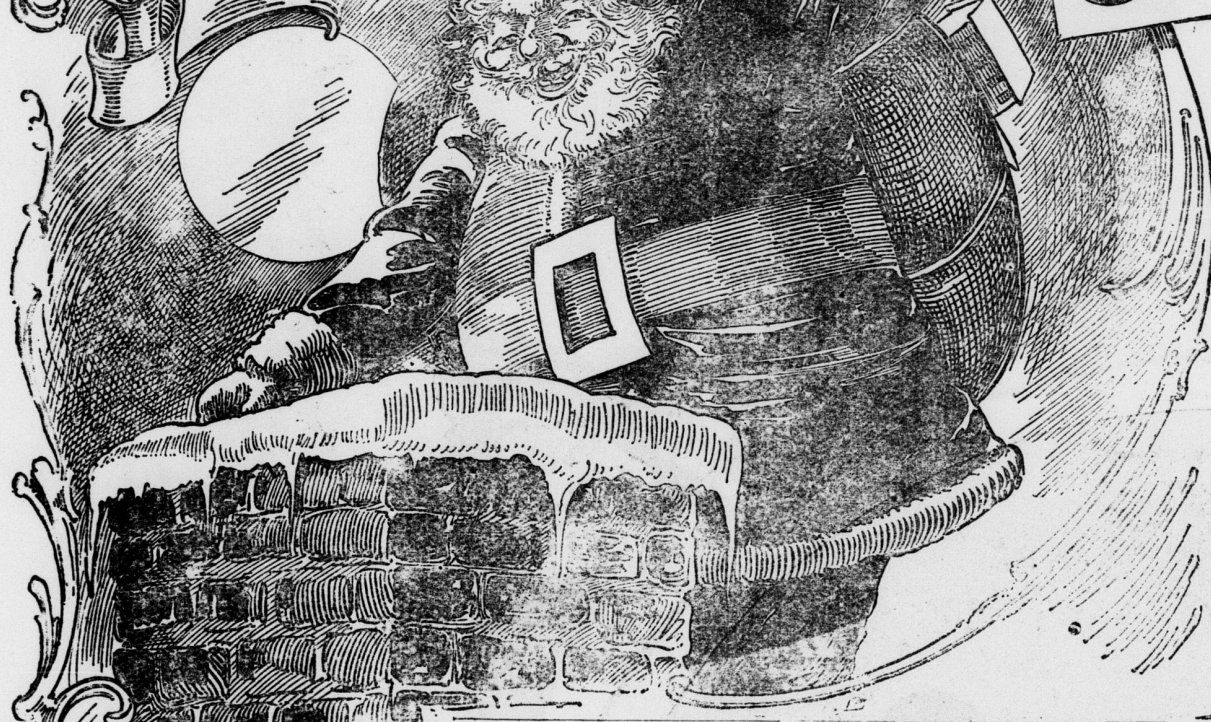


THE WATCHMAN'S BEST WISHES FOR YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS



...when was his first thought; the second was this: "If it be known that I have found a treasure, then I shall have the duchy putting its fist down on it, the lord of the manor demanding it, the crown exacting it, the person holding out his hand for a tenth and every householder in the parish, as this is common land, clamoring for his share, and there he has rights. There'll be naught left for me but the disappointment of having found and lost treasure."

TREASURE TROVE.
The forest of Dartmoor is surrounded on every side by wide stretches of moorland that belong to the several contiguous parishes, and every householder in each of these parishes claims rights in the common of his parish, over which, moreover, the manorial lord asserts paramount authority and enforces it when he can. The duchy of Cornwall, however, to which the forest belongs, professes a sort of sovereignty over all these commons.

Now, there lived in the parish of South Tawton, in the curious old village of Zeal, where every house is an archaeological curiosity and every householder is independent, a poor young man of the name of Josiah Day, commonly known as young Rainyday. This nickname was acquired by him through his excessive caution. Jos was not a lazy man, yet his exaggerated prudence led to much the same results as indolence.

He was working on the common, cutting up granite blocks, wherewith to construct a "new take" wall. While thus engaged Jos came on a pile of small stones. He cleared away these as too small to serve his purpose and discovered beneath them a granite slab. This he levered aside, without much difficulty, and to his surprise discovered a stone chest or coffin constructed of rule blocks. He crept in and was still further surprised when he found within a pot containing charred bones and ashes, and near it a cup of yellow metal and some rings and hoops, some weighing 6, others 10 and 15 ounces apiece.

He hastily scrambled forth, and as the setting sun glanced out he examined his find by its light. He rubbed the cup and the rings on his sleeve and "By ginger!" said he, "I'm darned if it ain't all solid gold! Come, I'm in luck's way. This shall stand over against a rainy day."

Then the young man replaced the covering block, then heaped the small stones and earth over it and disguised the fact that the place had been disturbed. He returned home very satisfied with himself and with his prospects. Now he could look forward without blinking to the inevitable rainy day. At present he had health, strength and youth, and with these he could earn his livelihood. "But," as Jos put it, "I can't reckon on these lasting. I knows several young chaps as has had colds settled on their chests and have died of a decline. And Tom Endicott, he dislocated his hip and now can't hobble up on to the moor after granite no more, and as to old age and decrepitude—there's no denying it, every day and hour and minute brings me nigher to it."

Accordingly Jos went on breaking up stone and inclosing, and instinctively he extended his "new take" wall in the direction of the cairn and stone chest that contained his treasure. It must not be supposed that Jos was not tempted to realize, but fear of exposure and the consequent confiscation of the gold, above all, his prevailing dominant passion of caution against a future unprovided for, prevented his doing so. On the verge of the moor lived a girl named Mary Aggett with her bedridden mother. She made a livelihood out of some poultry she kept, out of flint arrowheads, which by searching she found on the moor and which she disposed of to an archaeologist. She also did some needle-work.

Jos passed the cottage twice daily on his way out and on his way home, and very frequently he saw Mary at her door, and they never met without exchange of salutations. On one occasion when overtaken by a hailstorm he had been invited into the cottage and had been given a cup of tea that warmed his heart as if it had been peppermint and got into his head as if it had been whisky. On leaving the cottage he said to himself: "I might go farther and fare worse. The old mother is pretty and bright and pleasant. But"—he shook his head—"it don't do to marry early; that means a family coming fast and nothing drags a man's head under water like a lot of babies clawing hold of it. If Polly Aggett had money, that would be another matter altogether. Then it might be worth consideration."

One day when they met on the moor the northeast blast was so cutting that they retired together under shelter of a rock to eat their lunch. Considering how cold the weather was Jos put his arm round Polly, and, having an overcoat, he threw one arm of it over her shoulder. The ensuing night was one of sore tempestation to Jos. He tossed on his bed. He could not sleep. He sallied very early from his house and went to the moor, resolved to raise his treasure, dispose of it, dare fortune and marry.

As he passed the cottage of Mary Aggett he did not see her. He was glad of this, lest she should have asked him why he went to his work two hours earlier than usual. He proceeded to the cairn, removed the stones, heaved the covering slab aside, got into the chest and brought out the gold rings and cup. He furnished them up, and they sparkled in the morning sun. When all were ranged before him, he shook his head. "It would be madness to risk it," said he. "If I married Polly, women be their corkscrews, she'd have the whole story out of me, and they be that chatterboxes they are, and she'd blab about it to every one in the place. Then I'd have the crown, and the duchy, and the lord of the manor, and the parish, and the 143 commoners down on me demanding their shares. Be hanged if I'll risk it! Women is terrible dangerous animals with their tongues, never to be trusted."

again into the coffin that had contained and preserved it for 4,000 years. "I know what I'll do," said Jos. "I'll build my new take wall right over this old grave and then no one can get at the treasure without pulling down the wall."

"YOURS! WHERE DID YOU GET THE MONEY?" I found your treasure and I disposed of it to the antiquarian gentleman who buys the arrowheads. With the money I bought the land, the sheep, the cows—and you."

Then Jos scrambled out of the grave and fell a-laughing and he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. "By ginger!" said he. "Woman's wit outwights man's wisdom. My true treasure trove is here"—he clapped his wife on the shoulder—"and it's one neither crown, nor duchy, nor lord of the manor, nor parish, nor the 143 commoners have one particle of right over no more nor a pin's head, but is all—al! and undivided my own. And by gum!"—he kissed Mary, when the child in each arm, then the child at her knees—"this treasure of mine is one bearing annual interest."

THE CHRISTMAS MORN.
BY JOEL COSTANT.
Shining in the Christmas sky,
Sometimes meets the human eye,
While the church bells, sweet and slow,
Peal their joy out down below,
On the far horizon's hem
A hint of faroff Bethlehem.
'Tis his softly luminous star,
Like that the magi saw afar.
Bright holly and the mistletoe
Join us in the firs side glow,
And presents by the chimney side
Make lovely all the Christmastide.
The story of those ancient times,
The children look for Santa Claus,
While in the air the silver chimera
Recall the old Judean times.
The ringing bells and tokens say
That in a stable, dim and gray,
The Light of All the World was born,
His bed a manger, rough, forlorn,
Where meek-eyed oxen, with their hay,
Stood in a trance almost of grace
Before the sweet Madonna face,
And, half in awe and half in prayer,
Seemed to suspect some god was there.
This world will never cease to know,
Though centuries come and centuries go,
The story of those ancient times,
The meaning of the Christmas gifts,
Which come with their perennial grace
With blessing for the human race.
So what to us are ice and snow
And all the wintry blizzards that blow
If we see the star of Bethlehem?

A PRECARIOUS PUSH.
The Honeycomb and a Christmas Adventure. A New Method of Hunting the Grizzly Winterling in the Yosemite Valley.—The Neglected Christmas Dinner.—A Narrative of Dinner.
BY F. A. OBER.
All our friends said we were foolish, and really I suppose we were—foolish in the first place, to fall in love; foolish to get married, and, lastly, foolish to spend our honeymoon in the Yosemite. Yes, they declared that to be the crowning act of all our foolish deeds, and they washed their hands and cleared their skirts of us entirely. But, bless them, we didn't care. Alicia and I had fallen in love with each other just because we couldn't help it, and we didn't want to either—that is, we didn't want to "help" it. And we cared not a straw what our friends thought or did so long as they let us entirely alone.

And at the end of the week, when the others started for the return trip, we proved the integrity of our intentions by remaining behind. It was then late in September, and soon, the guardian of the valley told us, the first snowflakes would fly, and not long after the Yosemite would be closed entirely to the outside world. "Yes, indeed," he said, "there won't be nobody in here except now and then a logging team and whoever's left over. So I'd advise you two to get out mighty soon."

"But we don't want to get out," I exclaimed, and my wife nodded her head affirmatively. "We want to stay here all winter, all alone."

"What? You don't say! Yes, I do know of one. It's that log cabin over the river. But it'll be awful lonesome, let me tell you. There won't be nobody but me within a mile, and perhaps half a dozen ferns scattered over the whole seven mile stretch of the valley."

"What? Do you mean that darling little log hut among the apple trees, with the tiny flower garden in front and the river flowing by?"

"That's the one. The man who built it has gone east; staid here one winter, and it was too lonely for him. If you really want it, I can put you in possession at once."

"If we want it!" I exclaimed, ready to hug the old man on the spot. And I was almost afraid Alicia would hug him then and there, but she didn't; only her eyes shone, and she clapped her hands for joy.

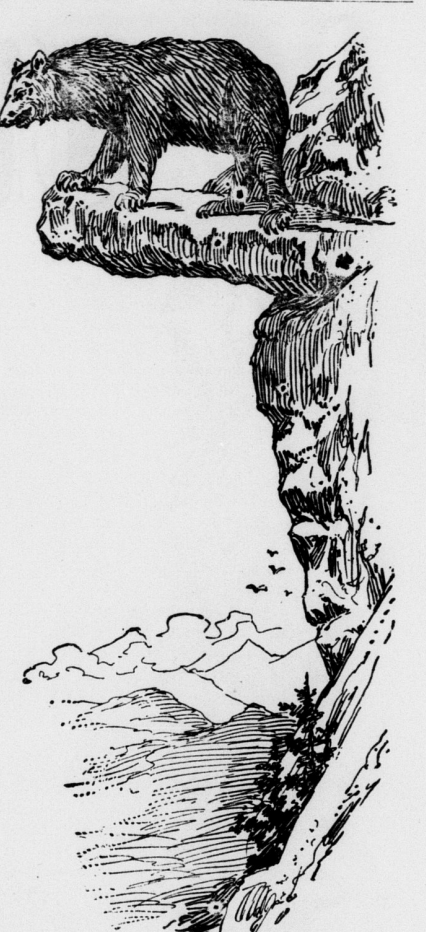
"Why, we don't want anything else in this wide, wide world!" she exclaimed. "It will be perfect, just too heavenly for anything!"

"Well, guess you'll want a little something else," rejoined the dear old man, "some provisions, for instance, fuel, and the like."

At this sudden descent to sublunary and substantial things our countenances fell. We hadn't thought but that we could live on air perhaps or on ambrosial nectar. We looked at each other doubtfully.

The old man noted our disappointment and hastened to add: "Well, now, don't feel bad about it. I'll arrange for all that. Fact is, the cabin's supplied with pretty much everything except fresh meat—flour, meal, bedding, blankets, cooking things—and if you haven't got the money with you we'll trust you till spring opens for you again."

"Oh, we've got money enough," I remarked. "I'll pay you any price you ask and feel forever indebted to you into the bargain." And I wrung the old man's hand so warmly that he turned aside with a suspicious moisture in his eyes and remarked under his breath and with a sigh: "Dear me! I was young myself once. It's nice to be young."



THE GRIZZLY ON TABLE ROCK.
A stuart and a growl and took the trail in my direction. The blood was oozing from a wound in his flank, but that was nothing more than a flea bite to his bearship, though good excuse enough for revenge. I looked about me and saw to my horror that I was between him and the edge of the cliff, which at this point descends sheer 3,000 feet. Projecting over the edge of the precipice was an immense rock like the bowsprit of a ship and some 15 or 20 feet in length. It may look like an insane move that I made tracks for this perilous position, 3,000 feet above the valley floor, but there seemed nothing else to do unless I went straight toward the bear. I remember that I felt then that my time had come and I wondered confusedly what Alicia would say and do when, perhaps days or weeks later, she should view my mangled remains at the foot of the great cliff. How ever, I ran for all I was worth, and as I ran, mechanically ejected the empty shell from my rifle and slipped in another cartridge. It was a six shooter, and I reloaded only for Alicia's sake not to die until I had given grizzly the full benefit of every shot. He was shuffling along clumsily, but relentlessly, and was close upon me as I slipped over the bank. If I had carried out my hastily conceived plan of going out on the protruding rock, I should not have lived to tell this story, but just as I reached its base I slid down into a crevice behind and a little to one side of it.

That unintentional move saved my life. For, seeing me go over, my pursuer rushed fiercely after and could not restrain his impetus until well out on the rock. It was extremely slippery, indeed as it was in ice, with a sheet of snow atop, and he had hard work to keep his footing, and as he stood there, growing terribly and shifting his position incessantly, yet looking down and all around for me, a storm of hope came into my mind. I saw that it would not take much to send him crashing down upon the rocks at the foot of the cliff, and I trembled lest he should get off the rock before I had given him a little jolt. I could see him quite clearly, as he wasn't more than 20 feet away, and that instant also he saw me, wedged into the crevice back of him.

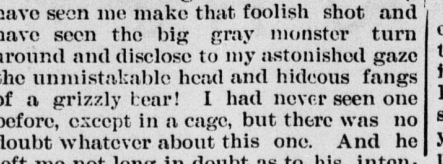
He tried to scramble about and reverse his position, but as he turned I drew a bead fiercely after and could not restrain my impetus until well out on the rock. It was extremely slippery, indeed as it was in ice, with a sheet of snow atop, and he had hard work to keep his footing, and as he stood there, growing terribly and shifting his position incessantly, yet looking down and all around for me, a storm of hope came into my mind. I saw that it would not take much to send him crashing down upon the rocks at the foot of the cliff, and I trembled lest he should get off the rock before I had given him a little jolt. I could see him quite clearly, as he wasn't more than 20 feet away, and that instant also he saw me, wedged into the crevice back of him.

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I dared not look over for fear I might shoo his fate, but after a prayer of thankfulness at my escape I slowly crawled to the brow of the precipice. The old man met me soon after and had to support me over a portion of the downward trail, I was so unsteady. After a detour of several miles we finally reached the base of the cliff over which grizzly had fallen, and there we found him, a very much used up bear. His skin, however, was not so badly torn but it later served as a rug for our cabin floor, though it was long before Alicia could look upon it with composure.

The bear meat, the old guardian said, was tender and toothsome—probably from the pounding it got—but Alicia and I could not bring ourselves to taste it. In fact, though our hearts sang with joy and we were thankful for our blessings, with the true Christmas spirit, yet we could not do justice to that Christmas dinner. Even the pudding, which the old man declared a conspicuous success, was neglected, for my little wife did nothing but shudder, and, throwing her arms around my neck, whisper, with her lips close to my ear, "Dearest, I shall never let you out of my sight again!"

The Date of Christmas.
Christmas gets its name from the mass celebrated in the early days of the Christian church in honor of the birth of Christ, its first solemnization being ordered by Pope Telesphorus. This must have been some time prior to the year 138, for in that year Pope Telesphorus died.—Philadelphia Times.



WINTER CABIN IN THE YOSEMITE.