

"CURFEW MUST NOT RING TO-NIGHT."

BY ROSA A. HARTWICK.

England's sun was setting o'er the hills so far away,  
Filled the land with misty beauty at the close of one sad day;  
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair,  
He with steps so slow and weary, she with sunny, floating hair;  
He with bowed head sad and thoughtful, she with lips so cold and white,  
Struggling to keep back the murmur—"Curfew must not ring to-night."  
"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison old,  
With its walls so tall and gloomy, walls so dark and damp and cold;  
"I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night to die,  
At the ringing of the curfew, and no earthly help is nigh;  
Cromwell'll not be here till sunset," and her face grew strangely white,  
As she spoke in husky whispers—"Curfew must not ring to-night."  
"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton (every word pierced her young heart,  
Like a thousand gleaming arrows—like a deadly poisoned dart.)  
"Long, long years I've rung the curfew, from that gloomy, shadowed tower,  
Every evening, just at sunset, it has told the twilight hour;  
I have done my duty ever—tried to do it just and right,  
Now I'm old I will not miss it—girl, the curfew rings to-night!"  
Wild her eyes and pale each feature, stern and white her thoughtful brow,  
As within her heart's deep centre, Bessie made a solemn vow.  
She had listened, as the judges read, without a tear or sigh,  
At the ringing of the curfew Basil Underwood must die,  
And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright,  
One low murmur scarcely spoken—"Curfew must not ring to-night!"  
She with light step bounded forward, sprang within the old church door,  
Left the old man coming slowly, paths he'd trod so oft before,  
Not a moment paused the maiden, but with cheek and brow aglow,  
She gazed up the gloomy tower, where the bell rung to and fro,  
Then she climbed the slimy ladder, dark, without one ray of light,  
Upward still, her pale lips saying—"Curfew shall not ring to-night."  
She has reached the topmost ladder, o'er her hangs the great dark bell,  
And the awful gloom beneath her, like the pathway down to hell.  
See the ponderous tongue is swinging, 'tis the hour of curfew now,  
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath and paled her brow.  
Shall she let it ring? No, never! her eyes flash with sudden light,  
As she springs and grasps it firmly—"Curfew shall not ring to-night!"  
Out she swung, far out, the city seemed a tiny speck below,  
There twixt heaven and earth suspended as the bell swung to and fro,  
And the half deaf sexton ringing (years he had not heard the bell),  
And he thought that twilight curfew rang young Basils funeral knell.  
Still the maiden clinging firmly, cheeks and brow so pale and white,  
Stilled her frightened hearts wild beating—"Curfew SHALL NOT RING TO-NIGHT!"

It was o'er—the bell ceased swaying, and the maiden stepped once more  
Firmly on the damp old ladder, where for hundred years before  
Human foot had not been planted, and wharshe this night had done  
Should be told long ages after, as the rays of setting sun  
Light the sky with mellow beauty, aged sires, with heads of white,  
Tell the children why the curfew did not ring that one sad night.  
O'er the distant hills came Cromwell—Bessie saw him, and her brow,  
Lately white with sickening horror, glows with sudden beauty now,  
At his feet she told her story, showed her hands all bruised and torn,  
And her sweet young face so haggard, with a look so sad and worn,  
Touched his heart with sudden pity—lit his eyes with misty light,  
"Go, your lover lives," cried Cromwell, Curfew shall not ring to-night."

A LITTLE GOOSEY.

[The following exquisitely simple verses, from the pen of an "Unknown," will touch the heart of every father and mother]  
The chill November day was gone,  
The working world home faring;  
The wind came roaring through the streets,  
And set the gas lights flaring;  
And hopelessly and aimlessly  
The seared old leaves were flying;  
When mingled with the sighing wind  
I heard a small voice crying—  
And shivering on the corner stood  
A child of four or over;  
No cloak nor hat her small, soft arms,  
And wind blown curls to cover,  
Her dimpled face was stained with tears,  
Her round, blue eyes ran over;  
She cherished in her wee, cold hand,  
A bunch of faded clover.  
And one hand round her treasure, while  
She slipped in mine the other,  
Half-scared, half-confidential, said,  
"Oh! please, I want my mother."  
"Tell me your street and number, pet;  
Don't cry, I'll take you to it."  
Sobbing she answered, "I forget;  
The organ made me do it."  
"He came and played at Milly's steps;  
The monkey took the money,  
And so I followed down the street,  
The monkey was so funny,  
I've walked about a hundred hours,  
From one street to another;  
The monkey's gone, I've spoiled my flowers—  
Oh! please, I want my mother."  
"But what's your mother's name, and what  
The street? now think a minute."  
My mother's name is mamma dear—  
The street—I can't begin it."  
"But what is strange about the house,  
Or new, not like the others?"  
"I guess you mean my trundle bed,  
Mine and my little brother's."  
"Oh! dear! I ought to be at home  
To help him say his prayers,  
He's such a baby he forgets,  
And we are both such players—  
And there's a bar between to keep  
From pitching on each other,  
For Harry rolls when he's asleep;  
Oh, dear! I want my mother."  
The sky grew stormy; people passed  
All muffled, homeward faring;  
"You'll have to spend the night with me,"  
I said, at last, despairing.  
I tied a handkerchief round her neck—  
"What ribbon's this, my blossom?"  
"Why! don't you know!" she smiling,  
asked,  
And drew it from her bosom.  
A card, with number, street and name;  
My eyes astonished met it;  
"For," said the little one, "you see  
I might sometimes forget it;  
And so I wear a little thing  
That tells you all about it;  
For mother says she's very sure  
I would get lost without it."

THE SNOW.

Oh! the snow, the beautiful snow,  
Filling the sky and the earth below;  
Over the house-tops, over the street,  
Over the heads of the people you meet,  
Dancing,  
Flirting,  
Skiimming along,  
Beautiful snow! it does no wrong;  
Flying to kiss a fair lady's cheek,  
Clinging to lips in a frolicsome freak:  
Beautiful snow, from the heaven above,  
Pure as an angel, gentle as a dove.  
Oh! the snow, the beautiful snow,  
How the flakes gather and laugh as they go,  
Whirling about in its maddening fun,  
It plays, in its glee, with every one.  
Chasing,  
Laughing,  
Hurrying by;  
It lights on the face, it sparkles the eye,  
And the dogs, with a bark and a bound,  
Snap at the crystals that eddy around—  
The town is alive and its heart in a glow,  
To welcome the coming of the beautiful snow!  
How wild the crowd goes swaying along,  
Hailing each other with humor and song,  
How the gay sledges like meteors flash by,  
Bright for the moment, then lost to the eye—  
Ringing,  
Swinging,  
Dashing they go,  
Over the crust of the beautiful snow:  
Snow so pure when it falls from the sky,  
To be trampled in mud by the crowd rushing  
by;  
To be trampled and tracked by thousands of  
feet,  
Till it blends with the filth in the horrible  
street.  
Once I was pure as the snow—but I fell!  
Fell like the snow-flakes from heaven to hell!  
Fell to be trampled as the filth of the street,  
Fell to be scoffed at, spit on and beat!  
Pleading,  
Cursing,  
Dreading to die,  
Selling my soul to whoever would buy;  
Daring in shame for a morsel of bread;  
Hating the living and fearing the dead;  
Merciful God! have I fallen so low?  
And yet I was once like the beautiful snow.  
Once I was fair as the beautiful snow,  
With an eye like its crystals, a heart like its  
glow;  
Once I was loved for my innocent grace—  
Flattered, and sought for the charms of my face!  
Father,  
Mother,  
Sister, all,  
God and myself, I have lost by my fall;  
The veriest wretch that goes shivering by  
Will make a wide sweep, lest I wander too nigh;  
For all that on or above me I know,  
There is nothing that's pure as the beautiful  
snow.  
How strange it should be that this beautiful  
snow  
Should fall on a sinner with nowhere to go;  
How strange it should be when the night comes  
again,  
If the snow and the ice struck my desperate  
brain;  
Fainting,  
Freezing,  
Dying alone;  
Too wicked for prayer, too weak for a moan  
To be heard in the streets of a crazy town,  
Gone mad in the joy of the snow coming down,  
To be and to die, is my terrible woe,  
With a bed and a shroud of the beautiful snow.  
CONSISTENCY, THOU ART A JEWEL.—The earliest trace of this quotation is in a ballad called "Jolly Robin Roundhead," published in 1754, and reads thus: "Tush, tush, my lassie, such thoughts resign, Comparisons are cruel; Fine pictures suit in frames as fine, Consistency's a jewel."