

Tired himself at last,
His eyelids fell. He dreamed a moment deep,
Then wide awoke and starting up he wept,
And as he sobbed he said, "I've seen my kitten
In the cold ravine. Oh, let it in!"
This was a kitten lost a while before,
A creature in his heart as much as treasure
Real or ideal fills the heart
Of any ardent man. He ever longed
And hoped for its return. And every night
The door was opened and the yearning call
Went out into the empty air. And every
Night he saw the lost one's dish supplied,
Which morning found untouched. The mother did
Her best to stay his tears, and as she bent
And tucked him warm in bed she said that maybe
Santa Claus would bring another kitten.
"Tie a great big stocking, mother; make it
Open wide and warm." She did so, kissed him,
And he closed his eyes.

One hand alone,
Would fill that empty stocking, nor forget.
A friend or neighbor would come later on,
But David's eyes when morning came would look
On emptiness, save for mother's hand. Nay, stay,—
At midnight, yea, at midnight, when the moon
Was still a silver lamp, a creature poor,
Benighted, wandered to the cottage door.
Ill-treated, cold, too sick to cry, it looked
With wistful eyes beneath the fastened door.
Then turned and went aside and trembling climbed
The sloping birchen tree and reached the roof.
Adown the chimney peered, then slowly crept,
Then fell. It lay upon the hearth a time.