

A Dirge for the Dying Year.

Ring merrily! let music float around the dying year. Let sorrow thrill but without note, And shed his brilliant tear. How lately did we bid him part, How soon his eye grew dim With looking on this cold, cold world! Come, chant his funeral hymn.

O gladly was the New Year met, When first he wandered down, With many a precious minute past, As jewels in his crown. We laughed, from out his diadem To see his tresses fall, Now eared we them to gather them, These so bright and yet so small. But, could the moments, one by one, Each stand as a spark Of light to illumine the morrow's sun, This world would add so dark And thus the New Year's shining brow Of all things would be lost.

To call them back we vainly yearn, These hours so idly cast, Into that dark and noisy sea Which mourns all the Past. We break Time's fragile web, and leave Its fragments dim with tears; We separate moments not to grieve When they are best in years; Like children in their heedless play, Or some wild river's brink, We fling their treasures all away, And laugh to see them sink, Till, as each bubble glistens, They come to catch the waves with joy, And o'er their folly weep.

As notes of life, as grains of sand, As bubbles in the sea, As moments years within his hand Who books eternity. Yet he who weeps Time's mighty gift Marks when one thought is given, And every moment but on earth Is reaped in heaven.

The Old Year's dying hour has come: Let grief's pale shadow be cast Around him—oh! a requiem, And leave him with the past. And now, to dock the New Year's shrine Go gather wisdom's flowers, That wisdom's splendour star may shine Upon his parting hours.

Talleyrand and Arnold. There was a day when Talleyrand arrived in Havre, on foot from Paris. It was the darkest hour of the French revolution. Pursued by the blood hounds of his reign of terror, Talleyrand secured a passage to the United States in a ship about to sail. He was a fugitive and a wanderer to a strange land, to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

"Is there an American staying at your house?" he asked the landlord of the hotel; "I am going to cross the water, and would like a letter to a person of influence in the new world."

"There is a gentleman up stairs, either from America or Britain; but whether from America or England, I cannot tell." He pointed the way, and Talleyrand, who in his life was bishop, prince and minister, ascended the stairs. A miserable applicant, he stood before the stranger's room, knocked and entered. In the far corner of the dimly lighted room sat a man of fifty years of age, his arms folded and his head bowed upon his breast. From a window directly opposite, a flood of light poured upon his forehead. His eyes looked from beneath the downcast brows and morose expression. His form, vigorous even with the snows of fifty winters, was clad in a dark but rich and distinguished costume. Talleyrand advanced, stated that he was a fugitive, and with the impression that the gentleman was an American, he solicited his kind feelings and offices. He poured forth his history in elegant French and broken English.

"I am a wanderer and an exile. I am freed to fly to the new world, without friend or home. You are an American. Give me, then, I beseech you, a letter of yours, so that I may be able to earn my bread. I am willing to toil in any manner; a life of labor would be paradise to a career of luxury in France. Will you give me a letter to one of your friends? A gentleman like you has doubtless many friends."

The strange gentleman arose. With a look that Talleyrand never forgot, he retreated toward the door of the next chamber, his eyes looking still from his darkened brow. He spoke as he retreated backwards, and his voice was full of meaning.

"I am the only man of the new world who can raise his hand to God, and say, 'I have not a friend, not one, in America.' 'Who are you?' he cried, as the strange man retreated to the next room; 'My name?' 'My name?' he replied, with a smile that had more of mockery than joy in its convulsive expression, 'my name is Benedict Arnold!'"

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