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[From Literary Companion.]

Frost Work.

The beautiful foliage, the crown of the year,

Had been storm-struck and scattered, withered

and bare.

And the rains of the autumn were shed as a tear.

Where the withered garlands were lying

Naked and bare to the wintry sky.

Moving their arms to the bleak wind's sigh,

Sad to the heart and drear to the eye

Were the trees as the year was dying.

A cloud came drifting out of the west,

Darksome and weird were billow and crest,

And the fitful gale spoke little of rest.

As the day went on to the gloaming,

No vesper of bird met the deepening shade,

No lowing of herds as they homeward strayed,

No carol of peasant or song of maid.

No sound but the breakers foaming.

A night came heavy, darksome and drear,

A morning broke beautiful, frosty and clear.

All sadness was gone, a wonderful cheer

Came like a caress to humanity.

The clouds that haunted the winter night

Yielded their breath to the ice king's might.

And woven in beauty by elf and sprite,

Made nature a scene of vanity.

Light as the beautiful veil of a bride,

Pure as the lilies that woodlands hide,

Fairy and visions far and wide,

Enchanting the New Year morning.

No loon'er wove such a silver shawl,

Light never gilded a daintier scene

In marble hall or in forest green,

Than the wonderful frost's adorning.

Created and fringed on copse and spray,

Catching the light of a cloudless day,

Casting the hues of a diamond's ray,

Lay the snow in virgin whiteness.

Clinging in beads on the sward's thread,

Frosting like age the pine tree's head,

In forms of fanciful lightness.

Giving a bloom to the swaying vine,

Roses of white where the hiberns twine,

Bending the larch in a snowy line,

Making grove oaks fantastic,

Flinging beauty on every form.

Wayward spirit of cold and storm.

Showing a fancy wild and warm.

And art so endlessly plastic.

Child of the night, of unseen birth,

One thing pure on the face of the earth,

Water than foam from the ocean surf,

Fair work of a mystical power,

Telling our hearts that the darkest sky

And the saddest hours may yet give

When stilled like the storm; our evening sigh

May be joy in a brighter hour.

[From the Hearth and Home.]

Robert, The Wicked, Waiting for

Christmas.

"Hurrah, there! What's going on

now?"

The boy who cried out was old

enough to know why that wagon, lad-

den with Christmas greens, was toiling

up the hill toward the little

church. The very horses seemed to

know the work they were doing and a

gladness shone from every youthful

face that watched the mounting of

the precious load.

But Robert Hart did not know—

he had never seen a church adorned

for Christmas. During the summer

he had come to the town to help Far-

mer Atkins. He was a fatherless,

motherless, friendless boy, and yet

that load of evergreens going up the

hill toward the little church seemed

to draw him in a strange way. At

first no one spoke to him. The wag-

on was some distance off, when Fred

Lee shouted back: "You had better

come and see what's going on, if you

want to know."

"Haste, Fred," some one said;

"you know the girls won't want that

horrid fellow helping in the church."

"I don't know as the girls own the

church, or any one down here, either,

for that matter," said Fred. "Look

here, boys! Isn't it mean to give the

church to God!—built out of his own

sticks and stones, too—and then say

who we want to have come inside? I

don't believe we have any right to

do it."

Many times did Robert turn back

to look at the little mountain of green

ere it reached the church door. Churches

to him, meant places where folks

went to be shut up when the sun

shone brightest. He had never been

inside of one in his life. Once or

twice, he had been to a Mission

Sunday-school held in a barren up-

per room, and that was all he knew

about churches. His red hair, his

freckled face, his big hands and awk-

ward feet, his ragged, too-small

clothes, his rough words and wicked

ways—all were against poor Robert.

Good fathers and mothers in the

town warned their children to have

nothing to say to Farmer Atkins' boy.

That same afternoon Robert, hav-

ing finished his work and gained an

hour for himself, went down to skate

on Winnepeg Pond. Skating was

the one thing in which he excelled,

the one sport in which he delighted.

The boys who had carried up the

pine-tree boughs and hemlock

branches to St. John's church were

on the pond. The sun shone its

brightest and best. The ice gave

back its crystal gleaming, and the

skating was perfect, until Fred Lee

venturing too far on the thin surface,

it gave way and he fell in.

The pond was very deep. Pale

and horror-stricken the boys stood

still—not one daring to venture near

the black whirl of water where poor

Fred went out of sight—when, with

a kind of a swoop, Robert Hart came

down upon them and crying out,

"Out of the way, boys," he rushed

by and with a plunge disappeared

in the cold blackness.

Instantly, Robert's bravery stirred

them into action. They rushed to

where some dried branches lay heaped

on the shore, dragged the longest

ones to the place and at last had the

joy of helping both the boys from

the water, or rather of helping Rob-

ert—the boy he held in his arms was

unconscious.

"Who'd a thought it!" exclaimed

one of the boys, as they were all rub-

bing and pounding poor Fred back

into life and warmth. "That wet

clap running off there is worth

more'n any of us, rough as he is."

Fred was led to his home by his

troop of friends, all punching and

shaking him occasionally to keep

him from freezing. But, ah! what

a happy home his was that night!

On the farmer's hard bed lay Rob-

ert, wondering still about the load

of greens. He made errands around

by the way of the church during the</