

1250

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 brave he that leaps the wall
By level musket-flashes liten,
Then I, who stepped before them all
Who longed to see me get the misten.

Said no, she blushed and took my arm!
We let the old folk lean the highway,
And started toward the Maple Farm
Along a kind of lovers' byway.

I can't remember what we said,
'Twas nothing worth a song or story;

2

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 wood and tipple sheltered sweet,
Her face with youth and 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 that delicious journey ended.

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

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

A cloud passed quickly 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 lips too 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?



Edmund Clarence Poeman.

STEDMAN (Edmund Clarence). American
Poet. Autograph poem, signed. "The
Doorstep." 3pp., 8vo. \$17.50

*Complete transcript of his pretty poem, "The
Doorstep." Twelve stanzas of four lines each.

"THE DOORSTEP.

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Who longed to see me get the mitten.

But no, she blushed and took my arm!
We let the old folks have the highway,
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Along a kind of lovers' by-way."
Etc., etc.