

JOY—O earth ! be glad to-night,
Clad in your heavenly robes of white ;
O earth ! ring out your great delight.

SNOW—And I have been in the forest awhile,
And I have decked every spire and aisle,
Till now with fretted arch and column
It stands a Cathedral vast and solemn,
Like the marble temples that men raise—
White carven marble temples of praise ;
And there the night-winds sing and sigh
The grand chorale of the sky.

FOREST—Ah, fairy sister, well I knew,
What marvels your magic art would do ;
But before you came the solemn quiet
Of these ancient woods was drowned in a riot
Of joyous voices and gleesome laughter,
Shouts ringing out and echoes after,
Footsteps bounding and sleigh-bells jingling
The merriest noises merrily mingling.

JOY—I was there, too,
All the gay young hearts delighting,
All the wild young heads exciting,
Till they scarce knew what to do.

SNOW—But why did they come to the forest dim ?
Surely not to list to the evening hymn
Of the solemn pines. More grave their mood
If that were why they came to the wood.

FOREST—They sought for slender young trees,
Such as still wave their branches green
And fresh in the frosty breeze.
Balsam, and spruce, and fir,
The fairest that ever were ;
And boughs from the tall old giant that bend,
Glad that they have aught to lend.

JOY—And to-morrow night,
O, what wild delight !
When in gay parlours the fair tree stands,
Gemmed with a hundred glittering tapers,
And the loveliest gifts of loving hands.