

GRANDMA'S CHRISTMAS

Into the old time way,
This grandma's Christmas from the boys;
It makes me young again,
With all the little ones at play,
And ne'er an ache or pain.

First came Dan's Nell, with precious gifts,
From all the neighbors near;
Each sent a note with wishes sweet,
"Would you do good to hear."
This easy-chair's from Brother Tom;
Jack sent this fur-lined hood;
And here's Bob's check from Michigan,
For winter's coal and wood.

And let me see—gold spectacles!
From Dorothy, Dick's lass;
They say she's famous as a belle—
To think it's come to pass
That Dick, my boy, my youngest one,
Forever swapping things,
Should be a magnate in the land,
One of them railroad kings.

This box is labeled "from the kids"—
They live in Idaho,
A pair of silver candlesticks!
I wonder if they know
How often by the hickory fire
I've spun both wool and thread,
And only lighted candles, when
We went upstairs to bed.

They never in their modern home
Worked as their grandpa did,
Who wore the sheep's rough skin and
wool,
And dined upon the kid;
They want me, too, but bless their
hearts,
I couldn't live their way;
I'm used to this old fireplace,
And here I mean to stay.

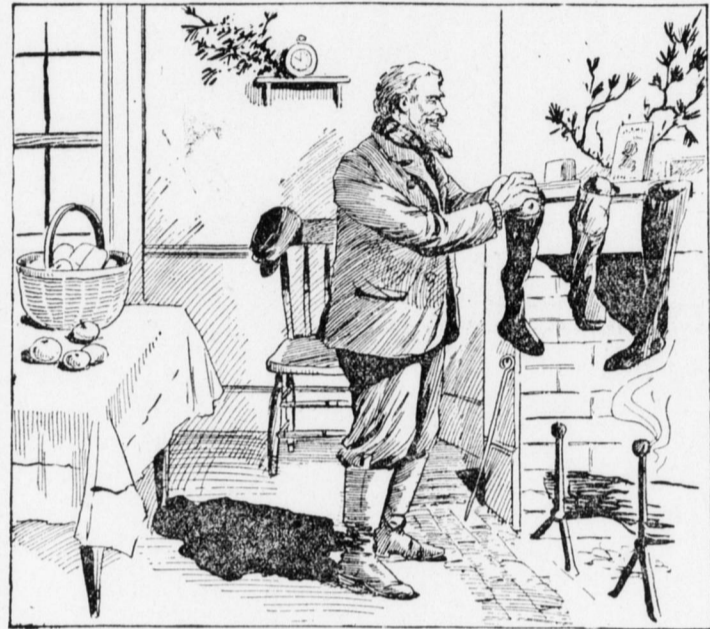
I'm used to every homely thing
Hallowed by smile and tear;
I couldn't leave to stranger hands
What love has made so dear.
I'm fond of my old rocking-chair,
Though brother's gift is fine,
For there once laid the silver hair,
That changed as fast as mine.

And down the road a little way,
Then up the hillside steep,
I almost see the granite cross
Where "father" lies asleep;
So here I rest and happily, when
Old Santa comes this way,
He brings a whole year's happiness,
Wrapped in a single day.
—Mary A. Denison, in Ladies' World,
New York.

these services. This had all put him behind, and now, in the latter part of December, he seemed to have every reason to be discouraged. But it was Hannah who had given up. He would still have been hopeful and looked on the bright side, but for her. She grumbled.

"I feel awful kind o' bad not to have any Christmas," confided Samuel to the mare, as he laid the straw for her bed. "I know things ain't so bright, but Hannah hadn't ought to feel so. It might be worse. I guess we can pull through. But then, it'll have to be as Hannah says. If she won't have no Christmas, I can't." He felt like crying in his disappointment. Samuel Bennett was old enough to be getting a bit childish.

In the house, Mrs. Bennett was putting away the supper dishes in no amiable frame of mind. "I don't care," she muttered, "what he thinks. I ain't said a word but the truth. How we'll ever get along this winter, I don't know. Starve, mebbe. The idea o' making a fuss about Christmas when you ain't got a thing cheer-



JUST LIKE SANTA CLAUS.

ful to look ahead to! No, I ain't a-going to do it. Sam can make the best of it. I mean what I say."

That evening there was nothing further said about Christmas between the farmer and his wife. By nine o'clock they were in bed. It was Tuesday night and Thursday would be the holiday. As he lay there, Mr. Bennett wondered what he should do with the 50 cents which he had saved up to buy his wife a present. With no Christmas, of course there could be no present. He fell asleep, saddened by the thought.

The day before Christmas was bright and clear. There had been a generous fall of snow during the night and everything out of doors was covered with the pure white mantle. Samuel Bennett was out shoveling paths when the expressman drove along, with a well-filled sleigh.

"Hello, there!" shouted the driver, cheerily. "Merry Christmas, Sam! It's a little ahead of time, I know, but I may not see you again."

"Thanks. The same to you," answered Samuel, leaning on his snow shovel. "Got lots of bundles, ain't you?"

"Yes; everybody's got something."

"That so? Ain't come to ours yet, have you?" The poor old man chuckled at his own pitiable little attempt at a joke.

"No, not yet," was the merry answer from the sleigh. "I'll bring that around to-morrow, most likely. Well, good-by. G'lang!" and on sped the sleigh with its jingling bells.

"I guess he won't, though," mused the other, as he fell to work shoveling again. "Tain't likely we'll get anything. There ain't nobody to send it to us, that I know of."

And Hannah, looking out of the window, echoed his thought with one still more doleful.

"Everybody'll get something but us," she mused. "I guess Christmas was intended for rich folks. Nobody gets that ain't got."

That afternoon about three o'clock, a muffled-up little form trudged through the snow and up the road to the Bennetts' farmhouse.

"Why, Amy Darrow, what you doing here in all this snow?" exclaimed Mrs. Bennett, as she opened the door and saw the little girl standing on the steps. "Come right in before you freeze."

"Oh, Mis' Bennett," said the shivering child, in a voice choked with tears, "won't you come right over to our house? Ma's awful sick."

"Is that so? What's the matter? Yes, I'll go right over."

"It's one of her bad spells, only worse," wailed Amy. "She says she don't know but she'll die."

"Oh, I guess it ain't as bad as that," said Mrs. Bennett, kindly. "Don't you be scart, Sam!" She was at the woodshed door now. "Hitch up the mare right off. I've got to go over to Mis' Darrow's. She's sick."

Samuel dropped an armful of wood and hastened toward the barn. In less than 15 minutes the old-fashioned cutter was at the door, Amy was tucked in between the farmer and his wife, and they were off as fast as the wheezy mare could conveniently carry them. Mrs. Bennett had her medicine bottles under her shawl. She was said by her neighbors to be "about as good as a doctor."

The Darrows lived half a mile or more from the Bennetts, farther on away from the village, which was nearly two miles from the Bennett farm. Mrs. Darrow was suffering from a chill when her neighbor en-

tered, and there was no fire in the house. Two children, smaller than ten-year-old Amy, were shivering on the bed with their mother.

"Ain't there no fire?" exclaimed Mrs. Bennett. "My sakes! This weather, too."

"I couldn't cut the wood," said Amy. "It's all big sticks."

Mrs. Bennett lost no time in giving the sick woman some of her homemade cordial, and Samuel soon had a fire blazing in the kitchen stove. The heat gradually crept into the adjoining bedroom.

"You're so good," sighed the poor woman on the bed. "I felt so bad I had to do something, and there wasn't a thing but to send for you, Mis' Bennett. It was so far to go for the doctor, and—"

"Which wasn't necessary," interrupted Mrs. Bennett. "I guess you feel some better now, don't you?"

"Yes; that medicine seemed to start my heart again. I thought it would just stop beating, one spell."

"I guess you'll be all right now," said Mrs. Bennett, comfortingly. Her

naturally kind heart had been touched by the sight of some one else in distress, and she forgot herself in ministering to another.

"It was good of you to come over," continued Mrs. Darrow. "I'm afraid it will spoil your Christmas. You must have been getting ready for it, seeing it's Christmas eve."

"Don't you worry. It ain't bothering me a bit," responded Mrs. Bennett.

But something was bothering her. It was something in her heart that almost sent a moisture to her eyes. But she choked it down.

"You need something to eat," she said, "some tea and toast. And these children must be half starved."

"I'm afraid there ain't much to get," said Mrs. Darrow, feebly. "I don't know as there's anything but a little bread."

"Well, that'll make toast," Mrs. Bennett knew that Widow Darrow was poor, but she never had known that the family were so destitute as she found them to be, this day before Christmas. "It's dreadful," she thought, as she searched the bare cupboard. "They're jest starvin'!" A moment later she was saying privately to her husband: "Sam, you go home and get a loaf of bread and some of that tea. Then you get a pat of butter and a little ham and hurry right back with it. They're all starvin', sure's I'm born. I guess that's what ails Mis' Darrow. Now you hurry."

"Yes, Hannah."

The old mare seemed to realize that she was on an errand of mercy, and actually quickened her pace.

It was not long before Mrs. Darrow had her toast and tea, and the children were enjoying what to them was a bountiful feast. It was dark when Mr. and Mrs. Bennett left for home. As they were riding along, Mrs. Bennett said:

"Sam!"

"Yes, Hannah."

"Them children have hung up their stockin's."

"Have they? Poor little things!"

"But, Sam, there won't be anything in 'em. They think there's a Santy Claus."

"I wish there was," sighed her husband.

"But there ain't," answered practical Mrs. Bennett, "and there won't be one thing in them stockin's, unless it's holes. Mis' Darrow cried about it. It's too bad."

There was silence for a moment, then Mrs. Bennett continued:

"Sam, there must be something put in 'em."

"How can they, Hannah?"

"Well, I guess there can. You go down to the store and get something. I guess we can spare a little."

"I've got—" Samuel interrupted, and then he paused, almost afraid to tell the rest. He had always been a bit afraid of his wife.

"Well, what have you got?"

"Fifty cents, Hannah. I kind o' saved it up, along to buy you a— a Christmas present, but—"

"I don't want no present. That'll buy some candy and a few trinkets for them children. Then, while you're gone to the store, I'll pop some corn, and there's some red apples. You can go over and fill them stockin's."

"Jest like Santy Claus," said the old man, delighted. The thought warmed his kind old heart anew, and the Christmas spirit within him began to revive. That evening, trembling with joy, he filled the little

stockings that hung in a row in the bare kitchen of the Darrow house, left a whole pumpkin pie in the cupboard, and went home, leaving a promise to come again in the morning and see how the mother and children were getting along. Mrs. Darrow was much better. She said she thought she would be able to get up in the morning.

Christmas morning, as soon as they had had their breakfast, Mr. and Mrs. Bennett again drove over to the Darrows'. They found the mother sitting up, happy with her children over their humble gifts. They had been sure that Santa Claus would bring them something, and he had not betrayed their childish confidence.

"I declare," said Samuel Bennett, when he and his wife were again in the cutter, on their way home, "it seems kind o' Christmasy, after all."

"I don't know but it does," admitted Hannah. "I've kind o' made up my mind we ain't the worst off ever was, after all."

She was learning the true lesson of Christmas time—that it is doing for "the least of these" that gives the deepest joy. But she was still to find the fuller happiness of that Christmas day.

"Land!" she exclaimed, as they reached the house. "There's the expressman in front of our gate. What can he want?"

"I don't know," replied Samuel. "It can't be anything for us."

But it was.

"I brought your package," called the expressman, "only it's a box."

The mysterious box was soon carried into the house and opened. It was generous in size, and as the cover came off it was found to be well filled.

"Here's a letter, Sam. Open it," Samuel Bennett opened the letter, which bore his name, and read it wondering. It said: "Dear Uncle: I guess you have forgotten me, but I am still alive and prosperous. As Christmas approached, I thought of you and Aunt Hannah, as the only living relatives I have, and I send you something to make you think of me."

There was further explanation, and then the letter ended with: "Now, Uncle Samuel, if you need any assistance, let me know. I shall be glad to help you. I have plenty and to spare, and if I can do anything for you it will be a blessing to me. Write to me soon. Your affectionate nephew, John Bennett."

"My brother Henry's boy," said Samuel. "I never knew what had become of him. Ain't it queer?"

"Queer?" said Hannah, feelingly. "I call it a Godsend. And to think I grumbled and found fault with the Lord. Wasn't I wicked?"

And then she sat down and began to weep.

"Don't, Hanna! Tain't nothin' to cry over. You didn't mean it, and the Lord'll forgive you. Let's take the things out of the box."

There were many beautiful gifts for both of them, John Bennett had shown his liberality when he packed the Christmas box.

"Sam," remarked Mrs. Bennett, when they had examined and wondered at the last article, and the box had been removed to the woodshed, "I wonder if you couldn't go and get a few evergreens. We might trim up a little."

"Of course, I could," answered Samuel, radiantly. "It ain't far to the woods, and the snow ain't deep there. I could get some in no time."

"Then you get some. And while you're gone, I'll go to work and get the best dinner I can. We'll have a Christmas, if it is a kind of a late one."

"Oh, Hannah," cried the delighted old man, with a suspicious shake in his voice, "you make me so happy."

"I feel that way myself, Sam," she replied.

Then she did something which she had not done before in many years. She went up to her husband and kissed him. He, surprised into silent ecstasy, blushed like a boy, as he went out after the evergreens.

That kiss was the sweetest Christmas gift he had ever received.—N. Y. Observer.

NOT FAVORABLY IMPRESSED.

Simmons—Do you know his wife?
Kimmons—Only through some cigars she gave him Christmas.—Town Topics.

Christmas with the Danes.
In many countries the Christmas feast formerly lasted from two to three weeks, and it was believed that the angels partook of the earthly food. Denmark, even at this time, considers it obligatory to have breakfast, dinner and supper of distinctive dishes on Christmas. Beefsteak and reindeer cutlets form part of the menu for breakfast. The dinner consists of grod (a soup of oatmeal and rice), roast goose stuffed with apples and roast pork with beet roots and gherkin pickles.

IN A RECEIVER'S HANDS.
The Omaha Loan and Trust Co. Falls—Stockholders Will Lose Half a Million.
Omaha, Neb., Dec. 12.—On application of William Wallace, Judge Fawcett in the district court yesterday appointed William K. Potter receiver for the Omaha Loan and Trust Co., and fixed his bond at \$100,000. As soon as the appointment was made the receiver qualified on the bond and took possession. The application was made by Mr. Wallace as a director in the company.

No official statement was filed with the application for a receiver, but Mr. Wallace's attorneys state that the company has outstanding debenture bonds of \$350,000; it has guaranteed about \$4,500,000 of its loans, and it has a paid-up capital stock of \$500,000. The assets are somewhat indefinite. The larger part of them is represented by \$1,100,000 of real estate taken on foreclosure, which is the book value of the property. About \$700,000 of this amount is covered by what are known as "straw mortgages," which are included in the list of guaranteed loans. These "straw" mortgages do not represent anything irregular, but are mortgages used by large trust companies to avoid carrying a large amount of dead property that ties up working capital.

This leaves about \$400,000 of real estate, in book value, to cover the debenture bonds and any actual liability which exists on the guaranteed loans.

It is not believed by the directors that the stockholders will realize anything out of the capital stock. One of the directors said that the stock had been offered within the past two months at from one to five cents on the dollar.

The greater part of \$4,500,000 of guaranteed loans is also protected by really mortgages. The loans were made on Missouri and Nebraska farms and on Omaha realty. The Missouri loans are said to be fair, those on Nebraska lands are of high grade, and those on Omaha property are considered worth about par.

WERE LOADED WITH GEMS.
Two Negroes are Arrested for the Alleged Theft of \$15,000 Worth of Diamonds.
Omaha, Neb., Dec. 12.—W. H. Woods and a woman companion, giving the name of True Johnson, both colored, were arrested here yesterday, charged with having robbed Alfred B. Lowenthal, a traveling salesman for a New York jewelry firm, in a Portland, Ore., hotel, of \$15,000 worth of diamonds and jewelry. The jewelry was traced by a local pawnbroker, who had received a circular describing the stolen property, to Wood and his companion. When arrested there was found in their possession \$3,000 worth of diamonds and jewelry, railroad transportation to Portland and a check for \$200 which had been given by the pawnbroker in exchange for a diamond brooch.

Leavenworth, Kan., Dec. 12.—W. H. Wood and Maggie L. Johnson, the negroes arrested at Omaha as being implicated in the jewelry robbery at Portland, Ore., were in this city on Thanksgiving evening, leaving the next morning for Omaha.

Maggie Johnson's mother, Mrs. Hillard, runs a negro boarding house here, and gave a party in honor of her daughter's arrival. Both negroes were literally loaded down with gems, their fingers being so encircled with diamond rings that they could not close their hands. While here the pair disposed of \$2,000 worth of jewelry.

A DUEL ON THE STREET.
Two Policemen and a Bunco Steerer are Killed at Houston, Tex.
Houston, Tex., Dec. 12.—When Officers J. C. James and Herman Youngst attempted to arrest an alleged bunco steerer, Sid Preacher, Wednesday afternoon, the latter opened fire with a shotgun. At the first fire he mortally wounded James, who fell. He then fired at Youngst, knocking him down, and was on top of him beating the officer, when James raised himself from the gutter and fired three times, killing Preacher. James and Youngst died within the same moment. There is great excitement over the matter.

Preacher was well known to the police and had been arrested frequently. The police had been watching him closely during carnival week. With a shotgun he went to the police yesterday and complained that they were interfering in his business. The police attempted to arrest him, when he opened fire on them. Several hundred people saw the duel.

A warrant was sworn out last night for J. B. Brockman, Preacher's attorney, charging him with murder, and he has been landed in jail. It is charged by the police that the attorney advised Preacher to use a shotgun in case any attempt should be made to arrest him. Late in the afternoon a box with two shotguns and a large number of buckshot cartridges, which he said he was carrying to Brockman's office, was arrested and the arms confiscated.

WRECKED BY DYNAMITE.
Another Street Car at Scranton, Pa., Strikes an Explosive.
Scranton, Pa., Dec. 12.—Another trolley car was dynamited on Capouse avenue last night. The wheel that ran over the explosive was broken, the windows smashed and the machinery beneath the car deranged. The few persons aboard were severely shaken up, but no one was injured. This makes the third time that the crew aboard this car has encountered an explosion.

A \$250,000 Blaze.
New York, Dec. 12.—Fire broke out in the Dennison Paper Manufacturing Co.'s store building at 198 Broadway this morning. In a very short time it spread through this narrow six-story building and attacked Hege-man's drug store at 196 Broadway. Within half an hour the Dennison Co.'s plant was a wreck. The building was filled with a stock of paper. The fire attacked the rear of Hege-man's drug store, but was kept from the principal stock. The loss it is thought will reach \$250,000.

A Coal Car Famine.
Knoxville, Tenn., Dec. 12.—The coal car shortage, together with a notice from the Southern railway that it will confiscate coal for its use, threatens grave danger to industries of four states which depend on Coal Creek and Jellico, Tenn., mines for their supply. So serious is the coal shortage becoming that textile industries in Tennessee, Georgia and North and South Carolina may be compelled to shut down. Coal operators of this section are losing thousands of dollars through their inability to get cars to move their output.

Democrat Senators Caucus.
Washington, Dec. 12.—The democratic senators yesterday held their first caucus of the present session. All the senators elected as democrats, with the exception of Senator McLaurin, of South Carolina, were present, as were all the senators who were elected as silver republicans or populists. All the independents except Senator Teller, of Colorado, had entered the democratic caucus held last March, but Senator Teller then remained away. He was present, however, at yesterday's conference and participated in the proceedings.