

BETWEEN THE WINTER AND THE SPRING.

BETWEEN the Winter and the Spring
One came to me at dead of night:
I heard him well as any might,
Although his lips, murmuring,
Made no sweet sounds for my delight;
Also, I know him, though long days
(It seemed) had fallen across my ways
Since I had felt his comforting.

It was quite dark, but I could see
His hair was yellow as the sun;
And his soft garments, every one,
Were white as angels' throats may be;
And as some man whose pain is done
At last, and peace is surely his,
His eyes were perfect with great bliss
And seemed so glad to look at me.

I knew that he had come to bring
The change that I was waiting for,
And, as he crossed my rush-strown floor,
I had no thought of questioning;
And then he kissed me, o'er and o'er,
Upon the eyes; so I fell
Asleep untroubled,—knowing well
That morning would fulfil the Spring.

And when they came at early morn
And found that I at last was dead,
Some two or three knelt by my bed
And prayed for one they deemed forlorn;
But he they wept for only said
(Thinking of when the old days were),
"Alas that God had need of her
The very morning Spring was born!"
—Francis Sherman, in "Matins."

...As We Go...

By Maud Tisdale.

ALL the morning the snow has been falling fast and thick. The trees outside my window are bending down with the weight of it, and the little pathway from the garden gate is quite obliterated. The world is beautiful. The snow so soft and white, and clinging, shrouds every imperfection. Perhaps it is this semblance to a shroud that makes the winter time in the country seem so still and peaceful. Too still, too peaceful! A sweet little bird—which winter winds have failed to drive away—is chirping on one of the snow-laden boughs as merrily as if it scented spring already in the air. Spring? With the snow still softly falling, and the pathway to the garden one long white snow-bank? Poor, silly little bird!

It is such a quaint old garden that the very thought of it brings spring.—The apple blossoms waving over the little rustic summer-house, and the dear old-fashioned lilac filling all the air with its perfume. Oh, there's nothing like it, nothing. Even now one sniffs the roses—glorious!

But the snow—will it never cease? And there are bells—merry bells with a laugh to blend, away off in a distance.

A quiet snowy afternoon. We were tired of reading, tired of staying indoors. What could we do? Skating? That was done for—the lake was one vast field of snow. Walking? Impossible, where skirts are concerned. Driving? The very thing. So away sped two cavaliers to order the horses and a sleigh full of robes—and bells, dozens of bells, ropes of bells. We were not long



in getting ready, and were soon tucked snugly in the sleigh—a John Gilpin party with four instead of six "precious souls to dash through thick and thin."

Smack went the whip, the runners sled.
Were never folks so mad!

Our own little village we quite scorned. Away we fled—down hill and up; past church yards and spook-groves, and along the edge of a bush where once a man was foully murdered, and his restless spirit still wanders there each night-fall, seeking and crying for avengement. Full fifteen miles we flew along before we pulled up, and unwound ourselves from out the robes. Fifteen miles of swift driving in the frosty air, and tea-time has come. Anyone would be hungry. We were ravenous. The way-side inn was warm and comfortable and the tea delightful. So was the girl who waited on the table—this the youth whispered to me as he slyly winked at the pretty girl. So were the pickles, so was everything—even the plum jam, which as the youth assured me, would come after the turkey. It was all delightful; and the organ in the little sitting-room up stairs, on which we could drum away to our heart's content completed the charm.

Afterwards, we pulled up our chairs around the log-fire and told stories, ghost stories, till we could hear the chains rattling, and feel the eeriness about us, and were almost frightened into art, and studied the wonderful prints in the little sitting-room with keenest enjoyment—the fair lady, and the dark jealous lady, and the disturbing Adonis were all there. Fish and fruit were also served upon the walls in the very latest fashion; while the menu card of a famous banquet once held in this little inn, was framed elaborately and hung over the organ where no one could fail to read it. We were loathe to leave, but the hours were flying, and the horses were waiting, and the bells were jingling, so we hurried out into the winter night, and were soon speeding homeward again.

In a room, whose windows opened upon a far garden, a little boy lay dying; it was June, and the roses were in their first bloom. It seemed hard to die in June, and the little room in which the boy lay was close and hot; while from the open window came the delicious fragrance of the roses. The child buried his head in the pillows, and tearfully begged his mother to take away the roses—they choked him so.

"But there are no roses in the room, dearest," said the mother—"out... in the garden, but not here, my child." "Then take them away from the garden; tear them up or I will die. Oh, mother, tear them up!" The delirious child rose in the bed and gasped for breath, but the only air that was in the room was filled with the perfume of the roses. "I will close the window, sweet," said the mother, as she kissed the little white forehead, and the wan, colorless cheeks, and the pale, pale lips. She closed the window, but the air soon became torrid in the summer heat.

"Snow," cried the child, "mother, make it snow—oh, make it snow, and I will get better. Make it snow, and make the bells jingle, and take away the roses, oh, take away the roses!" In his

great agony the child screamed, and fell back, unconscious, among the pillows.

The door was opened softly, and the doctor came into the room; he noticed the closed window and the heavy breathing of the dying child. The mother explained, hurriedly, disjointedly, of the child's delirium. The doctor stooped over the bed and opened out the child's hot, clenched hand, and felt the galloping pulse. He shook his head sadly. "He will regain consciousness presently—we must humor him. I think the roses had better be taken away," was all he said. Next to her boy, the woman loved her roses better than anything in the world. A little dry sob prevented her from answering the doctor, but she bowed assent, and passed out of the room. Her face was white and set when she entered again.

"I have told them to take away the roses,—leaves, roots, everything; and to bury them—deep in the lake,—deep" she repeatedly wildly.

The child was murmuring—the doctor and the mother hurried to the bedside.

"Bells, mother, merry bells!"

"Ah, the bells—we must have them," said the doctor, "you watch the child and I will see to them."

So the mother sat by the bed, and crooned some old lullaby, unconscious of sound or sense. The window had been pushed open again, but the blind was drawn and flapped in the light summer air.

Presently, in the distance, a peal of bells were heard—rippling bells, whose soft tones were borne upon the June breezes; and with the dying order of the roses were wafted by the flapping curtain through the silent sick-room.

The child moved restlessly on his pillows, then opened his eyes, and, with a faint smile, beckoned his mother to bend nearer him.

"I have been dreaming, mother, dear," he whispered, "I dreamed that it was summer-time, and that your lovely roses were choking me to death. You would like to die that way, my mother—you love the roses so. But it was dreadful, and I was suffocating, surely suffocating, by thousands and thousands of roses that were piled upon me. I must have nearly died, mother, for I remember no more, till I awoke just now and heard the sleigh-bells and knew that it was winter, and that the roses were just a dream."

"Mother," he paused and struggled a little for breath, "mother, it was such a real dream that, even now, I seem to smell the roses. How merry those bells are—someone must be coming here, mother, to ask how your little boy is. Mother," and he paused again, "and you go and tell them, when they ask about me, that I will never be better—not now; perhaps, if they had come sooner and I had heard the bells; but the dream, mother, the dream will kill me."

The woman could not answer—her face was buried in the pillows, that he might not see her crying.

"Will you tell them, mother," he asked again? "I will—my—sweet," the mother spoke between her sobs.

"Go then, mother, dear."

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When the woman returned the child lay dead. The sweet eyes were closed forever, and the soft lashes brushed the ivory cheeks, and a smile seemed almost to dimple the little mouth, while through the open window, from adown the maple-shaded lane, the bells were still ringing.

