

"That reminds me of a story, I don't believe I ever told you before." But just then a customer came in, and he was attended to by the old cobbler. Among their bits of conversation I caught the words. "Nice day for Christmas to-morrow." "You bet," replied the cobbler, "something like '73," and the other laughed.

As he took his seat again, I waited impatiently for him to begin his story but he was in no hurry and tapped meditatively upon the shoe. Suddenly he said, "what was that I started to tell you about." But before I could answer "Oh, yes;" I remember now:

"Well, some of us boys had a shanty down along the river. We used to lounge there around the open fireplace, telling stories and smoking as boys usually do. But I must not stop on this."

"One night there was evidently a big scheme on foot. They jollied each other with quip and quirk. On every face, there was a pleased look of expectation, and a sparkle in the mischief-loving eyes."

"Say Charley, is the spit all right," one of the fellows asked. "Yes, it is all right," said the other. "I got a couple of new blocks for it, and stole one of father's old steel ramrods for the cross-piece."

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The sitting room of the old farm house on the hill was cosy and bright; the old lumberman and his wife were sitting comfortably before the fire. "Well mother, I suppose you are pretty tired this evening."

"Yes, John, pretty tired, but it makes me happy to think we will have all the children here to-morrow, besides I have gotten almost ready for the dinner. The cakes are all baked, the cranberries cooling in the moulds, the raisins seeded for the big plum-duff. And you know the big turkey is cleaned and hanging out in the frosty air softening. What a monster he was; thirty-one pounds dressed. I'll bet he's bigger than the President's Rhode Island gift."

"But aren't you afraid some one will steal him," replied the husband.

"I have it tied with a bit of chain from one of your old bear traps, to a nail in the wall of the back porch. I put it high enough to be above the reach of any prowling animal."

"Just then they were startled by a sound as of a rattling chain.