GIGANTIC LAND FRAUDS IN THE WEST

HOW THE TIMBER AND STONE ACT WAS USED TO ACCOMPLISH THE ENDS OF LAND-GRABBERS

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 1.—(Special Correspondence.)—A tremendous and exciting contest is now on between the speculators and the United States Government for the possession and control of millions of acres of valuable timber now standing on the public land. The stake at issue represents many millions of dollars. The Government is hampered by red tape and defective laws. The speculators are alarmed at the aroused public indignation and the investigations now being made of their operations. So far the latter have the better of it, and will continue their "graft" until Congress puts a stop to it. The timber and stone act became a law in 1878. In the 25 years this law has been on the statute books the United States Government has sold about 4,000,000 acres of good timber for $2.50 an acre, thus receiving about $10,000,000 for what is worth, at a conservative estimate, at least $100,000,000, and possibly considerably more.

The timber and stone act provides that 160 acres of land declared to be unfit for cultivation if the timber were removed, and valuable chiefly for the timber upon it, can be obtained by a citizen of the United States upon the payment of $2.50 an acre for the same. The person appropriating this land makes affidavit to all the requirements of the law, including the statement that it is for his or her exclusive use and benefit, and that no prior agreement or contract has been made by which the benefit of the appropriation may be obtained by any other person.

The first few years this law was in effect the land disposed of by the Government averaged very little more than 10,000 acres a year, and, indeed, up to 1898, the segregation barely amounted to 50,000 acres a year. In 1900 big lumber companies and other speculative interests realized the imminent repeal of this law in response to popular agitation, and the judgment of the executive department of the Government, and began to utilize it to the utmost.

In 1900 about 300,000 acres of timber were obtained; in 1901 about 400,000 acres, in 1902 nearly 550,000 acres, and during the last fiscal year the remarkable activity of the timber speculators resulted in the appropriation in 12 months of 1,765,222 acres of forest.

Even the notorious lethargy of the Land Office at Washington was disturbed by this phenomenal record. An unusual number of special agents were put into the field, and the prosecuting officers of the law department of the Government were instructed to keep a sharp watch for possible cases of violation and perjury.

National Scandal Caused.

The result of this activity has been to cause a National scandal and give tremendous force to the recommendations for the repeal of the law. It has disclosed a condition of affairs in the administration of Government timber land which should be productive of many indictments and prosecutions.

Reports of the special agents have been coming in to the Secretary of the Interior from the Northwestern States by the score, and he recently remarked to a friend that if the records which he already had in his possession were made public the people of the country would be horrified. This record will, of course, make its appearance in due time, but, owing to the fact that it consists largely of testimony to be used in future prosecutions, the good of the service demands that it shall be withheld for a time at least.

Traffic in timber locations has been a recognized business in the Northwestern and Pacific Coast States for some years past. Timber cruisers, in the employ of big lumber companies, have searched the public domain for valuable forests. Once found, they are put upon the Government maps, and steps are immediately taken to get title thereto.

Employes of the companies are induced to take up claims of 160 acres each, and some corporations have even gone so far as to advertise for persons with timber rights to make filings for them. The companies furnish all the necessary data, have the papers made out and signed, and the pliant claimant need not leave his or her office to become the locator and finally the ostensible owner of 160 acres of saw timber.

The company furnishes the money to perfect title and pays the enterprising citizen who has farmed out his right for an average of $100 as a bonus for exercising the same. In this manner tracts of timber land amounting in some instances to more than 100,000 acres, have been obtained by a single corporation. This is notably true in Northern California, Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Bribery of Land Officials.

Recent disclosures have shown that notwithstanding the ease with which individuals can be obtained to utilize their rights, timber speculators have even gone so far as to bribe officers of the local Land Offices to insert the names of dummies in the necessary blanks and affidavits and transmit these papers to Washington as bona fide applications for timber lands.

One peculiar feature of this absorption of Government timber is the frank publicity with which these transactions have been conducted. They have been notorious for years past, and each annual report from the Interior Department has called earnest attention to their outrageous character.

Members of Congress from the States most interested have viewed the matter with indifference, or even gone so far as to state their belief that it was a good way for their constituents to make a few dollars on the side by exercising their citizenship rights and perjuring themselves for the benefit of some individual or corporation engaged in getting a reserve supply of timber for their mills for sale at great profit within a few years.

Mr. Richards, the Commissioner of the General Land Office, in his report just made to the Secretary of the Interior, says: "The increase in the total number of alleged fraudulent entries pending from that reported during the previous year is due largely to departmental instructions of November 18, 1902, directing the investigation of all entries made under the timber and stone act in the states of Oregon, California and Washington, with a view to determining their bona fides. Under this order alone nearly 10,000 such entries have been suspended, and 15 special agents are now engaged in the investigation to the exclusion of other work."

The timber obtained under the timber and stone act is not the only loss to the Government in this direction, for here again the value to the speculator of the commutation clause of the Homestead act is apparent.

Seizing of Timber Land.

Thousands of homesteads have been filed upon valuable timber land for the purpose of getting title to the same, and it is comparatively easy, with pliant witnesses and still more pliant officers of local land offices, for the homesteader to maintain an alleged residence upon his claim for 14 months and then pay the Government price of $2.50 an acre within the limit of railroad grants, or $1.25 an acre without such limits, and get a title deed to his 160 acres of timber.

Employes of lumber companies working in the region where it is desired to obtain this timber land can assure themselves of a long term of employment at good wages by taking up homestead claims for the purpose of turning them over to their employers as soon as title has been passed. There is no way of estimating how much timber the Government has lost through the operations of the homestead law as it stands, but the recent disclosures of land frauds in Northern California, the principals in which are now being prosecuted by the Government, show that scores of persons have been hired to use their homestead rights for the benefit of lumber merchants.

Many of these persons signed their applications and final affidavits without ever visiting the land involved, and perjury in connection with land matters has become of so little importance in the sections of the country where these operations are conducted that no one seems to give it a second thought, and as for taking it seriously, a man is looked upon as a prude or a crank who would object to complying with the forms necessary to carry out such a purpose.

As a result of the unwonted activity of the law department of the Government during the last few months, three men have just been convicted of perjury in connection with land matters in the northern part of California. In a telegram sent by the Prosecuting Attorney of that district to the Attorney-General at Washington, the department is congratulated for its victory in the case on the ground that these are the first convictions ever obtained upon like charges in the history of that part of the state.

When it is considered that a large part of Northern California is a vast and valuable forest in which lumber men have conducted extensive enterprises for many years, and that every acre appropriated, with the exception of a small percentage belonging to the state, was originally land belonging to the United States Government, and only to be obtained under the existing land laws, a true appreciation of the past neglect and indifference of the Land Office at Washington to these matters can be secured.

Secretary Hitchcock's Report.

In his report of a year ago Secretary Hitchcock, of the Interior Department, said that "The act of June 3, 1878, known as the timber and stone act, will, if not repealed or radically amended, result ultimately in the complete destruction of the timber on the unappropriated and unreserved public lands.

"The rapidity with which the unappropriated and unreserved public timbered lands are being denuded of their timber under the act mentioned, and the opportunity offered under the timber and stone act for the fraudulent acquisition of title to public timbered lands at the uniform price of $2.50 an acre, when they are in many instances worth 40 times that, has been heretofore set forth in the pages of my annual reports and those of my predecessors."

The Secretary then proceeded to recommend a certain change in the law, which repealed the timber and stone act and gave the department jurisdiction over the disposal of timber upon the public lands. In speaking of this proposed measure he said: "The need of the passage of such an act is so imperative that I earnestly recommend that the proposed bill be enacted into a law at the earliest possible date." The Secretary continues:

"The reports of the special agents of this department in the field show that at some of the local land offices carloads of entrymen arrive at a time, every one of whom makes entry under the timber and stone act. The cost of 160 acres of land under that act and the accompanying commissions is $415.

"As many as five members of a family who, it can be readily shown, never had $2075 in their lives, walk up cheerfully and pay the price of the land, and the commissions. Under such circumstances there is only one conclusion to be drawn, and that is that where whole carloads of such people make entry under that act the unanimity of sentiment and the cash to exploit it must have originated in some source other than themselves."

Mr. Hitchcock's Prediction.

The Secretary predicted a year ago that if the then noticeable activity in the absorption of the public timber was to continue all of the valuable timber on the public lands would be absorbed within two years. During the year which has passed since his last report was made, activity of speculators in this direction has increased by nearly 300 per cent.

It may now be stated with truth that with the exception of a few isolated tracts nearly all of the vast forest in the Rocky Mountain region once owned by the United States Government—that is, by the people of the country as a whole—and held as one of the great assets of the Nation, has been segregated from public ownership, excepting the area included within the forest reservations.

Without fully realizing the power thus put in the hands of the President of the United States to protect the timber on the public lands thereby, Congress, in 1891, passed a law authorizing the setting aside of forest reserves. Through the operation of this law an enormous acreage of timber, valuable not only in itself, but as protection for the watersheds, has been kept from the clutches of timber and land speculators.

Up to the present time 63,032,565 acres, nearly all of which is timbered, has been set aside in the forest reserves of the United States, and fully 30,000,000 acres more are now under consideration, and will probably be rapidly absorbed into the forest reserve area, thus bringing the total up to at least 100,000,000 acres.

As this is about the estimate of the timbered lands remaining on the public domain, it is possible that whether Congress acts or not the President, assisted by the Interior Department, will be able to prevent many further depredations.

Great Fraud Indicated.

There are now many prosecutions pending against men accused of juggling with forest reserve matters, and many sensational stories have been recently published which would indicate an enormous amount of fraud in connection therewith.

The alleged fraud consists of obtaining advance information from the Land Office at Washington as to the purpose of the Interior Department to withdraw a certain area as a forest reserve, and then to crowd in as many land filings and claims of various descriptions within the boundary of the area to be selected, this to be followed by political pressure to secure the setting aside of the reserve.

After this is accomplished then the Government is forced under the law to give what is known as the lieu land privilege to those who have claims within the newly created reserve.

There is very little actual illegality to be found in the methods employed to take advantage of the forest reserve law. The abuse of this law arises from defects in the legislation itself, for it is provided that if a man shall have filed a homestead claim or shall, through any other means, have obtained title to land within the tract set aside, the Government shall give him the right to select an equal acreage of land from any part of the public domain as yet unoccupied.

It follows, therefore, if a man should take up a claim of 160 acres under any pretext upon a tract of land which was later on included within a forest reserve, that no matter how worthless this claim might be, so far as the character of the land was concerned, he would be entitled to 160 acres of as good land, farming or timber, as he could find elsewhere.

In Northern California and some of the other Northwestern States, where the states own school land, this school land has been bought by speculators and political pressure brought to bear to have that particular section of country set aside in forest reservations. The school land itself may have been of most worthless character and bought at the minimum price. The right of filing upon the land is assignable, and it has been sold upon the open market at a rate generally ranging from $5 to $6 an acre.

It has also been used to take up great blocks of timber land in the Northwestern and Pacific Coast States, there being a handsome profit represented in the transfer of worthless land in the reserve to the Government and the relocation of a similar acreage upon valuable timber. This is all permitted under the law, however, and to say that there are vast areas in the obtaining of which men are fraudulently involved is misleading.

In the early days of the forest reserve law the effect of absorbing private lands was not fully realized, and in Southern and Central California and in Washington and Oregon large areas were so appropriated by the Government, and nearly all of the conspiracies charged arise out of this early action of the Department of the Interior. Warned by the difficulties which arose in the early '90s, subsequent forest reserves have been chosen with much care, and wherever possible land in private ownership has been excluded.

It is estimated that about 3,000,000 acres of railroad lands and private claims have been included in the 63,000,000 acres of forest reserves set aside. Of this 3,000,000 acres about two-thirds have been relocated elsewhere. About 5000 acres of lieu land privilege is still outstanding, which is available for immediate use when those who hold it shall so decide. There are 500,000 acres more which cannot be used until the land within the forest reserves is surveyed and the boundaries of the private claims on this unsurveyed land fully defined so as to ascertain the acreage involved.

The Northern Pacific Railroad has been the greatest beneficiary of this lieu land privilege, for that road has had 1,300,000 acres of its land grant included within forest reserves, this being in Montana, Idaho and Washington. The Southern Pacific has had about 500,000 acres, the Atlantic & Pacific about 375,000 acres, the Oregon Central about 100,000 acres, and a few smaller amounts are divided among other Pacific Coast transportation lines.

That these forest reserves have been established in such a manner that less than five per cent of their area has been found to be in private ownership makes it evident that land speculators have not been notably successful in grafting in this direction, and it is also true that a very large part of the private lands taken in by these forest reserves has been of legitimate value to the owners, hence the difference between the actual value of the private land absorbed by the reserves and what could be realized for the selections taken in lieu elsewhere dos not represent a very considerable amount.

It shrinks into insignificance when compared with the profits and acreage involved in the operations of the timber and stone act, the commutation clause of the homestead act or the desert land act.

Abuse of the Clause.

The abuse of the lieu land selection clause in the forest reserve law has been used as an argument against the extension of the reserves themselves, and, as is often the case, members of Congress from the states most benefited by the forest reservations are keenest to prevent their extension and are the most captious critics of the administration of the forestry regulations.

These states as a rule are sparsely settled, are heavily interested in the lumber business and the temporary advantage of destroying the forests to keep up the lumber industry has proved more attractive to politicians and speculators than a wise conservation of the resources of their states.

The motives behind this opposition to an extension of the forest reserves are not creditable, for the value of these segregations to the people of the entire West, all of whom live in the drainage basins fed from these Western forests, are so evident and the policy is so unanimously indorsed by the forestry experts of the world that only local and selfish reasons can be urged against them.

If the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Forestry prevail with Congress, the law can be so changed, without injuring its usefulness, as to prevent all but a minimum of fraud upon the Government. The change proposed is to provide a different method of recompense for individuals whose private ownership is embraced within the area of a forest reservation.

Instead of giving the privilege of another selection of land, based upon the acreage involved, the man whose land is taken could be paid what his property was worth, this to be determined by arbitration, or he could be allowed to take land equal in value to that which he relinquished. The most satisfactory way would be to close the transaction at once by paying the determined valuation of the property in question.

Grazing Livestock.

One of the problems which the Government has had to meet in the setting aside of forest reservations has been that of grazing livestock. Nearly every reserve created includes a large amount of range up to that time occupied at will by herds of cattle and horses and flocks of sheep. Naturally the livestock men have been bitter opponents of the extension of these reservations, and it is from this opposition that a large number of existing controversies have arisen.

This was carried to such an extreme point that the late Governor Richards, of Wyoming, issued a statement severely criticising the President of the United States for his forest reserve policy and attempting to make it a political issue. His sympathy was entirely with the grazing interests in control of the areas involved, and he spoke in their behalf.

Grazing is not forbidden within forest reserves, but the Department of the Interior has the power to regulate the manner in which the range shall be used. An estimate is made by forestry experts as to how many head of livestock can be sustained upon a given area without damage to forage or timber, and permits are issued for that number only, the range being apportioned among those who seem to have the best prior rights to its use.

Thus through its forest reserve policy the Government has been able to put in force a system of range control which has been advocated, but in vain, for the entire public domain for many years. In its operations it has substantiated the claim that the public lands of the United States can be scientifically handled while under Government ownership to the benefit of the lands themselves, to the private owners of livestock, and incidentally, should the law so permit, sufficient revenue could be obtained materially to decrease the National expenses connected with the administration of land ownership.

The mining and ranching interests of the West are favorable to the forest reserve policy. A mining claim can be created within the boundaries of a reserve, and timber can be got for mining purposes. Timber is sold from the reserves under the supervision of trained foresters, so that the ranchers in the neighborhood can obtain all they want; hence the opposition to the policy of setting aside all the timber on the public lands and allowing it to be administered in a scientific and proper manner comes from the big lumber companies who have been for years committing depredations upon the public timber and from the livestock interests which have depleted the reserves of their forage and been responsible for fires representing losses amounting to millions of dollars.

The frauds alleged to have been committed under cover of this law represent an insignificant percentage of its total operations. The good it has accomplished and the protection it has given to the drainage slopes of all the great rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean and into the Gulf of Mexico is incalculable.

Covert opposition to this policy of preserving the public timber has taken advantage of the indignation aroused by the frauds committed under the timber and stone act to confuse the popular mind and include the forest reserve policy in its denunciation.

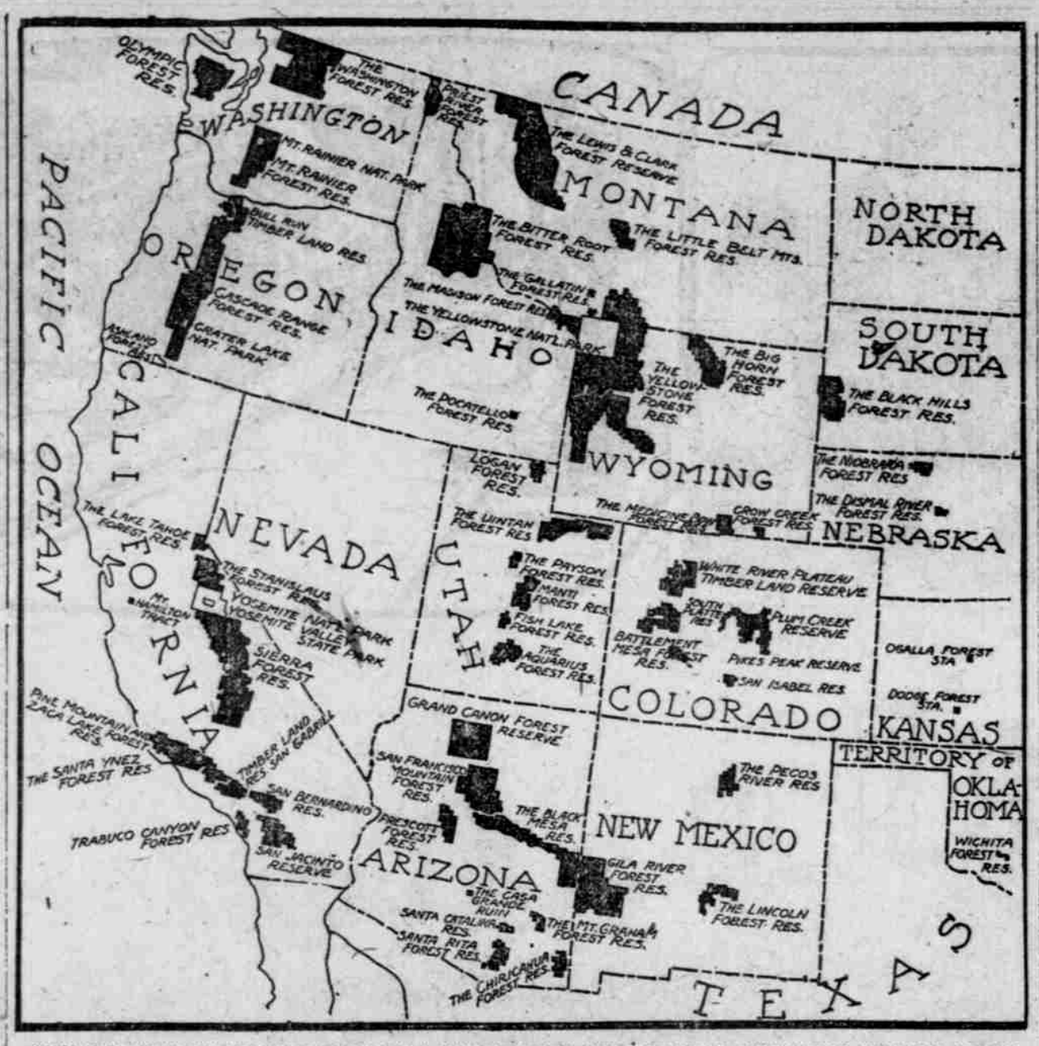
Laws Diametrically Opposed.

The laws are diametrically opposed to each other in the results achieved. The forest reservation protects; the timber and stone act destroys. Western members of Congress who have resisted the repeal of the latter are now recognizing the danger of their position from a political point of view, and are either remaining quiet or are attempting by introducing or advocating measures for substitution to put themselves right with the Administration and with the public.

The loss of the timber resources of the United States is susceptible of more or less sensational presentation. The public mind is aroused by the figures presented and conditions are easily brought home to consumers. In view of this relation of the question to public policy it is probable that the timber area will be conserved more quickly than the agricultural area, for the latter has not yet appealed so strongly to popular indignation.

It is frequently stated in the House and Senate that there are still more than 500,000,000 acres of the public land open for settlement. This is not true. There are only 300,000,000 acres of surveyed land left in the public domain outside of the reservations. Practically all of the land susceptible of settlement has been surveyed; therefore the 200,000,000 acres of unsurveyed land estimated is all mountainous or otherwise uninhabitable area.

Of the 300,000,000 acres of surveyed land, much of this is of rough character, woodland or desert, and when all the deductions are made, it will be found that within the area of land possible of irrigation and that now is used for pasturage and firmly held by large livestock interests is included, all that is left of the 2,000,000,000 acres with which Uncle Sam started in the land business 100 years ago.



SHOWING HOW THE FOREST RESERVE LAW HAS BEEN USED TO SAVE SIXTY-FIVE MILLION ACRES FROM THE TIMBER GRABBERS.

OLD HARDSTYLE'S FLANNEL HEART

AND THE CHRISTMAS IT MADE FOR THE KITCHEN MAID

NICHOLAS HARDSTILE was a man who did not believe in Santa Claus, and the one thing that he repented was that he had not been able to prevent his parents from giving him the name of Nicholas, which always made him angry, because it reminded him of Saint Nick.

Not to believe in Santa Claus is one of the foolishest of all the foolish things that a person can do in this world; and it is cheerful to think that only a very, very few extremely morose and bad-tempered persons are foolish enough to do it. Nicholas Hardstile was not only one of those foolish ones, but he was actually proud of it.

He never read the story of old Scrooge around Christmas time, or around any other time; not he. "Stuff and nonsense," was his opinion of it.

So when Christmas time arrived Nicholas Hardstile went to great pains to cultivate even a worse temper than usual, although it was most unnecessary, for his natural everyday temper was bad enough for almost any purpose.

It had driven away all those who had ever attempted to be friendly with him, and even his business acquaintances tried to go around the corner hastily if they saw him striding down the street. As a consequence, he lived like most folk who don't believe in Santa Claus—in a little ugly room in a boarding-house, where he paid liberally for the privilege of growling at everybody. It was the only liberal thing of which Nicholas Hardstile had ever been guilty in all his Christmasless life.

So it was on the Christmas eve about which we are going to tell you. Nicholas Hardstile banged his dusty office door on his dusty office, and banged his way down the dusty stairs, growling to himself because the janitor said "Merry Christmas" to him. And the janitor really and truly had done it only out of the goodness of his heart, for even in his wildest dreams, of which he had only few, he never dreamed of anything so wildly absurd as getting anything from Nicholas Hardstile—except a complaint.

Mr. Hardstile grumbled a little more—that is, it was little for him, although it would have been a whole lot for most other men—because a red-cheeked girl, with an armful of bundles, ran into him as he reached the street. And when a fat man with a little sled under his arm bumped into his ribs and chuckled merrily, "Excuse me, sir. Christmas crowds the streets, you know," Nicholas Hardstile was so mad that if he had been a dog nothing would have pleased him more exquisitely than to bite a large piece right out of the fat man's left leg.

So angry was he that he stepped spang! into a puddle where the snow had melted. And in jumping out of it he stepped spang! into the gutter where the snow had melted, too.

The language which Nicholas Hardstile used when he felt the icy water rippling softly over the tops of his shoes and down into his socks and in among his old un-Christmassy toes, would have made old Santa's merry red nose turn white with fright if Santa hadn't been too busy attending to nice children to pay any attention whatever to old Hardstile.

With the water squawking in his shoes, Nicholas pounded his morose way toward the place that he called "home," because he didn't know or care what a real home was like. His rage made him more clumsy than usual, and he was shoved and pushed and poked and prodded and squeezed and pinched and banged by the Christmas crowds until he was as mad—as mad as a wet hen; and he was wet as one, too, around the feet.

Nicholas Hardstile hurried into his room when he reached the boarding house and hastened to take off his wet clothes, for he feared to catch cold.

It is a strange thing, but overpoweringly true, that the more crabbed and unpleasant and sour a person is, the more he wants to take care of himself so as to live long. This is a great waste of time, to be sure, but it seems to be the weakness of all such folk.

Nicholas Hardstile soon had his wet trousers hung up over the back of a chair; then he looked around for a place to hang his wet socks. But he could find none, and at last he hurriedly tied a piece of string under the mantelpiece and hung his socks on that, where the heat from the grate could reach them.

Then he tumbled into bed without saying his prayers. He hadn't prayed since he was six years old. In a few minutes Nicholas Hardstile was fast asleep and dreaming like anything.

It was a beautiful dream, so beautiful that it actually made him smile! It was all about a poor family that owed him money, and about how he was going to dispossess them the very day after Christmas. The reason it was to be the day after Christmas was only because he couldn't get them dispossessed on Christmas day itself.

It was in such dreams as this that Nicholas Hardstile was happier than he ever was when he was awake. And the best of it was that all his dreams always came true, which, you will agree, is not the case with most dreams. But then Nicholas only dreamed of collecting money from his poor debtors and selling them out and foreclosing mortgages—delightful and ennobling things to dream about.

While he still lay dreaming happily a girl went tiptoeing downstairs. She was up before the dawn because she was the kitchen maid, and she had to make the fire and prepare everything for the cook.

Maybe you don't think she was poor. Oh, of course not! She got up in the bitter cold before daylight and chopped wood with her little red hands stinging with chill, and scrubbed floors and ate scraps from the boarders' tables because she was rich. You believe that, don't you?

Well, we won't fool you. She was so very poor that she had never had a Christmas in all her 12 years of life. But, unlike Nicholas Hardstile, she believed with all her heart in Santa Claus just the same.

She peeked into Nicholas Hardstile's room as she went down and happened to see the two red socks hung up on the string. And she thought, of course, that he had hung them up for Christmas.

"The poor, poor old gentleman," thought she. "There's nothing in them. Santa Claus must have forgotten him."

Without stopping to reflect, she hurried back upstairs and rummaged around in her little box in her attic room. Small as the box was, it was all too large for her belongings. But she did have two treasures in it—a big red apple that had been given to her by the grocer's boy and a red flannel heart with "I love you" on it in blue cotton thread. This she had found in a waste basket.

They were all she had in the world, and as she held them in her hand she almost decided not to give them away. But this selfish thought lasted only for a moment. The next instant she tripped downstairs and, slipping into Mr. Hardstile's room, she pushed the big red apple into one sock and the flannel heart into another.

When Nicholas Hardstile awoke his first motion was to reach for his socks, and his green eyes nearly popped out of his head when he saw what was in them.

Then he roared so loud that the boarding-house mistress, accustomed as she was to his roars, hurried into the room, where he held out the flannel heart with boiling rage, and demanded to know who had dared to enter his room and play such a joke on him.

The boarding-house mistress at once called all the servants into the hall, and the boarders, attracted by the extremely unpleasant noises that were being made by Mr. Hardstile, gathered on the landing.

The little kitchen maid tremblingly confessed all, crying bitterly.

Now do you suppose that Nicholas Hardstile was touched? If you do you have not improved even the short acquaintance you have had with him.

No, indeed. He began to roar again. He demanded that the girl be kicked out of the house. "Kicked" is just what he said.

But then all the other boarders had something to say. They didn't roar, but they silenced Nicholas Hardstile just the same. And before they got through, the weeping little kitchen maid had been made to comprehend that she was going to get the very finest Christmas that all the boarders could get up for her, and that then she was going to be a kitchen maid no longer, but was to be sent to school.

You will be glad to learn that Nicholas Hardstile ate too much Christmas dinner that day, even though he didn't believe in Christmas. And in the night he was so ill that they had to call in the doctor, who filled him full of the nastiest medicine that the most depraved imagination can conceive.

Absent-Minded "Uncle Joe."

New York Sun.

Uncle Joe Cannon hasn't fully come to a realization of the fact that he is the Speaker of the House of Representatives; or, if he has, he occasionally has a lapse of memory.

One day this week, after the house went into committee of the whole, he came down from the rostrum and absent-mindedly walked through the corridor to the room of the committee on appropriations, of which he was chairman for many years. Approaching the desk he formerly occupied he seemed to look for something.

"What is it, Mr. Cannon?" asked one of the clerks.

"Why, my box of cigars," said the Speaker.

"Didn't you take them with you into the Speaker's room?" replied the clerk, pleasantly.

"By Jove, that's right!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, with a characteristic gesture of his left hand. "I had forgotten."

But the fact which he had forgotten was not where he had placed his box of cigars, but that he had been elected Speaker and had changed his office from the committee on appropriations' room to the Speaker's room.

BY HENRY JOHNSTONE

Oh, Friday night's the queen of nights, because it ushers in
The Feast of good St. Saturday, when studying is a sin,
When studying is a sin, boys, and we may go to play,
Not only in the afternoon, but all the livelong day.

St. Saturday—so legends say—lived in the ages when
The use of leisure still was known and current among men;
Full seldom and full slow he toiled, and even as he wrought
He'd sit him down and rest awhile, immersed in pious thought.

He loved to fold his good old arms, to cross his good old knees,
And in a famous elbow-chair for hours he'd take his ease;
He had a word for old and young, and when the village boys
Came out to play, he'd smile on them and never mind the noise.

So when his time came, honest man, the neighbors all declared
That one of keener intellect could better have been spared;
By young and old his loss was mourned in cottage and in hall,
For if he'd done them little good, he'd done no harm at all.

In time they made a saint of him, and issued a decree—
Since he had loved his ease so well, and been so glad to see
The children frolic round him and to smile upon their play—
That schoolboys for his sake should have a weekly holiday.

They gave his name unto the day, that as the years roll by
His memory might still be green; and that's the reason why
We speak his name with gratitude, and oftener by far
Than that of any other saint in all the calendar.

Then, lads and lassies, great and small, give ear to what I say—
Refrain from work on Saturdays as strictly as you may;
So shall the saint your patron be and prosper all you do—
And when examinations come he'll see you safely through.

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