

O, Bold is the Frost.

BY ELIZABETH BARTER BURTON.

Oh, bold is the frost that comes dipping and nipping,
And painting the woodland over,
Till the woods are ablaze in the soft autumn haze
That hangs o'er the distant ever,
And the thin, crisp air to the meadow so fair
Clings with the strength of a lover.

Oh, bold is the frost that comes tipping and tipping
His goblet of gems o'er the trees,
Till the acorns fall down from the oak's lofty crown
At every caress of the breeze,
And the woodland perfume and the grape's purple bloom
The world-weary senses appease.

Oh, bold is the frost that comes sipping and sipping
The breath of the summer away,
And it kills in its strife that the springtime gave life
In the tender sunshine of May;
And it frights the bee in the hollow old tree,
And fills every heart with dismay.

Oh, bold is the frost that comes dipping and dipping
Its hands in each river and rill,
Till it stops their bright smiles and frolicsome wiles,
And bids their blue wavelets be still.
Then it trails its fierce hands o'er the innocent lands,
And withers the valley and hill.

Oh, bold is the frost that comes gripping and gripping,
With fingers so latter and cold.
Oh, help those, good Lord, when the frost is abroad,
Who have neither labour nor gold.
For the rich in their stealth they garner their wealth
With grimness that cannot be told.

THE KING'S MESSENGER;

OR,

LAWRENCE TEMPLE'S PROBATION.

(A STORY OF CANADIAN LIFE.)

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XV.

PERIL AND RESCUE—THE GUIDING STAR.

It comes—the beautiful the free,
The crown of all humanity,—
In silence & alone
To seek the elected one.

—LONGFELLOW—*Lady Macbeth*.

A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

—WORDSWORTH.

LAWRENCE did not neglect during the winter to keep up the round of his appointments, far and near, especially, as may be supposed, that at Owen's Corners. On snow shoes, or on horse back, or in a rude jumper, how bad soever the weather or the road, he was always at his post. On one occasion, when the drifts were so deep that his horse fell down, unable to proceed, he unhitched the outdone animal, left his "jumper" in the snow, and led his horse to the school house, where a large company were awaiting patiently his confidently expected appearance.

When possible, the frozen lake was chosen, as offering a smooth and level road. One night—it was toward spring, and a thaw and rain had weakened the ice—he was overtaken by night some distance from the landing. As it became dark, he hugged the shore pretty closely, in order to avoid getting lost on the ice. At length he saw gleaming in the distance a well-known light. It was that of the room in which the fair Edith Norris sat and read, and sewed or sketched. Had he been

unusually familiar with Shakespeare, he would probably have said with Romeo—

"Yonder's the East, and Juliet is my sun,"

but he simply thought, "Is that fair creature to be the loadstar of my life?"

These pleasant reflections, however, were soon ended. Suddenly, in a moment, his horse disappeared, as utterly as if he had been annihilated. Lawrence sprang instantly from the back of his "jumper," but was immersed in the water up to his waist. He managed to scramble out on to the ice, however, and crept carefully around to the head of his horse, which was struggling in the water. He tried, after the backwoods' fashion, to bring the animal to the surface by twisting the "lines" around his neck, and then to drag him on to the ice. But the ice kept breaking around the edge as often as he attempted this feat.

After struggling alone in the dark with the drowning horse for some time, he resolved to seek help at the landing, more than a mile off. He first drew the points of the shafts well up on the ice, so as to support the animal, and then started for the shore. But he had now completely lost his bearings, and he could not form the least idea where the landing was. He eagerly scanned the horizon, but could only see, looming through the darkness, the shadowy outline of the shore. At length—oh, joy!—there, far to the left, gleamed the solitary light which had previously gladdened his vision. It became his loadstar in peril sooner than he had thought. Would its fair mistress also? He hurried, with sturdy strides, to the shore, the chill wind piercing his wet clothing. Reaching the landing, he entered the village tavern, the nearest house, and cried, "My horse is in the lake. I'll give ten dollars if you'll get him out."

Four or five sturdy fellows immediately set out with ropes and a lantern. They spread out in skirmishing order over the lake, so as to sweep as much of its surface as possible. The rising wind blew out the lantern, and much time was lost in relighting it.

"This way," shouted Lawrence, who had run ahead. The poor animal, struggling hard in the ice-cold water, heard his voice, and faintly whinnied a reply. Lawrence hurried on, and supported the faithful creature's head till the men came up, when by main force they dragged him out on the ice. The benumbed animal was able to walk to the shore, apparently not much the worse for his icy immersion.

"Gentlemen, you have my warmest thanks," said Lawrence, when they were re-assembled in the bar-room, and he took out his meagre wallet to divide amongst them the promised reward.

"D'ye think we want your money?—not if I know myself and these jolly fellows," said the landlord—a burly, good-hearted man, though engaged in a very nefarious calling. But oftentimes, alas!

Evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart.

"Of course we don't." "Not a cent." "D'ye think we'd risk we're lives for money?" chorused the entire group.

One pitiful-looking sot, however, who had boozed by the fire while the others were on the ice, hiccupped out, "Ye might treat us to summat, noo ye've gotten yer 'orse as were as good as drowned."

"Gentlemen," said Lawrence, "it is contrary to my principles to treat or be treated to liquor; but I will be obliged, Mr. Landlord, if you will prepare for those gallant men the best coffee supper you can get up."

"Hurry for the preacher!" "He's a brick!" echoed the group—the latter expression being the very quintessence of a backwoods' compliment.

Lawrence had been wet for over an hour, and was shivering with the cold. He forwent his purpose of going to the Norris' hospitable house in his then plight, and asked for a bed at the tavern, at the same time ordering a quart of spirits to be taken up to his room, that he might bathe his benumbed limbs.

"It's good sometimes externally, gentlemen," he said; "and that is the only way it is good."

"E wants to take a soop on the sly," said the disappointed toper.

"Landlord," said Lawrence, not deigning to notice the insult, "haven't you some strychnine, that you use for killing foxes?"

"Yes. What do you want with it?" he replied, as he brought a small package from the clock-case, in which, for safety, it was hidden.

"Only this," answered Lawrence, as he poured it all into the vessel containing the spirits. "Now, gentlemen," he went on, "I'm not likely to take any of it 'on the sly,' nor any other way; but its poison is no more deadly now than it was before, only a little quicker in its operations, that is all," and he bade them a courteous good-night.

"He's a trump," said the landlord, "anyway, for all his notions. Pity he's a preacher. What a politician he'd make, with that manner of his'n! He's nobody's fool, nuther. 'Cute as a weasel, he is. If he was only runnin' for parliament now, he'd scoop up the votes at the Corners wholesale."

So great was that worthy's admiration of his unusual guest, that he refused next morning to accept anything for his entertainment over night.

"The men preferred drinks o' whisky all round to any of yer coffee stuff," he said; "an' I won't ask ye to pay for what's agin yer principles; an' as fer your bed, you're welcome here any time."

Very warm were the congratulations of the Norris family, who, in consequence of the celerity with which news travels in the country, even without telegraphs or telephones, had already heard of his adventure.

As Lawrence told the fair Edith that it was the light of her lamp that had been the guiding star that rescued him from the peril in the dark, her eyes were suffused with a sympathetic emotion. A great hope dawned like a brighter star in the young man's soul; but he strove to put the thought aside as a temptation that might come between him and the great life-work to which he was espoused as to a bride—that of the humble and ill-remunerated toil of a Methodist preacher.

The winter passed rapidly by. Successful revivals had taken place at several of the appointments, and the membership was largely increased. With the spring thaw the roads broke up, and travel was almost impossible. To Lawrence's efforts to reach his appointments might almost be applied the words of Milton, descriptive of the progress of a far different character on a far different mission:—

"O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies."

But still he bated not a jot of energy or hopefulness. As the bright spring weather came—and it comes with an almost magical transformation in these northern latitudes—the church was approaching completion. Lawrence expected that that venerable, highly-honoured, and much-beloved friend of missions, Dr. Enoch Wood—who has probably opened more churches for the worship of God than any other man in Canada—would conduct the dedication service. But that could not