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POETRY

NEW YEAR'S EVE

The old year's almost gone,
Sweetheart,
He will not see the dawn;
The wind's weird cry through the woodland
creeps,
The patient earth in th' darkness sleeps;
Only the glow of our hearth-fires' light—
Brightens the mirk of the dreary night—
The old year's almost gone.

Much have we lost in the year,
Sweetheart,
Treasures precious and dear;
There were kindly deeds that we might have
done;
There were gentle hearts that we left unwon;
And fields where might have grown grain of
gold.

Let fall under the frozen turf;
Much have we lost in the year!
That have we won in the year,
Sweetheart,
Hearts to cheer?
Eyes like pools of deep garnet brown;
Hair all glistening like tangles of sunshine.
Little Alexia, if you could only see yourself as
others see you, you might be tempted to be
vain! I shall make a point of calling at
Judge Ardell's house on New Year's day,
and if Miss Alexia is not there, I shall cer-
tainly inquire for her!

The pink satin dress vindicated Mme.
Chaussa's fame as an artistic dressmaker;
the blue damask came home in time to be
tried on and pronounced "perfect," on Sat-
urday night; and on Monday, the Misses
Scarlett dressed themselves with judicious
care, and many lavings with rose water and
cautious application of pearl-cream and
blush-pink.

The drawing-rooms, decorated with hot-
house flowers, and illuminated, not with
vulgar gas, but with the white lustre of
many wax candles in myriad-branched can-
delabra, had been personally inspected by
Mrs. Ardell before she went to make her
toilet, and the little room at the back, where
the judge ordinarily kept his boots, and
overcoats, and Turkish pipes, had been
transformed into a smilex-garlanded bow-
er, where faint lights glowed through shades
of Nile-green grass, and the most elegant
and aesthetic refreshments were arranged
in *cleisonne* enamelled ware, trays of *repos-
see* silver, and baskets of Dresden China.

And, just at the time when Ermengarde
was saying to her sister, "how do I look,
dear?" and Verena was twisting herself
into the shape of a letter S, to see the back
of her false pugs and plaitings in the mir-
ror, little Alexia was enthusiastically toss-
ing about the contents of an old cedar chest
in the store-room, which contained the
long forgotten wardrobe of the first Mrs.
Judge Ardell.

"Oh," she cried, "this is beautiful!" and
she unfolded a scented robe of long China
crape, crimped like the shingly bars of the
finest sea-sard, and embroidered in fantas-
tic figures of scarlet silk. "I'll wear this."

"But it's so odd and old-fashioned, miss,"
said Louisa, the maid.

"That is the very charm of it!" pronoun-
ced Alexia. "Oh, do make haste, Louisa,
with my hair! Are you sure you can do it
the plate in the fashion book?"

Mrs. Ardell was arranging the folds of a
pouf over her shoulders, when
Verena rushed up stairs.

"Mama, Ermengarde!" she cried, "who
is the lady down stairs?"

"The lady down stairs?" repeated both
mother and daughter in amazement.

A Christmas Sketch.

COUSIN TOM'S WOOING.

Grandpa and grandma live in a grand old homestead in the country, and there at every Christmas they gathered their grandchildren. And what merry days they were to be sure! We youngsters all assembled in the big nursery and spent the two evenings—Christmas eve and Christmas evening in playing games and 'having all sorts of fun,' as we phrased it, winding up the festivities by a repast of apples and nuts, enlivened with popped corn, which we popped ourselves with infinite relish in the glowing stove.

Of all the cousins the prettiest girl was Amy Lee, a slender, blue-eyed creature of dainty little ways and the sweetest laugh that ever was heard. We all loved her, but there was one of the boys that by common consent was given the place by her side as being his of right, from his long established and pre-eminent devotion to her.

This was Harry Allen, only a second cousin, but his home was so near that he and his father always came to grandpa's for the great festival of the year.

While we youngsters were holding high carnival in the nursery, the oldest of the family sat in what seemed to us stupidly solemn state in the big drawing room, and of course Harry's father sat with them.—And yet when I first remember him he was but a boy himself, and even after Harry was grown up, might be counted a young man.

When he was no more than eighteen he had run away with my mother's cousin Harriet Lee, and married her. The young creature only lived a year, leaving him at nineteen the father of this boy.

At first when he came to grandpa's he would come in often at a Christmas and play games with us, and he seemed hardly more than a youngster himself; he had a most amiable face with big blue eyes, and an ever ready smile, and he was a great favorite with us all.

I think it was way back in that early time that the story I am going to tell began: One Christmas eve we were all playing games, Mr. Allen or 'Cousin Tom,' as we all called him, suddenly appeared among us, and was greeted with shouts of delight.

"Come and play! come and play!" was called in a wild chorus, and Cousin Tom was seized by half a dozen hands and dragged into a game of forfeits.

Presently it was Amy's turn to redeem a pledge, and the mighty potentate who had our destinies in his hands gave out the time-worn forfeit.

"Bow to the wittiest, kneel to the prettiest and kiss the one you love best."

Amy stepped out and stood among us laughing at it blushing. She was about twelve years old at the time, a pretty little sylph, and as she stood there in her blue dress and long hair she was as dainty a picture as one would wish to see.

After a moment of hesitation she made a solemn bow to Sam, famous as the greatest blunderer among us. When the laughter had died away after this fit of satire, she knelt with a pretty gesture of admiration before handsome Cousin Annie, who was watching the game with all the dignity of an acknowledged belle, and then made another brief pause.

Harry, who was watching me jealously drew himself up with a look of expectation, even holding out his hand toward her, but Amy never noted the gesture, only after a short hesitation made a sudden rush to Cousin Tom, and flung her arms around his neck, giving him a hearty kiss.

Tom colored over all his fair face, and we all shouted and screamed with delighted approval of her choice.

And as for Amy, the years had brought to her a tenderness and loveliness until at twenty-two she had blossomed into perfect womanhood.

Christmas eve was gloomy and threatening snow, but two or three of us resolved just before dusk we would go out for a little walk. We moved on briskly, enjoying the quiet of the still country, that was wrapped in a soft veil of gray clouds, from which the white flakes came floating softly before our walk was half over, so that as we drew near the homestead again the air was quite thick with the falling snow.

As we reached the gate, the rest passed us and went in, Amy and I lingering a moment looking out at the peaceful scene.

A muffled figure at that moment was outlined in the dimness tramping swiftly toward us. Amy caught my arm with a sudden convulsive grasp.

"Who is that?" she exclaimed.

Her face was white and she was trembling violently. I looked eagerly at the new-comer, but before I could utter his name she had recognized him.

"Cousin Tom!"

She uttered the words in two tremulous accents as if overpowered with a great weight of joy, her eyes lighted up with a radiant glow, and she hurried toward me, years, as she seemed, having passed.

As I saw him a glow of happiness flooded all his face—that good, honest face we had all loved so much, and coming to her quickly, he caught her in his arms.

"Amy! Amy!" he whispered. "My darling!"

When I knew their secret, I slipped away into the house, leaving them alone.

My news was received with shouts of delight, and when at last Tom and Amy made their appearance there was a tumultuous greeting for him, followed by uproarious congratulations for both.

"You see," said Cousin Tom, at last in explanation, "I thought Harry had won her, and she would never care for an old fellow like me, so I went quietly away. But I find now that she has liked me all the time, and although I am older than I ever, she is willing to give herself to me."

The Toast—"Woman."

On Saturday evening, December 22nd, the annual dinner of the New England Society of Pennsylvania was given at the Continental Hotel in Philadelphia. The President was one of the guests, and responded to the toast—"The President of the United States."

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

On Judah's hills, their nightly watch;
The shepherds duly keep;
While all around in calm repose
The earth lies hushed in sleep.

And what is it they hear him say,
In accents sweet and mild?
"Fear not; I bear to you great joy:
To you is born a Child,
A Saviour who is Christ the Lord:
All people share your joy,
And unborn nations in his praise
Will sweetest strains employ."

Behold the subject of their joy
He in a manger lies;
Yet never could he be less won
Than when he came to earth to die.

Behold! around this infant form
The hopes of ages past
Gleam, white as snow, still to come
Are wrought through Him at last!

Adoring Magi presents bring
And bow before Him fall;
While myriads of hosts of Heaven's bright throng
Proclaim Him Lord of all.

No; while we're tossed on Life's stern waves,
We'll worship at his feet,
Will tell to others in the way,
All things, both good and meet,
What a dear Saviour has been given
By God to fallen man,
The sacrificial Lamb so meek
In God's redemptive plan.

BROKEN TOYS.

I found my baby girl to-day
Asleep upon the floor,
The face around her little form
With playthings scattered o'er.

Her hands were nestled 'neath her chin,
And one still firmly held
A broken toy, whose novel charm
As yet was undispelled.

There lingered still about the mouth
An frown on the brow a trace
Of thought, half grieved and half perplexed,
As if the tiny face

Already had begun to learn
The look it was to wear
In years to come. I stooped to kiss
Away the mimic care.

And as I held her, still asleep,
Within her nest-like bed,
And smoothed the crinkles of her hair
The little weary head.

I thought how we of larger growth,
When tired of pains and joys,
With that same look fall fast asleep
Amid our broken toys!

And then the Father, stooping, takes
The tired head to his breast,
And smooths the furrows from the brow,
And bears us to our rest.

Word's of Wisdom.

One hand cannot wash the wrong of
the other.

A woman is seldom merciful to a man
who is timid.

Life is too short for its possessor to wear
long faces.

The way to forget our miseries is to re-
member other people's.

Consistency is about as scarce in the
world as in a dog kennel.

You read of but one wise man, and all
that he knew was—that he knew nothing.

As charity covers a multitude of sins be-
fore God, so does politeness before men.

It is strange how often we think lightly
of the gifts we have and wish for those that
Providence has denied.

Pat says that if men could only hear
their own funeral sermons and read their
own headstones, there would be no living
in the world with them at all.

Kind looks, kind words, kind acts, and
warm hand-shakes—these are secondary
means of grace when men are in trouble, and
are fighting these unseeable battles.

Remember that you grow older every
day; if you have bad habits, they grow
older too, and the older both grow together
the harder they are to separate.

The malice of the weakest is not to be
despised. We should remember that venom
supplies the want of strength, and that the
lion may perish by the puncture of the asp.

As our intellectual food makes our minds
what they are, coarse or refined, barbaric
or cultured, disciplined or wild and riotous,
so our spiritual company makes our
spirits what they are.

A HAIR-RISING EPISODE.—A young
man was escorted into the parlor where sat
his mother. She was gazing soulfully
at the fire, thinking of him no doubt, but
not dreaming of his presence. He tiptoed
his approach, and slyly seizing a straggling
hair which coyly nestled in its blonde
beauty on the scruff of her rounded neck,
gently twitched it, and waited for the sud-
den start and maidenly blush, a pleased
surprise. But not a start, not a surprise.
Again he drew it toward his lips.

GOOD-BYE!

And both she and Ermengarde hurried
down stairs, just in time to see the beau-
tiful young intruder courtesying a gracious
greeting to two of the jenneuse doree of
New York.

And Alexia, with the utmost self-
possession, "here is mamma now, and my
sisters. Don't move, Mr. Helullyn," she
added in a lower tone, "I'm quite safe now.
Mamma won't dare to scold me before
company."

And Mrs. Ardell and Misses Scarlett
were forced to digest their rage and morti-
fication as best they could.

For Alexia out-hone them as a real,
common-hearted rose outlines the milli-
on's presentiment—as the diamond out-
shines the wretched paste ornament and
they knew it but too well.

But success excuses everything, and Mrs.
Ardell could not but perceive that the
quaint young beauty, in the antique dress,
was emphatically a success.

"Alexia," she cried, when there was a
temporary lull in the stream of callers, how
dared you play us such a trick?"

"I did it for fun, mamma," said Alexia.
"And if you scold me, I shall tell Mr. Hel-
ullyn. It was he that brought me back
from the depot, and he is my friend."

"I never heard anything so insolent in
my life!" cried Ermengarde Scarlett, turn-
ing pale with anger.

"She ought to be locked up for a week
on bread and water," said Verena, passion-
ately.

But Alexia only arched her eyebrows and
smiled.

During the New Year's day the child
had become into a woman. Alexia
had her own opinions ever scold or
blame.

They said none of this. She had no more
to do with the school.

Scarlett could
do nothing for the next day when
Alexia out-
shone them all.

What is to be
said of her?
said Mrs. Ar-
dell help being a