

"O, Sir! one does not need a pair of eyes
To see the hour of battle close at hand!
We soldiers, lying down upon the grass,
Smoke and converse among ourselves, and judge
Of this and that—just as our betters do—
They say in camp, to-day will end retreat;
And knowing our old General is of stuff
That will not warp or shrink—they hold it sure
That Stony Creek will be attacked to-night."
The man stood up at strict attention while
Young Basil answered him—"Go now and tell
The Colonel that I shall report at ten
To take his orders, and if I want men
I'll not forget you, friend! So now begone!"
The orderly remounted, and like fire
His red coat flashed between the lofty pines
A minute, and then vanished down the path
That seemed to run into the throat of night,
Where dragon Darkness swallowed up the day.
The evening star shone bright upon the hill,
Love's beacon guiding, when they turned to go.
Twilight drew round their feet, its fairy web
By night-elves woven in the darkening grass,
As down the hill they loitered slowly home.
The house stood sharply outlined in the faint
Pale, silver gray of evening, and each tree
Was pencilled on the clear but fading sky,
In inky tracery to its finest bough.
The curtains were undrawn, the lamps unlit,
But on the windows played a lambent glow
Of cheerful firelight, from the open hearth,
Where blazed the maple logs, and crickets sang
The music of an old and happy home—
While, now and then, a face against the pane
Was pressed, as if to look for their return.
The sound of tinkling bells rose on the air,
With bleat of sheep, barking, and voice of men,
Shutting the folds up safely for the night,
To guard the flock from ravage of the wolves,
Which, near at hand, howled in the hungry woods,
Or bears that prowled up from the dismal marsh,
Thick set with jungle of wild tamarac,
In search of prey upon the Flamboro' hills.
Not speaking much, too full of what she feared
Might happen ere to-morrow—Isa said,
While clinging to the arm she knew must soon