

tion to fall in, and soon reanimation glowed in every countenance.

Soon Spencer, in an audible soliloquy, said it was time to go home. Soon there was a general rising, and search for overcoats, caps and overshoes.

One after another the jumpers came and sped away. The parson's was the last to come.

"Why, where is my rig?" said Edie McMahon.

Mrs. Carter had made arrangements for Ike Martin to drive her home, and she had been waiting in the glow and shadow of the fire.

"Where is Ike?" asked Mrs. Carter, as Tom came in. "He was going to drive Edie home."

"Why, I don't know," Tom replied. "He hain't been at the stable. What in blazes will that rattle-pate do next?"

As if in answer to the inquiry, a loud snore came from behind the stove, and there beside the swill bucket, his back against the wall, his head wobbling on his shoulder, his mouth wide agape, they found him fast asleep.

The contrast in his uncouthness and the grace and spirit of the girl so filled the parson's mind that he humbly asked to drive her home. Soon they were out alone in the wondrous, white night, where the snow sparkled wave upon wave, great and still as a graven sea.

The moon was at its full; it seemed to stand still in the very centre of the sky, pouring down its dripping light. A fog had run along the snow, enamelled all things in pearl, and then had fled away suddenly as it had come. Like the tracings on a frosty pane stood out the great woods of Netley, the dead prairie weeds that looked through the snow were like the waxen flowers that sometimes deck a bridal cake. As he arranged the robes about them, her skirts pressed against him, and he felt that wild, trembling in his breath. Was it

the rhythm of the bells or was he deceived again, as he heard once more the "Trovatore":

"Turn unto visions fairer,
Where hope is ne'er betrayed."

"Great God!" he thought, "is there anything fairer, purer than this great white midnight and the breathing, laughing girl by my side?"

They passed the fringe of wild willows that circled like a coral reef around McMahon's house. A great hound bayed at the door, but at the sound of Edie's laughter it sank into slumber again.

The parson took the girl's hand as she slipped from the cutter, and pressed it very lightly. She did not take it away. They said good-night, and he lingered to arrange his gloves and gauntlets.

On the step before the door one little foot was playing, which, though cased in slipper and overshoe again, seemed such a toy. The curls that wandered over her forehead were gemmed with frost, and a frosty jewel trembled on each eyelid. Then came a silence, a silence so tense that it seemed as if they two were spirits in the great, white spirit world alone. And, O shades of land! the parson stooped and kissed her. The wild blood came pulsing through their veins, their eyes met in a wild, startled look, and she—she knew not why—stepped to the door. Without a word they parted.

But Edie, up in her little room, sat long before she slept, and ever singing in her brain was the one tumultuous thought: "He kissed me! oh, oh, he kissed me!" And the parson—his tired body and his wakened soul seemed in a maze. By the little iron stove, in his study, he stood, and the ever-recurring memory thrilled and startled him again: "I kissed her; oh, ah, God! I kissed her!"

And around him the long, black cassack fell, drawn in by its silken girdle.