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THE OLD HAT.

I had a hat it was not all a hat—part of the rim was gone, yet still I wore it on, and people wondered as I passed; some turned to gaze, others just cast an eye and soon withdrew it, as 'twere in contempt, but still my hat, although so fashionless, in complement extreme had that within surpassing show. My head continued warm—being sheltered from the weather—spite of all the want (as has been said before of brim.

A change came o'er the color of my hat—that which was black grew brown, and then men stared with both their eyes (they stared with one before); the wonder now was twofold, and it seemed strange that a thing so torn and old should still be worn by one who might—but let that pass, I had my reasons, which might be revealed but for some counter reasons, far more strong, which tied my tongue to silence. Time passed: green spring, and flowery summer, autumn and frosty winter came, and went, and came again, but still, through the seasons of two years, in park, in city, yea at routs and balls, the hat was worn and borne. Then folks grew wild with curiosity, and whispers rose, and questions passed about—how one so trim in coats, boots, pumps, gloves, trousers, could ensconce his caput in a covering so vile.

A change came o'er the nature of my hat—grease spots appeared, but still in silence on I wore it; and then