CHRISTMAS IN A WAGON.

Youths' Companion: A short procession of roughly-dressed miners, together with a few sad-faced women, came slowly and quietly down the rocky and narrow trail leading from a little group of gloomy and stunted pines to a dozen or more small log houses, and three or four tents half-way between the summit of a lofty and desolate rocky mountain and the narrow and barren gulch below.

One of the women led by the hand a little girl of five or six years, on whose face there was the questioning and sober ook often seen on the faces of children too young to understand what death means, but old enough to be awed into silent wonder by its presence.

Behind the woman and child there walked a stoutly built and manly-looking boy of about seventeen years, who had given his arm to a slender, palefaced girl of fifteen. There were tears in their eyes, and in the eyes of the women who had just seen the father of the children laid in his grave under the small group of pines.

Their mother had died the spring before, and their father, always a restless, wandering man, had strayed from mining camp to mining camp, and had reached Camp Fancy but four weeks be-fore his death. Now his children were alone in the world, their only friends the few poor miners who were almost strangers to them, their only home a dilapidated wagon, with a ragged canvas cover and an equally ragged little tent, while their only fortune was a few silver dollars in the boy's pocket. Their lot could not have been cast in a

drearier or more unpromising place than Camp Fancy-a half-deserted and depressingly desolate hamlet half-way up the barren side of a rocky mountain, ten miles from the nearest town, and ten times as far from the nearest railroad. Its two or three promising mines had gone through the process vulgarly called "petering out," and within a few weeks the camp would be wholly abandoned. The Haydens had temporarily taken up their residence in a deserted cabin.

The night after the day on which their father was buried, Louis and Huldah Hayden sat before the sparkling fire, and soberly discussed their future, while Nellie, the little girl, slept peacefully on her bunk filled with pine boughs and buffalo skins in a corner of the cabin. "We can't stay here, that's certain,"

said Louis, decidedly. "I don't want to stay," replied Hul-

"Nor I," said Louis, "I'm sick of the mountains."

"Then you don't mean to be a pros-pector, like father?" questioned the girl. "No, I won't. It don't pay. It kept father poor all his life, and I've often heard mother say she was worn out wan-dering round from place to place, and never having any place she could call

"Yes, I know," said Huldah, with a gh. "I wish we could have a home,

somewhere, Louis."
"We will, but not here. I want to go back east to the places I've heard mother and father talk about, and I'm going."

"In the wagon. It's the only way. We haven't money to go on the cars. Father and mother came out here in a wagon fifteen years ago and I guess we can go back the same way."

"I don't see why we can't, even if folks don't travel much that way nowadays. If only Old Charley will hold out

Old Charley was a bony and feeble horse, tied at that moment to a wheel of the cart outside. He had accompanied the Haydens in all their wanderings for the past ten years, and had drawn the wagon from gulch to gulch and camp to camp. Poorly fed and seldom housed from summer rains and winter snows, his

hardships had been many. By 9 o'clock the next morning Louis had Old Charley hitched to the wagon, in which their few poor possessions had been placed. A few of the kind-hearted miners and their wives gathered around the wagon to say good-by to the children and to wish them good luck. An hour later Louis drove Old Charley around a sharp curve in the mountain road, and they saw the half-deserted log houses and tents of Camp Fancy no

A cold wind was coming up from the gulch, and there were a few fine flakes of snow whirling in the air, but the young emigrants hoped to find it warmer with each descending mile, as the autumn had

been an unusually mild one.

As they drove along with little Nell scated between them. wrapped in a great buffalo robe, Louis and Huldah discussed their prospects.

They were strangely ignorant regarding the names and whereabouts of any of their relatives. Their information was confined to vague and indefinite remembrances of of the fact that "ma had a sister in Iowa "and "pa had a brother in Kansas." They had heard of Aunt Mary living "somewhere in Missouri," and of an Uncle Harvey in Ohio, but their mother had been much too busy to write, and their father had so far lost track of his own people that of late years the did not know where any of his four brothers or sisters lived—if they still lived,-and his children felt themselves to be utterly alone and friendless in the

But Louis had grown a manly, cour-

But Louis had grown a manly, couragents boy, and hardship had made Huldah old and wise beyond her years.

"We'll get along some way, I reckon," he said hopefully.

They had now gone well down the rocky trail into the gulch, overhung with resinous pines and noisy with the splashing of the narrow mountain stream, along the banks of which thin edges of ice had formed during the night.

night. "My idea is to go as far cast as we can before winter sets in in earnest, and then stop until spring at some town



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THE MORSE DRY GOODS CO.

and Nell can go to school for a few months. I've heard mother tell how there was places in Kansas where a fellow can get good farming land free from the government. I think I'll be a farmer. I know I'd like it from what I've heard about that kind of a life."

So they journeyed on down mountain slopes and through long canons until they came out among the low foot-hills, and for the first times in their lives, looked out across the wide, unbroken plain that stretched toward the east.

It was now November. The season had been a warm one. The prairie before them was free from snow; the days were sunny, and the nights not too cold for them to sleep comfortably in the wagon. So they started across the plains, a forlorn little company. Their well-nigh disabled wagon, the horse's too prominent bones, and the peculiarities of their appearance and method of travel excited both interest and amusement in the towns through which they

passed.

The horse grew bonier and more fee-ble as their journey grew longer. They had to travel very slowly. There were some days when Oid Charley was too lame and too tired to carry them on at all. On such days they had a dreary time sitting around the camp-fire or in the wagon while the December wind swept across the plains unbroken by hill or tree.

Their small store of money grew smaller from day to day, as they pur-chased the food they must have at the widely scattered ranch nouses and in the shabby villages through which they passed on their journey—whither they knew not.

At each village Louis tried to find employment, but always unsuccessfully. But often, when they encamped near a town or farm house, curious-minded but kind-hearted men and women came out to the wagon and the children went on their way with gifts of food and clothing, and often they found shelter at night and on stormy days in hospitable ranch-houses. ranch-houses.

t was the day before Christmas that they found themselves facing a strong, cold wind from the north, as they drove toward a little town far in the distance, but plainly visible in that flat and almost treeless country. The wind flapped the ragged cover of the wagon as it rattled along over the frozen ground, and late in the day flakes of snow began flying in at the open front of the wagon.

Old Charley walked slowly and un-

Old Charley walked slowly and un-steadily along, while Louis sat on the front seat holding the lines in his chilled hands. Huldah and little Nell sat on the straw in the back part of the wagon, warmly wrapped in buffalo and bear skins, of which, fortunately, they had a good supply.

Nell was a light-hearted little creature, even amid her dismal surroundings, and once her curly head, tied up in a red nubia, appeared above the mass

of robes in which she sat, as she said, 'Say, Louie?"
"Well?" he replied.

"Is tomorrow Christmas?"

"Yes. "O, goody!"

Louis and Huldah were silent. There were tears in both their eyes, for, poor as their parents had always been, they had always made much of Christmas "saving up" for it for weeks beforehand. Only last Christmas they had had a tree, the memory of which made little Nell's eyes sparkle and her cheeks glow, although it had been only a poor little tree, after all, strung with popcorn, and and having fewer things on it than many children find in one of their stock-

With the tree still in mind, Nell asked: "We'll have another tree, won'

we, Louie?"
"I—I—I'm afraid not."

"Nor nothing in my stocking?"
Louis thought of the three or four small pieces of silver, in the pocket of his ragged vest. It was the last of their money, but he said, as cheerily as he could, "Yes, yes, little one; you shall have something in your stocking, any-

"Can't we even have a little teentytonty tree?"
"I'll see, dear." "Ain't there any old Mr. Santa Claus

in this country?"

"I guess so."
"Well, you must send him a letter as oon as we get to that town, and tell him I want a tree, a big tree, with 40,000 bushels of things on it, and I shall go right to work now and pray real hard for what I want most. What shall I pray for for you, Louie?"
"O, nothing."

"What, not even some merlasses candy?" "O yes, I'd like that."
"Well, I'll ask for that for you, and for

a lovely blue silk dress and a perlanno to make music on for Huldah."

There was silence for a long time after that. The short, dull day was ending in gloomy darkness when they reached the outskirts of the little town. They unhitched Old Charley on the low bank of a little stream a short distance from the nearest house. The wind had gone down. A light snow was falling, and it

Louis built a fire, and while he went to the town for a loaf of bread Huldah made tea. After their frugal supper was eaten there was nothing left for them to do but to "snuggle up," as Nellie said, in the buffalo robes and straw in the wagon

and go to sleep.

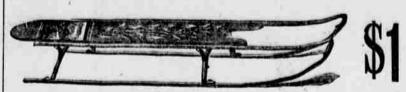
Before she lay down for the night the little girl went to one end of the wagon and pinned a pair of her ragged stockings to the outside of the wagon cover.

"There now," she said, when this was done to her satisfaction, "it won't be the leastest bit of trouble for Santy Claus to stop here on his way to the town, and he



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Morse's-16th and Farnam.

can fill my stockings without even get- sure," said another. "Wonder where ing out of his sleigh."

Louis and Huldah sat silent around

the camp-fire, looking at the pair of empty stockings dangling from the pins that held them. Suddenly the boy said, "We ain't got but forty cents in the world, Huldan, but I'd rather spend it all than have her get up in the morniug and find them stockings empty.' "So would I," replied the girl, prompt-

"I couldn't bear to have her find nothing at all in them." "I reckon she'd sleep sound enough

and not waken if you and I went up into the town and bought her something for her stockings," "Oh yes; she never opens her eyes

after she once gets to sleep, and there's no danger of her coming to harm here." So, after seeing that Nellie was well covered under the robes, and the wagon cover closely drawn in front and behind, Louis and Huldah walked up the one unlighted street of the dreary little town, in which there was no sign of Christmas cheer. There was but three or four stores, and the Christmas toys on sale were few and poor. But they seemed grand and abundant to this boy and girl, who had lived all their lives in mountain gulches and on mountain tops.

They bought a large yellow orange and a tin lamb on wheels, and then went up the street until they came to the small wooden church in which was a Christmas-tree for the children of the town. A woman about to enter saw them trying to peep in at one of the frosty windows, and asked them to go in with her. They shily accepted

the invitation. They were mistaken in their theory that no one would go near the wagon while they were gone. Hardly had they entered the town, than there came riding swiftly and boisterously across the plain a hilarious company of half a dozen horsemen of the class known throughout the west as cowboys.

Their hilarity is not always of the most agreeable sort and it is sometimes dangerous, particularly if it has been inspired by liquor. When they are sober they are not only kindly, but sometimes reckless, in their generosity.

The men who now came riding across the snowy plain had not the best inten-tions in visiting the little town. There was a saloon of the lowest class just out-side the village. The riders intended to make a visit to this saloon—after that no one, not even themselves, could say what form their festivities would take. The old wagen with its flopping cover attracted their attention as they came galloping along. They reined up their horses before it and began joking gaily about its dilapidated appearance, the still burning camp-fire revealing its rickety and ragged condition.

"That'd be a gay old rig to ride up an' down Fifth avence in wouldn't it?" said one of the men.

sure," said another. "Wonder where the owner of such an elegant outfit is? If he ain't careful somebody'll steal it. It aint safe to let valuables lie 'round loose in this country for—well, I'll be ever-lastingly ding-fiddled—look there!" He pointed his whip at Nellie's stock-

ings as a sudden flame from the fire re-vealed them flapping in the breeze. "If omeyoungsteraint hung up its s tockings for Christmas!"

The other men drew near. One or two of them dismounted, and one tall, lank man, older than his companions, took one of the stockings and felt of it, saying, "Well, old Santa Claus aint filled it yet and I don't reckon—Hello!" He stepped back in surprise as a curly

brown head was thrust from the rear of the wagon, and a childish voice ex-"Are you Mister Santa Claus?"

The men on the horses laughed and one of them said, "She caught you that

time, Cap."

"Well, who be you, anyhow?" asked
the man addressed as Cap.

"I'm Helen May Hayden."

"O you be, be you? Where's all your
folks?"? "I ain't got none, only just Louie and Huldah, and I s'pose they've gone off to hunt Santa Claus. Do you s'pose they'll

find him?' "It's hard tellin' whether they will or not, What if they don't?"

The child's lips quivered and her voice trembled as she said, "then I

s'pose my stockings 'll be empty in the morning, and they ain't never been empty a Christmas yet."
"Where d you come from, anyway?" "From the mountains way off yonder." She thrust one arm out and waved it oward the west in the darkness.

"And your dad didn't come with you?"
"He couldn't—he's dead."
"Nor your marm?" "She's dead too." "And there ain't nobody in the cart with you!"

"No mam-nobody."
"Who's Louie and Huldah?" "My brother and sister-and they're splendid. They'll find Santa Claus. Louie's got forty cents for him. I heard him tell Sis so. "Oh, he has? Well, I guess you'd better crawl back there and snuggle down among the bedclothes till they

come back. That's what you'd better

do. Good night-" "Good night, mister; if you see Santy Claus you'll tell him bout my stockings

"Oh yes. Good night and sleep tight."
"Good night. I wish you a merry Christmas. The men mounted their horses and rode away in the darkness, the tall man

the others.
When Louis and Huldah returned they id one of the men.

'It's seen mighty tough times, that's as when they left her. They put the

called Cap dashing silently on ahead of

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MORSE'S, 16th & Farnam

orange into one stocking and the toy lamb into the other, together with a lit-tle bag of candy that had been given them at the church.

They climbed up into the wagon and were soon sleeping by Nell's side—three homeless young wayfarers under the Christmas skies.

It was after 10 o'clock when a man rode silently and slowly out from the

rode silently and slowly out from the town, casting half-furtive glances back, as if fearing he might be followed by some of the companions who had long ago missed him from their revels in the saloon. He had heard one of them come to the door and call after him as he stole away, but they knew that he was a man whom it was best for them not to follow, so they went back to their cups, expect-

He rode straight to the wagon, dismounted, and stood for a moment listening to make sure that all was silent within. Then he cautiously tip-toed near in the darkness, his arms and pockets full of bundles. He filled the little stockings to the top, and tied the other bundles to a wheel of the cart. Then he stood still for a few moments, his head bent forward and resting on the cart wheel. A moment later he mounted his horse and rode a few rods in the direction of the town-then wheeling suddenly and furiously around, he dashed madly away in the darkness over the plain in the direction from whence he and his com-

ing him to return soon.

vain for his return. "I jest bet ye Cap's went back to that there wagon," said one of the men. "He's a queer one, is Cap. It aint the first time I've knowed him to act queer after running across some little young-ster, an' I b'leeve there's something in that story I've heerd 'bout him once havin'a little girl of his own, and her ma and her dyin', and him bein' reck-less ever sence. He'll be sober for six months now. He's a queer one, any

panions had come, while they waited in

When morning came and Loui climbed out of the wagon, he gazed in open-mouthed surprise at the stockings and the wagon wheel below them. In one stocking was the great doll he and Huldah had so wished they might buy the night before and in one of the hunthe night before, and in one of the bundles were the dishes Huldah had said little Nell would "most go crazy over." In the bottom of the stocking were twenty-five shining gold dollars in a buckskin purse, while in the bundle were many good and useful things.

They had not had such a breakfast for months, and Huldah said she should be able to get up a "real Christmas dinner." But in the midst of her preparations for it the good woman who had invited them to the church the night before found her way down to the wagon and took them to her own comfortable little house, and that was the end of their wanderings for

that winter.

A place for Louis was found in one of

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\$2.50.

MAIL ORDERS FILLED. Don't miss getting one. You will be more than pleased with your purchase. It is not a useless

the stores, and the kindly disposed people of the town, with true western hospitality, helped them in so many ways that the hardships of the past were soon forgotten in what they regarded as the wenderful prosperity of the present.

The little town is a prosperous city now, and Louis Hayden is one of its most active and successful young business.

active and successful young business men. He has a home of his own on the

kept their Christmas in a wagon.

Where Artificial Eyes Come From. villages are engaged in their manu-ture. Four men usually sit at a table each with a gas jet in front of him, and the eyes are blown from gas plates and moulded into shape by hand. The col-ors are then traced in with small need-

How Our Forefathers Lived. Our forefathers had fewer indoor oc-

cupations than ourselves and more en forced idleness. They saw less of society; they depended more on home resource for amusement. Hence the pilgrim with his licensed exaggeration, the minstrels and the whole army of jesters, japers, disours jong leurs, gleemen, ribalds and goliards—all the tribe of those whom Pier Plowman calls "Satan's children, were welcome in the baronial hall.

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The Order of the Thistle has claimed very ancient date for its foundationeven as far back as A. D. 809; but it was either restored or instituted by James V., 1540, when he with twelve knights completed the roll. It now consists of the sovereign and sixteen members; St. Andsew is its patron saint, and the color

The Antipyrene Habit. Several physicians assert that the increase in the morphice habit is caused by the use of the new febrifuge, antipyrene. People who are inclined to exper-

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tin gun, but a regular air rifle.

very spot on which he and his sisters

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of its distinctive ribbon is dark green. The knights of this order are invariably

iment with medicine, especially young women, take antipyrene until it loses its curative power; then they resort to more

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