

THE OLD VIRGINIA REEL

A CHRISTMAS REVERIE IN VERSE

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In old Virginia, on the James,
Beside Potomac's placid flow,
Where limpid Shenandoah shames
The rival weikin with its slow
Or Rappahannock runs, you know
(Ere war had flashed its fiery steel),
Some half a hundred years ago
They danced the old Virginia reel.

Where now are they, the stately dames,
The dimpled maidens all a-row,
Who played with hearts the deadliest
games
While lightly treading to and fro?
Where now is all the dainty show
Of silken fabric, glance of heel
And gleam of satin slippers too
That danced the old Virginia reel?

Where now the cavaliers? The names
Of some have felt the bugle blow
Of glory—saw in battle flames,
They sleep Virginia's soil below—
And some have quaffed the common
wine
Of nameless death their dooms to seal,
And yet, good fellows all, behold!
They danced the old Virginia reel.

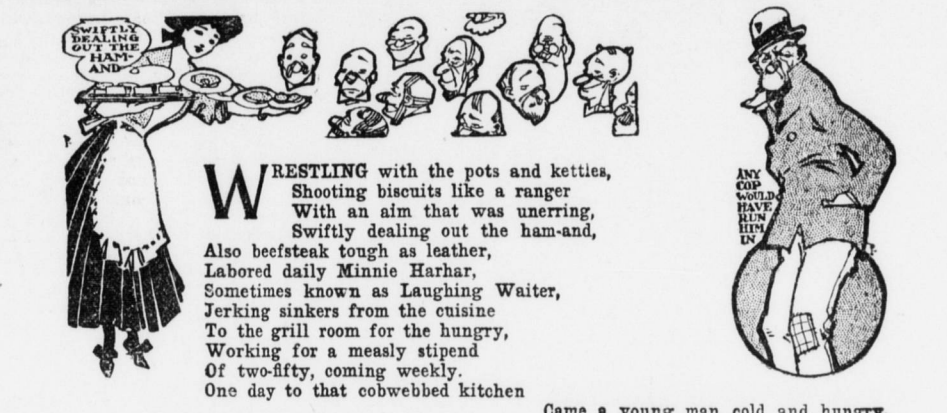
ENVOY
Gallants and girls, I see ye grow
From out the gloom—your ghosts ap-
pear!
Touch hands anew—the music—so!
We'll dance the old Virginia reel.

A TALE OF THE PIED PIKER

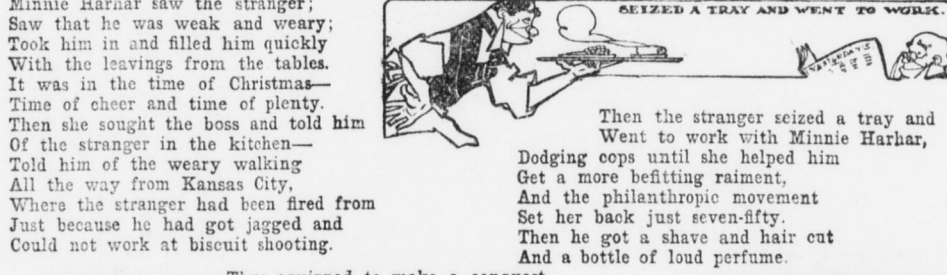
BY RICHARD S. GRAVES.

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[Being a Christmas story of the biscuit shooter's revenge, which is offered with apologies to the shade of Henry for infringing on his particular style of blank verse and at the same time hating one to the memory of the old boy who had everybody else beaten to a pulp and three ways from the jack at this sort of thing.]

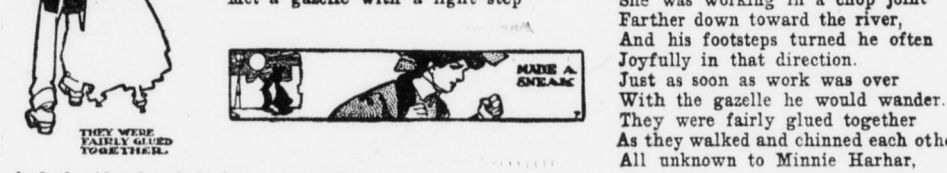


WRESTLING with the pots and kettles,
Shooting biscuits like a ranger
With an aim that was unerring,
Swiftly dealing out the ham-and,
Also beefsteak tough as leather,
Labored daily Minnie Harhar,
Sometimes known as Laughing Waiter,
Jerking sinkers from the cuisine
To the grill room for the hungry,
Working for a measly stipend
Of two-fifty, coming weekly,
One day to that cobwebbed kitchen

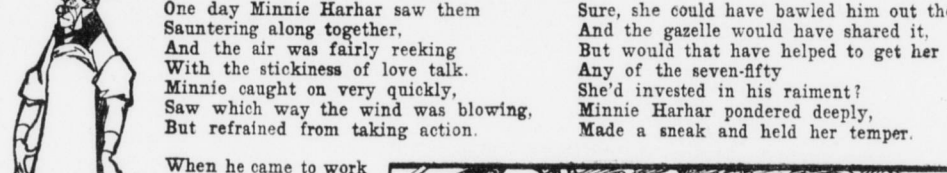


Came a young man cold and hungry,
He was walking on his upper's
In the storms of wintry weather,
And his garb was built for summer,
Hanging on him loose and floppy,
Like a hide hung on a fencepost.
Any cop he might have met then
Would have run him in and vagged him.

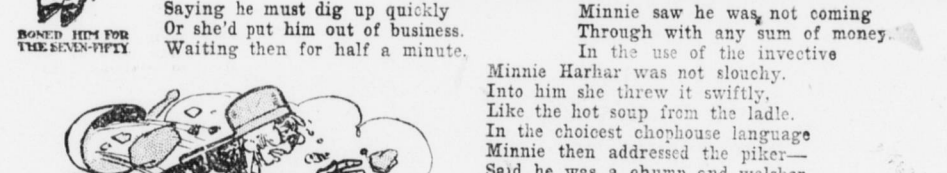
Then the stranger seized a tray and
Went to work with Minnie Harhar,
Dodging cops until she helped him
Get a more befitting raiment,
And the philanthropic movement
Set her back just seven-fifty.
Then he got a shave and hair cut
And a bottle of loud perfume.



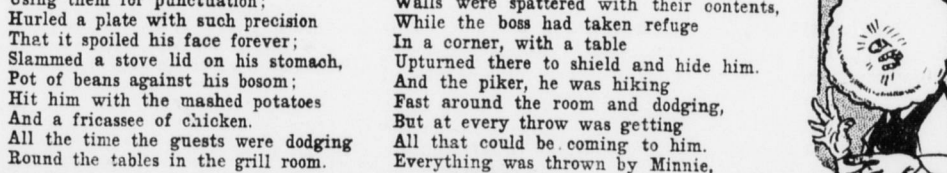
Thus equipped to make a conquest,
He threw googoo eyes at Minnie—
Threw them hard and threw them often
Until finally she wiled.
Then he took her, unresisting,
In his arms and hugged and kissed her.
He was hers and she was his'n
For a week or ten days, maybe,
Until he had met another
Out upon the public highway—
Met a gazelle with a light step



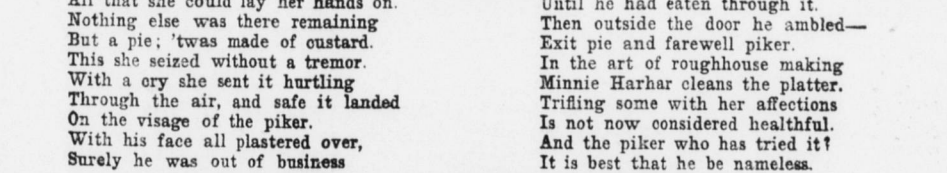
And they'd take their beer quite often
In the wine room at O'Kelley's.
Christmas days were soon forgotten,
And the loan he'd got from Minnie
From his memory fast was fading.



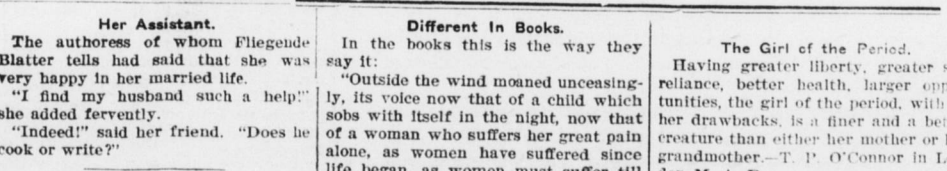
One day Minnie Harhar saw them
Sauntering along together,
And the air was fairly reeking
With the stickiness of love talk.
Minnie caught on very quickly,
Saw which way the wind was blowing,
But refrained from taking action.



When he came to work
at evening
Minnie Harhar sprang
it on him,
Boned him for the sev-
en-fifty.



Saying he must dig up quickly
Or she'd put him out of business.
Waiting then for half a minute,
Minnie saw he was not coming
Through with any sum of money.
In the use of the invective
Minnie Harhar was not slothful.
Into him she threw it swiftly,
Like the hot soup from the ladle.
In the choicest chophouse language
Minnie then addressed the piker—
Said he was a chump and welsher,
Also cheap screw, phony, moocher:
Called him two spot, bloke and wuzzer,
Said he was a yap from Yapville
And a skate from down the river.



Minnie also shied utensils,
Using them for punctuation;
Hurling a plate with such precision
That it spoiled his face forever;
Slammed a stove lid on his stomach,
Pot of beans against his bosom;
Hit him with the mashed potatoes
And a fricassee of chicken.
All the time the guests were dodging
Round the tables in the grill room.



All that she could lay her hands on.
Nothing else was there remaining
But a pie; 'twas made of custard.
This she seized without a tremor.
With a cry she sent it hurtling
Through the air, and safe it landed
On the visage of the piker.
With his face all plastered over,
Surely he was out of business.

FINE LAND FOR FARMS

Hundreds of Home Seekers Flocking to Sun River Valley.

FERTILE REGION IN MONTANA

Soil is Capable of Yielding Big Crops of Wheat, Oats, Sugar Beets and Other Products—May Prove Excellent Dairy Country.

One of Montana's most beautiful agricultural valleys is now the scene of unusual activity, as hundreds of home seekers from all parts of the United States are going there to take up their new homes.

The Sun River valley, which is a little west of the center of the state, on the eastern slope of the Rocky mountains and near the city of Great Falls, was selected several years ago by the reclamation service as a choice area for the construction of a stupendous irrigation work. The work has progressed rapidly, and several farms have been thrown open to settlers on liberal terms.

These farms will be obtainable under the homestead law subject to the charges of actual cost of water upon the number of acres actually supplied with water from the system. This charge has been fixed at \$30 an acre, divided into not less than five nor more than ten annual payments, says a Washington correspondent of the Chicago News. The sum of \$3.50 will be due and payable at the time of making entry. The second installment will be payable March 1, 1910, thus allowing early settlers nearly two years before second payment is due. In this period any industrious settler can get his land into shape to earn its own re-payment of the charges.

An interesting and unique feature in connection with the project is the proposed establishment of model rural villages every six miles. In all there will be twenty of these, so that no farm will be more than three miles from a postoffice and school.

All the crops which can be grown in northern countries can be raised in the Sun River valley. It is probable that the principal crops raised will be alfalfa, sugar beets and potatoes. Usually three cuttings of alfalfa are made annually. Some have cut only two crops, and others have cut four, but the average is three and the average yield about five tons an acre. The present price varies from \$5 to \$15 a ton in the stack, according to location and demand. It is not probable that the average price will drop below \$5 for many years. The cost of putting the hay into the stack is about \$1.25 a ton.

The average yields an acre are: Potatoes, 228 bushels; wheat, 28 bushels; oats, 60 bushels; sugar beets, 20 tons.

All garden truck is easy to raise except tomatoes and some kinds easily affected by frost, though these with care may be grown sufficiently for family use. An ordinary ranch garden about two miles from Simms in 1905 produced a net profit of \$225 an acre from the following kinds of vegetables: Cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, squash, onions, pumpkins, carrots, turnips, beets and parsnips.

The sugar beets grown in the vicinity have analyzed 23 per cent sugar. The beet industry promises great things, and a sugar factory is assured upon the completion of the works necessary to irrigate an area large enough to guarantee five year contracts on 5,000 acres of beets. Past experiments prove that the farmer should average a net profit of \$40 an acre on sugar beets.

It is probable that the Sun river valley will prove an excellent dairy country. A creamery was completed in August in January, 1907, and the three or four others already in operation in neighboring towns show that the industry is profitable and will be permanent and growing. Four and a third million pounds of butter are now imported annually from other states. This means that over \$1,000,000 ought to be kept in Montana each year for butter.

Full details relating to terms, size of farm units and other information regarding the methods of securing lands may be obtained on application to S. B. Robbins, engineer United States reclamation service, Fort Shaw, Mont., or stationer, reclamation service, Washington.

The Modern Husband.
Mrs. Knicker—We are to have a thousand foot skyscraper. Mrs. Bocker—suppose that means that Henry will be detained at the office 500 feet later—Harper's Weekly.

Jaded.
The Lady—Little boy, don't you know smoking will shorten your life? The Kid—Shucks! What do I care? I've seen everything here is.—Boston Traveler.

Put a little more in than you take out, and your purse will soon fill.

SOMETHING NEW!

A Reliable TIN SHOP

For all kind of Tin Roofing, Spouting and General Job Work.

Stoves, Heaters, Ranges, Furnaces, etc.

PRICES THE LOWEST!
QUALITY THE BEST!

JOHN HIXSON
NO. 119 E. FRONT ST.

Mexico's Christmas Eve

Christmas in Mexico lasts for nine days, ending with Christmas eve. They are described as "the nine days' wanderings," being symbolical of the wanderings of the Virgin Mary and Joseph in search of shelter prior to the birth of Jesus.

One custom is to have nine families of friends or relatives take part in this quaint observation. Each family entertains in turn for one evening all the others. Both adults and children participate in the wanderings. Arriving at a house, they apply at the door of each room for shelter, which is refused by those within. Finally all are admitted to the largest room, where refreshments of cold meats, cakes and wine are served. In many instances the children are garbed in fanciful costumes.

The last night of the wanderings, Christmas eve, means to Mexican children



EACH BLINDFOLDED CHILD TRIES TO HIT THE PINATA.

dream what the gathering of Christmas tree fruit means to the children of the United States, though there is no Christmas tree. There is instead the pinata, otherwise a human figure made of tough paper, suspended from the ceiling. Sometimes there is an olla or earthenware pot similarly suspended.

One child is blindfolded, turned around a few times and invited to break the pinata with a cone or rod. Three strokes are permitted, and it usually happens that the cone hits only impalpable air. After an hour or so of failures somebody hits the pinata a smart blow, and the legs and trunk of the grotesque figure split open. Down to the floor, in scattering confusion, fall the Christmas presents with which the funny figure was stuffed. Then there is a merry scramble for the "favors." The one who succeeds in breaking the pinata or the olla gets a special present and is placed in the seat of honor for the evening.

Almost Qualified.
"Help you" scoffed the fraile housewife. "Well, I guess not. I only assist invalids."
"Well, mum," responded Beefsteak Ben as he tried to remove the bulldog from his shins, "I'll be an invalid if I stay here much longer."

The Poor Milkman Again.
The milkman was boiling over with indignation. "And you mean to say my milk don't look right?" he snapped. "Why, lady, this can of milk is a picture!"
"Ah, yes," laughed the keen housewife: "a fine water color."—Exchange.

Autobiography of A Christmas Gift

I am a Christmas gift. In fact, I have always been one. My age is now nineteen, though I may look older. I was made by the dainty hands of Miss Susanna Sikes, who at that time was just the age I am now. Guess her age at present? She is still Miss Susanna, and she still owns me.

Oh, yes, Miss Susanna gave me away. Perhaps I should explain that I am twins, being a pair of knit slippers. Miss Susanna, it was understood, had benevolent designs upon the young pastor of her church, so she knit me and sent me to the reverend youth.

Next Christmas the preacher, who had received five other pairs, sent me to his sister. You see, knit slippers are guaranteed to fit any foot as well as any other feet. So the preacher's sister was not at all offended.

The next Christmas she sent me to her old college chum, Mrs. De Brown, who was a member of her brother's congregation. Next Christmas Mrs. De B. sent me to her pastor. The pastor grinned when he saw me again and remarked something like "Cast your bread upon the waters and it will return to you after many days."

The next Christmas the pastor sent me to his old college chum, who was sweet on Miss Susanna. There was every prospect of a match, since Miss Susanna had despaired of winning the preacher, who was known to be engaged to another lady. Right—the very next Christmas the preacher's college chum sent me to Miss Susanna as a perfumed note praising her dainty lit feet. This broke off the match, of course.

Well, next Christmas Miss Susanna mailed me to a friend of hers clear across the continent. Miss Susanna's address on the corner of the box in which I was mailed got rubbed off en route, and her friend didn't know who sent me.

So the very next Christmas I returned to Miss Susanna. Oh, I was hard to lose! I was not made to wear I was made to circulate. I am a good thing, and so everybody passes me along.

Oh, so you recognize me now? Yes, I spent a year with you. Well, time slips, and I must be going. This is Christmas eve, you know.

T. SAPP, JR.

They Were Not Encouraged.
"I don't see why that young man doesn't propose."
"I think, ma, that the chances of his doing it would be fully as good if you wouldn't leave your boxing gloves around where he can see them."—Bohemian Magazine.

Of course everybody likes and respects self made men. It is a great deal better to be made in that way than not to be made at all.—O. W. Holmes.

It is the wise head that makes the still tongue.—Lucas.

Santa In Grass Valley

One town in the United States has a practical and apparently perpetual Santa Claus. In Grass Valley, Cal., everybody gets Christmas gifts. There is no child so poor as to be disappointed when Santa passes his bounties around, and, for that matter, no grown person either. Twenty-five years ago Mrs. Hansen of Grass Valley was an invalid, confined to her chair at the window of her cottage. She watched the school children troop by. Some of them were scantily clad and looked ill nourished. The good woman forgot her own misfortune in her compassion for the unfortunate little ones.

She suggested that on the last day of school before the Christmas holidays each child should bring to school something to give away to others. It need not be anything big or costly—just whatever the child could spare. A committee was to distribute the things where they were most needed. So many little ones and their parents were made happy the first Christmas that Grass Valley adopted the idea permanently. Now for a quarter of a century Mrs. Hansen's improved Santa Claus system has been working in order, though long ago the good woman herself was released from her chair of pain and laid to rest in the town cemetery.

When the last day of school in the old year arrives—called donation day in Grass Valley—every child of the more than 1,000 in the schools is seen trudging teacherward with an offering. Later the town's brass band leads the procession, dispensing appropriate music.



HERE AND THERE A BOY BEARS A LIVE CHICKEN.

Some of the children carry sticks of wood as big as themselves; others hold only a fat potato in their chubby fingers. Here and there a boy bears aloft a live chicken, cackling and struggling. At the rear of the walkers follows a line of wagons laden with good things donated by the merchants and other well-to-do citizens. Suppose it rains? Well, that doesn't matter. The children march, rain or shine. Santa Claus is not deterred by inclement weather—not in Grass Valley.

Inpenicuous Ponies.
A rather curious habit has been developed by Mexican ponies in connection with the cactus thorns. When these creatures are thirsty it is said that before attempting to put their mouths to the prickly plant they will first of all stand and kick at the cactus with their heels. By this means the thorns are broken and the leathery skin bruised, and so the ponies can drink their fill of the cool juice without injury.—Strand Magazine.

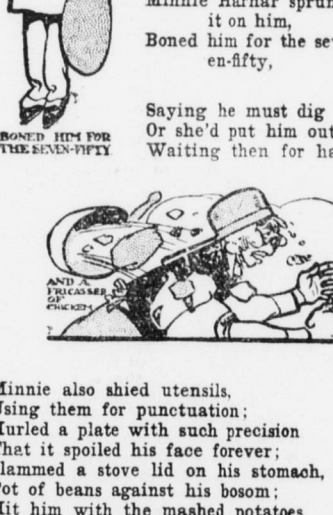
Frugality is a fair fortune and habits of industry a good estate.—Franklin.

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