

On Christmas eve the drowsy heads
 Went early to their downy beds,
 That all from sweet repose might borrow
 More blooming roses for the morrow;
 While even the watchful chanticleer
 Forgot to blow his clarion clear,
 And sitting snugly on his perch,
 Was silent as the village church.
 But when the rays of morning creep
 Down the gray spire of St. Philippe,
 And cast its shadows o'er the way
 Just at the foot of Grand Marais,
 The wooden cock that at its peak
 Stood opening wide his gilded beak,
 Thought surely there was something wrong
 To make his brothers mute so long.
 Uprising on his sinewy toes,
 Far out his gorgeous breast he throws,
 While of the bracing air he quaffed
 A deep exhilarating draught;
 Then from the bottom of his throat
 He crowed so fierce a trumpet note
 That all the country stared aghast,
 Astounded by that sudden blast;
 And every rooster, roused to feel
 A rival worthy of his steel,
 Met the fierce chapel guardian's crow
 With a defiant *coquerico!*
 Up from their beds the slumbering people
 Sprang at that summons from the steeple,
 And every bachelor and maid
 In rustic garments neat arrayed,
 With sparkling eyes and glowing face,
 Prepared to figure at the race.
 Too far from Fashion's halls to get
 The work of Ma'm'selle Tond Minette,
 The blooming damsels managed still
 To show the power of taste and skill.
 And when they all had met together,
 Rose tinted by the bracing weather,
 They made philosopher and dunce
 Fall swift in love with all at once.

The mass was over, and the sleighs
 Came sliding o'er the crystal ways,
 As shining birds from flower to flower,
 Dart swiftly in the summer hour.
 The swan-necked carioles make the scene
 Lively with scarlet, gold, and green,
 The bright-eyed pacers, roan and bay,
 Caper like little boys at play,
 And toss their heads, as if they knew
 As much as human horses do.
 The lady Claire, with courteous mien,
 Beams like a radiant fairy queen;
 But while she swiftly moved her eyes
 O'er the contestants for the prize,
 She turned a moment pale as snow,
 Then blushed with such a ruddy glow
 That all the maidens then and there
 Owned there was none so good and fair,
 And wished success to lovely Claire.
 For well, with ready wit, they guessed
 She had a purpose in her breast
 That none from her devoted swain
 The triumph of the course should gain;