

CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD HOME.

MIRANDY, we will, if you say the word. Have an old-fashioned time on Christmas day. These still rooms will ring as in days of yore. When the children were small and full of play.

The homestead seems lonesome when Christmas time comes. And quite as the light of a mouse or a rat. With no one but you and me, left alone. Given thoughtful with age-like the dog and the cat.

I remember the children's Christmas mirth. And how we together did fix and plan. Just before Christmas, arranging to have a merry good time, same as now we can.

Mirandy, we will, if you say the word. Just stating our warmest and fullest desire. For friends and kindred to share a big feast.

At the old homestead, 'round a rousing good fire. The garret shall echo with the mirthful climes. Joy of the children free to explore. We'll build a neat bower of fresh evergreen.

And draw dyed pink, as we used to be. A Christmas tree will add zest to the feast. And polish big eyes of the girls and the boys. Just as it did when our children were tots.

And shared in the harvest of Christmas-time joys. Then let us prepare for an old-fashioned time. In honor of Christ—in pure gratitude. For favors received and blessings enjoyed. Our hearts will radiate a happier mood.

Our twilight of life begins to descend. And age, like a hawk, is drifting away. To the westward of youth, farther and fast. While Time plucks swifter the moments each day.

So let us, as I say, a brief note. Just stating our warmest and fullest desire. For friends and kindred to share a big feast. At the old homestead, 'round a rousing good fire.

YULE-TIDE REFORMATION.

BY DR. WILLARD MACKENZIE.

CHRISTMAS Day promised to dawn bright and fair, for the western sky was one great flame of glowing pink, but pretty Madge Early was not in harmony with the beauty and sentiment of the occasion. Her fair face was clouded, and although arranging the Christmas tree for the children, more than once a sad tear fell across holly, beribboned parcel and decorating tinsel.

Madge had a lover, and that was the secret out. There was not a true-hearted lad in all the county than Ned Walters. They had exchanged vows of constancy to be confronted by her stern, self-willed father with the ultimatum that he would sooner see her dead than wedded to a son of his bitterest enemy!

It was an old-time feud, and the lovers had supposed 'til long since buried with old Rufus Walters himself—a lawsuit over a trifle, won by Walters fairly, but the obstinate farmer would not forget or forgive.

When his edict came Madge demurred. Ned rebelled, and they met clandestinely. The morning before Christmas, Early had learned of this. There had been a violent scene. He threatened to turn Nellie from the house if she ever contemplated Ned again.

"Father," she sobbed piteously, "I love him!"

"And I hate him!" snarled Early, "and all the Walters brood, and always shall. He'll defy me, eh? I'll hitch up after dinner and drive to Newburg. He's cashier in the bank, and Darrel owns it. Well, I've got over eight thousand dollars on deposit. I'll draw it out and inform Darrel not a penny do I put in again while that young jackanapes is in my employ. Insult me by defying my will, eh? Try to steal my daughter? Why, I'll drive him from Newburg, a beggar!"

"Oh, father, you wouldn't be so cruel!"

named poor Madge.

"I'll show you!"

Early went on his willful way. He drew his money, partly in gold, and placed it in a satchel under his buggy seat. Then he visited some stockpiles, put in the afternoon and about dusk started for home.

A two-wheeled cart passed him as he approached Dobbin's Grove, a lonely piece of timber near the burying ground, but two strangers drove it, and he barely noticed them. Then, as he turned a bend he was halted summarily. The zig was standing unattended. One of its recent occupants grabbed his horse's bridle, the other presented a revolver, and reaching under the buggy seat drew out the treasure satchel.

"Keep still, or I'll shoot!" he gruffly warned, and the frightened farmer knew what he had been followed from town by robbers.

The thief tossed the satchel to his companion, who threw it into their own buggy. Then both pulled Early from his vehicle, overpowered him, tied his hands and feet, and giving his horse a cut with the whip sent him flying down the road. The affrighted Early saw his own horse, startled by the runaway, dash into the timber at full speed, but the robbers, now absorbed in his capture, did not notice the fact. He, too, fled through a thicket and dropped at the edge of a fence.

"He'll be safe from harm or help till we're far from pursuit!" laughed one of the men.

They went away. Early found himself helpless. It was very cold, and his limbs began to stiffen.

The moon had risen, and he could see the scintillating frost flakes in the air. He wondered if he would remain undiscovered until he had frozen to death.

Death! The thought chilled him to the soul. What a awful Christmas Eve! Death! He quivered, as for the first time he noted that he lay near the fence surrounding the township cemetery.

Yes, and there yonder—that tall stone, standing so close, so clear, so seemingly accusing the white moonlight—the conscience-stricken man recognized as the monument of the enemy he so bitterly hated.

What fearful thoughts ran riot through his mind! How dwelling was his rancorous antipathy in the light of his own awful peril! It almost seemed like retribution, his being left here to die, after striving to beggar the son of the man towards whom, in this moment when eternity loomed—realized he had been unjust.

An hour went by. He was chilled to the marrow. He felt that long before midnight the cold would prove fatal. Suddenly he caught the echo of hoofs on the frozen highway. His horse voice rang out in piercing, desperate accents.

What was that? Help? relief? Oh, surely, a vehicle was picking a difficult course through the timber. A man sprang out, came towards him. He was rather sinister looking, for he wore a long black beard and a great enveloping ulster.

"Why?" he cried, "it's Mr. Early."

"You know me," shivered the farmer. "I don't know you, but for mercy's sake, untie me, get me home!"

The stranger cut the ropes. He had to lift Early into the vehicle. As they made towards the road, the farmer told what had happened.

OMENS OF NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Some Superstitions of a Pagan Rite in Popular Signs.

With the exception of All Saints' day, there is no time in the whole twelve-month about which so many superstitions cluster as New Year's and some form of divination to foretell the future is practiced in almost every land on Jan. 1. This, of course, is particularly the case with young people who desire to know whether they will get married during the coming year or soon thereafter. In the country districts of England and Germany there is a tea and coffee test which is most satisfactory. A teaspoon is balanced carefully on the edge of a cup. Then tea or coffee, as the case may be, is dropped into it, drop by drop. Every drop that the spoon will hold without losing its balance means another year before the wedding. One or two large drops will usually upset the spoon, and so this is a very popular way of looking into the future.

The actions and voices of domestic animals on New Year's day are perhaps more significant than any other omens. A dog's cheerful bark on the morning of a most auspicious sign, while his howl

attest game, everybody sits around in as small a circle as possible. A sheet is stretched across the circle, and held securely under each person's chin. Some one takes a small, downy feather, and letting it float in the air gives it a puff. The person before whom it falls, blows it up towards some one else. If it falls upon him, or if he lets it touch the sheet a forfeit is demanded.

An absurd game called "Jack's Alive," requires a small piece of firewood, which, after being held in the end to a candle, is extinguished, leaving the end to a candle. The stick is passed from hand to hand. Each one blows it to keep it lighted, saying "Jack's Alive" as long as the spark remains. The person in whose hands "Jack" dies pays a forfeit.

There is a game called "Rooster," which causes no end of merriment, but it is necessary that one person of the party shall not know the game. The leader says aloud that he will whisper to each person the name of an animal, whose peculiar cry the must imitate at a signal from him. To all but the uninitiated person he whispers "keep perfectly still." To that one he whispers "Rooster." The leader then counts "One, two, three." At three a loud, prolonged and lusty crow from the victim of the joke initiates him into the mysteries of the rooster game.

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DEPARTURE OF THE OLD YEAR AND ARRIVAL OF THE NEW

"Hello!" gasped the astonished farmer, for, tearing off his false beard, the old man's rescuer revealed his real identity. In few words Ned Walters explained the mystery. He felt that he must see Madge that Christmas eve, and disguising himself had started on foot for the farm. He had taken a short cut through the timber, so came across the vehicle and horse of the robbers. He had driven on, hoping to find an owner, when Early's cries for help had attracted him.

"It is the same girl, Mr. Early," said Ned, "for here is a Christmas present for you."

The smiling Ned drew from under his coat the old man's satchel found under the seat of the gig.

Nellie was trembling with joy. With eagerness her father inspected the contents of the satchel. Then his eyes lifted to the handsome, manly features of the person who had saved his life and his property.

He arose, and solemnly joined Ned and Madge, hand in hand.

"And there, Ned Walters," he said heartily, "there is your Christmas present!"

"Where are last year's toys?" Oh little girl, oh little boy, you look ahead with eyes

And wonder what the gifts the Saint shall bring to you may be. A thousand fancies fill your heads, a thousand dreams you dream

Of dollies made in wondrous ways or things that go by steam. You'll like whatever comes, you know, And childishly you vow

To keep your treasures well, but oh Where are the toys of last year now?

You shouted at the jumping Jack you'd begged the Saint to bring;

You laughed to see the antics of the monkey on the string;

The fairy book, the pictured blocks, the little train, the doll—

Ah how you danced with gladness as you looked upon them all!

But that was long, so long ago, And you, you know, some day will say: Have newer wants to-day, and oh

Where are the toys of last year now?

Oh anxious man, oh lady fair, you court the fates to-day,

And there we blessings rich and rare for which you weekly pray;

A loving glance, a happy smile; perhaps the strength to take

New-fangled responsibilities for wealth or honor's sake!

You grasp new hands and gladly go, And faithfully you vow

To cherish and to love, but oh Where are the toys of last year now?

—Chicago Record-Herald.

Latest Quotation.

Old, Kentucky-Uncle, what's the price of yoke turkey?

Uncle Reuben—Well, sah! dat dog he got my trousers and some of mah leg; but I don't grudge dah price—no, sah!

Some-what Uncertain.

Len—Are you going to give Mary a Christmas present?

Joe—In fact, sah! I don't know yet. I can't find out whether she's going to give me anything.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

To the New Year.

Up to the great heights and down to the perfect seed—

Bind deep wounds that bleed, And lift from darkest night,

Earth to eternal light! —Atlanta Constitution.

The best thing to put in a warm Christmas stocking is a poor child's foot.

PAPERS BY THE PEOPLE

REFORMING INEBRIATE WOMEN IN ENGLAND.

By Lady Henry Somerset.

The homes for friendless girls in London are well established, and the homes for inebriate women, so sadly needed, are well started, well patronized and are already a success.

We use nothing but kind words to reclaim the unfortunate women with whom we come in contact, and that has proved to be the best way. Looking up a woman in prison is not the way to reform her. When a woman enters our home, she is given light work to do, and everything around her is arranged so that nothing of her old life will be present in her habits.

Another factor contributing to the advance made in the cause of temperance in England is the conviction on the part of the general public that there is too much drinking throughout Great Britain. The people themselves—the working class, the tradesfolk and the better middle class—are all beginning to see that drunkenness is one of the curses of civilization and that temperance is its only cure. As to the upper classes, the nobility, the cause has never been very popular there, but I really think that there are a better understanding and a beginning of sympathy among the upper classes. But in England we have centuries and centuries of custom back of us, and it is hard to break through and see that there is light on the other side.

DISREGARD OF SUNDAY DEFERRED.

By Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore.

A close observer cannot fail to note the dangerous inroads that have been made on the Lord's day in this country during the last thirty years. Look at the railroad lines in this country; not only are the passengers carried on Sundays, which I believe is unavoidable, but freight trains are in full operation. This traffic involves the employment of thousands of conductors, firemen, and engineers, as well as freight handlers, on the Lord's day. Then observe our system of electric cars. These lines are in full blast on Sundays, and the conductors and motormen have to serve the same number of hours on that day as on week days.

On Sunday mornings the business man is debarrued from going to his place of business, but seizes the morning paper and devours its contents of twenty or thirty pages, news of stocks and bonds, or pleasures and amusements, of crime and scandal, until his whole being is saturated with this unhealthy diet. Like animals gorged with food, he spends the morning in a comatose condition.

MONSTER EVIL OF OUR DAY.

By Adam E. Stevenson, Ex-Vice President.

Existing conditions challenge the attention of all thoughtful men. These conditions are confined to no particular section, but exist throughout the length and breadth of our country. Notwithstanding our boasted prosperity and the individual fortunes that have suddenly been acquired, the sad fact remains that to the mass of the people this oft repeated boast of prosperity is but a mockery. Within a brief time articles of daily consumption—the foods essential to human health and comfort—have enormously increased in cost. Meat at many tables is indeed an article of luxury. The much vaunted prosperity is that of the favored few. To the mass of the people conditions have seldom been more exacting, rarely less hopeful, than at this moment. It were worse than idle to close our eyes to the discontent, the feeling of unrest so general in this land. It is the part of wisdom to ascertain the cause and, if possible, to apply the remedy.

The trust is the crying evil of to-day. By combinations of capital unknown to our earlier days, against public policy, and in many instances in direct violation of State laws,

laid bare and swept clean of everything tending to remind one of the catastrophe. Money to build another campaign, Venice, some months ago was extraordinary in that no one was killed or injured of the hundreds who might have been if it had swayed toward the old ducal palace forty feet distant from its base and tore its way through that mossy pile which has been defying the ages for centuries. The lofty tower started to its demolition after giving full warning and came down as gently as if some great giant had purposely held it back to save those near by from destruction.

THE RUINED CAMPANILE.

Strange Spectacle of the Celebrated Square of Venice.

The crumbling of St. Mark's campanile, Venice, some months ago was extraordinary in that no one was killed or injured of the hundreds who might have been if it had swayed toward the old ducal palace forty feet distant from its base and tore its way through that mossy pile which has been defying the ages for centuries. The lofty tower started to its demolition after giving full warning and came down as gently as if some great giant had purposely held it back to save those near by from destruction.

SNAKE VIRUS USED ON WEAPONS.

Seri Indians Poison Their Missiles with Rattlesnake Venom.

"I scarcely can think they are cannibals, but one day we killed a deer, and tossing the Indians a hind quarter, they proceeded to devour it raw. They live

made a landing. At first the Indians were very suspicious, but finally they consented to do some trading.

The party obtained some of the natives' bows and poisonous arrows and a peculiar bamboo boat. The Indians poison their arrows by taking the liver of a deer, allowing a rattlesnake to bite it and then dipping their arrows into the inoculated liver. The Seris are supposed to have horses, as the party saw several hoof marks. The island is about thirty-two miles long and eighteen wide.

Members of the expedition shot many deer and reported that the island is filled with rattlesnakes.

Buried on Horseback.

Lord Dacre, who died fighting for the Lancastrians at Towton, England, in 1461, directed that if he were killed in the battle his favorite war horse should be buried in the same grave with him. According to his wishes, when his interment took place in Saxton church yard after the battle a tremendous grave was dug and in it the warrior was buried, seated upright on his horse. For centuries reflections were cast upon the accuracy of this tradition, but a few years ago while excavations for new graves were being made close by the reputed burial place of Lord Dacre the pick of a digger struck into a great bone and upon further search being made the skull of a horse was brought to the surface. As this was found almost at the very spot under which the body of Lord Dacre was said to lie it was accepted as confirmation of the tradition, particularly as the skull was found to be standing vertically in the soil. The skull was replaced carefully in its original position and the excavation filled up.

United States Patents.

The whole number of patents issued by the United States Patent Office is more than 350,000, of which 45,000 were to foreigners. The number of live patents is about 375,000.

The industries and appliances upon which the larger number of patents have been issued are, approximately, stoves and furnaces, 20,000; steam engines, 14,000; railways, tracks, and harvesters, each, 12,000; electric lights, 6,000; bicycles, 6,000; pumps, 5,000; refrigerating, 4,500; telephone, 4,000; electrical railways, 3,000.

It has been estimated that the four-motion feed for sewing machine patents earned \$32,000,000 for its owners, a larger amount probably than any other patent issued prior to the Bell telephone patent.

Would Take Him Back.

Mand—Why did you break your engagement with Tom Hotchkiss? Edith—Hush! Don't tell anyone—but he was growing so horribly fat. When grief has pulled him down a bit I shall take him on again.—New York News.

Gold in Rhodesia.

Southern Rhodesia's gold output in May was the highest recorded, being over 15,000 ounces.

THE WRECKED CAMPANILE IN VENICE.

Not even great noise proclaimed its undoing, but a huge cloud of dust arose and settled for a time over the big square of which for centuries it was the crowning glory. In descending it leaped over enough to tear out the part of the front wall of the ducal palace, otherwise no damage was done. The immensity of the campanile could not be comprehended when it stood the lofty sentinel overlooking Venice and the Adriatic 330 feet in the air. Now that it was tumbled into debris, filling a space 300 feet long by 100 wide and 70 feet high, its colossal proportions could be understood. Even the Venetians who were born within its shadow, and lived beneath it to old age, did not realize its mighty dimensions until it was turned into a crumbling mass.

To recover the figures and designs of various kind used to embellish the lofty pinnacles the great mass was fenced in, the public excluded and laborers set to work to sort over the debris before consigning it to the barges which carried it out to sea. Singularly enough all the iron and brass used to beautify the tower was recovered and found to be practically unimpaired. For ten days, making two trips inland, one of eight miles on the Sonora side and the other four and a half miles on the Gulf side.

Whenever they saw any Indians they

made a landing. At first the Indians were very suspicious, but finally they consented to do some trading.

The party obtained some of the natives' bows and poisonous arrows and a peculiar bamboo boat. The Indians poison their arrows by taking the liver of a deer, allowing a rattlesnake to bite it and then dipping their arrows into the inoculated liver. The Seris are supposed to have horses, as the party saw several hoof marks. The island is about thirty-two miles long and eighteen wide.

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CHRISTMAS GAMES.

JUST one day in the year grows people play games which on any other day they would scorn as childish. The time is usually in the evening, after the Christmas dinner, with its palatable plum pudding, has put everybody in good humor about the world. Some one suggests "Those foolish Christmas games we used to play." And, in short order, staid men and dignified women are converted into a parcel of laughing rumps.

The "Fairy Tale" much merrier. One person begins to relate an imaginary fairy tale. When he has arrived at a point where his listeners are interested he stops short, throwing a handkerchief at the person he wishes to continue the narrative. Any one failing to respond must pay a forfeit.

The game "I love my love" is mentioned by Charles Dickens in several of his novels. The leader in this game commences by saying something like this: "I love my love with an A. I will agree, because she lives in Asia. I will give her an airgun and feed her on artichokes and make her a bouquet of apple chokes and make her a bouquet of apple chokes." The next player takes the words "A" and uses the same phrases, substituting words beginning with "B" and so on. Any one failing to respond must pay a forfeit.

In "Fly Feather," another mirth-cre-

ating game, everybody sits around in as small a circle as possible. A sheet is stretched across the circle, and held securely under each person's chin. Some one takes a small, downy feather, and letting it float in the air gives it a puff. The person before whom it falls, blows it up towards some one else. If it falls upon him, or if he lets it touch the sheet a forfeit is demanded.

An absurd game called "Jack's Alive," requires a small piece of firewood, which, after being held in the end to a candle, is extinguished, leaving the end to a candle. The stick is passed from hand to hand. Each one blows it to keep it lighted, saying "Jack's Alive" as long as the spark remains. The person in whose hands "Jack" dies pays a forfeit.

There is a game called "Rooster," which causes no end of merriment, but it is necessary that one person of the party shall not know the game. The leader says aloud that he will whisper to each person the name of an animal, whose peculiar cry the must imitate at a signal from him. To all but the uninitiated person he whispers "keep perfectly still." To that one he whispers "Rooster." The leader then counts "One, two, three." At three a loud, prolonged and lusty crow from the victim of the joke initiates him into the mysteries of the rooster game.

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