

ward which an aged white-haired man is wending his way—at short intervals he stops suddenly, gazing over the hedge side, where the moon is shining through the leafless snow-covered trees—advancing a few paces he stops once more before a ruined tower, fast crumbling to decay.

"God bless the dear old landmarks," he murmured, "many and many a time have I stood beside you in my dreams when the great ocean rolled between us—at last, like the load-stone that attracts the needle, you have brought the wanderer back. Oh, sweet Inisfall, the smallest blade of grass that grows in your green dells is a million times more precious to me than all the wealth and grandeur I have seen on foreign shores."

Having reached the cottage, he was met at the door by a tall, well-built, venerable looking man.

"Can you give me shelter for a short time?" asked the stranger.

"I can, or for a long time, if you need it—though not very long, now I come to remember, for in a few weeks I won't be able to call this house my own. Isn't that the truth, Mary?" he added, looking at his wife, busily plying her needle near a bright turf fire.

"It is indeed—the bitter truth—may God in his mercy protect us," said his wife.

"And how long have you lived in this cosy cottage?" asked the stranger.

"Fifty years, sir. My father built it. I married the good wife you see beside me in it. I reared a big family in it, but they're scattered far away from us now. Some of them, I'm afreerd, I'll never see again. Our oldest boy I've not heard from in ten years. He was sent into penal servitude for the part he took in the 'rising' of '67."

"What was his name?"
"Redmond O'Hara. But in troth if I go on in this way I'll be disgracing the proud owld name of our family. Here, take a whiff o' this owld dhudeen; 'twill help to banish sad thoughts."

"Before I light my pipe," said the stranger, "I wish you would tell me why it is that you will be compelled to leave this cottage in a few weeks?"

"The answer is simple," replied his host. "I am only a small farmer, and cannot afford to pay Lord Leech the heavy taxes that are yearly imposed on my own time and money without a haporth of help from his lordship. That's the whole of it in a nutshell."

"And so you are to be evicted?"

"That's it exactly," replied the host.

"Not if I can save you," said the stranger.

"Saltpeter couldn't save us."

"There is something more potent than saltpeter."

"Maybe ye mane dynamite," said his host.

"What I have reference to is more powerful than even dynamite," replied the traveler, "although it is not so noisy. What I allude to is the power of gold!"

During the foregoing the farmer's wife



Santa Claus (to himself)—Great Scot! How am I ever going to get down these chimneys? Oh, that the Czar's disarmament congress had borne fruit!

countrymen. I soon amassed great wealth. You would scarce'y imagine me, as I appear at present in these tattered garments, to be a rich man, but, to prove the truth of my assertion, here is a bag containing a thousand sovereigns. Take it. Keep it. It is yours. I present it to you as a Christmas box."

"A bag o' sovereigns," cried the farmer. "Oh, sir, you must be one o' the good fairies in disguise."

"If this happened in America," said the stranger, "you would undoubtedly call me Santa Claus."

"Whoever you are," cried the farmer's wife, "you must be something not natural to be tantalizing poor people with the sight of a heap o' gold like that."

"I give you my word I am neither ghost nor hobgoblin, but real flesh and blood," said the stranger, throwing off his white wig and beard and standing erect at his full height. "Now examine my features well and tell me if they bear any resemblance to Redmond O'Hara, your convict son!"

"Oh! Redmond! our own gra bawn!" exclaimed his father and mother simultaneously. "Yes, it is," said the mother, caressing him, "he has the same auburn hair." "And the same proud light in his manly blue eyes," cried his father, grasping his son's hands. "Oh, Redmond, Redmond, this sudden joy is almost more than we can bear."

"Now, spare me this hugging and kissing and hand-shaking," cried their son, "if you don't wish to kill me with too much kindness. You can both snap your fingers at Lord Leech to-morrow. We'll have our own home, our own land and our own cattle as well as his lordship. And to-morrow we'll fill the table with turkey, geese, lamb, ham and every luxury in season and out of season that money can purchase. In short, my dear father and mother, it won't be your own Redmond's fault if you don't say it is the merriest Christmas day you ever enjoyed."

Thoughts of Christmas.

We want good things fer Christmas—thes all 'at we kin get
Drums, an' dolls, an' trumpets, an' a toy chlna set;
An' jumpin'-jacks, an' packs an' packs of firecrackers, too,
An' elephants, an' lions that never growl at you.

We want good things fer Christmas—thes all the house kin hold!
An' we hopes it will be snowin', an' the weather freezin' cold.
(Snow's mighty fine at Christmas time— an' so is everything;
So we're waitin'—thes a-waitin' fer the Christmas bells to ring!)
—Atlanta Constitution.

not worth giving thanks for." Except for its boughs, which were used in house banking, and its sticky aromatic balsam, which is employed in medicine, the Maine fir had no mission on earth until everybody discovered that it made a beautiful Christmas tree. As the cities grew larger and Christmas began to take the place of Thanksgiving as a feast day, the demand for Christmas trees grew. Twenty years ago a carload from the Androscoggin valley and two or three deckloads on schooners sailing from Bucksport or Castine comprised all the Christmas trees sent out from Maine. Finding there was money in the business, the farmers and owners of waste land sought to enlarge their market, and succeeded so well that in December, 1893, more than 100,000 fir trees were sent from Maine by rail, to say nothing of those that went by steamboats and sailing vessels. The prices went up with the increased demand. In 1878 no farmer thought of asking more than 25 cents for a big tree delivered at the cars. Twenty years later the same kind of a tree sells for \$1, and the old hands at the business are holding back hoping to get more.



Ingredients—Three pounds raisins, three pounds currants, one pound mixed peel, one and one-half pounds bread crumbs, one and one-half pounds suet, sixteen eggs, two wineglassfuls brandy, one nutmeg, one teaspoonful salt, one-fourth pound almonds, chopped fine.

Stone and cut the raisins in halves, but do not chop them; wash, pick and dry the currants, and mince the suet finely; cut the candied peel into thin fine crumbs. When all these dry ingredients are prepared, mix them well together; then moisten the mixture with the eggs, which should be well beaten, and the brandy; grate in the nutmeg. Stir well, that everything may be well blended, and thoroughly press the pudding into a buttered mold, tie it down tightly with a well-floured cloth and boil for five or six hours. It may be boiled in a cloth with-

cigarette boxes as to deceive even an inveterate smoker are made of chocolate or peppermint. Big, business-looking pens, pencils and paperweights are made of sugar-paste and paper, and the most artful of spectacles, opera glasses and cases are made of isinglass, tinsel and candy-filled wood.

A medicine case of coarse brown linen is bordered with a puffing of pink silk ribbon. The vials are held in place by a band of garter elastic covered with puffed silk and divided into spaces large or small enough to accommodate the bottles. One end of the linen case turns in and is tucked to form two pockets that are to contain court plaster, a tiny scissors, antiseptic cotton and a roll of soft linen. The little bottles are labeled with familiar names ammonia, arnica, quinine, ginger, camphor and other household stand-bys.

The Christmas Stocking.

There is a German story about the origin of a Christmas stocking. It tells how a poor woman with bleeding feet came to the hut of a little peasant boy and begged for aid. He took off his shoes and gave them to her; he had no stockings. In the morning he found the shoes filled with thalers tied to the door latch. Some say the little old woman was a fairy, others of more serious mind claim that she was the Virgin Mary; whoever she was, she wrote on parchment: "Du liebes kind," and this is still kept as a relic in a small church in Bavaria.

First Celebration of Christmas.

Christmas was first celebrated in the year 98, but it was forty years later before it was officially adopted as a Christian festival; nor was it until about the Fifth century that the day of its celebration became permanently fixed on the 25th of December. Up to that time it had been irregularly observed at various times of the year—in December, in April and in May, but most frequently in January.—Ladies' Home Journal.

The Christmas Girl.

The snow has drifted to her brow,
The holly bud has dyed her cheek,
Her eyes, like stars on Christmas eve,
Shine out with glances coyly meek.
There's Christmas radiance everywhere
In wreaths of green and berries red;
But, best of all, I gladly note
There's mistletoe above her head.
—Life.

Easily Pleased.

"Well, little Jim, what do you want for Christmas?"
"I'll take anything I kin get, pa, but you better not gimme anything I don't like."

soved in an instant. Every family must consider it from its own standpoint. Happiness is not, even at this season, to be put in a great sack labeled "candy and toys." We should study our children and find out what particular thing they are counting upon. Especially where Christmas is the great gift-making epoch of the year, and the children look to it for their annual store of games and toys. But only half our duty toward them will be done if we have not taught them the pleasure of making gifts to others. I say taught advisedly, for the moral nature of a child is not conferred upon him at birth; it exists then only in the germ, and it has to be cultivated just as his faculty for intellectual work has to be cultivated. But the great difference between moral and intellectual training is, that whereas in the last one may attack the understanding and lead on to desire, in the first all our approaches must be made to the heart. No restraint upon conduct is of any account unless we succeed in getting the child to want to be good. He will then try to be good under all circumstances, when he is away from us as well as when he is in our sight.—Harper's Bazar.

A Midnight Encounter.



Santa Claus (vigorously)—Well, that's the last house I'll go into till I find out whether they keep a dog.—Harlem Life.

One Is Enough.

"Eph, I want to give you a nice fat turkey for Christmas," said Col. Hawker.
"Dat's berry kin', cunnel, but I'd 'fer a \$2 bill ef's all de same to you. Kris Kringle allus 'pears to leab a tuhkey at my house de night afoh Chris'mas."

Sensible Jimmie.

"Jimmie," asked his mother, "why are you so persistent about going to your Uncle John's for Christmas?"
"'Cause he hain't got none of them smoke consumers on his chimbleys. Santa Claus kin git inter his house."

Not Distributing Gifts.

Nopurse—I proposed to Miss Many-millions Christmas eve.
Gotbills—Shall I congratulate you?
Nopurse—I don't know. She told me she wasn't Santa Claus, and that's all she said.—Truth.