

The Doorstep.

The conference-meeting through at last,
We boys around the vestry waited
To see the girls come tripping past
Like snow-birds willing to be mated.

Not braver he that leaps the wall
By level musket-flashes liten,
Than I, who stepped before them all
Who longed to see me get the mitten.

But no, she blushed and took my arm!
We let the old folks have the highway,
And started toward the Maple Farm
Along a kind of 'Covers' by-way.

I can't remember what we said -
'Twas nothing worth a song or story;
Yet that rude path by which we sped
Seemed all transformed and in a glory.

The snow was crisp beneath our feet,
The moon was full, the fields were gleaming;

✓ By hood and tippet sheltered sweet,
Her face with youth & health was beaming.

The little hand outside her muff —
O sculptor, if you could but mould it!
So lightly touched my jacket-cuff,
To keep it warm I had to hold it.

To have her with me there alone, —
'Twas love and fear and triumph blended.
At last we reached the foot-worn stone
Where this delicious journey ended.

The old folks, too, were almost home;
Her dimpled hand the catches fingered,
We heard the foot-voices nearer come,
Yet on the doorstep still we lingered.

She shook her ringlets from her hood
And with a "Thank you, Ned," dismounted,
But yet I knew she understood
With what a daring wish I trembled.

A cloud passed kindly overhead
The moon was shyly peeping through it,
Yet hid its face, as if it said,
"Come, now or never! do it! do it!"

My life till then had only known
The kiss of mother and of sister,
But somehow, full upon her own
Sweet, rosy, darling mouth, — I kissed her!

Perhaps 'twas boyish love, yet still,
O listless woman, weary lover!
To feel once more that fresh, wild thrill
I'd give, — but who can live youth over?



Gift of Frank W. Gunsaulus

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