The New York and Omaha Clothing Co.,

HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS

Our Novelties.

In holiday goods consist of a vast number of beautiful and newly designed articles in Mufflers, Silk Handkerchiefs, Neckwear, Gloves, Fine Fancy Underwear, Fur and Sealskin Caps, Night Robes in Flannel, Canton Flannel and Fine Handkerchief effect. A large number of Overcoats and Suits, suitable and bought expressly for the holidays. Fine leather and alligator Traveling Bags. Any one of these articles would make a very acceptable present, and one that will be appreciated.

Our Bargains.

For the holidays we have bought an enormous lot of Overcoats, Pea Jackets, and suits for boys and men. Beginning with the Overcoats, we are going to sell for the holidays only, a number of chinchilla and beaver Overcoats for $4, $5, and $6, that cannot be bought elsewhere for from $8, $10 and $15. The Pea Jackets we sell for $2.50, are worth at least $5. They are ALL WOOL AND FLANNEL LINED. A most suitable present would be one of our Jersey Office Coats which can be bought for $3, $4.50 and $5.50. Underwear, we will sell from 75c a suit to $15. A fine all wool worsted suit for $10, worth $15,

Our Stock

Our stock has never been in such a splendid condition to meet the demands of the people. Being entirely new and made expressly for us, there is not another stock of goods in the city so desirable to choose from. The stocks of Overcoats, Suits, Underwear, gloves, Hats and Caps, Ties, Shirts, Childrens' and Boys' Overcoats, Suits and Furnishing Goods, are as complete now as a large, well selected line of goods can make them.

The New York and Omaha Clothing Co. is the Headquarters for Good Goods and Low Prices.

Our Present

Something which has never before been done is what we are now doing, that is giving away an article that is not trash and worthless. We give to those who buy $15 worth or more, a gold headed cane, that is retailed at $8. This is something that you will not be given every day and you should take advantage of it.

1308 FARNAM STREET, OMAHA.

ALL HAIL THE FESTAL DAY!

With Its Ancient Joys and Youthful Toys and Stockings Gaping Wide.

KRIS KRINGLE'S MERRY CALL.

A Bevy of Blithesome Beauties Bagged and Baked for the Occasion—A Feast for Big and Little Ones.

The Christmas Tree.
Philadelphia News.

O,
the
Christ-
mas tree
so bright
and green,
awaits Old
Santa Claus.
And the chim-
ney place all swept
and clean gapes wide
its wonderous jaws.
The little stockings are
all hung up, and baby's
just makes four. Won't
Old Santa Claus be surprised
when he finds there as one
more! There's an elegant
place up in the tree to hang
Johnny's gun, and a place for
May and one for Kate to leave
their dolls upon. But for little baby
blue eyes a lower branch he must
choose, where she may reach and find
the place he's hung her first new
shoes. Turn down the light a little, now,
so Old Santa Claus can't see. And
baby and all must go to bed and
be as good as good can be,
and to-morrow morn get up
early, after a long night's
sleep,
and
come
softly
down
to the
Xmas
tree
and
see
Who will get the first peep.

Dr. Talmage on Christmas.

Christmas bells ring in family reunions! The rail trains crowded with children coming home The poultry, fed as never since they were born, stand wondering at the farmer's generosity. The markets are full of massacred barnyards. The great table will be spread and crowded with two or three or four generations. Plant the fork astride the breast bone, and with skilful twitch, that we could never learn, give to all the hungry lookers on a specimen of holiday anatomy. Florence is disposed to soar; give her the wing. The boy is fond of music; give him the drumstick. The minister is dining with you; give him the parson's nose. May the joy reach from grandfather, who is so dreadfully old that he can hardly find the way to his plate, down to the baby in the high-chair, who, with one smart pull of the table-cloth, upsets the gravy into the cranberry. Send from your table a liberal portion to the table of the poor, some of the white meat as well as the dark, not confining your generosity to gizzards and scraps. Do not, as in some families, keep a plate and chair for those who are dead and gone. Your holiday feast would be but poor fare for them; they are at a better banquet in the skies. Let the whole land be full of chime and carol. Let bells, silver and brazen, take their sweetest voice, and all the towers of Christendom gain music.

His Christmas Gift.
Bessie Chandler.

It seems like a hundred years ago,
That we traveled once through the drifted snow
To meet round the Christmas-tree.
You were a child, with a fair, round face,
And you hung on the tree, with a shy, sweet grace,
Your Christmas present for me.

'Twas a scarlet, beaded pincushion heart,
Brilliant and shiny—a triumph of art—
With a bead bird on it—a dove—
'Twas bought of a "squaw" (who spoke with a brogue),
And you said in your note—dear little rogue—
That you gave it to me with your love.

Well, that little red heart has been with me
Through distant countries far over the sea,
Crossed river, mountain and lake.
Though never a pin have its tough sides known,
For the heart was as hard as Pharaoh's own,
But I loved it for your sake.

We're very much older and wiser now,
We met with a formal word and bow,
And many more things we know;
We don't hang our hearts on trees, I believe,
Nor wear them either upon our sleeve;
Is it better, I wonder, so?

The tree is laden with gifts to-night,
And the colored tapers are gleaming bright,
And the Christ-Child floats above;
But my hoped-for gift isn't on the tree,
I want a heart—will you give it me,
As you did before, "with your love?"

Christmas and the Puritan Forefathers.

Harriett Prescott Spofford: So much time indeed, had been spent and, in their view, so much evil done in making merry over Christmas and its attendent train of holidays, that our forefathers felt it a solemn duty to discontinue its observance and to take no other notice of the day than to denounce everything associated with it. They were not of those who would make such a day memorable to their children by a Christmas dinner, where a peacock was baked in a huge pie, the magnificent tail spread at one side, the head with its crest protruding at the other and holding in the gilded beak a sop soaked in spirits and set on fire, a dish so sacred that oath could be taken on it, and that must be served, according to time-gray custom, only to the chief guest, and only by the lady of the house, with music going before and all her damsels following after. Nor this at all because they hadn't the peacock; they would not if they had had a wilderness of peacocks! Nor would these unco good people condescend to see at a Christmas dinner the pigs head stuffed with shallots and herbs and spices, soaked in vinegar, and simmered in sherry, in imitation of the royal wild boar's head, a dish more ancient than the time of Ivanhoe, served them on gold and silver, with flourish of trumpets, as became the king of the forest. The went further; they would have no Christmas dinner at all, and in their hatred of everything that had once had part in what they esteemed popish idolatry, they extended their horror of the affair even to the traditional mince-pie, for no other reason than that it had been wont to belong to the day's feasting, to be called Christmas pie, and that its crust had originally been shaped to represent a manger, although possibly every Puritan did not know that circumstance.

A Symbol of the Season.
From the Yonkers Gazette.

As birds to sun-land wing their way in blithesome bevies and with song, so from the gift hand, Christmas Day, flow tokens that life's joys prolong. The season's symbol, like a charm, wish and delight, is interlocking and plainest gifts the heart will warm be they but found within a stocking! *** Time can destroy the dearest whim; the sweetest joy age can bedim; but on life's way all love to pause each year a day with Santa Claus, Tho' heads be bowed with weight of years, and onward crowd life's sadding cares, the mem'ry turns at Christmas tide in grooves of childhood joys to glide.
*** Then Hang the stockings—
great and small
Our chimney-
sprite will
know them
all! He reads
the wish in
every mind
and tries the
wished-for aye to
find. Yes! hang
the stocking—young
and old. Let Saint
Nick's legend
be retold! Let
old heads
play the
Christmas
parts,
which
prove that
naught
can age
young
hear
ts!

What to Give and How to Give It.

Rules for giving Christmas presents, according to the San Francisco Chronicle: Always give the girl who loves you something cheap. Some other fellow who wants to win her is sure to give her something handsomer than you do, anyway, and you will suffer by comparison whatever you give. She will estimate your gift by the richness of your affection. She'll gauge the other chap by the value of his present, and it's two to one you're left in any case.

Always send the girl you want to secure something she doesn's need. If you send her anything useful it will never appeal to her sentiment, and if she can use it every day she will forget all about you on the third day out. But if you give her something she can only use on exceptional occasions she'll make as many exceptional occasions as she can and think kindly of you for years.

Give an old man a white satin scarf, or a dude scarf-pin. He'll never wear it, but he will be tickled to death and he'll leave you something in his will, if he's got no relations to prove him insane posthumously.

Give an old lady something. She only enjoys the affection and feeling that go with it, and old ladies are the most easily made happy and grateful. They have no vanity about things like that, and they have reached that stage where they would give you back a present that you might sell it and have fun with the money, but they will always cherish the memory that you gave it to them.

Lights on the Christmas Tree.

How came the lights on the Christmas tree? asked a writer in the Cornhill Magazine, and then answers the question as follow:

In the ninth month of the Jewish year, corresponding nearly to our December, and on the twenty-fifth day, the Jews celebrated the Feast of Dedication of their Temple. It had been desecrated on that day by Antiochus; it was rededicated by Judas Maccabæus and then, according to the Jewish legend, sufficient oil was found in the temple to last for the seven-branched candlestick for seven days, and it would have taken seven days to prepare new oil. Accordingly the Jews were wont on the twenty-fifth of Kislen in every house to light a candle, and on the next two and so till on the seventh and last day of the feast seven candles twinkled in every house.

It is not easy to fix the exact date of the nativity, but it fell, most probably, on the last day of Kislen, when every Jewish house in Bethlehem and Jerusalem was twinkling with lights. It is worthy of notice that the German name for Christmas is Weihnacht, the Night of Dedication, as though it were associated with this feast. The Greeks also call Christmas the Feast of Lights, and indeed this was also a name given to the Dedication festival, Chanuka, by the Jews.

In every house the seven-nozzled lamp, or seven-branched candlestick, symbolized the seven-branched candlestick in the temple. This latter was, moreover, made like a tree, and each lamp was like a flower on the tree.

Many seven-branched candlesticks were in use in the German churches in the middle ages; the most magnificent that remains is one in the cathedral of Essen, dating from 1068, standing nearly nine feet nigh. Another is at Brunswick, standing fourteen and a half feet high. Many others exist. The writer saw a very beautiful iron work stand of seven candles in Iceland, made in imitation of angelica leaves. He was told this was only lighted on Christmas eve.

In Milan is one of the thirteenth century called the tree of the virgin, with four rivers represented as issuing from the base. Yggerasill had but three. A superb tree of seven branches was presented to Canterbury in the twelfth century; another to Winchester by King Canute in 1035. Anthony Beck, bishop of Durham bequeathed what seems to to have been one of silver gilt, with an image of the virgin and child at the foot, to his cathedral. The Blessed Virgin takes the place of the Norse Hertha by the well or spring. A seven branched candlestick remains at Litchfield; several remain in France, at Lyons, Angers, Tours. Vienna. They were placed at the entrance to the choir, and were certainly lighted at the midnight mass on Christmas eve, as the Paschal candle was lighted at Easter.

Kris Kringle's Visit.

Who dashes on in sleet and snow,
With ears and cheeks a ruddy glow,
With whoop and shout and merry jingle?
Good folks, look out, 'tis old Kris Kringle.

His cap he raises with a shout,
His beard and hair blow all about,
He stamps his feet and snaps his finger,
For not an instant can he linger.

He cracks his whip, now left, now right,
The reindeer speed with all their might,
A million stockings must be filled,
And not a single toy be spilled.

Look out now—there's a sled broke loose,
And there's a doll caught in a noose—
Now hasten, hasten every one,
Or soon we'll see the rising sun.

Now, first go through this narrow street;
We'll give the children here a treat,
For once a year, at least, I'll see
The poorest child shall happy be.

There, halt! How high this chimney is!
'Tis well I understand my biz,
For never mortal saw before
So tight a squeeze as this, I'm sure.

Now dash away o'er hill and dale,
The stars and moon begin to pale,
And Mrs. Kringle will not wait—
She never likes her breakfast late.

The Night Before Christmas.
A French Version of Clement C. Moore's Famous Holiday Poem.

It was Christmas during the night, when not a being down to a mouse was promenading itself throughout the whole of the mansion. The stockings below the mantel-piece had been suspended carefully, in the hopes that Saint Nicholas would render his visit with speed. The infants had retired themselves to their couches, and all of them were exceedingly comfortable, during which periods some dreams of the confectionery made a dance within their heads. The mother with her handkerchief and I myself having assumed my cap had that moment arranged our brains in the condition of a sleep of the lengthy winter, and an excitement so great made itself to be heard outside within the court yard, that from the bottom of my bed I made a spring in order to ascertain to myself the cause. To the window as a flash of lightning I myself shot, the shutters pushed with a violence extreme, and the framework raised. The moon, down upon the bosom of the snow now fallen, imparted a brightness of the broad day below the objects, when before my eyes, lost in the astonishment, came a small sleigh and eight reindeer, very little, with an aged coachman, also very small, very animated, very jerky, and this man, I knew it at once, must be Saint Nick. Than the eaglets a great deal more rapidly his steeds advanced themselves; he mentioned how they were called, with a whistling, a crying out:

Pusher-on! Waltzer! Riser-Up-on-His-Two-Hind-Feet! Termagant! Come now! Make yourself to go on to the roof of the piazza, to the portion of the fence the most elevated! Be in a hurry, be in a hurry!"

As the withered leaves impeded in hte cyclone make for themselves to the sky's height the passage, in the same manner the reindeer the ridge of the mansion ascended with celerity, bearing with them the sleigh of playthings full, Saint Nicholas with them going also. Afterward, in the time it takes one's eye to be winked, upon the roof I discovered of each small hoof the scrape, the gambol also.

As my head to the interior of the apartment I had brought, and was of myself making the turn, St. Nicholas bounded himself down into the fireplace of the chimneys. From his head even down to his feet in the fur he was clothed, and upon him the ashes and soot lay as a thick covering, tarnishing him; on his back a great abundance of the playthings he had cast, and, in fact, the resemblance of him to a peddler was very close. His eyes blinked; he possessed joyous dimples! His cheeks were of the roses; his nose possessed the appearance of a cherry! His small mouth was puckered up as the bow; his beard was white, suggesting a similarity to the snow; a short pipe, of which the smoke engarlanded his head, was between his teeth. He possessed a broad visage; a circular stomach, also. When he laughed, the latter was agitated as the jelly which is placed in the bowl. Round, corpulent, excessively hilarous, he caused me to burst out laughing in spite of my serious efforts at the control of myself. His winking eye and twisting head immediately gave me to know he was harmless. Silently he inaugurated his task, filling with playthings the stockings; then he himself turned, alongside of his nose his finger placed and, giving to me of politeness the salutation, took again the chimney.

Within his sleigh he cast himself, whistling, and as a feather flew his team. Nevertheless, I heard him exclaim, immediately in the advance of his driving afar off: "To everybody the Happy Chirtmas and the good night!"

Songs of Love.
Whittier.

Sound over all waters, reach out from all lands,
The chorus of voices, the clasping of hands;
Sing hymns that were sung by the stars of the morn,
Sing songs of the angels when Jesus was born!

Christmas Hints.

Don't wait until you can catch your best girl under the mistletoe bough. Kiss her wherever you find her.

In filling up her stocking have a care not to "put your foot in it."

A ton of coal and a barrel of flour would not be too much for many stockings.

A shapely foot, not to go any farther, is about as neat a thing as can be put into a stocking.

The stocking that contains a pair of diamond earrings may not give any more happiness than one with a tin rattle.

Some people think that their stocking would look about right if stuffed with a sealskin cloak and a sable muff.

Don't hang up any long red stockings this Christmas. Kriss Kringle may not mind them, but there is a possibility that the man of the house may come home slightly befuddled and mistaking them for a fire, alarm the entire neighborhood.

Among the Norwegian it is a superstition that if a turkey is killed on Christmas day something terrible will happen. Among Americans it is believed something terrible will happen if a turkey is not killed on Christmas day or thereabouts.

This will be a green Christmas for the girl whose sister carries off the sealskin sacque palm, as it were. She'll be green with envy.

Hartford Post: They were sitting by the fire, Job Shuttle and his wife. The children had gone to bed and the subject of Christmas presents were under discussion.

"I suppose Jack wants a sled," suggested Mrs. Shuttle, "and Jennie wants a pair of skates."

"Now I think the sled should go to Jennie and the skates to Jack," said Job.

"Why not give us both sleds and skates?" sounded a piping voice from the inner bedroom.

"You sha'n't have a solitary thing at all," said Job excitedly.

But they will. Every bureau drawer in the house is chock full of truck for the children.

A Christmas Chorus.
Lee C. Harby, in Brooklyn Magazine.

I.

Now fill up your glasses of champagne and sherry
And turn to the bumper of eggnog again;
The first stroke of midnight must find us all merry,
And this be the chorus that marks the refrain:
Oh! Christmas is here,
The best of the year—
We'll meet it with love, as each heart may decree—
No sorrow shall darken
Our souls, as we harken
To th' joy bells that ring in the year's jubilee!

II.

Let beauty and gayety trip to the measure
Which musical cadences mark for their feet—
The maze of the dance is a well-spring of pleasure,
And adds its own charm to this festival sweet.
Oh! Christmas is here,
The best of the year!
Then hail it with jollity, greet it with dance,
For pulses are beating
And warm hands are meeting,
While rhythm of music the senses entrance!

III.

Of feasting and plenty 'tis fitly the season,
So give to the indigent part of your store;
For he who withholds it, does charity treason
And falls in his duty—to think of the poor.
Oh! Christmas is here,
The best of the year—
The day that we love and an era of glee;
The gloom clouds shall lighten
From hearts as we brighten
The homes of the needy with gifts full and free.

IV.

A toast for the Christmas tide! drink it in gladness—
Wish peace to the world, unto all men goodwill;
May the sunshine of joy pierce the shadows of sadness,
And life for our quaffing, its choice wines distill!
Oh! Christmas is here,
The best of the year,
The season of merriment, charity, song—
Such mem'ries entwine it,
Each heart shall enshrine it
Amid the affections which grow green and strong!

Origin of a Popular Custom.

In the good old times the custom of "kissing under the mistletoe" was very quaintly defined. Every berry on the mistletoe bough hung in the center of the hall entitled a young gallant to a kiss from any member of the fair sex who passed beneath it. After exacting the penalty from the maiden he had to pluck a berry from the bough and hand it to her as a peace offering. To be strictly correct the young lady then had to throw the berry on to the burning yule log in the open grate and decide by the time it took in cracking her luck during the ensuing year Nowadays the custom has been shorn of all its formalities, but the leading feature of it has not been forgotten or abandoned. Scores of legends abound as to the origin of the custom, one of the quaintest of which is worth recording. A prince of royal blood and of fine physique got separated from his companions while out hunting. He wandered through the woods and at night arrived at an old ruined castle. He knocked at the gate and having satisfied the watchman that he was not a robber or a dangerous character, was allowed to enter. The only inmates of the castle was a hideous old baron and his lovely daughter.

The welcome accorded to the wanderer was not of the most enthusiastic character, and when in the morning he paid some well-worded compliments to the baron's daughter he was seized rudely by command of the irate parent and turned out of the castle. He wandered about for several days, and when almost dead from fatigue and hungry, encountered a fairy, to whom he told his adventures. She informed him that if he returned to the castle armed with a mistletoe bough the power of the baron over his ladylove would cease and he could win her with a kiss. But the bough must be plucked from a hollow oak growing by the side of a stream, on the opposite bank of which stood a weeping willow with all its leaves torn off save two. For weeks the love-sick prince searched for this particular oak, but without success. At last he fell asleep one night under an oak tree, and when he woke in the morning he observed to his surprise a rivulet just at his feet and a weeping willow on the opposite bank which answered exactly the fairy's description. He speedily climbed the tree, plucked a bough of mistletoe which grew at its summit, repaired to the castle and won his bride.

A CHRISTMAS TRAGEDY.

By Julia D. Whiting in the Springfield, (Mass.) Republican.

Last year, while taking a horseback ride through a section of a southern state made desolate by the war, I chanced one afternoon just at twilight on what once had been a stately avenue, and I wondered at the neglect now visible, still more, as I idly traced it, it opened upon a lawn where stood an imposing mansion.

I hesitated to approach it, and waited underneath the trees, thinking to accost some servant, and ask the name of its owner. No servant appeared, and, as I waited in the gathering gloom, I felt something uncanny about the place:

That said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
'The place is haunted!

Almost fearful, yet desirous to solve the mystery, I rode up to the veranda that shaded the front of the lower story, and then perceived how fallen to decay it was. The steps that had led from it were quite gone, while the heavy door that opened into the once hospitable hall sagged upon its rusty hinges and stood half open, a great pile of dead leaves choking the entrance; and now I observed the broken panes in the long French windows.

Oppressed by the silent influence of the place and half ashamed of my fears, I turned away and sought the highroad.

Remaining in the neighborhood for some days, I visited the deserted mansion again, and wondered much why this house, once so delightful, and even now in its decay so full of charm, had been deserted. While I questioned it for an answer its silence denied me, I forbore to ask those that might have told me, lest the mystery might be violently dissolved.

But one day, riding in a new direction, chance brought me to a house where an old lady sat on the porch, occupied only with her thoughts it would seem, as her hands lay idly in her lap, and she started as I addressed her. Asking her my way she answered courteously, and I was about to take my leave, when the thought struck me that here, if any where, I should hear of the deserted house. So I said: "Can you tell me the history of that lonely house that stands in the grove of of live-oaks on the Ghent road?"

She gave a sharp glance, as she answered: "No one knows as well as I. Why do you ask? Leave it to itself."

I assured her I had none but a traveler's interest, and, at length she told me its history. But first, she turned toward the open door, she called "Zoe!" three or four times, and on a smart colored girl appearing ordered her to fetch wine. As she appeared again with decanter and glass the old lady poured wine for me herself, and we drank with great ceremony. Desiring me to be seated she began her tale, preluding it with "If I am not mistaken you own other blood than English. There is mixture of the fiery French with your cooler Saxon?"

I assured her that she was right. I was proud to number among my ancestry some from "fair Provence."

"It prevails with you, young man, and you will sympathize in the passions that made this story possible. It was long ago—yes, fifty years ago that it happened. I was a young girl, and a beauty, sir, with young gallants at my call, ah me!

"That house is the old Grantley house, and Lucille Grantley, my dear cousin, was the only child and heir. We were of an age, and fondly attached. How can I describe my beautiful cousin! How paint her charm! The Grantleys on the mother's side were of French origin, and to that she owed her graceful form, fiery glance, and dark, glowing cheek; but,—look," said the old lady handing me a locket, going on with her description, while I gazed at the pictured face within.

It was indeed a magnificently beautiful face that met my gaze. In the somber yet fiery eye there shown the possibility of any fate. The hair was swept away from the face in rich curls, and the delicate aquiline nose, melting lips, and rose-tinted cheeks made a vision to charm one. In gazing at the miniature, I had lost what the old lady was saying. I looked up to apologize, but she excused me, saying: "No one could gaze on Lucille, and think of aught else. Is she not beautiful? Ah well!

"Lucille had many suitors, among them Dick Floyd, and alas! my own dear brother Hugh. I knew Lucille's heart, and had long known that her affection was given to Floyd. That secret was buried in my breast,—not even to Lucille did I breathe my knowledge. I have said that we were cousins, and as our plantations joined, our families were in the habit of spending the Christmas holidays, now with the Grantleys, now with us, as the years alternated. That Christmas we kept the day at the Grantleys', and Mrs. Grantley gave a ball. Many a beautiful girl and gay gallant were there that night that now lie in their graves, or are old and sad like me! After dinner we girls went up stairs to dress, and, being ready first, ran across the corridor to Lucille's room. Never had I seen her look so beautiful; I little thought it was the last time! Her simple white gown, with no ornament saving a great diamond cross, a family jewel, that blazed upon her throat, well became her sumptuous beauty.

"'Ah, Lucille,' I cried, 'How exquisite! There's many a heart will ache to night!' and I whispered in her ear, 'You look like a bride.'

"'Hush, you silly girl, said Lucille. 'But I wish to look by best to-night.'

"'Why, Floyd would admire you in homespun,' I said.

"'Hush, don't breath his name. My mother —' as she spoke Mrs. Grantley appeared at the door to hasten us down stairs.

"My cousin led the dance with my brother Hugh, and never had she queened it more royally. All the young men looked after them with envious eyes and Hugh seemed in a transport. As they swept past me in the dance I heard Hugh whisper, 'Would that this might last forever! I would ask no better heaven than to be forever by your side.' I saw her smile in answer, and marked the glad light spring into Hugh's eye, and pitied him for the disappointment in store for him.

"The hours flew by, I was sought by many, and listening to the murmured words of compliment, and whirling down the long hall in the waltz, I had not marked the absence of Lucille, until, resting after a dance, while my partner went to fetch me a glass of wine, I became aware of a sudden excitement in the room, and I overheard a neighbor, Mrs. Stanley, saying to a friend, 'Why, she has been gone for the three last dances, and Mrs. Grantley has disappeared also.'

"When my partner returned I asked him for an explanation, but he could only tell me that there seemed to be a feeling that something was wrong.

"However, the band struck up, and all were dancing, when all at once the music ceased, and all was confusion. Every eye was turned toward the door, and there appeared Mrs. Grantley holding Lucille's hand tightly in her own, both mother and daughter pale as ashes!

"For an instant I caught Lucille's eye. She looked away and shuddered!

"Mrs. Grantley led her daughter into the midst of the hushed assembly—then, releasing her with a gesture that looked like renouncement, she turned to Floyd, who had closely followed their footsteps. Waiving him to Lucille's side, she turned to the guests, and said:

"'Is there not a clergyman here?' and her eye sought among the crowd, while from Lucille's lips there breathed a murmur of 'Be merciful!'

"Unheeding this interruption, Mrs. Grantley said in a distant, hard voice, 'I think I numbered the Rev. Mr. Ingalls among the friends I asked to spend Christmas night with us?'

"As she spoke a servant came in from the library, with the gentleman. 'Come here, if you please, Mr. Ingalls,—your services are required.' While the clergyman was crossing the hall Mrs. Grantley resumed, in her even tones:—

"'As we grow older we grow dull in invention, but our children often prepare surprises for us. My daughter, I find,' with a wave of the hand in her direction, 'with the help of our young friend, Mr. Floyd, had arranged a marriage, to make the festivities more joyous!'

"'Mother!' said Lucille, imploringly,

"'Mrs. Grantley went on, unheeding, 'On special occasions all should be included in the enjoyment of the house, and I have prevailed on these foolish young people to share their pleasure with us. Proceed with the ceremony, Mr. Ingalls.'

"'Ahem!' said the embarrassed clergyman, 'This is quite irregular, I hardly like to—'

"'Do not I give it my sanction? Pray go on.'

"Thus adjured, Mr. Ingalls began the marriage service, amid a breathless silence. All eyes were fixed upon the extraordinary group. It seemed much more like a burial than a marriage, and there was a horror over the assembly that seemed to fix all in their places. When it was over and the minister stepped away from the newly wedded pair, there was a stir of uncertainty. None knew whether to wish them joy.

"'Mrs. Grantley, still in that icy voice, said, 'Are there none then to congratulate the bride?'

"'Mother!' cried Lucille, making as if she would fall upon her neck. 'Forgive me! Give me your blessing!'

"Her mother repelled her and said, 'You spoil the play by such improvised speeches. Forgiveness is not set down in my part.'

"Floyd now spoke for the first time. Taking his young wife by the hand he said: 'She is not to blame. On me the fault lies.'

"'On you'—Mrs. Grantley paused a moment as if for words, then her fury broke forth. 'The farce is over—I have no further wish for you! Farewell, Mrs. Floyd!—Lucy—she called her maid, who stood with the other servants in the doorway, surveying the scene, 'Pray fetch your young mistress' wraps for Mrs. Floyd. The night is cold and these young people take the boat.'

"There was a terrible scene. Lucille threw herself at her mother's feet, and with sobs and cries besought her for forgiveness. Her mother looked down upon her while a dreadful smile illumined her face. Or, a sudden she drew herself away and said: 'Enough of this. Get up. For shame!'

"Some of the friends now came forward, some helped to raise Lucille from the floor, while others, among them, my mother, remonstarted with Mrs. Grantley: 'You have punished her enough; if she has deceived you, remember that she is still your daughter.'

"'My daughter?—I have no daughter,' said Mrs. Grantley. 'I do not know Mr. and Mrs. Floyd.' Turning with much politeness to them again, she said: 'Do not let us hinder you. It is nearly time for the boat to reach the landing. We must not detain these young people, just about taking their wedding trip!'

"Accepting the wraps brought by Lucy, Lucille and Floyd left the room, without another word, closely followed by Mrs. Grantley, waving them out of the house with an 'Au revoir!' and a whispered injunction to her old butler; who followed his young mistress down the walk, as we afterward learned, with instructions not to lose sight of them until the boarded the boat.'

"'What a horrible scene!' said I, speaking for the first time.

"'Do you call this horrible?' said the old lady. 'That was nothing to what followed. Don't interrupt me, listen!'

"'We returned to the parlor, to wonder and surmise on the affair, while Mrs. Grantley shut herself up in the library. From one of the servants we learned that Mrs. Grantley had come upon the lovers in the conservatory, and had heard Floyd urge an I Lucille consent to an elopement, and had taken this way to avenge herself. A poor revenge, you think? It was, indeed, and recoiled upon herself.

"'The tragedy of that night was but begun. A half-hour passed, and the guests began to slip away, when the old butler burst into the room, and rushing up to my mother, exclaimed, "My God! Mis' Clayton, who's gwine to tell missis? It'll kill her sholy!'

"'Tell her what, Robert? What has happened?'

"'Miss Lucille and Mars' Floyd, bof dead, down yander, on the landin'! Bof of 'em! Dere dey lie!'

"'There arose a chorus of shrieks and exclamations, to which Robert answered, 'This gwine kill Missus! If she lef' that poor chile alone this never happened!'

"'It cold outside, so dey went in de shed down on the landin', till the boat come; Miss cryin' and Mars' Floyd tryin' to comfort her. Mars' Floyd hear noise outside, and say he guess boat comin' and he go out,—then we hear him speakin' with some one, first low like, then louder,—and Miss say, 'Mo' trouble!' and she open the door,—and I hear her say 'No! No! You shall not hurt him!' and den I hear a shot, and den another, and a scream,—and a fall—and den I run out, and dere dey lies! with the blood runnin' on her white dress! an' I raise 'em, but they bof gone—dead bof of 'em!

"'Who's dead?' demanded a terrible voice—Mrs. Grantley stood in the door. She was answered by the tramp of feet without,—the door opened, and men brought in, on an improvised bier, the bodies of Lucille and Floyd!

"'With a shriek that still rings in my ears, Mrs. Grantley saw all in one swift glance, threw up her hands in frantic appeal, and sank forward over her daughter's body. They ran to lift her up but she also was dead!

"'They were buried on New Year's day. The faces of Lucille and her bridegroom seemed transfigured with immortal happiness. She was buried in the dress she wore that fatal night, a cloud of lace covered the ominous stain over that still heart! Mrs. Grantley's features, frozen into marble stillness, yet wore that look of horror with which she died. The three were buried, and silence fell upon that house, once so full of life and gayety: silence fell upon their history. It seemed strange to me, who knew but too well—but no one guessed the murderer's name. I knew!'

The old lady paused, and wrung her hands as it the tragedy she told was fresh. After a few moments she collected herself and resumed:

"Why should I conceal it longer? He must be beyond reach of reprisal long ago. It was my brother! My poor brother! When I, at last, reached my room that dreadful night, I found on my pillow a note. Half beside myself, I locked my door, and read that Hugh, maddened by his passion for Lucille, had followed them to the boat landing, and when Floyd came out to listen for the boat taunted and stung him to the quick. His rage partly satisfied he would have left the spot; but when Lucille appeared and hung upon her husband's arm, it drove him beside himself, and he fired—to see Lucille throw herself between her husband and harm, and then received the second shot! Hugh, so the letter ran, not daring to see what he had done, fled from the spot, and reaching home, how he knew not, had gathered together what money was at hand, penned the confession, and throwing himself on a fleet horse, was miles away as I read. He called himself her murderer, and charged me not to seek him.

"What could I do but bury the secret in my heart, and wonder, and mourn, with the rest, over Hugh's disappearance. It was laid to his grief at Lucille's death, and as years passed, and he did not return, it was supposed that he had met death in some solitude—and so it may be—no word has ever come to me."

Here the old lady paused so long that at length I ventured to ask why the house was left to decay.

"Well," she answered, "the Grantleys were singularly without relatives, and with the death of Lucille and her mother they vanished from the earth. As time passed, the estate reverted to the state, but the mansion was left to fall to ruin, and many a ghost story has been told of it."

And so ended the story of a Christmas day. I wish my readers could have seen the old lady that told it. As she proceeded with her narration her bent form grew more erect, a flush rose in her faded cheek, her eyes grew bright, and I saw, for the time, the beauty of long ago. As the story ended, she relapsed once more into decrepit age, and it was again a bent and feeble old lady that thanked me for my attention, and bade me "Good day!"

'Tis vain to seek a powder that defies detection, but use Poozoni's to improve the complexion.