

Beneath a frosted birch,
Lit up to brilliance by the burnished moon,
The shingle cottage stood, a humble home.
The labour of the day was done. The lamp
Within sent out its yellow rays athwart
The silver snow and on the well-washed sheets
And other things that hung on lines and told
The woman's calling. Work. from dawn of day
Till dark, with poor reward.

CHRISTMAS EVE

'Twas Christmas Eve.

The mother and her little boy (his name
Was David Annandale) sat down to read
And converse hold before they sought repose.
A widow young, with richest auburn hair,
Bright hazel eyes 'neath finely arching brows,
Teeth of pearl, and sympathetic smile
Most sweet. No wonder that her child, a lad
Of six, with raven hair and ruddy cheeks.
Should find in her alone his heart's desire.
His reigning thought, the perfect one. His eyes
Loveliest no blemish saw in careworn looks.

Her stories, read and told with girlish zeal.
Of beaver, bear and wolf, and jet black squirrel,
But, best of all, of smiling Santa Claus.
Aroused an interest intense. The deep
Ravine itself and other themes all passed
Beneath her spell. And he, tho' entertained,
Was also purified and lifted up.
"My mother, dear," he said, "When I'm a man,
I'll work and work for you, and buy a castle
And a carriage; you will be a lady.
And nevermore be tired."