



CHRISTMAS EVE

I.

Though fierce the winter storm-winds shout  
 And hurl their shafts in elfish glee,  
 And pile the snowdrifts high without,  
 Yet here shall Christmas merry be!  
 The holly glistens on the wall,  
 The flames leap up the chimney wide,  
 And mistletoe from rafters tall  
 Breathes forth the spell of Christmas-tide  
 As midway o'er the fire-lit space  
 Fair Doris stands with troubled air,  
 And all a captive Psyche's grace.  
 The bough has caught her  
 shining hair,  
 And youthful cheeks  
 with summer's  
 rose are vying,  
 Though round  
 the eaves  
 the wintry  
 winds are  
 sighing.

II.

Anon across the polished floor  
 There comes the sound of dainty feet,  
 And music's strains the senses lure  
 And hands in lingering clasps meet.  
 A whispered word—a startled glance,  
 An answer shy—half joy, half pain,  
 And in the mazes of the dance  
 The same old story told again.  
 What though the world in winter's grasp be  
 lying,  
 'Tis summer here, where youth and love are  
 sighing.

III.

Around the Yule log's cheery blaze  
 The wiser heads with zest sustain  
 The genial sports of other days,  
 And live their triumphs o'er again.  
 Again the glorious "tally-ho!"  
 In fancy bursts upon their ears,  
 And fox and hounds and huntsmen go  
 Across the vista of the years.  
 A Nimrod's fire still burns within,  
 Though winter's snow is on each brow,  
 And he—the mighty "whipper-in"—  
 Stands silent-voiced beside them  
 now.  
 The hunt is o'er—time's  
 steady pace  
 is gaining,  
 As Christmas  
 lights and  
 Christmas fires  
 are  
 waning.

IV.

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 From out the oaken-paneled walls,  
 Fair, pictured faces calmly gaze  
 On darkened and deserted halls,  
 So lately lit by beauty's rays.  
 And through the storm, a weird, wild  
 chorus singing,  
 From yonder tower the Christmas bells  
 are ringing.

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BEATRICE HARLOWE.

