

When having joined the dancers in the barn,
 The fiddle shrieked as a broad hint to kiss,
 (A hint, you may be sure, not thrown away.)
 'Twas sight to see the good squire and his dame
 Lead gaily off along the echoing floor,
 With set to partners, hands across, and swing,
 And down the laughing middle and up again,
 While after them a rush of merry hearts,
 With light steps, through the mazy figure flew,
 With flash of eyes like summer lightning playing
 And flying words like rain of arrow shafts,
 And tangle of white necks and flying hair,
 And swirling skirts like drifts of colored snow,—
 Ah! happy time of youth and heartiness!
 Ah! warm the blood that tingles in young veins!
 So sped the dance: but when they had gone down
 The opening contra dance of twenty couples,
 The stout old squire and dame, both scant of breath,
 And feeling they had done enough for fame,
 Resigned their places to the feathier feet,
 And joined their friends around the parlor fire.

Meanwhile the graver people by the blaze,—
 A brother justice it might be, or so,
 And eke the doctor of the settlement;
 The parson of the parish, certainly,
 Who on small income did a deal of good,
 Yet had his views; his was the legal faith,
 And other sects were but by tolerance;
 With him the reverend Scottish minister,
 Who held the sterner forms of Calvin's creed;
 The neighboring curé, too, a kindly man,
 But with the priestly cast of countenance,
 A priest who labored humbly in his cure
 With no hopes of an archiepiscopate,—
 Sate gossiping, and, for the time, at least,
 The secular School Act was a thing ignored.

Until the supper called the dancers in
 To such a banquet as a farm can spread,
 Of food and home-grown luxuries, such as rest
 As lightly as a quiet conscience, on
 Digestion born of healthful appetite.
 Nor food alone, but fruit and winter flowers
 Were extras rarely wanting with the squire,
 Who though he used did not abuse good cheer,
 And so upon his board there sparkled bright
 The crystal amber with Nantz eau-de-vie,
 Or ruddy with the blood of Portugal
 And amethyst with vintage of Auvergne,
 Selected by a friend of former years
 Now in the smuggling isle of French Pierre,
 Although the casks came through the custom house.

Thus passed the hour in family festival
 While all the time the old year lay a-dying,
 And the new year was waiting to be born.

At long and length the hall clock rung out *twelve*,
 And Time cut one more notch on Terra's zone,
 When the host rising, with a brimming glass,
 And looking kindly round the circle, said: