

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS.

It was the night before Christmas, when all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse: The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there; The children were nestled all snug in their beds, While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads; And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap, Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap— When on the lawn there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter: Away to the window I flew like a flash, Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow, Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below, When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer, With a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick. More rapid than eagles his courses they trace, And his whiskers, and shouted, and called them by name: "Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! now, Vixen! On! Comet, on! Cupid, on! Donner and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall! Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!" As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky, So, up to the house-top the coursers they flew, With the sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas too. And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof The prancing and pawing of each little hoof. As I drew in my head and was turning around, Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound. He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnish'd with ashes and soot: A bundle of toys he had slung on his back, And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack. His eyes-how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry; His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow. The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath. He had a broad face, and a little round belly, That shook, when he laugh'd, like a bowl full of jelly. He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, And I laugh'd when I saw him, in spite of myself. A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head, Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread. He spoke not a word, but went straight to my work, And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk, And laying his finger aside of his nose, And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose. He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a willow; But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

THE BAKER OF BARNBURY.

It was three days before Christmas, and the baker of the little village of Barnbury sat in the room behind his shop. He was a short and sturdy baker, a good fellow, and ordinarily of a jolly demeanor, but this day he sat grim in his little back room. "Christmas indeed," he said to himself, "and what of Christmas? Thank you, baker, and a merry Christmas to you, and every one of them goes away, with the present of a raisin-cake, or a horse ginger cake, if they like that better. All this for the good of the trade, of course. Found the trade, I'm tired of trade. Is there no good in this world, but the good of the trade? 'Oh, yes,' they'll say, 'there's Christmas and that's good.' But what is the good of it to me? I. Christmas day is a family day, and to a man without a family it's no day at all. I'm not even fourth cousin to a soul in the town. Nobody asks me to a family dinner. 'Bake, baker!' they cry, 'that we may eat and love each other.' Confound them, I am tired of it. What is Christmas to me? I have a mind to skip it." As he said this a smile broke out on his face. "Skip Christmas," said he, "that's a good idea. They did not think of me last year; this would make them think of me this year." As he said this he opened his order book and ran his eye over the names. "Here's orders from every one of them," said he, "from the doctor down to Cobler John. All have families, all give orders. It's pastry, cake or sweetmeats, or it's meat or fowl to be baked. What a jolly Christmas they will have without me! Orders from all of them, every one; all sent in good time for fear of being crowded out." Here he stopped and ran his eye again over the list. "No, not all," he said, "the Widow Monk is not here. What is the matter with her, I wonder? The only person in Barnbury who has not ordered either pastry, cakes or sweetmeats; or fowl or meat to be baked. If I skip Christmas, she'll not mind it, but she'll be the only one—the only one in all Barnbury. 'Ha! ha!'" The baker wanted some fresh air, and as this was supper time for the whole village, he locked up his shop and went out for a walk. The night was clear and frosty. He liked this; the air was so different from that in his bakery. He walked to the end of the village, and at the last house he stopped. "It's very odd," said he to himself; "no cakes, pastry or sweetmeats; not even poultry or meat to be baked. I'll look in and see about this," and he knocked at the door. The Widow Monk was at supper. She was a plump little body, bright and cheerful to look upon, and not more than thirty. "Good evening, baker," said she, "will you sit down and have a cup of tea?" The baker put down his hat, unwound his long woolen comforter, took off his overcoat, and had a cup of tea. "Now, then," said he to himself, "as he put down his cup, if she'd ask me to dinner I wouldn't skip Christmas, and the whole village might rise up and bless her."

"mas," he said to her. "Fine enough for the rest of you," she said, with a smile, "but I shall not have any Christmas this year." "How's that?" cried the baker; "no Christmas, Widow Monk?" "Not this year, baker," said she, and she poured him another cup of tea. "You see that horse-blanket?" said she, pointing to one thrown over a chair. "Bless me, Widow Monk," cried the baker, "you're not intending to set up a horse?" "Hardly that," she answered, with a smile; "but that's the very very last horse-blanket that I can get to bind. They don't put them on horses, but they have them bound with red, and use them for goor curtains. That's all the fashion now, and all the Barnbury folks who can afford them have sent them to me to be bound with red. That one is nearly finished, and there are no more to be bound." "But haven't the Barnbury folks any more work for you?" cried the baker; "haven't they shirts or gowns, or some other sort of needings?" "Those things they make themselves," answered the widow, "but this binding is heavy work and they give it to me. The blankets are coarse, you see, but they hang well in the doorway." "Confound the people of Barnbury!" cried the baker. "Every one of them would hang well in a doorway if I had the doing of it. And so you can't afford a Christmas, Widow Monk?" "No," said she, setting herself to work on her horse-blanket, "not this year. When I came to Barnbury, baker, I thought I might do well, but I have not done well." "Did not your husband leave you anything?" he asked. "My husband was a sailor," said she, "and he went down with his brig, the Mistletoe, three years ago, and all that he left me is gone, baker." "It was time for the baker to open his shop, and he went away, and as he walked home snow drops and tear drops were all mixed together on his face. "I couldn't do this sort of thing before her," he said, "and I am glad it was time to go and open my shop." That night the baker did all his regular work, but not a finger did he put to any Christmas order. The next day, at supper time, he went out for a walk. On the way he said to himself, "If she is going to skip Christmas, and I am going to skip Christmas, what should we not skip it together? That would truly be most fit and glad some, and it would serve Barnbury right. I'll go in and lay it before her." The Widow Monk was at supper, and when she asked him to take a cup of tea he put down his hat, unwound his woolen comforter, and took off his overcoat. When he sat down his empty cup he told her that he, too, had made up his mind to skip Christmas, and he told her why, and then he proposed that they should skip it together. Now, the Widow Monk was to take a second cup of tea, and she turned as red as the binding she had put on the horse-blankets. The baker pushed aside the teacups, leaned over the table, and pressed his suit very hard. When the time came for him to open his shop she said that she would think about the matter, and that he might come again. The next day the sun shone golden, the snow shone silvery, and Barnbury was like a paradise to the good baker. For the Widow Monk had told him he might come again, and that was almost the same thing as telling him that he and she would skip Christmas together! And not a finger, so far, had he put to any Christmas order. About noon of that day, he was so happy, was that good baker, that he went into the village inn to have a taste of something hot. In the inn he found a tall man, with rings in his ears. A sun-browned man he was and a stranger, who had just arrived and wanted his dinner. He was also a handsome man, and a sailor, as any one could see. As the baker entered, the tall man said to the inn-keeper: "Is there a Mrs. Monk now living in this village?" "Truly there is," said the inn-keeper, "and I will show you her house. But you'll have your dinner first?" "Aye, aye," said the stranger, "for I'll not go to her hungry." The baker asked for nothing hot, but turned him and went out into the cold, bleak world. As he closed the door behind him he heard the stranger say: "On the brig Mistletoe." It was not needed that the baker should hear these words; already he knew everything. His soul had told him everything in the moment he saw the sun-browned man with the rings in his ears! On went the baker, his head bowed on his breast, the sun shining like tawdry brass, the snow glistening like a slimy evil thing. He knew not where he intended to do, but on he went. Presently a door opened and he was called. "I saw you coming," said the Widow Monk, "and I did not wish to keep you waiting in the cold," and she held open the door for him. When he had entered and had seated himself before the fire, she said to him: "Truly, you look chilled, you need something hot," and she prepared it for him. The baker took the hot beverage. This much of good he might at least allow himself. He drank it and he felt warmed. "And now," said the Widow Monk, seating herself on the other side of the fireplace, "I shall speak as plainly to you as you spoke to me. You spoke very well yesterday, and I have been thinking about it ever since and have made up my mind. You are alone in the world and I am alone, and if you

don't wish to be alone any longer, why, I don't wish to be either, and so—per haps—it will not be necessary to skip Christmas this year." "Alas for the poor baker! Here was paradise seen through a barred gate! But the baker's heart was moved; even in the midst of his misery he could not but be grateful for the widow's words. There flashed into his eyes a sudden brightness. He held out his hands. He would thank her first and tell her afterwards. The widow took his hands, lowered her bright eyes and blushed. Then she suddenly withdrew herself and stood up. "Now," she said, with a pretty smile, "let me do the talking. Don't look so downcast. When I tell you that you have made me very, very happy, you should look happy too. When you came to me yesterday and said what you said, I thought you were in too much of a hurry, but now I think that perhaps you were right, and that when people of our age have anything important to do, it is well to do it once, for in this world there are all sorts of things continually springing up to prevent people from being happy." "The widow's body of the baker was filled with a great groan, but he denied it utterance. He must hear what she would say. "And so I was going to suggest," she continued, "that instead of skipping Christmas together we keep it together. That is all the change I propose to your plan." "Up sprang the baker, so suddenly, that he overset his chair. Now he must speak. The widow stepped quickly toward the door, and turning with a smile held up her hand. "Now, good friend," she said, "stop there! At any moment some one might come in. Hasten back to your shop. At 3 o'clock I will meet you at the parlors. That will surely be soon enough, even for such a hasty man as you." The baker came forward and gasped, "Your husband!" "Not yet," said the widow, with a laugh, and kissing the tips of her fingers to him she closed the door behind her. Out into the cold went the baker. His head was dazed, but he walked steadfastly to his shop. There was need for him to go anywhere; to tell anybody anything. The man with the earrings would settle matters for himself soon enough. The baker put up his shutters and locked his shop door. He would do nothing more for the good of trade; nothing more for the good of anything. Skip Christmas! Indeed would he. And, moreover, every holiday and every happy day would now be skipped straight on for the rest of his life. He put his house in order, he arranged his affairs; he attired himself in his best apparel; he locked his door behind him; and went out into the cold world. He longed now to get far away from the village. Before the sun set there would not be one soul there who would care for him. As he hurried on he saw before him the parson's house. "I will take but one thing away from me," he said, "I will ask the good old man to let me keep the good thing I will take with me." "Of course he is in," said the parson's maid, "there, in the parlor." As the baker entered the parson's parlor, some one hastened to meet him. It was the Widow Monk. "You wicked man," she whispered, "you are a quarter of an hour late. The parson is waiting!" The parson was a little man with white hair. He stepped toward the couple standing together, and the widow began to utter a speech he always made on such occasions. It was full of good sense and very touching, and the widow's eyes were dim with tears. The baker would have spoken, but he had never interrupted a clergyman, and he could not do it now. Then the parson began his appointed work, and the heart of the baker swelled as the widow's hand trembled in his own. "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?" asked the parson. "No, for this," quoth the poor baker to himself, "I may as well keep the good man waiting." And he said, "Yes." Then it was that the baker received what he had come for, the parson's blessing; and, immediately, his fair companion, brimming with tears, threw herself into his arms. "Now," said the baker to himself, "when I leave this house, may the devil take me, and right welcome shall he be." "Dearest," she exclaimed, as she looked into his face, "you cannot know how happy I am. My wedding day, and my brother back from the cruel seas!" "Struck by a sudden blast of bewildering ecstasy the baker raised his eyes, and beheld the tall form of the sun-browned stranger who had been standing behind them. "You are not a sailor-man," quoth the jovial brother, "like my old mate, who went down in the brig Mistletoe, good fellow, and I wish you fair winds and paying cargoes." And after giving the baker a powerful handshake, the sailor kissed the bride, the parson's wife, the parson's daughter, and the parson's maid, and wished the family were larger, having just returned from the cruel seas. The only people in the village of Barnbury who thoroughly enjoyed the Christmas of that year, were the baker and his wife and the sailor brother. And a rare good time they had, for a big sea chest arrived, and there were curious presents and tall flask of rare old wine, and plenty of time for three merry people to cook for themselves. The baker told his wife of his soul-harrowing plight of the day before. "Now, then," said he, "don't you think that by rights I should bake all the same?"

"Oh, that will be skipped," she said with a laugh; "and now go you and make ready for the cakes, pastry, and sweetmeats, the baked meats and the poultry, with which the people of Barnbury are to be made right happy on New Year's day."

OLD SANTA'S BIRDS.

Dear Santa Claus keeps a bowser of birds To card his Christmas guests, And every year their joyous notes Resound through the Christmas trees. Good Santa's birds are children dear, They keep our hearts in tune, And mind us of a better world As roses tell of June. Oh! what a dreary world this were, How barren, bleak and cold, If childhood's harmless mirth were hushed, If all the young were old. Ten blessings be on Santa's birds, For childhood is a glimpse of Heaven, In the sunshine of our days. Good Housekeeping.

KITTY'S NEW YEAR.

"It's rather hard," said Kitty Penflax, as she scalded the milk-pail with boiling water, and carefully wiped out the seams and depressions of the shining tin pans until not a drop of the moisture could be by any possibility linger—especially during holiday week, when there are so many little gayeties going on at home, and when cousin Paul Penflax has already telegraphed three times for one of us to smooth his dying pillow. But of course mother couldn't come, and Se-lina's sprained ankle puts it out of the question for her—and Lizzie has her drawing and penmanship pupils, and it's very mean and selfish for me to grumble and repine like this! Yes, Cousin Penflax, yes, I'm coming! It's a vigorous thumping of a cane or umbrella, or some other blunt-ended instrument signified the presence of a dominant will in the room upstairs. And she hastened to attend the summons, pulling down her dress sleeves and flinging off her green checked work apron as she ran. Paul Penflax lay among his pillows, a little yellow, dried up effigy of a man with faded curves to the corners of his mouth, sharp, bead-black eyes, and hair of that peculiar sandy that fades but never turns gray. "Kitty," said he, "what time is it? Who has taken away my clock?" "It is five o'clock, Cousin Paul." "You're deceiving me, Kitty! It's dark, ain't it—pitch dark?" "But it's a snowy evening, Cousin Paul, and the days are short. And you know you gave the clock to Zenas Throgg to repair." "But I didn't expect he was going to keep it always." "Shall I send for it?" "No—no!" snarled the yellow-faced invalid. "I don't suppose he's touched it yet. He's the slowest snail going. Get some one to move the hall-clock in here. I'm lost without the time of day!" "Yes, Cousin Paul," meekly answered Kitty. "Because you know," said old Mr. Penflax indignantly, "every minute is of value to me now. My days are numbered." "The doctor says—" "I don't care what the doctor says," interrupted Paul Penflax. "He can't see an inch further than his own drugs. All the Penflaxes die on New Year's eve!" "It's the family fate," said Paul. "Oh, no, Cousin Penflax, because—" "Your father died on New Year's eve, didn't he?" "Yes, but—" "And Zachariah Penflax, down in Massachusetts Bay, was blown off the 'Lively Sallie,' in a squall, ten years ago on New Year's eve?" "They didn't know whether it was the thirty-first of December or the first of January, because—" "But I know," solemnly interrupted Mr. Penflax. "And there was your cousin Maria." "She wasn't a Penflax!" "But she married one. It's all the same. The Penflaxes all go on New Year's eve." "All these are only coincidences, Cousin Paul," pleaded Kitty, as she tenderly straightened the sheets and smoothed the pillow cases. "Hump!" grunted the sick man, "when you see me in my coffin you'll say it was 'only a coincidence.' I suppose." "Please don't talk so," soothed Kitty. "Here is your gruel, nice and hot." "You'll see!" said Paul Penflax. "Shall I make you a cup of tea?" "You see!" he mournfully reiterated. "Or would you prefer coffee?" "You'll see!" "I'm going to stew down a chicken for you to-night," cheerfully went on Kitty. "And Owen French says there's such a nice little red calf out in the barn. A New Year's present." "Calves and chickens don't signify to me now," groaned Mr. Penflax. "But I want the clock brought in, where I can see it hear it tick. Every second is of importance to me now. Let's five o'clock, isn't it? Very well. Before midnight the Penflax doom will have descended on me. You've been very good to me, Kitty. I wish I had a fortune to leave you, but I've only the farm and—and the big diamond stud that old Captain Blossom gave me before he committed suicide in the garret ten years ago. I'm calculating to give that to Mary, my niece, who is so poor, down on Beverick Beach. Mary's father helped me years ago, when I needed help badly. It's all written in a paper somewhere. And the stud is sewed up in a bag of chamois skin leather in the lining of my pillow-tick. Don't let any one get at the diamond stud, Kitty, until the lawyer comes." "No, Cousin Penflax, I won't," protested Kitty. "And now bring me the big Bible and my spectacles," said Paul. "And call Owen French to move the clock at once!" "Won't you eat your gruel, Cousin Paul?" "No," said Penflax. "What has a dying man to do with gruel? Isn't it New Year's eve? Isn't the Penflax doom approaching?" Kitty crept down stairs, with an odd, prickly sensation in every nerve. She knew that an old sea captain had boarded with Paul Penflax years ago, but she never had heard of the suicide in the

garret—the great, dark, echoing garret with its angles full of shadows and the mysterious creaking, scuffling sounds, which might be rats, or might be the wind under the loose shingles, or rustling the bunches of dried herbs that hung from the beams, or might be— She was glad when she saw Owen French's stalwart form by the cooking stove.

"I've brought you a fresh supply of wood and water, Kitty," said he. "It's snowing so that we shan't know where the well is to-morrow morning! Now Kitty, haven't I earned a kiss?" "Don't, Owen!" said the girl—and yet she smiled a little as she added: "Please go up and move the big hall clock into Cousin Paul's room. He wants it there."

"Bound to die, is he?" said Owen, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, I suppose we'll have to humor him!" "He went cheerily up stairs, moved in the big cherry-wood clock, where the gilt sun never left off rising behind a grove of painted poplars above the face, and the huge brass pendulum swung drowsily to and fro.

"Now what else can I do for you, squire," said he, with alacrity. "Nothing," said Paul. "Or stay. My tonic, please, I need all the strength I can gain."

"Is it this bottle?" said Owen. Mr. Penflax nodded without turning his head—swallowed his medicine, and folded up his glasses. "I'll rest a little now," said he—and honest Owen tiptoed out of the room, fully conscious of his squeaking boots.

Paul Penflax shut his eyes and meditated gloomily over past, present and future. "I've been a miserable sinner," said he; "but I don't know, if I was to live my life over again, that—I wonder, now, if this is imagination—this strange death was only a sort of falling asleep, used up sensation. Yes, it's the Penflax fate. It's New Year's eve, and I'm dying! I wonder—what—Kitty—"

Only a minute, as it seemed, and there were footsteps and voices in the room. But he lay there, unable to stir, his feet or feet—even lift an eyelid. "I suppose they'll lay me out now," said he to himself. "I'm dead. And it wasn't so painful, after all? I can't see 'em, but I can hear 'em talk."

"I found him lying just so," said Kitty's soft voice, "when I came upstairs. Oh, dear! oh, dear! do you suppose he's dead?" "As a door nail," said Peter Penflax, a distant cousin who lived next door. "Must a' died just on the stroke of eleven."

"I told them so. The Penflax fate!" was the reflection in cousin Paul's mind. "Dreadful cold weather for a funeral," said Peter. "Where is Owen?" "Gone for the doctor," sobbed Kitty. "For the doctor! That's only money thrown away. He charges a dollar a visit," growled Peter. "You'd a' deal better fetch the undertaker! By the way, Kitty, where's that diamond stud of his? And all his papers? I'd better take charge of 'em at once."

"That the mention of the papers enabled her to speak truly," the lawyer— "Lawyers cost money," said Peter. "I'm lawyer enough, and I'm the natural heir. Paul was nothing but an old miser—never helped nobody but himself. If he could, he'd took his money with him, he would. And I mean to find that diamond if I—"

"You shall not touch a thing!" cried Kitty, as Peter began to open the drawers of the ancient mahogany desk in the corner and pry around in various directions. "He was good to me, and I won't have his wishes disregarded!" "I'm bound to have that stud," said Peter. "I'll know the reason why!" "And I'm dead and can't interfere!" thought poor Paul.

"Sit down!" said Peter Penflax. "I ain't goin' to be domineered over by no woman! That diamond stud is here, and I'm the next kin—sit down, I say, or I'll choke you like you was a chicken!" "Oh, if Owen French were here!" gasped Kitty, wringing her hands, "let me go! You hurt me! You—"

"Let go her throat or I'll be the death of you!" bawled a voice behind Peter Penflax; and the inter-ferer jumped back to behold the yellow visage and flannel bed-gown to match of the supposed dead man close to him. "What's them bells?" said Paul. "The old South Church ringing in the New Year! And I am not dead! Then I shan't die this year, the Lord be praised! Get out of this, Peter Penflax! You ain't heir to my diamond stud yet, and I don't mean you shall be! I'm powerful drowsy, and my legs feel like cracked pipe-stems; but I'm as live as ever I was! Get out, I say!"

"Your a ghost," said Peter, "and ghosts have no legal rights." "I'm alive!" retorted Paul. "Kitty, hand me the tongs! Yes, I thought that would scatter him. And the old clock stopped at eleven, did it? Everything's combined again, the Penflax fate, I do believe. And now, Kitty, help me back to bed, and give me a swallow of my tonic! It's there on the table!" "No, Cousin Penflax, it isn't," said Kitty. "This is the laudanum liniment for your back!"

Paul Penflax opened and shut his mouth like a piece of newly invented machinery. "The laudanum liniment!" said he. "That accounts for it! Owen French gave me a big dose of it last night—reckoned it was the tonic! It must have put me dead asleep, and I supposed of course I was dead! But I wasn't. I was alive enough to come to your rescue, Kitty! And you shall have the diamond, after all! You've earned it, my girl! Put wood on the fire. Set the clock going. Fetch on that chicken stew you told me about. If I'm to live another year I may as well be comfortable about it!" Paul Penflax left off talking about the Penflax doom. He died comfortably in his bed, somewhere in August, that year; but previous to this he sold the big diamond stud and divided the proceeds equally between his cousin Kitty and the widow down on Beverick Beach. His room is empty now, and the old clock in the corner has never ticked a tick since that New

Year's eve when it stopped at eleven. "I declare," said Kitty French—for she married Owen and settled down in her inherited home by that time—"I don't know which I miss most—the old clock or Cousin Paul!"

Sitting Bull's Career.

Sitting Bull, the most noted Indian since Black Hawk, was between 55 and 58 years of age. His father was Jumping Bull, a warrior of no particular prominence, except for his position at the head of one of the innumerable factions of the Sioux nation. Up to his 14th year Sitting Bull had been called the Sacred Stand, but when he had killed and scalped a young buck about his own age his name was changed to Tattanka-Yan-Tanka, or in English the name which he now bears.

Before he reached his 15th year he began those traits which afterward made him a terror. He was lazy and vicious, and never told the truth when a lie would serve better. But he was fearless under all circumstances, a magnificent rider, an accurate shot and capable of enduring an extraordinary amount of fatigue.

THE BEGINNING OF HIS FAME.

It was not until after the close of the war of the rebellion that Sitting Bull began to attract any attention. In 1867 he was known as a "Blanket warrior" by the soldiers at Fort Buford, on the Missouri River, and one who inspired the whites. General Morrow was in command of the fort, and in 1868 or 1869, when numerous depredations occurred Sitting Bull was not long after denied the charge, and not long after one of his men was killed. He charged that the killing was unprovoked and made a demand for some sort of a settlement, displaying such powers of argument that General Morrow plied up blankets on the dead Indian until the chief declared himself satisfied.

This occasion drew around him some of the bolder members of the tribe, who had before held aloof. From that day forward Sitting Bull became a great chief among his people. He began at once to display a deliberative turn of mind altogether at variance with his previous character. In a few months his perspicacious view of events became so well known that he held every buck in the tribe under his thumb, and those who had been bold enough to consider themselves possible rivals were heard of no more. As soon as he felt that his power was absolute he gave orders to strike camp and go down to Yellowstone River. Sitting Bull set up a claim to all the land for forty rods on both sides of the Yellowstone and all its tributaries.

In the latter part of 1875 a party of fifty white men from Montana invaded Sitting Bull's territory and built a fort. The chief ordered them to leave and enforced the demand by killing one of the party. Then Sitting Bull put the fort under fire, and there were desultory attacks daily, lasting through the months of December and January. Six white men were killed and eight wounded. Five hundred warriors surrounded the fort, and their persistent patience soon convinced the besieged that the intention was to starve them to death. Two of the imprisoned men managed to reach Fort Ellis, and re-enforcements were sent to the besieged. Sitting Bull withdrew, but after the fort was evacuated the Sioux chief had the bodies of six men dug from their shallow graves and scalped.

HE LED THE CUSTER MASSACRE. The story of the Custer massacre, in June, 1876, has been told again and again, but to this day no person can tell just what part Sitting Bull took in that fearful scene of carnage, although it is pretty certain that he was the leader in it. Sitting Bull himself was evasive and ambiguous. After he became a show Indian, and posed as a relic of the mighty aborigine in Sunday schools and on lecture platforms, the old rascal simply went back to his boyhood habit of lying, and blandly explained that he wasn't responsible for the killing, and really knew nothing of it. The public is familiar with his part in the recent Indian troubles.

An Early Spring Predicted. Chester county's eminent weather prophet, J. Williams Thorne, has written his usual weather predictions for the winter, according to his Lunar Cycle Rule, and the interesting portion of the prediction is contained in the following: "The winter of 1890-91 will be a moderate one, with about three weeks of good sleighing. Ice will be sufficiently abundant to furnish a full supply in eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The navigation of the Delaware, at Philadelphia, will be obstructed with ice but temporarily, if at all. In Chester county the thermometer will but rarely indicate a temperature at or below zero. The spring will be of more than average earliness. The summer following will be sufficiently warm and moist to make good crops of grain and hay generally. Apples, pears, peaches and cherries will be more than usually abundant."

Seven Babies in Two Years.

Mrs. Blume of Pittsburg, Beats All Fecundity Records. PITTSBURG, Dec. 14.—Mrs. Joseph Blume, of No. 220 Franklin street, Allegheny City, has astonished her neighbors and her husband during the past two years by giving birth to seven children in that time. Within the last few days Mrs. Blume has presented her husband with triplets, plump, healthy youngsters, two boys and a girl. Not quite a year ago the Blume family was blessed by the birth of twins, and during the preceding twelve months Mrs. Blume gave birth to her two first babies. The triplets and their prolific mother are doing well. Mrs. Blume is described as chipper. Mrs. Blume is a woman of ordinary build.

They are cutting a good deal of ice down in Maine nowadays. Maine papers declare that it is very fine ice, remarkably clear and sound. There is every indication of a big crop.