bringer with more eager satisfaction. Lucy stopped the accounting for a period of ridiculously hearty laughing, in which she was joined by her companion with such appreciative vigor that the strident black-jack boughs fairly vibrated in the woods above them. Finally after a long period of accounting, made long by the frequent interruptions for intervals of laughing, Lucy said:

"There now. With economy we can live on this——say about how long?" She looked up for an opinion. Will was looking at the spread reflectively.

"Four whole days. But we've only a quart of milk. And to own the truth, I'm awfully hungry right now, Lou. I'd like to eat a whole chicken if I could do it with any regard to prudent economy."

"Dear fellow! so hungry! Well, this is my Christmas dinner and you shall eat as much as you want. Begin now. I believe I'm hungry too." And Lucy, making a great pretense of badinage, was nevertheless perfectly in earnest.

"Oh, it won't do at all, Lou. I was joking about being so hungry," Will said in a faint remonstrance.

"Never mind. I'm the hostess. Have some of this chicken. I roasted it myself. And just think of our Christmas dinner down here in the bottom of this old iron-mine."

This was quite enough to start them both laughing. In fact almost every thing is funny when young people who love each other, and are alone together.

After a very protracted dinner they fell to discussing serious subjects of an infinite variety of type, from the stars, which upon theory they ought to be able to see from this subterranean point of observation, to the vast satisfaction of an unbroken and perfect friendship between two people for life. Then again something of the ludicrous would come up and the staring oak walls of the old iron-mine rang again with such merry peals of laughter as never before nor since could they hope to respond to.

Then they discussed the question of whether it was really growing dark, and finally settled it in the affirmative. Then at the end of a paroxysm of unusually loud laughter caused by some absurd saying of Lucy's, voices were plainly heard above them and quite near. In short the rescuing party was at hand.

THE RESCUE.

"Now, Lucy, before we move a step out of this—very ——— [illegible] ———"

"Delightful old iron-mine," suggested Lucy.

"Yes, the most pleasant of iron-mines. I want to say that of all the good, clever, pretty—" here he glanced at the basket in acknowledgment of her [illegible] surrender [illegible] provisions to him—"young—and—and altogether lovely young women of my acquaintance"—here Lucy put up her face and pouted a little—"you are the best of them all. And I won't stir out of this spot unless you promise to marry me right away."

Nobody knows what Lucy's answer was since it was drowned in the shouts of [illegible] from the party now gathering round the mouth of the old mine. But they were married on New Year's Day. And Father [illegible] declares that all the girls in the neighborhood have been trying to throw young men's fancies [illegible] old iron-mines—not so deep as that one, to be sure. But deep enough in which to eat a dinner and get engaged.

H. W. Taylor.

Rocked the Turkey Asleep.

"[illegible] good-for-nothing wretch!" exclaimed Big William's wife, as she reached her hand out of bed and felt in the cradle to see if the baby was covered up.

"What's 'er matter?" murmured Big, as he turned in his sleep.

"Matter enough! Ough you! Wake up and go downstairs and bring baby up here this minute."

"[illegible] him up. He's in the cradle."

"No, he ain't a thing. You've drank too much [illegible]. You wrapped the Christmas turkey in baby's blankets and rocked it to sleep in the cradle, you wretch! and baby is downstairs on the sofa catching cold."

His Christmas Presents.

Arabella Tippett and Cholly Weakpate were engaged. Cholly works as clerk in a dry-goods house and earns [illegible] the [illegible], and Arabella's father is a pork-packer with the higher aspirations for his daughter than to have her marry Cholly.

On Christmas morning Softop met a chum, who displayed an embroidered hat [illegible] his lady had sent him for a Christmas present.

"What did Arabella give you, Cholly?" he asked.

"She gave me the shake, and her old man gave me a boot."

The Boarder's Sock.

The star boarder on Christmas hung up an old sock
And the boarding-house mistress put in it a rock.
Then the serving maid thought she would not be outdone,
So she stole to the sock and thrust in a bun.
Now the boarder, awaking, dressed up in the [illegible],
And very quiet slipped softly downstairs with a light.
Then he boldly walked in with the air of a lord,
And there pinned to his sock was a bill for his board.

He Was Insignificant.

"Arabella," said Cholly Softop to Miss McFlopper, "did you ever notice that some people are amused with very little and insignificant things?"

"Are they? Well, you must feel amused continually, then."

"How so?"

"Why, you are with yourself so much of the time."

Dead Stuck on Himself.

"I do like a pig," said Mr. O'Greedy, as he helped himself for the fourth time to a liberal plate-full of the viands at the Christmas dinner.

"You should be 'dead stuck' on yourself at that rate," said the landlady, with a smile, but in rather a cutting tone.

If He Had Luck.

"What will we have for dinner on Christmas, dear?" said Jem Pinchem's wife to [illegible].

"A pair of chickens, if I have luck and old Henman don't lock his coop to-night."

CHRISTMAS SAVED.

[CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.]

backward in rayless midnight. I suppose that never, Never, since the destruction of Jerusalem and the persecution of the early Christians, was there such a period of human suffering and measureless, wide-spread misery. But this half century of tears wept itself away. A footnote by Evelyn states positively that this period covered one hundred years, while a note in the appendix—A—by Mr. Barr, who had a great deal of paper to take up about January 1, asserts that it was the shortest twelve months he had ever known. But I can not now stop to reconcile these conflicting statements, and the Christmas bells were chiming again. Here again I find in this same excellent history of those days, on the twenty-fourth page of the chapter on December, the statement that all holidays had been forever abolished and voiceless gloom and sad-eyed sorrow were to walk hand in hand in the dates of all such, down to the end of recorded time and back again.

But it seems that a great many ignorant common people, with plain every-day stomachs, with the digestive apparatus thereunto appertaining in fair working order, had not heard this decision, which probably had been imperfectly promulgated, so they went right on frolicking and merry-making just the same as though the sun shone and pay-day came every Saturday.

On the streets and in the stores everywhere the annual exhibition of Christmas frenzy went on, and all the world was a mad world, my masters. Chattering lunatics crowded and jostled, crushed and elbowed other lunatics that rippled and elbowed and crushed and crowded back again, with no earthly idea of doing any thing else, while they apologized to each other just for the sake of being cordial. Mild imbeciles bought utterly impossible things to send to feeble ones who had no earthly use for them, while other mad men and women, after fighting their way through impassable crowds into the stores, loaded themselves down with fragile wares, remorselessly doomed to everlasting smash in the hopeless struggle to get out again. A few stranger maniacs, so far away from their home asylums they could not get back to them by Christmas, bought benevolently, and then madly gave their purchases to gamins in the street, who gratefully jeered them and called them "Ben-

"STUCK A SMOKING-CAP SO RAKISHLY"

eens" for their pains, as is the manner of the street Arab when he receives a benefit. Any place in the maelstrom was a solitude, and so it was that Tom and Evelyn met right in her own papa's big store. And they talked in low tones, while Effie, touched with pity, though as she stood guard and frankly recognized poor Tom, much as a compassionate nurse might drop a tear upon the traveler whom it is assisting to freeze.

"What will Christmas be without you?" said Tom, moodily. "There will be no more Christmas."

"And what will it be without you, dear Tom?" she said, with quivering lip, and then went on, bravely trying to hide her own pain as these women do at the very times when men think most of themselves. "It will be a lonesome mockery for both of us, but you mustn't be alone. You must go out with your friends and be happy. I will be less miserable if I know you are enjoying yourself."

"Evelyn, you know what papa will say," interjected Effie, "and there's a floor-walker looking right at you."

"I can't go out," said Tom, more bitterly than before. "I don't want to see people. I hate people."

"But you mustn't shut yourself up," she pleaded. "It is hard for me, too. I have no heart for gayety. I will think of you and love you all day, and you must carry me in your heart wherever you are. Some time"——

"Evelyn, papa is looking for us in the next aisle."

A little hand caught Tom's in the crowd, the brown eyes looked a good-bye at him through a mist of tears, the quivering lips smiled bravely for his sake, and he whispered at last a cheery and cheering word to her, and then he was alone in the multitude, with a heart so heavy and full of love for her it was like to break. That is, he thought it was like to break. He gulped down a sob, and drifting into the terrible surge of the coming and going crowds, he was ground and crushed out into the street amid a wreck of Christmas matter and a crash of fragile holiday wares.

How can we sing when the heart is sad? When we sit down by the rivers of far-away Babylon and hang our voiceless harps, all tuned in minor keys, upon the drooping branches of the sorrowing willows, how can we echo the mirth of the strangers, or sing the old songs that we sang when our hearts rang with music? Hath the man with neuralgia in the face any place at the feast? He that is smitten of the rheumatism in his knees, doth he drift through the whirling mazes of the giddy dance? Laugh he ever at the merry jest for whose return from halls of mirth and revelry his sheriff's deputy impatient waits? Indeed we do all of us. It seems to me that I once heard a gifted writer, a profound thinker and a most accurate analyst of human nature remark in her essay read at the high school commencement that all men and women wear masks, and much I marveled that one so young had discovered a truth that had eluded the search of the sages.

Christmas dawned at last, and very few people observed a singular phenomenon recorded in the history of the day, to which allusion has already been made, that large awnings of sackcloth had been stretched across the entire heavens, from which showers of ashes were being sifted upon the shuddering earth. Many people remarked that it was cloudy, and some said that it was snowing. So little note do careless mortals take of momentous occurrences in nature. I knew about the sackcloth because I knew the people who put it up. They had been up nearly all night stretching that emblem of woe, carrying ashes and setting out tear-jugs.

Nobody saw any sackcloth and ashes at the Barrs'. The children could hardly wait to eat breakfast, and few and short were the morning prayers they said, for heart and mind were set on the locked room in which the Christmas tree bloomed and bore most rare and radiant fruit. When the door was opened how they trooped in, singing like the blackbirds in the royal pie. What shrieks of laughter as every body selected the wrong things on the tree, and chose unto themselves the most absurdly inappropriate gifts. And when the room was darkened and the candles lighted, what a fairy land it was. How the tapers gleamed like little stars! What a chorus of Oh's and Ah's as the tree glittered in a brave spangle of frost-work of gold and silver. What wails of dismay when the tree caught fire; what united and vigorous blowings and puffings that blew it out again in such merry laughter! What suppressed excitement when a soft jingle of sleigh-bells in the next room, growing louder and nearer, until just as every body was just ready to faint or scream with suspense, a gruff voice shouted: "Whoa, Prancer! Whoa, Dancer! Whoa, there, Vixen!" The door flew open and Jack dashed in, dressed up like Santa Claus, and began to distribute gifts amid a chorus of screams of delight, some of them a little timid. Why, even some of the older children were half afraid of him, he looked so real, even with Jack's voice, which he tried to disguise and made so gruff. Robbie and Irma firmly believed it was really Santa Claus, and so did Claude, at which

"AND THE ICE WAS BROKEN."

credulity Master Gus scoffed and said stoutly: "Huh, it's Jack!" and was gravely rebuked for his skepticism by Trude, while baby Anna cried outright. And when Santa Claus put the new scarf around mamma's neck and kissed her and wished her many a merry Christmas like this one, what a clapping of hands when mamma said:

"Good Santa, you've been at my Jack's [illegible]."

And when he fastened on Effie's bracelets, and kissed her a merry Christmas and told her every day ought to be Christmas to her, she said:

"Good Christmas Saint, I know whose [illegible] you for [illegible]."

Didn't we laugh, and didn't we laugh more loudly still when Gus shouted: "Old Santa, we're on to you!" And the white-bearded old Saint threw a beautiful dressing-gown on papa's shoulders and stuck a smoking-cap so rakishly on the side of his head that every body screamed again. Oh, it was fun and only poor Evelyn, seven, white face, paler than ever, and frightened like a saint's by her brave smiles, softened the laughter a little at times, and made every body feel more tenderly toward her, in spite of her great wickedness and rebellious conduct. And when it was all over, and Santa had quit bringing things out of the invisible sleigh or taking them down from the tree, Effie said:

"Why, Ja—Santa, you haven't given Evelyn any thing."

And a hush fell upon every body then that Evelyn was in disgrace, and was to have no Christmas. But she bore her punishment so sweetly and bravely. She just walked up close under the beautiful tree, gleaming with its Christmas jewels, and took Jack by the hand, and said, oh so softly, in such a peaceful, contented voice:

"I'll take Santa Claus."

And then Jack pulled off his fur cap and white beard, and the very clock on the mantel stopped ticking as mamma sank into a chair and faintly gasped:

"Tom!"

And every body stared and rubbed every body's eyes and stared again, and stared and stared. And all they could see was Evelyn with her white face, with new roses faintly glowing in her cheeks, lying on Tom Appleyard's breast, just as though it belonged there, her arms around his neck, and a big fur-clad arm clasping her waist, and no Jack any where in sight. Some of the children began to cry.

"Father," said Santa Claus, quietly.

Then papa dropped into the nearest chair, which happened to be a piano-stool, that upset with him, and the ice was broken, for papa sitting on the floor with a piano-stool leaning up against his back and a smoking-cap hanging on the side of his head, might have felt severely dignified, but he didn't look it. "Tom," he said, sternly, "don't tell me you and Evelyn are married!"

"This morning," said Evelyn, speaking the forbidden fact for him, "don't disobey your father, Tom."

"While the rest of you were at breakfast," added Tom, who hadn't been forbidden to say when.

"Where?" asked mamma, feebly.

"In the kitchen," said Tom, sheepishly, and mamma fainted.

"Well, help me up," said papa, grimly, "and come to my arms."

But they rushed to his arms without waiting for him to get up. Every body did—groom, bride and children—without knowing just why, and they laughed and cried and kissed each other, until mamma, being left to herself, recovered all alone, and joined the riot with as much good-will as any one, until enough quiet was restored to tell and to hear all about it. How the whole plot had been arranged yesterday afternoon; how the cook and the housemaid had jointly entered into the conspiracy, and the cook had engaged her own pastor, a German Lutheran, who knew just about enough English to stumble through the marriage service, and how he had married them while the family was eating Christmas breakfast and then fled with as profound secrecy as he had arrived, while the house-maid let Tom into Jack's room, Evelyn having previously instructed him in the duties of Santa Claus.

But where was Jack all this time? Before Tom, who looked awfully guilty, or Evelyn, who looked a little frightened, could answer this, one of those little blue-coated Angels of the Western Union Telegraph Company brought a telegram from Jack. He was away up the country on the L. S. & D. railroad at Lost Creek, and couldn't get back until noon.

"What on earth did he go there for Christmas Eve?" asked papa. "That Lost Creek man came in and saw me yesterday."

"Why," said Tom, in a troubled way, "I guess—perhaps—I think Jack thought you sent word to him to go right up there last night. He had a perhaps [illegible] word a few minutes before train time, and hadn't time to see you and thought"—

Here Tom's voice wandered away.

"I don't know what Jack thought," said papa, "but I know what I think."

Jack came home about two o'clock, in ample time for dinner. Oh, but he was furious at first. "Ramming mad." "Red hot," Gus said. But the dinner and general merriment cooled him off.

"Well," he said, "I'll give you my blessing, but don't you ever fool again."

And they promised they wouldn't.

Only mamma groaned in spirit and in words. "Married in a kitchen," she said, "by a little Dutch preacher, with a cook and a housemaid for witnesses. Oh, Evelyn! Evelyn, how could you?"

But Evelyn still clung to Tom, and smiling as though she could never, never cry any more, said if she hadn't promised Jack the world to do it again.

Robert J. Burdette.

"I see by the society advertisements that Madame Highflyer will receive callers on New Year's," said a hot-blooded dry-goods dealer. "I shall instruct my collector to call on her with the little bill she has been owing here since she purchased the outfit for her watering-place trip last summer." —*Goodall's Sun.*

CHRISTMAS REVERIE.—"What are you going to buy your wife for a Christmas present?" asked one benedict of Jorie Peterby. "I'm thinking of getting her a piano." "Can she play?" "No, of course not. Do you think I'd be such a fool as to buy her a piano if she could play?"—*Fliegende Blätter.*

YOUNG man, if you are going to get married soon, get married before Christmas. You can talk economy much better as a husband than you can as a lover, and may deceive her into thinking that in not making her a Christmas present you are doing a noble act.—*Philadelphia Herald.*

THE EDITOR'S CHRISTMAS.

THE last page was finished and he yawned in his chair,
While the ink on his pen he wiped off on his hair;
He mused for some time, then laid down the pen,
And donning his coat, he locked up the den;
Then home to his lodgings, in a dingy back street,
He walked in thin shoes through the down-falling sleet;
And opening the door, to the fifth story climbed,
As the bells of St. Nicholas merrily chimed.

His coat and his hat he hung on a nail,
And then tried to read by the candle-light pale;
A feeling of drowsiness soon o'er him came,
And, tired out, he slumbered and dreamed him of fame.

He seemed to be sitting in a sumptuous room
Where bright chandeliers made the walls to illume;
Where tables were loaded with all they could hold
Of presents and gifts as in good days of old.

A Christmas tree standing upright in a block!
The sight gave his brain a most terrible shock;
Subscriptions and contracts were there by the score,
And bank notes as well—some thousands or more.

What could it all mean? His head must be wrong;
His eyes must deceive or surely weren't strong;
The lamp of Aladdin never could have done more
To add to the table's most bounteous store.

Kind Providence truly had come to his aid
And brought the success for which he had prayed;
No more would he wander around for the news,
While his feet met the paves through the soles of his shoes.

The bank bills would buy him a new suit of clothes,
And next year he'd hang up a whole pair of hose;
His friends in the parlor again he'd renew,
And give them a paper both novel and new.

Alas! his air-castles were bubbles that broke,
When he turned in his chair, and in turning, awoke;
The room and the table all vanished in air—
Gone, gone to the dickens—he never knew where.

The bell of St. Nicholas pealed forth its chime,
As oft it had done before in its time,
And gray streaks of dawn shone in his cold lair,
Proclaiming that Christmas in earnest was there.

The fire was all out, the table were strewed
The bills and the notes for which he was sued;
With a sock in his hand, he buttoned it anew,
While [illegible] through its holes played "hide and go peep."

But people that morn who laughed at his glee
Over jokes from his pen till they scarcely could see,
Knew little the hardships the writer went through,
Who gave them on Christmas good stories and new.

BURT ARNOLD.

"That's All."

"Where did you get that turkey you have in your hand, Sam?" said Mrs. Sambo, as he entered the house at midnight with a sixteen-pound gobbler, whose head was [illegible].

"Won him at er Chris-mus raffle, my dear. Nobody—but—me—had—any. Count me [illegible]."

"Well, what is the matter with it? What makes it look so queer?"

"Thass nothin'. I—er—knock—his—ed a few p—p—p—[illegible] off er fence wa I was coming home. Thass all."

THE man who lays down the law to his wife and tells her that under oath to his boots he is forbidden to receive Christmas presents may miss getting a token of his wife's affection, but he will save money by the loss.—*Fall River Advance.*

THE season of swapping presents is drawing near. The old-time custom of giving to those who could give naught but thanks and gratitude in return had mind to commend it.—*Boston Herald.*