

## CHRISTMAS GEM.

On Christmas Eve the bells were rung,  
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That only night in all the year  
Saw the staid priest the chalice rear;  
The daisied dunn'd her kirtle green;  
The hall was dressed in holy sheen;  
Forth to the wood did merry men go  
To gather in the mistletoe.  
Then opened wide the baron's hall  
To vassal, tenant, serf and all;  
Power laid his rod of rule aside,  
And Ceremony doffed his pride.  
The heir with roses in his shoes,  
That night might village partner choose;  
The lord, undergating, share  
The vulgar game of "post and pair."  
All hailed with uncontrolled delight  
And general voice the happy night  
That to the cottage as the crown  
Brought tidings of salvation down.  
The fire, with well dried logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney wide;  
The huge hall table's oaken face,  
Scrabbed till it shone, the day to grace,  
Bore there upon its massive board  
No mark to part the squire and lord.  
Then was brought in the lusty brew  
By old blue-coated serving men;  
Then the grim bear's head frowned on high  
Crested with bays and rosemary.  
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell  
How, when and where the monster fell,  
What dogs before his death he tore,  
And all the halting of the bear.  
The wassail round in good warm bowls,  
Garlanded with ribbons, blithely trows;  
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by  
Pump porridge stood, and Christmas pie,  
Nor failed old Scotland to produce  
At such high tide her savory goose.  
Then came the merry maskers in  
And carols roared with blithesome din.  
If unmelodious was the song  
It was a hearty note and strong.  
Who lists may in their murmuring see  
Traces of ancient mystery.  
White shirts supplied the masquerade  
And smattered cheeks the visors made.  
But, ah, what maskers richly dight,  
Can boast of bosoms half so light?  
England was merry England when  
Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
Twas Christmas brought the mightiest tale;  
Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;  
A Christmas gambol of could cheer  
The poor man's heart through half the year.  
—By Sir Walter Scott, in "Marmion."

## A RACE FOR A WIFE; OR, A CANADIAN CHRISTMAS PARTY.

BY PIERRE DUVAL.

How did I come to bring home a wife from the colonies? You would like to know, would you? Well, as it's Christmas, when all ought to be everything that's nice and obliging, why, I'll tell you; but I warn you there is very little romance about my story.

Two years ago, when I finished my college career, my anxious parents settled it for me that I had been working too hard, and needed a thorough change of scene and complete rest and relaxation; naturally arguing, that, as I had brought on indisposition by study, a cure would be wrought most speedily by my endeavoring to forget as soon as possible all I had been at so much trouble to learn. My dear old mother thought I was thin and looked pale. I did not feel pale, but had no objection to take advantage of my fancied ailment, in so far as to agree readily to their proposal to pay a visit to an uncle who had settled in the Dominion not far from Ottawa. It is nothing to the purpose of this story how I journeyed over "the pond," and saw much that was interesting. Suffice it to say that I arrived at my destination a few days before Christmas, and received a most hearty welcome from my jolly old relative. I do not wonder that he was glad to see me, as the long Canadian winter, when out-door work was at a stand-still because of the depth of the snow and the severity of the weather, is a tedious affair; and anything which breaks the monotony of life is welcome.

This very monotony was to me a complete change; and most of all did I enjoy the sleighing, which was both necessary and delightful. No one, who has experienced the exhilarating sensation of skimming along the deep snow—and it was deep that year—behind a pair of spirited horses, as fully alive to enjoyment as ever their driver could be, is very likely to forget it. Was it cold? So the thermometer said, even suggesting ever so many degrees below zero as the measure of it; but it never felt so cold as an ordinary sloppy winter day in the old country. But this is nothing of the story you wanted me to tell.

A day or two before the 25th, my uncle got a letter from an old friend and neighbor asking him to spend the festive day at his house. He would probably be considered a very distant neighbor in England, being some twenty-five miles away; but in America distances are so vast that such a space seems a trifle, and did not count at all as likely to affect our acceptance. As female society was somewhat scarce in our part of the country, and I heard that at Mr. Preston's we should probably meet a large party, I readily acquiesced in my uncle's proposal to go; so we went. My two relatives, for my aunt was of the party, drove in their sober sleigh, while I was fitted out with the new vehicle just arrived from the city, and the two young horses.

Of the party nothing needs to be told, except that it was a complete success. We all enjoyed ourselves most thoroughly, and were only too sorry when the dawn of the next day warned us to break up and go home. Now, among the guests was a young lady to whom I had been introduced, who had taken my fancy greatly. She was young,

and, of course, pretty, but seemed dreadfully shy; and do what I might, I could draw her out but little about herself and her belongings. I had noticed during the evening how she seemed bored by the attentions of a man evidently much her inferior in birth and education, but seemingly well-to-do, and I had done what I could to relieve her of her perpetual attendance, but still she did no more than respond in a formal and correct manner. I had heard that she was a relative of a farmer some distance off, and had no other protectors, being an orphan and somewhat of a stranger. It was not till afterwards that I learned that there was a sort of tacit understanding of engagement between her and Bob Saunders, and that the outward observer the girl was not a willing party to the arrangement. Our host was a hospitable man, and the good things of the world had been freely set before the guests, with the usual and natural result of sorting out the more reasonable from the over-indulgent, and before midnight it became painfully apparent that Bob had taken as much as was good for him, and it further became equally evident that he was not capable of driving Alice home again. She, poor girl, was in a terrible state of alarm and chagrin, and I overheard her expressing her disgust to a friend and declining to trust herself to his care again.

What could I do? I was the only one of the party who had a vacant seat, and I could not, in common politeness, do less than offer her my escort to see her home.

Bob scowled awfully, when she firmly, but politely, declined his attendance; and when he heard that the upstart Englishman had carried off his girl, his language, I afterwards heard, was

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Does it want much explaining how we got so to like one another that she concluded to visit the old country as my bride? I think not. How did we settle with Bob Saunders? Well, we did not have much trouble with him. When he got sober again he was so much ashamed of himself that he sold out his belongings and moved out further west, where the last I heard of him was that he was an ardent apostle of the Blue Ribbon Army.

## LITTLE BESSIE.

An Interesting Christmas Story.

Deacon Amos Dorr was a thoroughly good man and a true Christian, and was noted for his deep love for little children. Mrs. Dorr, his wife, was a good and upright woman; but was noted for her deep love for property.

Many years before our story, a little child came to gladden the hearts of the worthy couple; but only for a few brief years was she permitted to remain with them.

Then came a day—only a week before Christmas—when sweet little Allie lay sick unto death with that dreadful disease, membranous croup; and that year the Christmas snows were softly falling over a little new-made grave, as

next summer and stay a spell."

"Dear me! I never did see such a man in all my born days," said Mrs. Dorr, resuming her knitting, "you ain't never satisfied unless there's half a dozen young ones at your heels."

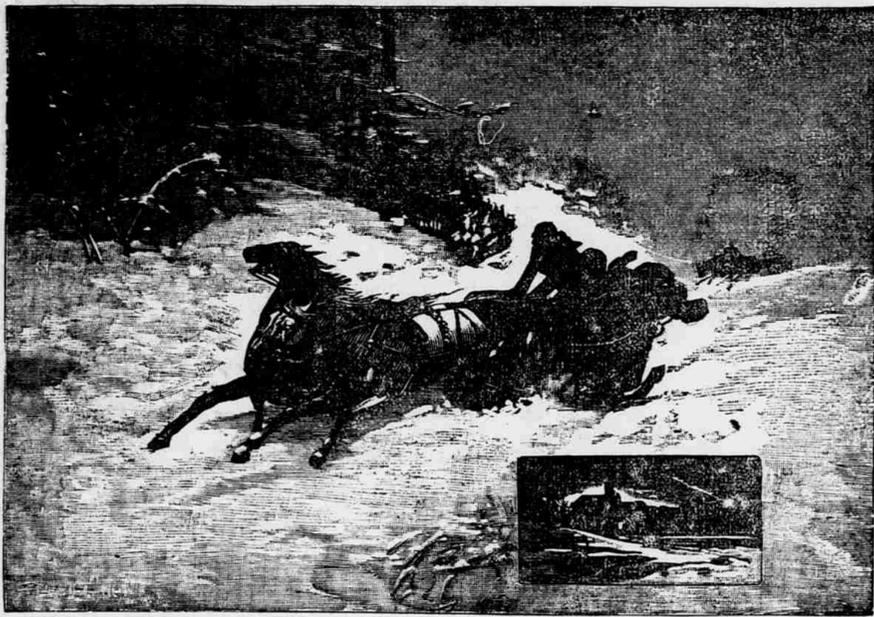
The Deacon took up his paper and went to reading again, thinking that enough had been said upon the subject, for that time at least.

This was Saturday night. The following day Mrs. Dorr was forced to go to church alone, as her husband was suffering from a cold, and declared that he wasn't a-goin' to keep the congregation in a quiver with his coughing. Left to his own devices, the good Deacon, like men of smaller growth, fell at once into mischief. Or it might have appeared to Mrs. Dorr had she known that her husband availed himself of her absence by writing a letter to his favorite nephew, John Ferris, in Boston. But fortunately, the good woman did not hear of this letter until a long time after. And when that time came, "things had changed, and she had changed," so it did not matter.

The next day the Deacon walked down to the village and mailed the precious missive, and in the course of a week there came a letter to the farm-house nephew John.

"Why that's John's writin'!" exclaimed Mrs. Dorr glancing over her husband's shoulder as, with an impassive countenance, he proceeded to read his letter. "It is from John," he presently announced.

"Do you want a boarder, Nancy? good pay guaranteed. John wants to know if you'll board a four-year-old girl for a while. He says she's quiet and well-behaved; I guess John's sort of a guardian, or something, for the child."



ON HE CAME, AND AS HE NEARED US, HIS CURSES AND IMPRECATIONS GREW PLAINER AND PLAINER.

not a little unparliamentary, and he swore he would "upset his darned old sleigh and the gal and all, if he swung for it."

Of this, of course, we were in blissful ignorance, and I had hardly settled down into the full enjoyment of our morning drive, before Alice burst into hysterical tears, and buried her face in the buffalo robes, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

"Oh, Mr. Burton," she gulped out between the sobs, "I am so much obliged to you for taking care of me. Please forgive my crying, but I am so unhappy."

I did my best to pacify her, and succeeded so far as to get her to confide in me how she had yielded to the persecutions of her lover in so far as to consent to his visiting her. This was chiefly in deference to her guardian's wish and not because she could really like or respect such a man.

We had not gone far in these pleasant confidences when I heard the jingling behind of other bells, and Alice turned to me in a tone of great alarm.

"Oh, Mr. Burton, I do believe that is Mr. Saunders behind us, and he is driving like a madman. But we are nearly to my guardian's. Please push on and get out of his way."

But though I whipped my good horses up to their best pace, they had gone far and were getting pumped out, while our pursuer had a fresh and splendid team.

On he came, and as he neared us, his curses and imprecations got plainer and plainer, and it was evident he had lost control not only of his temper, but also of his horses too, and I was soon painfully aware that we were all of us in imminent danger.

Urging my steeds as well as I could, I steered for the side of the track, so as to keep my precious freight furthest from danger, but I was unable to get out of the way, and in two seconds more crash came the brute right into us, and I remember no more.

How long I was unconscious I don't know, but when I came to myself I was lying in bed in a comfortable but homely room, with a very singular ignorance of how I came there.

"Thank God! he is alive," I heard whispered, and opening my eyes, I

the grief-stricken and childless couple, sat by the chimney corner, in which no gay little stocking was hanging, ready to be filled with the little toys so carefully prepared by loving hands. But, as the years rolled on, the cares of the world entered into the mother's heart, and nearly crowded out the memory of the little child. Not so with the father's loving heart! Ah, no! For the sake of his lost darling, all other children were regarded by him as so many precious jewels, to be guarded carefully, and most tenderly loved. The one great desire of the Deacon's heart was to adopt a little girl; but never a word of this had he spoken to his wife.

One cold November evening, when the wind was wailing mournfully around the old house, bringing to mind the cold winter so near at hand, the good couple were quietly seated in their cosy sitting-room, engaged in their usual evening occupation, the Deacon reading, and his wife knitting. Just as Mrs. Dorr was endeavoring to calculate to a cent, how much that day's churning would "fetch," the Deacon's voice broke the silence, as he methodically folded his paper and placed it on the table beside him.

"Seems as ef it grows lonesome an' lonesome every year, Nancy," remarked the Deacon, with a sigh.  
"Lonesome?" repeated Mrs. Dorr in a tone of surprised inquiry. "Why I aint lonesome; I have work enough to do to keep me from getting lonesome, I hope. What in the world's come over you, Amos?"  
"Well, I don't know," replied the Deacon slowly. "But somehow or other it seems terribly sorter still, like, round the house lately. Nancy,"—catching his breath—"Nancy, why can't we take a child?"

"Take a child?" repeated Mrs. Dorr in amazement, dropping her knitting into her lap and catching her spectacles from her eyes. "What an idea! as much as I have to do! Why, I should go distracted to have a child round under foot; and the expense of bringing up a child, too, specially a girl. You must be crazy, Amos, to think of such a foolish thing."

"Well, well, wife," hastily replied the Deacon, "I didn't know but you might think well of it, seein' we're all alone, so; but I shall get along well enough. Mebbe John's children will come down

"Why, I don't know," said Mrs. Dorr, impaling her back hair on a knitting-needle and folding her hands meditatively. "P'raps I could manage to somehow. Winter's a good time for boarders, for me, on account of butter'n cheese. But a child—well, I'll see between now and morning."

The Deacon wisely forbore to say much on the subject; for he very well knew how his wife would decide. So he was not at all surprised when she said the next morning that "she'd thought it over, and she guessed she would try it, but she should want good pay." Secretly delighted to hear this, the Deacon immediately answered his nephew's letter, and in a few days was gratified by the arrival of Mr. Ferris with his little charge.

"I will see that the child's board is paid as long as you will keep her, Aunt Nancy," said the gentleman. "She is a dear little thing and has neither father nor mother. Her father died while in my employ; and the mother being dead some time before, the children had to be separated. There were two others, another girl and a boy. They are in the asylum," he added briefly.

"Why aint this one there too?" inquired Mrs. Dorr.

"O, I took a fancy to her," replied Mr. Ferris carelessly. "I wish she could have a good home somewhere. I shall look after her until she does, I think."

Mr. Ferris stayed with them only a day and a night; and with many an injunction to his little charge to be a good girl and mind Aunt Nancy, he bade them good-by, and was whirled back to the big city.

Little Bessie was rather lonely at first in the large, old farm-house; but she was a cheery little soul, and soon began to sing and chatter from morning till night. She followed the Deacon about like a faithful little spaniel; and when the good man was positively unhappy when she was not with him. It was a pretty sight to see the sunny-haired little maiden trudging about with the quiet old farmer, holding fast to his big, blue-mottled hand with her wee scarlet-covered one. Every animal on the place learned to love her, and, strange to relate, Aunt Nancy at last felt captive to her infantile charms, and, unknown to herself, a big place was thawing out in her heart for the

little child. And now Christmas was come, and the Deacon, half suspecting what was taking place in the mind of his wife, resolved upon a grand stroke.

Christmas eve, the child was undressed as usual, and placed in her little cot which stood in a corner of the room where slept the Deacon and his wife. Not close by the bed where Allie's crib used to stand, poor little orphan girl! Away off in a corner by herself, just a poor little lonely boarder! Ah, well! thy good angel is hovering near, little one!

Mrs. Dorr, after setting things to rights in the kitchen, for the night, returned to the sitting-room and found it empty; but in the chimney-corner hung one of dear little Allie's stockings, filled—as Mrs. Dorr quickly discovered—with the very toys she had had in readiness so long ago, to put into this same little stocking. As she stood silently gazing at it, the tears slowly gathered and falling, the bedroom opened and disclosed the Deacon standing there, with such a look of love and longing on his kind old face, that it instantly became manifest to her what her husband desired and expected from her hands as his precious Christmas gift. And all at once her soul seemed flooded with tenderness and love. Love for the little child so safe in Heaven, and for the little one so quietly sleeping in the little crib which the Deacon had drawn up close to the side of the bed.

"Nancy," said the good man, holding out his hand, and leading his wife to the side of the crib, "Nancy, will you give me this little child? she is the one gift I crave."

"O, Amos," said Mrs. Dorr brokenly, "she aint mine to give; she's the Lord's; but I guess she's meant for you anyway. I—I've been growing hard and stingy, Amos. I can see it now. I'd most forgot my own little girl, and everything else, but my own self. But I'm a goin' to have a share in this little thing," she exclaimed stooping to kiss the little sleeper. "I declare, she looks as Allie used to," she remarked, wiping her eyes, as they turned to leave the room.

"I've thought so all the time," replied the Deacon, as he softly closed the door upon the sleeping child, who had all unconsciously, entered into a kingdom of love, there to stay, and make glad the hearts of those about her.

## In a Dentist's Chair.

Pretty soon the dentist stuck his head into the door and told me it was my turn. I asked him how he had disposed of the remains of my predecessor, so easily. He smiled more sweetly than ever and motioned me into the operating chair. By its side was a little silver mounted spittoon, for use in case a vital organ was punctured. I told him I wanted the tooth drawn out front view, cabinet size. He replied, that if I didn't like the proof I could sit over as many times as I liked. He had me there.

I threw back my head and opened my mouth. The dentist involuntarily grasped the side of his chair and said he believed he wouldn't come in because his feet were muddy. Then he ran his arm into my face and began to feel around somewhere inside. I seized his arm, dragged it out of my person, and explained that my tooth was still in my mouth, that I had not swallowed it. He said yes, he knew it. I suppose he had personally investigated. I never experienced such an instance of fellow feeling in my life.

"I've found it!" he cried, excitedly, at last.

"I've known where it was all the time," I answered with choked sarcasm.

The dentist turned to his chest of gleaming tools and picked out a machine that I have seen blacksmiths use in shoeing horses. The minute the cold steel entered my mouth I began to repent. It felt its fearful way along until it got to a tooth that suited it. The crucial moment had arrived. The dentist leaned forward, planted his head against my chest, braced both feet against the writer, said "now look pleasant—won't be long," and gave a mighty jerk. There was a cracking sound in my brain, a blending flash of cerebral lightning, a sensation like the disintegration of worlds, and the tooth was out. I think the root was wrapped about the backbone, and had begun to sprout in the shoulder-blade.

"She's a daisy," panted the dentist. "She's the best thing out," I replied, coldly.—*Cabriolet, in the Springfield (O.) Globe-Republic.*

## A Perishable Cargo.

Mr. William Parsons, the lecturer, was one day a passenger on a big sleigh away up in Michigan. On the road they met another sleigh not nearly so big as their own. The little sleigh kind of kept to the middle of the drifted road, and the driver of the big sleigh kind of turned clear out and kind of turned his sleigh clear over and plunged his six or seven passengers up to their necks or heels in the chilly drift, just as they happened to be shot in head first or feet foremost. Loud was their wrath. They wanted to mot their cowardly driver. "Why didn't you make the little fellow turn out?" "Why didn't you upset him?" "Why didn't you run over him?" they demanded. "Could of done it," said the driver, groping around in the snow for stray valises, "but I kind of hated to spoil his load." "What was he hauling?" demanded the lecturer. "Dynamite, for the mines," said the driver. They accepted his apology, and the work of excavating for the buried Troy, the entombed dress-suit and "The Heros of the Homeric Age" went on in silence.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

It's a wise night-key that knows its own key-hole.—*New Haven News.*

## THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

Farmers Who Hope Not to Have Home Rule.

Dating from Belfast The London Times correspondent in Ireland writes: Having spent a considerable time in the south and west, I determined to see something of the other Ireland in the north. It is like a different country. Even in Donegal the change of accent strikes one, but on entering Londonderry it becomes pronounced; and it is not only in their accent, but in character and disposition, that the people are closely allied to the Scotch. They are a sturdy race, hardworking, independent, and thrifty. "You know very little of this country," said one man; "if twelve people want to send a letter to Dublin, they'd go 'co, in the penny stamp."

I visited some substantial farmers in Londonderry who would answer very much to the yeoman class in England. The first was a prosperous man, who had built a house fit for any gentleman when he had no lease, and who agreed on a judicial rent under the land act without going into court. "Ye needn't ask me anything," he said; "yuv only to look at me to see that I'm contented." He showed me over his farmyard and offices, and from the appearance of everything I should say that he certainly ought to be contented. He declared, nevertheless, that it was very hard now to make both ends meet, if a man is depending solely on the land. "It's not the rent," he said, "but the prices; and you English with your free trade are ruining us." His parting injunction was delivered slowly and with great emphasis. "When ye go home," he said, "tell them, whatever ye do, not to give us home rule."

The next man I saw had raised himself by industry from the position of a common laborer, and had built a house fully equal to the last. He was content to live friendly with his landlord, he said, as everyone ought to be, and he had fixed his rent with him out of court. He grew a good deal of oats and flax, and had a dairy of twelve cows. "I suppose you were glad the home-rule bill was rejected?" I asked. "Yes, and the last one, too," he said eagerly. "Going to break our fifteen years' judicial lease! Whatever happens after let us have our fifteen years at any rate." I visited another of the same class, who had had some disputes with his landlord and was less contented, though his house was, if possible, more magnificent than the others, and, like them, out of all proportion to the size of his holding, which was only about one hundred acres. He had always taken an active part in politics, he said, and was evidently an extreme radical; but he abstained from voting at the last election, as he would not vote for a conservative and could not vote for a home-ruler. Many of the Presbyterians in the north are, I believe, extremely democratic, and would be nationalists if it were not for the fear of being ruled by Rome. This man also said that if he had nothing but the land, he would find it very hard to keep square and do justice to his family; but the open piano and handsome furniture showed what that meant.

## What to Teach Them.

At a social gathering someone proposed this question: "What shall I teach my daughter?" The following replies were handed in:

Teach her that 100 cents make a dollar.

Teach her to arrange the parlor and the library.

Teach her to say "No," and mean it, or "Yes," and stick to it.

Teach her to wear a calico dress, and to wear it like a queen.

Teach her how to sew on buttons, darn stockings, and mend gloves.

Teach her to dress for health and comfort as well as appearance.

Teach her to cultivate flowers and to keep the kitchen garden.

Teach her to make the neatest room in the house.

Teach her to have nothing to do with intemperate or dissolute young men.

Teach her that tight lacing is unbecomely as well as injurious to health.

Teach her to regard the morals and habits, and not money, in selecting her associates.

Teach her to observe the old rule: "A place for everything, and everything in its place."

Teach her that music, drawing, and painting are real accomplishments in the home, and are not to be neglected if there be time and money for their use.

Teach her the important truth: "That the more she lives within her income the more she will save, and the further she will get away from the poor-house."

Teach her that a good, steady, church-going mechanic, farmer, clerk, or teacher worth a cent is worth more than forty loafers or non-producers in broadcloth."

Teach her to embrace every opportunity for reading, and to select such books as will give her the most useful and practical information in order to make the best progress in earlier as well as later home and school life.—*Charleston (S. C.) Dispatch.*

## Gum-Chewers.

There is a ludicrous habit in this country, which shows how childish some people are. It is that of chewing gum. I remember that Stephenson, the novelist, in his "Silverado Squatters" mentions that his gigantic Apollo in the foothills chewed gum and spat. It is, I think, a habit imported from Missouri, or else it was acquired among the foothills when tobacco was scarce. But grown up Yankee people have engaged at the pleasure. A somewhat noted Massachusetts professor, who had lived here several years, was surprised because I did not chew gum. At Los Angeles I did a favor for a San Francisco practical politician—that is, I wrote for him a letter which he himself could not write. I had acquired a toothache from drinking too much ice-water, and seeing him take out a silver-plated box, I asked him for a bit of the tobacco. "It's gum," he said.—*San Francisco Cor. New York World.*