverential conduct." 1 Pet. iii. 12.—*Primitive Christian and Pilgrim*.

'Tis my creed that Age should carry,
'Mid its strifes and cares and losses,
The purple of its morning,
April-bloom and choral air;
That Wisdom, Cheer should marry,
That life ascends on crosses,
And that its best adorning
Is its joy in all things fair.

About Distinguished Men.

Mr. A. H. Stephens and Senator Hill have, it is reported, adjusted their ancient quarrel. *The Augusta Chronicle* says that a mutual friend from time to time conveyed between the two some laudatory expressions of each about the other, and finally informed Mr. Hill of Mr. Stephens' eulogies upon his recent speeches in the Senate. Moved by these things to forget his ancient wrath, Mr. Hill offered a hand which Mr. Stephens cordially accepted. The two men have always been political opponents, and their personal relations have never been very friendly. Before the war the result of personalities on the stump led to the sending of a challenge by Mr. Stephens, but Mr. Hill, with a contempt for the Code as commendable as it was at that time rare, declined to settle the difference between them by a resort to mortal combat.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes says that the first time he ever visited Theodore Parker, the scholarly reputation of the young preacher, then not quite thirty years old, had not reached him. "In looking around his library," says Dr. Holmes, "I saw upon his shelves the great series of quartos—'Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiae.' 'You have hardly read that, I said, not thinking that any student in these degenerate days, grappled with these megathelial monsters of primitive erudition. 'Oh, yes, I have,' he answered very quietly; and then I, who thought I was dealing with a modest young divine of the regulation pattern, took another look at the massive head of the young man, whom Mr. Wendell Phillips has lately spoken of as the 'Jupiter of the pulpit.'"

Senator Hannibal Hamlin has a pleasant, cream-colored, prettily-furnished house at Bangor. He has four children living, his youngest son having graduated at Bowdoin last commencement. The Senator is the oldest living man in the public service. "But I am tired of it," he says. "It harasses me more than it used to. If you are in political life you are everybody's slave, and don't even own yourself. I shall quit as soon as I can. I would rather live here than at Washington. I have a comfortable home, and a farm near here of about twenty acres, that yields me as much as the average farm through the country. But I am still strong. Very often I go fishing or hunting with the boys, and I often hear them whisper, 'We'll give the old man a soft place,' but they generally come home behind the old man."

King Alphonso's Wife.

The second wife of the young king of Spain, is thus described by the *Tribune* correspondent:

"The archduchess is not pretty nor fine looking, nor stately, but she is certainly a winsome wee thing. Her hair is of the German blonde which wants burnishing. The gold which should brighten it up has fallen into the complexion, which is 'tallow candle.' It wants roses, and I am afraid will always continue to want them. The eyes, however, are very good, being large, blue, humid, and capable of expressing infinite depth of tender feeling and loving kindness. The nose is too aquiline and lacks delicate modeling at the nostrils, the upper lip, is short and nicely formed enough the under lip is full without being a hanging one, and the teeth are simply perfect. When the archduchess laughs her whole face brightens up—an excellent sign. She resembles *enpetite* Marie Antoinette, and I am sure the resemblance is not a mere physical one. What is worst in her figure, is the height of her shoulders, which are too near her ears. If her neck were an inch longer she would be beautifully made, and she puts on her clothes well and dresses in good taste. I am sure that neither she nor the archduchess Elizabeth would have ordered the stagey costumes which Worth, under the directions of the Duchess de Aosta, has made up for her. They are cumbersome, and only suited for a tall, finely developed woman. A detail which will I know interest the ladies—the Archduchess Christine, who will be queen before this letter reaches New York, wears no earrings."—*Ex.*