

Wide open swung the great hall door
 Before the east was grey with dawn,
 And sleighs with argosies of girls
 Came jingling up across the lawn ;
 Came youths astride of prancing steeds,
 Came cousins to the tenth remove,
 With cousins' greetings by the sweet
 Life services as cousins love.
 The silver tankard went around
 To every lip with brave good cheer,
 According to the ancient rites ;
 For Christmas comes but once a year.

They feasted high at Thornton Hall ;
 The Christmas revel lasted long ;
 They danced the old Virginia reels,
 And chanted many a jovial song.
 The old folks prosed ; the young made love ;
 They played the romps of olden days ;
 They told strange tales of ghost and witch,
 While sitting round the chimney's blaze.
 But though the pile of light wood knots,
 Defied the frosty atmosphere ;
 The back-log still held bravely out ;
 For Christmas comes but once a year.

And at the quarter merry rang
 The fiddle's scrape, the banjo's twang ;
 How rhythmic beat the happy feet ;
 How rollicksome the songs they sang.
 No work at all for hands to do,
 But work abundant for the jaws ;
 And good things plenty, smoking hot,
 Made laughter come in good haw-haws.
 They frolicked early, frolicked late,
 And freely flowed the grog, I fear,
 According to the settled rule ;
 For Christmas comes but once a year.

So passed the merry Christmas week,
 And New Year's morning came and passed ;
 The revel ceased ; the guests went home ;
 The back-log burned in two at last.
 And then old master sent for Ned,
 Still mellow with protracted grog,
 And asked him where in Satan's name
 He picked him out that fire-proof log ;
 And Ned with all that dignity
 That drink confers, contrived to speak :
 "I tuk and cut a black-gum log
 And soaked it nine days in de creek.
 I fears it was a wicked thing,
 I'm feared to meet the oberseer ;
 But den you must remember, sah,
 Dat Christmas comes but once a year."

"THE VOICE IN THE TWI- LIGHT."

I. COR. : III., 10-15.

I was sitting alone in the twilight,
 With spirit troubled and vexed,
 With thoughts that were morbid and gloomy
 And faith that was sadly perplexed.

Some homely work I was doing
 For the child of my love and care,
 Some stitches half wearily setting
 In the endless need of repair.

But my thoughts were about "the building,"
 The work some day to be tried ;
 And that only the gold and the silver,
 And the precious stones should abide.

And remembering my own poor efforts,
 The wretched work I had done,
 And, even when trying most truly,
 The meagre success I had won.

"It is nothing but wood, hay and stubble,"
 I said : "It will all be burned—
 This useless fruit of the talents
 One day to be returned.

And I have so longed to serve Him,
 And sometimes I *know* I have tried,
 But I'm sure when He sees such a building,
 He will never let it abide."

Just then, as I turned the garment,
 That no rent should be left behind,
 My eye caught an odd little bungle,
 Of mending and patchwork combined.

My heart grew suddenly tender,
 And something blinded my eyes
 With one of those sweet intuitions
 That sometimes made us so wise.

Dear child, she wanted to help me ;
 I knew 'twas the best she could do ;
 But oh, what a botch she had made it—
 The grey mismatching the blue.

And yet—can you understand it ?—
 With a tender smile and a tear,
 And a half compassionate yearning,
 I felt her grown more dear.

Then a sweet voice broke the silence,
 And the dear Lord said to me :
 "Art thou tenderer for the little child
 Than I am tender for thee ?"

Then straightway I knew His meaning,
 So full of compassion and love,
 And my faith came back to its refuge,
 Like the glad returning dove.

For I thought when the Master Builder
 Comes down, His Temple to view,
 To see what rents must be mended,
 And what must be builded anew.

Perhaps, as He looks o'er the building,
 He will bring my work to the light,
 And seeing the marring and bungling,
 And how far it all is from right.

He will feel as I felt for my darling,
 And will say, as I said to her :
 "Dear child, she wanted to help me,
 And love for me was the spur ;