later, they were at a loss to account for that phase of the situation. It was not long before news from Cleveland reached our little town, showing that Stuart had disappeared also, leaving his wife and daughter in reduced circumstances. It seems he had sold out his business, turned all his possessions into money except his residence, and had dropped out of sight.

"When I left our little town, about ten years after this occurrence, the matter was still a subject for discussion at all the sewing circles, but the good women had not succeeded in learning anything further about the fate of Stuart and Madge Barker.

"I came out to Nebraska and secured a position as court reporter at Lincoln. After I had been there about three years a lawyer whom I had known very well in Lincoln was elected judge of the district court in one of the newly organized counties. His court was located at Allen, the county seat, and he offered me the position of reporter under him. I accepted the position and was soon on the spot.

"I had not been in the town twenty-four hours when who should I meet, walking down the main street, but Lorin Stuart. Of course, he didn't recognize me as being any one he had ever seen, and I did not speak to him.

"To make a long story short, I learned by quiet inquiry that Stuart was the most important man in the little town, being the owner of the townsite. He had married Madge Barker and they were living in one of the most imposing houses in the town. It seems that when Mrs. Barker and Stuart disappeared from their homes they had gone to Colorado, where they lived for two years as man and wife. Richard Barker, the woman's son, who had disappeared about the same time they did, had followed them to Colorado and had been living with them all the time. After leaving Colorado these three had come to Nebraska, and Stuart and Mrs. Barker had each homesteaded a claim. The two claims were adjoining, and Stuart had "boarded" with the woman and her son. When their titles had been perfected they were married, John Barker having in the meantime secured a divorce from his wife on the ground of desertion. Soon afterwards the town of Allen was laid out on the claim of the woman, and when I appeared on the scene this town had reached a respectable size.

"As the owner of the town site, and by dint of his superior ability, Stuart had become a strong factor in politics, and had become, in a small way, a dictator and dispenser of patronage. He had been elected to the state senate, and at the time I arrived in town he was a candidate for election as state treasurer.

"Through Stuart's influence with the authorities at Washington Richard Barker had been appointed postmaster at Allen about two years before.

"A few days before I reached Allen Postmaster Barker had married Mabel Anderson, the belle of the town, and the only daughter of one of the most prominent families. She was a beautiful young woman, a decided brunette, with dark, flashing eyes, and regular features of a rather strong type.

"I had not been in town a month before I heard rumors floating about to the effect that Stuart and young Mrs. Barker were more affectionate than their relative circumstances seemed to require. These rumors increased rapidly, and it was soon common talk that Stuart had supplanted his stepson in Mrs. Barker's affections.

"You will remember that I said in the beginning that Richard Barker resembled his father in the matter of brains. That will account for the fact that he did not seem to be much concerned about the actions of his wife and Stuart, although it was impossible for him not to have known all about their doings.

"While this was going on the suspicions of Mrs. Stuart had been aroused, and the neighbors told of frequent family jars in the Stuart family. One day the whole town was thrown into a great state of excitement by a personal encounter between the two women. They had met on the main street in the busiest part of town one afternoon and Mrs. Stuart drew a revolver from the pocket of her dress and attempted to shoot her daughter-in-law. The weapon failed to explode, however, and was taken from the infuriated woman by a bystander. Mrs. Stuart warned Mrs. Barker that if she didn't leave town inside of twenty-four hours she would kill her.

"This threat had the desired effect, and the next day it was announced that Mrs. Barker had gone to Omaha for medical treatment. Her departure did not put a stop to the dissensions in the Stuart family, however, and they were constantly quarreling. Mrs. Stuart refused to join her husband in executing deeds to buyers of their land, and he sold it anyway. He made frequent trips to Omaha and would be gone several days each time. Finally he took up his residence in Omaha altogether, and Mrs. Stuart secured a divorce on the ground of desertion, Stuart making no defense.

"I had occasion to go to Omaha frequently on business, and learned that Stuart and Mrs. Barker were living together in the northern part of the city. This condition of affairs continued for about two years when Stuart removed to Red Wood, a small town in the western part of the state. Mrs. Barker followed him there, and he bought her a fine home in the town, living with her under the guise of relationship. He died shortly afterward, and when his will was filed for probate at Allen, where all his property was situated, it was seen that everything had been willed to Mabel Barker, and she was appointed administratrix without bond.

"The will was probated, but within less than a week afterwards a contest was instituted in the district court in the name of Helen Stuart, who claimed to be the daughter and sole heir of Stuart. She had been living in Cleveland since the death of her mother, several years before. I had learned this incidentally some time before Stuart died. It is not material how Helen Stuart had learned of the death of her father and the disposition he had made of his property.

"There was great difficulty in getting a jury, and several days were consumed in finding twelve men who were not biased or prejudiced one way or another by their knowledge of the case.

"A jury was at last secured, and the case commenced. Helen Stuart produced the marriage certificate in proof of her mother's marriage to Stuart in Cleveland years before and produced proofs of her own relationship to Stuart. She testified that her mother had never been divorced from Stuart. It was also shown incidentally that just before his death Stuart had transferred his entire bank account in the bank at Allen, amounting to about $11,000, to the credit of Mabel Barker, and she had drawn it all out immediately after his death. The claim of Helen Stuart, that she was the sole surviving relative of her father, was proved most conclusively.

"The attorneys for Mabel Barker were simply astounded at the evidence confronting them, but they made a strong fight. Every resource known to the profession was brought to bear on the case, and altogether it was one of the most brilliant legal conflicts I ever witnessed. The arguments were gems of legal logic combined with rhetorical flights which fairly made the old town hall ring. The case was submitted to the jury on the 19th of December, and, as I said at the beginning, the jury was still out when Christmas eve rolled around.

"Our little party fairly haunted that old town hall waiting for the verdict that seemed so near and yet so far. There were the two women and their attorneys, the judge and myself. All day long and until midnight every night we waited. Then we would disperse, only to assemble the next morning and repeat the process. It seemed as though none of us could stay away. As Christmas morning approached the strain seemed to grow more intense. The weather was intensely cold, and the barn-like room was anything but comfortable, notwithstanding an immense stove that was white hot. Two small lamps threw a fitful light on the scene and filled the room with dancing shadows. The silence was oppressive. No one had uttered a sound during what seemed to me to be several hours. I had looked at my watch for the forty-ninth time to find that the hour was slowly approaching midnight, when the bailiff reported that the jury had agreed.

"They were promptly brought in from an adjoining room and seated in the improvised jury box. They looked fatigued and worn, but there was nothing in their faces to indicate what the verdict was. I watched the two women. Helen Stuart was calm and collected, and her large, blue eyes surveyed the faces of the jurors without a muscle of her face betraying any sign of emotion. Mable Barker was just the reverse. Her eyes were restless and shifted rapidly from one object to another. She showed signs of a great mental strain and her mouth twitched nervously.

"The usual form was gone through with and the verdict passed to me to read. It found for Helen Stuart, and also found that Mable Barker was not entitled to any part of the Stuart property.

"As the estate was valued at about $150,000, Miss Stuart received a very substantial Christmas present. She returned to her home in Cleveland, leaving her property in the hands of an agent, and I learned that she is married to a physician. Mable Barker was living in the house at Red Wood bought by Stuart, the last I heard of her."

F. B. M.

HOW SANTA CLAUS CAME.

Clarence Hawkes in Three Little Folks.

Last Christmas eve, when we were snug in bed,
And all the lights were out, Tommy, he said,
"I'd like to know how 'tis, with pack and all,
That Santa Claus got down the chimney hole."

"Let's lie awake and see and then we'll know;
Won't it be fun to see him squeezed up so?"
And so we laid awake, and by and by,
I got sleeping some with my left eye.

But still I saw the chimney with my right,
And by and by there came the queerest sight;
A little man no bigger than Tom Thumb,
With a little pack no bigger than my drum

Came sliding down the chimney more and more,
Until he went kerbump upon the floor;
And then he looked around the room a spell,
But very soon his pack began to swell.

It kept a-swelling more and more and more,
'Till it was bigger than the parlor door,
And then I saw that it was full of toys,
And books and dolls, and things for girls and boys.

And soon the little man had grown so tall,
He didn't seem to be a dwarf at all,
And then he took some things out of his pack,
And filled my stocking until I thought 'twould crack.

And then the pack grew small, and small, and small,
Until it wasn't bigger'n nothin' 'tall,
And Santa Claus he was a dwarf once more,
And climbed up back as he had come before.

Just then, as Santa Claus got out of sight,
I opened my left eye, and it was light,
And there were all the things for Tommy 'n' me,
A-bursting out, just as I knowed they'd be.

But when I told him Tommy laughed and said,
I was a foolish little sleepy head.
But by and by he said, "It must be so.
For Santa Claus had left the things, you know."

TOLD OUT OF COURT.

Anecdotes and Incidents Concerning the Legal Profession.

In answer to a complaint that the court enforces a rule as to abstracts by holding that "errors in the record, but not shown by the abstract, are not visible," the opinion of the Illinois appellate court says the amount of business is the justification, and adds: "Thirty-six years ago the supreme court endeavored to compel observance of the rule by a threat. Kelleher against Tisdale, 23 Ill., 405. Four years later that court, without executing, repeated the threat. Shackleford against Bailey, 35 Ill., 387. So the judicious mother secures the obedience of her wayward children."

Illinois shines in the reflected glory of vast quantities of legal erudition. An attorney from the east had occasion to try a case recently in a city on the east bank of the Mississippi. The opposing attorney raised the point as to twice placing a person's "life or limb" in jeopardy for the same offense. He rounded up a number of periods with the word "jopperdy." Tripingly it came from his tongue, "jopperdy," "jopperdy," and thrice he repeated it, "jopperdy," "jopperdy." The eastern attorney smiled at first, but when the words rose in a series to a climax he coughed violently to hide his laughter. The presiding genius of the bench knew that something was wrong. He fidgeted in his chair, frowned and finally walked down to confer with the visiting attorney.

Even a justice of the peace occasionally learns things, relates the Chicago Chronicle. The other day Justice Kersten added the word "rubberneck" to his vocabulary.

Mrs. Brigel was before him charged with disorderly conduct. Mrs. R. Lutz, a neighbor, said Mrs. Brigel had called her many harsh things. Mrs. Brigel took the sand and denied all the allegations but one.

"I admit, your honor," said she, "that when Mrs. Lutz passed me I said, 'There goes a rubberneck,' right out loud, your honor. She is a rubberneck, and—"

Justice Kersten, whose face had assumed a puzzled expression, here interrupted with: "What is a rubberneck?"

The officials and the spectators smiled at the court's innocence. Somebody explained and Justice Kersten said:

"This seems to be a very opprobrious epithet. I'll just hold the defendant in peace bonds."

"It will be difficult for our legislature and impossible for our courts," says a recent opinion, "to establish definite and fixed rules that will preserve from their own improvidence the estates of maiden ladies who give their hearts, hands and property to the knights of their choice."

Referring to a railroad whose operating expenses always exceeded its earnings, an opinion of the United States supreme court says: "Counsel say that 'it is familiarly known in Texas as a teazer, and if it ever passes beyond this interesting but unprofitable stage, even its friends will be surprised.' We are not advised and we can hardly be expected to take judicial notice of what is meant by the term 'teazer,' but it is clearly disclosed by the record that this was an unprofitable road."

IMPIETIES.

A late English bishop of a somewhat inquisitorial character once wrote the following query to the church wardens of a parish in his diocese: "Are the conversation and carriage of your clergyman consistent with his holy office?" The reply was: "We can't say nothing about his conversation, but he don't keep no kerridge."

Mr. Dodson, the English actor, recently told a story about a clergyman whom he heard at a parish church in Kent. The clergyman was reading the notices for the week, and ended by saying: "There will be christening next Sunday at 10:30." He then slowly walked to the pulpit. Suddenly turning toward the congregation he remarked in severe tones, "Remember, Mrs. Tomlinson, I said 10:30. A year ago you were late, I believe."

Some years ago, relates Harper's Round Table, there lived in England a certain bishop who was extremely pompous, and very fond of impressing upon the minds of the poorer people the evil of doing wrong. As they never seemed to do aught but wrong in the worthy man's opinion, it sometimes became irksome to these people to hear him constantly admonishing them to do right. One of the bishop's habits was to visit the miners a short distance from his city, and his presence grew familiar to these toilers. During one of his calls he found a group of them talking together, and after a few preliminary words on his customary subject of doing right, he asked them what they were talking of.

"You see," said one of the men, "we found a kettle, and us has been er trying who can tell the biggest lot to own the kettle."

The bishop was duly surprised, and read the men a lecture in which he spoke of how strongly the offense of lying had been impressed upon him when he was young, and how he had never told a lie in the whole course of his life. He had hardly finished when one of the men cried out:

"Gi'e him the kettle, Jim! Gi'e him the kettle."

The Dutch, the Danes and the Prussians each have a mile that is 18,440 feet long, or three and one-half times the length of ours.

The Christmas Feast at Bracebridge Hall.

By WASHINGTON IRVING.

"Lo, now is come our joyful'st feast!
Let every man be jolly.
Each roome with yvie leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.
Now all our neighbors' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning;
Their ovens they with bak't meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let Sorrow lie,
And if, for cold, it hap to die,
We'l bury 't in a Christmas pye,
And evermore be merry."

—Withers' Juvenilia.

* * * * * * * * *

The dinner was served up in the great hall, where the 'squire always held his Christmas banquet. A blazing, crackling fire of logs had been heaped up to warm the spacious apartment, and the flame went sparkling and wreathing up the wide-mouthed chimney. The great picture of the crusader and his white horse had been profusely decorated with greens for the occasion; and holly and ivy had likewise been wreathed round the helmet and weapons on the opposite wall, which I understood were the arms of the same warrior. I must own, by-the-by, I had strong doubts about the authenticity of the painting and armor as having belonged to the crusader, they certainly having the stamp of more recent days; but I was told that the painting had been so considered time out of mind and that, as to the armor, it had been found in a lumber room, and elevated to its present situation by the 'squire, who at once determined it to be the armor of the family hero; and as he was absolute authority on all such subjects in his own household, the matter had passed into current acceptations. A sideboard was set out just under this chivalric trophy, which was a display of plate that might have vied (at least in variety) with Belshazzar's parade of the vessels of the temple; "flagons, cans, cups, beakers, goblets, basins, and ewers;" the gorgeous utensils of good companionship that had gradually accumulated through many generations of jovial housekeepers. Before these stood the two Yule candles, beaming like two stars of the first magnitude; other lights were distributed in branches, and the whole array glittered like a firmament of silver.

We were ushered into this banqueting scene with the sound of minstrelsy; the old harper being seated on a stool beside the fireplace, and twanging his instrument with a vast deal more power than melody. Never did Christmas board display a more goodly and gracious assemblage of countenances; those who were not handsome were at least happy; and happiness is a rare improver of your hard-favored visage. I always consider an old English family as well worth studying as a collection of Holbein's portraits, or Albert Durer's prints. There is much antiquarian lore to be acquired; much knowledge of the physiognomies of former times. Perhaps it may be from having continually before their eyes those rows of old family portraits, with which the mansions of this country are stocked; certain it is, that the quaint features of antiquity are often more faithfully perpetuated in these ancient lines; and I have traced an old family nose through a whole picture gallery, legitimately handed down from generation to generation, almost from the time of the conquest. Something of the kind was to be observed in the worthy company around me. Many of their faces had evidently originated in a gothic age, and been merely copied by succeeding generations; and there was one little girl, in particular, of staid demeanor, with a high Roman nose and an antique vinegar aspect who was a great favorite of the 'squire's, being, as he said, a Bracebridge all over, and the very counterpart of one of his ancestors who figured in the court of Henry VIII.

The parson said grace, which was not a short familiar one, such as is commonly addressed to the Deity in these unceremonious days, but a long, courtly, well worded one of the ancient school. There was now a pause, as if something was expected, when suddenly the butler entered the hall with some degree of bustle; he was attended by a servant on each side with a large wax-light, and bore a silver dish, on which was an enormous pig's head, decorated with rosemary, with a lemon in its mouth, which was placed with great formality at the head of the table. The moment this pageant made its appearance the harper struck up a flourish, at the conclusion of which the young Oxonian, on receiving a hint from the 'squire, gave, with an air of the most comic gravity, an old air the first verse of which was as follows:

"Caput apri defero
Reddens laudes domino.
The boar's head in hand bringe I,
With garlands gay and rosemary.
I pray you all synge merrily
Qui estis in convivio."

Though prepared to witness many of these little eccentricities, from being apprised of the peculiar hobby of mine host, yet I confess the parade with which so odd a dish was introduced somewhat perplexed me, until I gathered from the conversation of the 'squire and the parson that it was meant to represent the bringing in of the boar's head—a dish formerly served up with much ceremony, and the sound of minstrelsy and song at great tables on Christmas day.

The table was literally loaded with good cheer and presented an epitome of country abundance, in this season of overflowing larders. A distinguished post was allotted to "ancient sirloin," as mine host termed it; being, as he added, "the standard of old England's hospitality, and a joint of goodly presence and full of expectation." There were several dishes quaintly decorated, and which had evidently something traditional in their embellishments, but about which, as I did not like to appear over curious, I asked no questions.

I could not, however, but notice a pie, magnificently decorated with peacock's feathers, in imitation of that bird, which overshadowed a considerable tract of the table. This, the 'squire confessed, with some little hesitation, was a pheasant pie, though a peacock pie was certainly the most authentical; but there had been such a mortality among the peacocks this season that he could not prevail upon himself to have one killed.

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When the cloth was removed the butler brought in a huge silver vessel of rare and curious workmanship, which he placed before the 'squire. Its appearance was hailed with acclamation, being the Wassail bowl, so renowned in Christmas festivity. The contents had been prepared by the 'squire himself, for it was a beverage in the skillful mixture of which he particularly prided himself, alleging that it was too abstruse and complex for the comprehension of an ordinary servant. It was a potation, indeed, that might well make the heart of a toper leap within him, being composed of the richest and raciest wines, highly spiced and sweetened, with roasted apples bobbing about the surface.

The old gentleman's whole countenance beamed with a serene look of indwelling delight as he stirred this mighty bowl. Having raised it to his lips, with a hearty wish of a merry Christmas to all present, he sent it brimming around the board, for everyone to follow his example according to the primitive style; pronouncing it "the ancient fountain of good feeling, where all hearts met together."

There was much laughing and rallying, as the honest emblem of Christmas joviality circulated, and was kissed rather coyly by the ladies. But when it reached Master Simon he raised it in both hands, and with the air of a boon companion, struck up an old Wassail Chanson:

"The brown bowle,
The merry brown bowle,
As it goes round about-a,
Fill
Still,
Let the world say what it will,
And drink your fill all out-a.

"The deep canne,
The merry deep canne,
As thou dost freely quaff-a,
Sling
Fling,
Be as merry as a king,
And sound a lusty laugh-a."

* * * * * * * * *

The dinner-time passed away in this flow of innocent hilarity, and though the old hall may have resounded in its time with many a scene of broader rout and revel, yet I doubt whether it ever witnessed more honest and genuine enjoyment. How easy it is for one benevolent being to diffuse pleasure around him; and how truly is a kind heart a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity to freshen into smiles. The joyous disposition of the worthy 'squire was perfectly contagious; he was happy himself, and disposed to make all the world happy; and the little eccentricities of his humor did but season, in a manner, the sweetness of his philanthropy.

* * * * * * * * *

After the dinner table was removed the hall was given up to the younger members of the family, who, prompted to all kinds of noisy mirth by the Oxonian and Master Simon, made its old walls ring with their merriment, as they played at romping games. I delight in witnessing the gambols of children, and particularly at this happy holiday season, and could not help stealing out of the drawing room on hearing one of their peals of laughter. I found them at the game of blind-man's-buff. Master Simon, who was the leader of their revels, and seemed on all occasions to fulfill the office of that ancient potentate, the Lord of Misrule, was blinded in the midst of the hall. The little beings were as busy about him as the mock fairies about Falstaff, pinching him, plucking at the skirts of his coat and tickling him with straws. One fine blue-eyed girl of about 13, with her flaxen hair all in beautiful confusion, her frolic face in a glow, her frock half torn off her shoulders, a complete picture of a romp, was the chief tormentor, and from the shyness with which Master Simon avoided the smaller game and hemmed this wild little nymph in corners and obliged her to jump shrieking over chairs, I suspected the rogue of being not a whit more blind than was convenient.

When I returned to the drawing room I found the company seated round the fire, listening to the parson, who was deeply ensconced in a high-backed oaken chair, the work of some cunning artificer of yore, which had been brought from the library for his particular accommodation. From this venerable piece of furniture, with which his shadowy figure and dark, weazen face so admirably accorded, he was dealing forth strange accounts of the popular superstitions and legends of the surrounding country, with which he had become acquainted in the course of his antiquarian researches.

* * * * * * * * *

While we were all attention to the parson's stories our ears were suddenly assailed by a burst of heterogeneous sounds from the hall, in which were mingled something like the clang of rude minstrelsy, with the uproar of many small voices and girlish laughter. The door suddenly flew open and a train came trooping into the room that might almost have been mistaken for the breaking up of the court of Fairy. That indefatigable spirit, Master Simon, in the faithful discharge of his duties as lord of misrule, had conceived the idea of a Christmas mummery or masking, and having called in to his assistance the Oxonian and the young officer, who were equally rife for anything that should occasion romping and merriment, they had carried it into instant effect. The old housekeeper had been consulted; the antique clothes presses and wardrobes rummaged and made to yield up the relics of finery that had not seen the light for several generations; the younger part of the company had been privately convened from parlor to hall, and the whole had been bedizened out into a burlesque imitation of an antique mask.

Master Simon led the van as "Ancient Christmas," quaintly appareled in a ruff, a short cloak, which had very much the aspect of one of the old housekeeper's petticoats, and a hat that might have served for a village steeple and must indubitably have figured in the days of the Covenanters. From under this his nose curved boldly forth, flushed with a frost-bitten bloom that seemed the very trophy of a December blast. He was accompanied by the blue-eyed romp, dished up as Dame Mince Pie, in the venerable magnificence of faded brocade, long stomacher, peaked hat and high-heeled shoes.

The young officer appeared as Robin Hood, in a sporting dress of Kendal green, and a foraging cap with a gold tassel.

The costume, to be sure, did not bear testimony to deep research, and there was an evident eye to the picturesque, natural to a young gallant in presence of his mistress. The fair Julia hung on his arm in a pretty rustic dress, as Maid Marian. The rest of the train had been metamorphosed in various ways. The girls trussed up in the finery of the ancient belles of the Bracebridge line, and the strplings bewhiskered with burnt cork, and gravely clad in broad skirts, hanging sleeves, and full-bottomed wigs, to represent the characters of Roast Beef, Plum Pudding, and other worthies celebrated in ancient maskings. The whole was under the control of the Oxonian, in the appropriate character of Misrule; and I observed that he exercised rather a mischievous sway with his wand over the smaller personages of the pageant.

The eruption of this motley crew, with beat of drum, according to ancient custom, was the consummation of uproar and merriment. Master Simon covered himself with glory by the stateliness with which, as Ancient Christmas, he walked a minuet with the peerless, though giggling, Dame Mince Pie. It was followed by a dance of all the characters, which, from its medley of costumes, seemed as though the old family portraits had skipped down from their frames to join in the sport. Different centuries were figuring at cross-hands and right and left; the dark ages were cutting pirouettes and rigadoons; and the days of Queen Bess, jigging merrily down the middle, through a line of succeeding generations.

The worthy 'squire contemplated these fantastic sports, and this resurrection of his old wardrobe, with simple relish of childish delight. He stood chuckling and rubbing his hands, and scarcely hearing a word the parson said, notwithstanding that the latter was discoursing most authentically on the ancient and stately dance of the Pavon, or peacock, from which he conceived the minuet to be derived. For my part I was in a continual excitement from the varied scenes of whim and innocent gayety passing before me. It was inspiring to see wild-eyed frolic and warm-hearted hospitality breaking out from among the chills and glooms of winter, and old age throwing off his apathy, and catching once more the freshness of youthful enjoyment. I felt also an interest in the scene, from the consideration that these fleeting customs were posting fast into oblivion, and this was, perhaps, the only family in England in which the whole of them were still punctiliously observed. There was a quaintness, too, mingled with all this revelry, that gave it a peculiar zest; it was suited to the time and place; and as the old manor house almost reeled with mirth and wassail, it seemed echoing back the joviality of long-departed years.

LITTLE STOCKINGS IN A ROW.

Boston Transcript.

Dreaming by the Christmas fireside,
When the lights are faint and low,
I can see beside the chimney
Little stockings in a row,
Filled with dainties, overflowing,
Bulging out with books and toys,
Dolls and carts and childish treasures
That delight wee girls and boys!

Safe in bed each little sleeper,
And I softly say, "Good-night!"
They will wake with joyous greeting
In the welcome morning light,
But alas! a hush comes o'er me,
And my dreams of long ago
Vanish, for I see no longer,
Little stockings in a row!

Many years within the old house,
Since the sound of little feet
And the shouts of merry voices
Filled the rooms with music sweet;
And my Willie's now a soldier,
Little Nell lives in the west,
Clare and Arthur crossed the ocean—
Birdlings all have left my nest!

Never, only in my dreaming,
When the lights are faint and low,
Shall I see at Christmas eve
Little stockings in a row!
Bless them all, my grown-up babies!
Mother's heart yearns for you so,
For the little prayers at twilight
And the stockings in a row!

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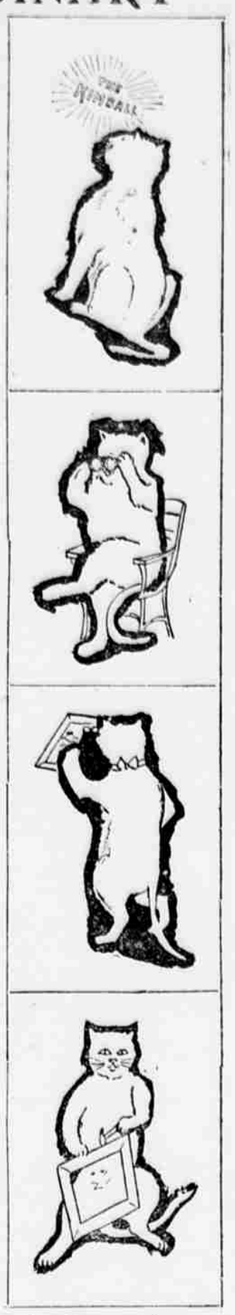

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One $400 Ivers & Pond Upright Piano, largest size, finest piano they make	255
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FOR OLD FOLKS.

Charming Holiday Souvenirs Calculated to Tickle Their Fancy.

A muff footstool is the sort of a Christmas gift with which to cater to the weakness of a grandmother or elderly aunt. Cold feet is sure to be a weak point with any dear old lady, and the muff footstool almost does away with such discomfort. It looks quite like any ordinary round foot prop, of leather, standing about three inches high, but in its tufted depths it conceals a Japanese stove. When chill draughts then come wandering by and nip elderly toes, one-half the stool's top can be lifted up and the feet thrust into woolly depths, where a tiny stove throws out a gentle heat.

When a stove is not used a small rubber water bottle fits into the stool, and, if filled once a day, it keeps the inside of the stool cosy for twenty-four hours. A stout ribbon loop at one side of the cushion enables its owner to carry it about handily, to drop it under the dinner table, use it in the carriage, the theater, and even at church, and, when made of embroidered brown leather or bottle green velvet, it is quite ornamental as an invaluable comfort.

Distinct utility should nearly always distinguish gifts for elderly folks, and this season they are selling all manner of knitted things for grandfathers as well as grandmothers. For the former are knitted silk and a new sort of silk beaver skull cap, not like the tall, round black silk cap usually worn. The new and improved one is made flat, circular and to fit the head like the cap a cardinal wears over his tonsure. It not only comes in black silk, but the rich ecclesiastical red and purple, so often highly becoming to white-haired, handsome old gentlemen.

Every grandmother this Christmas should receive at least one pair of silk mittens, not to wear for beauty alone, but to keep her hands warm and supple. Black ones are the best and those with four half-fingers and separated thumbs are the nicest, if the wearer is a needle woman. Mittens for warmth reach not only half way down the fingers, but nearly to the elbow, and some of them have coquettish scarlet ribbons, laced through at the wrist, and tied into small neat bows at the back of the hand.

In place of worsted bedroom slippers one can buy at present smart rose colored, blue and pale yellow, knitted lamb's wool bed socks, to keep old folks' feet warm after retiring, and coax them to sleep. They are appropriate for elderlies of both sexes, but for excellence the choice gift for an invalid aged person, who is nevertheless fond of entertaining, in his or her sick room, is a visitor's register. The register is a big black book that sets on a dictionary stand, beside the invalid's bed or chair, and its pages are arranged much like a diary, while a fountain pen fits into a slot at the top of one cover. In this book, under the proper date, every visitor registers his or her name, while, on the page opposite the names, spaces are marked off, in which the invalid can jot down any good bit of news, or joke, or trifle of information that comes his or her way. This keeps interest in the outside world alive and the registry proves who were the busy, careless young folk, or hurried friends, or favorite gossips that dropped selfish joys to come in for a chat and the whole supplies something for the invalid to think about as well as an amusing record to glance over.

For the bedside table of any elderly person treasure trove may be bought just now in the form of an electric night clock or gong. The clock works are so sunk in its wood casement as to absolutely give out but the faintest ticking, while by pressing the button the whole face is illuminated and the flight of time can be seen. The gong is in reality a charming chime of silver bells moved by electricity, and set by clock work to ring out the hour arranged for taking medicine or meals.

To tickle an old lady's gentle vanity is an easy feat with the pretty pearl topped cap pins jewelers are showing. The pins are of gold, with ash pearl heads for a lady in mourning, and pink and white pearls or a cluster of very small marguerites for one who still wears colors. A woman clever with four long needles will be apt to like a very improved knitting bag of soft white wicker, capable of holding a very big ball of yarn or wool and having in the top of its cover a hole through which the thread can be drawn.

Another charming fancy work appliance for a lady of years is a large square bag of very soft brown leather beautifully colored and decorated after the Moorish patterns and having cords, to swing it from the arm or top of a chair. Such a bag holds knitting, crochet work, etc., while to screw at an angle and on any chair is the prettiest black butterfly screen. Elderly people use these painted silk or paper conveniences to shelter their eyes from too strong light or from an open fire heat, and for the old father who naps in his chair one can get an admirable gift in the form of a bellagio rug, a big soft light blanket, half wool, half silk, to throw over the knees and ward off draughts.

LONG AFORE HE KNOWED.

James Whitcomb Riley.

Jes' a little bit o' feller—I remember still—
Ust to almost cry for Christmas, like a youngster will.
Fourth o' July's nothin' to it!—New Year's ain't a smell.
Easter Sunday—Circus day—jes' all dead in the shell!
Lordy thought at night, you know, to set around and hear
The old folks work the story off about the sledge and deer,
And "Santy" skootin' 'round the roof, all wrapped up in fur and fuzz—
Long afore I knowed who "Santy Claus" wuz!

Ust to wait, and set up late, a week or two ahead—
Couldn't hardly keep awake, ner wouldn't go to bed,
Kittle stewin' on the fire and mother settin' here
Darnin' socks and rockin' in the shreeky rockin' cheer;
Pap gap, and wunder where it was the money went,
And quar'l with his frosted heels, and spill his liniment,
And me a dreamin' sleigh bells when the clock 'ud whirr and buzz,
Long afore I knowed who "Santy Claus" wuz!

Size the fireplace up, and figger how "Old Santy" could
Manage to come down the chimbly, like they said he would;
Wisht that I could hide and see him—wundered what he'd say
Ef he ketched a feller layin' fer him thataway!
But I bet on him, and liked him, same as if he had
Turned to pat me on the back and say: "Look here, my lad,
Here's my pack—jes' he'p yourse'f, like all good boys does!"
Long afore I knowed who "Santy Claus" wuz!

Wisht that yarn was true about him, as it peared to be—
Truth made out o' lies like that un's good enough fer me!
Wisht I still was so confidin'; I could jes' go wild
Over hangin' up my stockin's like the little child
Climbin' in my lap tonight and beggin' me to tell
'Bout them reindeers and "Old Santy" that she loves so well—
I'm half sorry for this little girl sweetheart of his—
Long afore She knows who "Santy Claus" is.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

The salary of the president for one year, if paid in gold, would weigh almost exactly 200 pounds.

It takes the planet Uranus about eighty-four of our years to make one complete revolution around the sun.

The most extensive cemetery in the world is that at Rome, in which over 6,000,000 human beings have been interred.

The largest tree in the United States is in Tulare county California. It is 275 feet high and 106 feet in diameter at the base.

Experts in the snake branch of natural history say that the largest rattle snakes never strike above the knee of a standing man.

If all the locomotives and passenger and freight cars in the United States were made up into one train it would have a length of over 7,000 miles.

A toad in the possession of Harry Henderson of Pittsburg, Pa., was found in a snug little hole under seventeen feet of hardpan at Tacoma, Wash.

An Indianapolis highwayman tried to rob a St. Louis lawyer on a dark back street the other night, and now the lawyer is wearing a new gold watch.

Marguerite Evelyn Yost is a 14-months-old miss of Reading, Pa., who rejoices in the rather unique distinction of having four great grandmothers living. But one of these great-grandmothers wears spectacles, and all live within a short distance of the home of this presumably well-coddled miss.

After a priest had performed the last rites over the body of a workman in the cemetery at Arras, in France, a friend of the dead man appeared with two great bottles of gin in his hands. Opening one of these, he spilled its contents into the grave, thus complying, as he said in a short speech, with the wishes of his dead comrade. The other bottle was opened for the refreshment of the mourners.

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