

THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING.

I see a ghostly light I'm... While the dread shapes are fitting in... On my heartstone in mad races, and I marvel, for in seeming... I can dimly see the faces and the scenes of which I'm dreaming... O golden Christmas days of yore! In sweet anticipation... I lived their joys for days before Their glorious realization...

OLD FATHER TIME RECEIVES THE NEW YEAR.



HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT

How to Keep Crackers. Complaints are frequently heard that crackers bought at grocery stores are soggy and stale tasting, even when comparatively fresh... The fault, says the Mercantile Journal, is in the way they are kept. Crackers demand a warm, dry place, and they should not be stored near oil, fish or other strong-smelling goods...

Scalloped Oysters. Take two dozen large salt water oysters. Put them in a pan in their own juice and place on the fire until they boil, then drain. Take five ounces of best table butter, one large tablespoon of flour, mix, and let it simmer for a half minute without getting brown...

Corn Custard Pie. One cup of grated corn, half a cup of milk, salt and pepper (cayenne) slightly, butter the size of a walnut, one rounded tablespoonful of cornstarch and the yolks of two eggs. Stir the cornstarch into the milk, then add the other ingredients...

Hints. To every fifty pounds of fresh sausage or pudding meat use fourteen ounces of salt and four and a half ounces of black pepper, and herbs to suit taste...

Don'ts About Gifts. Don't give gifts because you feel compelled to do so from a sense of social obligation. There are other ways to acknowledge indebtedness than by making the holiest of holidays a matter of trade and barter...

Sickroom Talk. For cramps or pains in the stomach try a few drops of essence of camphor. For binding up cuts and wounds always use flannel, not cotton, as the fibers of cotton are flat and apt to irritate a sore place...

Another Altered Will. Little Alice—Mamma says she ain't going to give you anything for Christmas this year. Papa's Maiden Sister—Oh, she isn't, eh? Why not? Little Alice—Cause the present she give you last year was worth twice as much as what you give us...

Definition of Christmas. Sunday School Teacher—Johnny, what does Christmas mean? Johnny—My pa says Christmas means swapping a lot of things you can't afford for a lot of things you don't want.—Lila.

UNCLE JERRY'S CHRISTMAS.

UNCLE JERRY POSTER was too stingy to live, and everybody knew it. But everybody didn't know how poor Aunt Betsey, his wife, had to manage and contrive and skimp to get along. She never had the handling of a penny money. Even the butter and egg money, that most every farmer's wife has for her own use, all went into Uncle Jerry's pockets...

any rate, all to once she give out and had to go to bed. The next morning she couldn't get up, but Uncle Jerry didn't think much about it, s'posed she'd be up bimeby, but when he come in to dinner, there lay his wife just the same, as if she hadn't no thoughts o' getting up...



UNCLE JERRY SET FORTH AS A STATE, could not get along without her, nohow. He was as anxious to have the doctor as Mrs. Hopkins was, and told her to hurry and bring him.

"I know that farmers' wives grow old pretty fast as a general thing; break down young, don't they? But, Uncle Jerry, 'squaia' round on him suddenly and looking 'im in the eye, 'I want to ask you to compare your wife's looks with the looks of other women of her age in town, no handsomer, no healthier than what she was when you married her, and tell me if you think there's a difference...

has took to her bed in the prime of life and don't want to live no longer. For I find that's about the way it is with her."

When the broth was ready Uncle Jerry asked if he might take it, so Mrs. Hopkins filled one of the china bowls that was Aunt Betsey's ma's and set it in a plate with a cracker or two, and he took 'em along.

"Why—why, husband?" she whispered, "didn't it cost an awful sight o' money?" "Only \$3 a gallon," he answered, trying to smile, but lookin' rather ghastly. She sipped it slow, eyein' him over the top of the tumbler as she done so; but pretty soon she set it down and spoke again, awful mechin' and pealin', her lips tremblin' as if she was going to cry...

"I want you to get well, Betsey. I want you to get well!" he managed to say. The strangest expression come into her face you ever see in any creature's. Then, as if struck by somethin' in his looks, she

seemed to get a dim idee that he was different, and she tried to make out how it was, but couldn't, and, bein' too tired and weak to think much, she just shet her eyes and ziv it all up.



IN TROOPED A PARCEL O' CHILDREN. Fore Christmas, and Aunt Betsey lay back in her easy chair in the cheerful sittin' room. A pitcher full of late fall flowers stood on the mantelshelf; a cracklin' fire was burnin' in the open fireplace, and the old tabby cat lay before it on the rug...

She sat there, blamin' herself and thinkin' what a poor, weak kind of a mother she was, till the tears rolled down her cheeks. Then, all at once, she heard a noise outside.

Wipe the Christmas holly over all the doors (where the winter sunshin' a flood of glory pours) Heap the Christmas roses everywhere we can, Let them breathe their sweet souls in the heart of Man.

Ring the merry church bells (ring them loud and clear, For the little Christ-child born to us each year, See him meek and lowly in the manger lie, And the star of Promise in the Eastern Sky.

Scatter love and kindness everywhere we can! Glory be to God on high! Peace and good will toward man!