



IN the Rocky mount'ins, in Colorado, 9,000 feet above sea level, I struck a vein of good mineral and surveyed a claim. I built me a log cabin, and there, miles away from any human habitation, I lived alone. Far below me, like a thread, was Otto Mears' toll road from Silverton to Ouray, a road that cost $40,000 a mile. In clear weather I could see the stages whirl along this, or, like a line of flies, a mule train pass on in single file, and sometimes, like small ants, a heavy loaded burro train. Them reminds me of a green feller I see, reading about a burro as was knocked off a road by a landslide. "Serves 'em right," said he, "for taking that heavy furnitoor way up there." He wasn't much on spelling and didn't know a burro was the Colorado name for a donkey. The burro is the salvation of the mount'in miner, for the little creatures can walk on the picket edge of nothing and never miss a foot and carry a load that weighs more than they do. Far below the toll road the Uncapaghre, brown and dark in the shadders and silver in the sunlight, meanders through the valley. How far down? Waal, one place on that road is a cut torn from a solid mount'in wall and a look down of 900 feet. It is a ticklish place, but we gets used to them things after a time.

For six months in winter I was snowed in in my lonely cabin. I could hear the roar of the icy gales through the crashing timber and once in awhile another sound that you never forget—a fearful roar like a monstrous wave breaking over jagged rocks and carrying with it a grand, big ship. There's a jar of the airth, a snap of trees, a crunching and rumbling and a thunder of rolling rocks, with a queer sense of moving, not where you may be, but far off. That's a snowslide. It begins on a mount'in peak, creeping slow, a white mass, gathering more at every inch, getting tighter for a clinch, then faster, taking everything in its path, cutting a clean swath, like a scythe, then whirling, roaring, swallowing up a cabin, with shrieking men, or a b'ar, hid and sleeping for the winter. Then you understand what I mean by moving, for the air is full of it, and it lasts till, with a muffled thunderclap, the whole mass drops down into the valley miles away.

Then the summer storms, when the lightning don't seem no further off than a



I SAYS SUDDEN, "I'LL DO IT, BY GOSH!"

stone's throw and glares and blinds and goes streaking ribbons of fire over the pines, while you're dazed and deafened by the thunder! Don't that thunder boom, a-playing catch across the crags, the last one sending it back and all of it kinder condensed and held in canyons and each new roar and each past one mingling together until there's a very fury of sound, like nothing else on earth.

Ag'in, one day you see a mount'in peak, a gray cloud kinder hovering, low; it's soft and full of crinkles and rolls like cotton batting all flung in a heap. Bymeby there's a chill in the air, and the gray cloud—now the sun don't shine on it—gets black as ink. It gets closer and lower and all of a sudden turns into a sheet of dazzling silver. Now under it is a big river coming with a rush and roar, faster than an avalanche and churning up rocks, earth, trees, animals and men in its awful boiling current. That's a cloudburst. It swells the water in every stream in the valley, and the river beyond, where the streams empty, goes mad and rushes on over home and farm, carrying havoc and misery all along its course.

The silence up mount'in is awful. I've gone out and yelled jest for the company of an echo. Then worse than the quiet is the sound of something walking after night. Sometimes there's a slinking four footed creature like a monstrous yellow cat, with the sliest gait of any animal devil. That's a mountain lion. Often there's a heavier tread, and a clumsy creature goes sniffling by—a grizzly. He can't be tamed nor the little black imp of his family connection. Then again there's the sound, but when you look there ain't nothing to make it. That's the worst of all. That's ghosts.

My mine is a tunnel 100 feet into a mount'in side, and often toward night when I'm working I hears tap, tap, tap, soft and low, but clear as preaching. I gits out then, for them's the mine speerits, and I don't wanter git 'em ag'in me. It's funny, ain't it? But you just live up mount'in alone and see how you feel after awhile.

Twice a week a burro train came 20 miles from Ouray for my ore, coming up a trail I made up to my mine not three foot wide and just cut out of the rock and ground. Them and the man with 'em was mighty cheerful to see after days of silence. Letters? No; I never had a soul to write to me, but newspapers—a week or a month old, it didn't matter. They was comfort, and me, setting up in that cabin, forgot by all human creatures, could through them papers feel the beating heart of the great world.

Last September I got the blues so bad that I quit work one day and went down to the toll road, timing my trip so as to see the stage pass and to git from some passenger something to read. A feller give me a book called "Dombey and Son" one day. Gosh, them old seafaring fellers was the gamest crowd I ever see. Cuttle's my choice. I know the book by heart, and Florence and Walter, and that shop and Soll Gills is jest as nateral as if I hed knowed 'em. Why, I set and read that over so much, seemed like I could jest see 'em come into life and be real folks in the firelight. Like to know Dickens, the feller that wrote 'em. Dead, is he? Waal, waal, he'll never know what a comfort he was to me. When I git the charnce, I'm going to lay a wreath of posies where he is planted and tell him them books he's writ has been more'n a gospel to us miners in the mount'ins, and I'll say I come clear from one of the newest states in the new world to give him my humble thanks.

Where was I? Oh, on the toll road. I set there and smoked my pipe, looking down the gulch on the Uncapaghre sparkling like a silver cord fur below and listening to the wind whispering through the pines, and then I heard a sound. The road is so sun dried and hard it echoes. This was a sorter pattering, and wan't no shod creature either. It can't be a mount'in lion, I says to myself. He wouldn't dare be here. I felt for my gun—revolver, you know—and then I see this was a dorg, a Gordon setter and a thoroughbred, white and black, with the humanest eyes I ever see in a animal. I called him and after a survey he come and seemed friendly enough. He was footsore and lean and looked like he'd come a long way. I picked a cactus thorn out of his paw and wan't he grateful? I kept a watch 'round a turn of the ground for his owner, and pretty soon I see four burros, heavy loaded, and walking behind them a youngish feller. He was tall and broad shouldered, dressed like the most of us in rough clothes, woolen shirt, sombrero and long boots. He was bronzed some, had curly hair, pleasant blue eyes and a straggling mustache trying hard to cover a mouth pretty as a woman's.

"Good day," he says, halting the pack animals. "Thanks for helping the dog. It was careless in me not to look when he limped."

"Howdy," I says, looking him over. "Stranger in these parts?"

"England," he answers, setting down on a rock and mopping his forehead.

"Miner?"

"Going to be. By the way, am I anywhere near the claim of a man named Day?"

"You be," I says cautious, "near Bige Day's tunnel. It's up that trail."

"You must know him?"

"Sum'at. Do you?"

"No, the claim I have purchased of General Raymond of Denver is a half mile farther up the mountain than his."

"Poker Sam," I gasps, and mebbe I swore some, for the young feller looked sorter s'prised. "That's his old gag, sends 'em here, mentions my name and gits me into his schemes. Stranger, last month there was seven men I'd never set eyes on afore traveling up that trail on the lookout for Bige Day's claim. They come different ways and times, and swore in diff'rent langwidges, but all was directed by General Raymond—where he got the general he don't know hisself—and had bought claims of him. I answered 'em civil at first, but my dander got up and I took the last one—a slim fellow from New York—and I says, 'See that speck up there, that p'int a half mile up mount'in—waal, that's it. If you don't keer for yer life and has good legs, you may reach it alive. If you've breath left then, kin diskiver a tunnel six foot into the mount'in and rock, all the rock you want, but there never was, nor never will be, any streaks of pay dirt there and no way of gitting it down if there was. Some of her secrets this old mount'in won't give up, and where a human gits overbold in climbing up and trying to find out, why she jest shets down on him at the start.' Poker Sam played you for a sucker"—I looked him over—"and I guess you was easy to play."

"Possibly," he says carelessly. He drawed out a cigar and give me one. He set back then smoking coolly, his hat sider him and the little rings of hair curling round his forehead. I chewed my cigar awhile to git the taste.

"Busted?" I asks.

"In the vernacular of the country, just that," he laughs.

"Rich folks mebbe?"

"Haven't a soul to care whether I live or die." He looked kinder far away then,



I SET THERE AND SMOKED MY PIPE.

and I would bet ag'in heavy odds that there was a gal concerned in it. I took a big shine to the feller, and after awhile I offered him a job up to my mine, to work on shares, him to throw in the grub stake he had with him. He was willing enough, so from that day Ed—that's name enough, for a story—and me was pards. Folks used to call me "Groundhog" Bige, and they nicknamed him "English" Ed, but I usually called him "pard." Get along? You bet. I was a ignorant, old creature and he was college larned, but that wasn't no diff'rence. He was friendly to me as to a chum of his own class, mebbe more so, for when I got rheumatics, he was off to Ouray—and cold, too—to git linnerment and played the nurse complete. He was fits of company, and so was the dorg—Doc was the pup's name. Pard took just as much int'rest in Cuttle and Gills as me, and got more books—one about the gamest old feller, Pickwick, and the eating and drinking in that volume would make your mouth water. We read him while we eat pork and biscuit and drunk coffee 'thout no milk nor sugar. We was doing well in the mine, but when you think of the ways vittles has to be brought on the backs of them burros, you aint setting up for entrys—as Ed used to say. He was a cheerful feller, but given to fits of gloom—never said a word about his folks though.

'Bout Chris'mus time, and we wan't so snowed in by then but that you could git along on snowshoes, we was reading Pickwick over again. He read aloud in diff'rent voices, making it jest as real as live folks a-talking, when I says sudden, "I'll do it, by gosh!"

"What?" He kinder jumped, and the pup riz up and licked my hand.

"Why," says I, "I'll hoof it to Ouray and lay in a chicken—a turkey if I can git it—pertaters and a squash and cranberries and the truck to make a plum pudding. I'll celebrate. I can't hear of them Dick-



I STUMBLED UP THE MOUNT'INSIDE A-HOLLERING.

ens fellers eating no more and try to fill myself up on salt horse and slops. I'll git one good feed if it takes a leg or costs a life."

"It will be the latter," he says, sober enough. "You couldn't make a walking market of yourself over three feet of snow on the edge of a precipice."

"I'm light and easy on snowshoes."

"But," he interrupts, "what's the matter with my going?"

"You ain't," I answers, bringing to mind his attempts to walk on snowshoes and his wabblings "you ain't no bird on em, pard."

He laughed then like a boy.

"It's a deal," I says, "and tomorrer, the 24th, I'll set off early and git back by night and we'll set up and eat till morning. I'll git brandy for the pudding sass, but pard," I finishes anxious, "how is them puddings made?"

"Why, flour, raisins, lard or butter—something that's rich"—

"Butter," I puts in, "is 80 cents a pound at Ouray, and I guess that's rich enough."

"Butter, currants, molasses to make it brown, and spice mixed and cooked."

"I cal'late I'll get it mixed to the store," I says, "and my traveling will beat it up."

"Then you sew it up in a bag which you boil and make a sauce of brandy that you pour over and set afire, and it burns blue flame. This is the way we used to have it at home." His face grew sad, and I knew he was going into them glooms ag'in.

"Waste of good liquor," I says under my breath, but he didn't note me.

I set out early the next morning, leaving him and the pup at home. It wasn't bad going and the air was fresh and full of sunshine. They was s'prised to see me at Ouray, and laughed a deal at the truck I bought and paid for with gold dust. I found the pudding stuff so heavy that I really had it mixed in a pail. I went over to a saloon for awhile, and it was 'bout 3 in the afternoon when I come back for my things. I had asked the storekeeper, who was also postmaster, if there were any letters for pard, but there wan't. I tied the eight pound turkey round my neck with the pudding pail, the vegetables and a squash that seemed to weigh a ton before I was four miles on my way. I filled my pockets with cigars and books and a bottle of brandy and tobacco. As I fixed my snowshees, the storekeeper came out.

"Queer thing, Bige," he says. "'Bout an hour 'fore you got back here the saloon an Englishman named Ingalls was here asking if I knowed your pard, Ed. I told him where he was and off he goes. Impatient and stuck up enough, wouldn't listen to no caution. Thought mebbe our mount'in trail was a bolerward where he could find hoss keers and them two wheeled cabs with a jay up behind. Off he jumps like a flash. I says, 'Try it, young feller, you'll be back in an hour or two.' I clean forgot all about you was going that way."

"I'll meet him," I says and starts. The crowd give three cheers for me and wished me a "Merry Chris'mus!" "Keep some of that pudding for me till spring. It will be hard enough," yells the storekeeper, "for you wouldn't take no soda in it."

Pard hadn't mentioned soda and I wouldn't put it in though it was argued it oughter be done. "S'long!" I calls and goes on. For three or four miles I could see tracks quite plain in the snow and I kept a lookout for Ingalls, but my progress was awful slow. I was so beat out that I swore at the vittles, pard and Chris'mus straight along. The turkey growed heavier and heavier, and once I lost it and had to go back a half mile. I wan't a likely pictur' as I floundered along and was ugly enough to fight my best friend. Curious enough I put all my mad on that feller ahead. "The idee," I'd say, "of him daring to climb this mount'in alone in snowtime."

'Bout ten miles on my way, just as I was straightening up my back after making another hitch on the turkey, I felt something sharp strike my face. I knowed I was in for it, for snow at Chris'mus time in these mount'ins means darkness, drifts and death. But that didn't stump me. Every inch of that road was plain as a map in my mind, and blunted by cold, stunned by the snow and darkness, I forgot Ingalls entirely and must have passed close by him. I had enough to do to fight for my own life. On I goes and game enough to hang to the truck. I wan't going to be beat outer that dinner for all the snow in Colorado. Every now and then when I got kinder sleepy and a sly idee kep coming how slick it would be to lie down and take a nap—that means never git up, but freeze to death—the old turkey would sling around and fetch me a smart slap in the face. I kinder growed to think the old bird wanted to be roasted and git up to the cabin to give his remains for the celebration.

I got along all right till I got to where I ought to turn off to the trail, and there I dassent leave the road. I wasn't sure where it lay. I listened and I heard the muffled sound of a gun, and this I follered, wondering where pard got his sense. I stumbled up the mount'in side a-hollering, and soon I got a answer and the happiest sight of my life—I see a big yaller glare. It was pard a-burning kerosene.

"Glad it's cheap," I says ironical, for it ain't. He laughs and takes all the truck and flounders on ahead a distance, where by the howling I knowed Doc was tied, and then the house was all lit up.

"Made three stations down the path," he explains; "house first, dog next, myself with the gun and bonfire last."

"You'll do," I says. He flew around looking at the stuff I'd brought, found some cloth and made a bag into which he put the pudding mixture, tied it and slung the same into a kittle of boiling water, which he hung over the fire.

"The water'll git in it," I says. "Them stitches is too loose."

"It cooks out," he answers, beginning to cut up the squash. "Now sit down, Bige, and get straightened out," he goes on, bringing me a glass of brandy.

"I asked for a letter for you, but there wan't none," I says, beginning to draw off my boots.

"You were very kind, but there is no one to write."

"Land of the living!" I yells, jumping up, "them tracks ahead—that feller." It come to me all of a sudden. Where was he?

"What did you say?" asks pard, keerless like.

"Ingalls," I gasps.

"Ingalls," he repeats, gitting white, "for pity's sake who—what do you know of him?"

I told him. He listened quite a minit, then goes to where his coat was hanging on a nail.

"Where are you going?" I says.

"To look for him."

"Why? What's he to you?"

"My worst enemy."

"Pard, you're a fool. If me, an old mount'ineer, hed a hard fight for like a half hour ago, what will it be for you, and the storm is worse. The feller's dead now anyhow. Mebbe he went back—sure he did, and you don't budge a step."

"You are sure he did not go back," he says quietly, lighting the lantern. "Let go, Day, I mean to start."

"You're so smart on snowshoes, you'll git about a mile and then tumble over a precipice."

"I think not," he says soberly. "If I do, it don't matter."

"Waall, I'm not going."

"I wouldn't let you," says he.

"Oh, you wouldn't," I growls, "you wouldn't, hey. You young whipper snapper, you cub, you. Let me go. I'll jest let you know you don't stir a foot out till I git fixed. Here you are starting off with a lantern and a dorg—no brandy, no rope, nothing."

"The dorg will scent him."

"The dorg will be snowed in 40 rods from the house, and a dead dorg in 40 minits if we don't kerry him."

He hung his head.

"I don't want you to risk your life," he stammers.

"Ed," I says, "you are all the thing I have in this world to keer for. If I'd a son, I couldn't love him more'n you. Come."

We left the dorg in the cabin, with food where he might git at it if we didn't come back, and I was pretty sure he'd break the winder and git out if we were long away. Pard fixed a candle in the winder and put logs on the fire, and then we set out. I had the lantern tied on my back, and had made a rope fast to pard.

The night was jest like a curtain of black velvet and absolutely still. The air was thick and wet and stupefying. So we goes on. The snow being damp had packed some, and that kep' us in the trail, but it was hard work, and I was already wore out. At last we tumbles into the road and stops a minit.

"He never got as fur as this," I says, "and I'd better go on alone. You stay here and I'll shoot when I find him." For answer pard ketches my lantern.

"If it's death to one of us, it shall come to me," he says. "You stay here. I'll go."

He'd cut the rope that bound us and was off into the dark. I knowed one of us must have sense, and if we lost that little trail up mount'in we was done fur. So I waited. I yelled to him to try and keep inside from the edge of the road, but I doubt if he heard, the air was so deadened. The time I waited seemed years. I made fast the rope to a tree near the trail, and



I SEE A FAINT, GHOSTLY LIGHT A-COMING AWFUL SLOW.

kept one end of it, and made trips down as far as I could where he went, but I dassent let go. Bymeby I was so sleepy and numbed I thought I dreamt it when I see a faint, ghostly light a-coming awful slow and something big behind the light.

"I've got him," says Ed, panting. "I fell across him in the snow about four miles down. I think he is dead."

He had him on his back, and luckily the stranger was a small, slight chap, but as it was it was awful. We took him between us. There was no time to try to bring him to life, for the storm was thicker every minute. But we tackled the brandy ourselves and then started. I never see sich strength as that pard of mine had. He held most of the feller, and didn't seem to touch airth at all—in fact, the last of the way he dragged me. We was pretty near beat out when we heard Doc's howl. That put new life in us, and soon the light from the little cabin showed faint but stiddy. The candle we found nearly flickering out, but the fire on the hearth was burning bright. The pup went crazy over the stranger.

"Knew him in England," says Ed, working away at the chap's boots. We got him undressed and rubbed him with snow and poured brandy into his clinched teeth. After an hour or so of this we could see him breathe, and this encouraged us for new efforts. Tired? We were nearly dead, and if the stranger had any skin left on him he was in luck. Bymeby he opens his eyes. "What did you wake me up for?" he says crossly, and drifts off into a sleep.

"That's him," says Ed bitterly. "He's a natural kicker."

"Who is he?" I asks after we had made ourselves comfortable—pard was fixing the fire. "The pudding ain't spoiled," he mutters, "though the water nearly boiled out of the kittle. We'll have the dinner, after all. He? Oh, he's Larry Ingalls. He and I were orphans distantly related to Sir John Webster of—well, somewhere. Sir John brought us up. Larry was a rich orphan. I was a poor one, and Sir John had a daughter"—

"I cal'lated there was a young woman in the case," I says.

"Lady Maud. She was a sister to us both when we were youngsters, but when we were grown I fell in love with her, and so did Larry, who always did as I did. We had a bitter quarrel, he and I, and I told him Lady Maud loved me, and he, the cur, went and explained everything to her father. I was ordered out of the house, and came here. That's all. I don't know what Ingalls wants of me. I suppose he came to tell me he had married Lady Maud."

'Bout noon the next day I got up and fixed the turkey to roast and the vegetables and set the pudding back over the fire. Somehow, though it had a shape and was hard, I didn't feel much confidence in it. Ed was lying in a corner jest wore out. While I was a-fussing round I see the new feller looking at me. "Where am I?" he asks. I told him, and said who saved his life at the risk of his own, and hinted that I didn't think the life of a mean feller was worth saving, and such had better go back where they come from.

"But you don't know all," he says wistful, his eyes full of tears. "Ed and I did quarrel, but I did not tell Sir John."

"Oh, you didn't," I sneers. "Likely story."

"Lady Maud did. She told her father that she loved Ed and she wanted to marry him. She is that kind of a girl. She never had a secret from him. Of course he was angry, and turned Ed out. I was mean enough to be glad at first, for I knew her father would give Maud to me, but she grew so thin and unhappy and took such a dislike to me that I was sorry enough for the whole affair. I tried then to find Ed. I give you my word I did. Then an uncle came from Australia, that Ed used to brag about when he was a child and say he would bring back a trunkful of gold. Well, he really did come back with



"THE PLUM PUDDING OF OLD ENGLAND," SINGS INGALLS.

lots of money, and he and Sir John are great friends now. He is a sick man or he would have come to America with me. I came for Lady Maud's sake. She said if I would find Ed she would give me the old sisterly affection. I told her I would be a knight of the round table and find the holy grail—a cup, you know."

"Oh," I says, "sorter prize winner, eh?"

"Though that is a comical comparison for Ed, who looks like a rough. I have been watching him, but women generally like big, stupid bears."

"Thank you," says Ed, gitting up, "I didn't save your miserable life to be abused. Lucky for you, you were a little fellow or you wouldn't be here."

"Game, though," I puts in. "The grit of him starting alone up these mount'ins."

Ed and him looked at each other then like two animals 'bout to fight. Then I seen 'em lock hands and I knowed their eyes was dim.

"I brought you her photograph. She sent it," says Ingalls, hunting around, "but—but I must have lost it."

"Here 'tis," I says. "It dropped outer your coat last night and I set it by the fire to dry." The heat and wet had mussed it so you couldn't tell what the puter was.

"Too bad," sighs Ingalls. "I meant to give it to you. I brought it all the way."

"I carry her face in my heart," laughs Ed, and then he fell to singing:

"Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone.'

While pard was setting the table Ingalls, who had all our bedding piled on him, crawled out and got on his clothes.

"You live high for miners," he says.

"This is Chris'mus day," says Ed, and then they shook hand ag'in. "The dear old day, Larry, and we'll spend next Chris'mus at home, and Lady Maud, my wife, Larry—don't that make you hate me—I'll welcome you under the mistletoe. Perhaps I'll let you kiss her then."

"She's my sister," answers the other, not a bit of meanness left in him, "and the world is full of fair women. Is it not so, Mr. Day?"

"They don't trouble me none," I says. "But, pard, look at this pudding." He crossed the room still a-singing:

"My heart would hear her and beat
Were it earth in an earthly bed."

"He never could carry a tune," grins Larry.

Ed turned the water outer the kittle and ripped open the bag. A round, warty looking thing, like a small cannon ball and pretty near as hard, rolled out. It was a grayish color, specked with raisins and as vicious appearing a compound as I ever see. "The plum pudding of old England," sings Ingalls, and then we roared with laughter. But the turkey, roasted in an oven sider the fire, was good and the vegetables splendid, and the young fellers was the best company I ever see, and you kin bet the dorg didn't go hungry. He was Lady Maud's pup, and Ed had brought him clear from England. That was the jolliest meal I ever eat, and it was as good as sunshine to see them two, friends now and forever.

Where am I going now? Oh, down to something hall, where pard lives with his uncle and Lady Maud. Of course Ed married her. Sir John and Ingalls, who, pard wrote, has got a gal of his own, is going to be there. I've sold the mine for a good sum, and I'm carrying Ed his share. Queer, though, Ingalls would have never found Ed but for Poker Sam. So the old villain did a good turn once, not knowing it. Yes, I'm pretty well fixed, rich enough to drink champagne out of a pail—which is western—and I'm going to spend the Chris'mus holidays with pard. I've brought the dorg way across the ocean with me to show to Lady Maud. I forgot to tell you that when the young fellers went away the pup wouldn't quit me, and is mine now. We'll probably have a good dinner Chris'mus day, but the vittles won't taste no better, nor the crowd be no merrier, than it was last year in Colorado in the Rockies, 9,000 feet above the sea. About the plum pudding—waal, I have nothing to say. That subject's a tender one 'twixt pard and me.

PATIENCE STAPLETON.

RICHES TAKE WINGS.

A Christmas Story With an Unusual Ending.

He was a fine looking fellow. In his hands he carried three large bodied, though none too plump, turkeys, and the big calico sign behind him with its legend, "Turkey Raffle Within," gave a pretty good inkling of how he came by his burden.

"Turkeys enough here to last a week," he soliloquized as he swayed to and fro on the edge of the sidewalk. "Guess that turkey they've got at home lays over all these, but then turkey is a thing you can't have too much of."

Just then a man approached him from the shadows—a man with a gaunt look and a coat that would fail to attract the attention of a rag gatherer. It was the usual request for "a little assistance."

"I guess they took all my spare change inside, pardner. Just hold this 'turk' while I look."

He found a quarter and handed it to the beggar, who started to move away, but an idea seemed to strike the young fellow and he called the man back.

"Was that dead straight about your having children at home and nothing to eat?"

"It's true, sir, so help me God."

"Then take this turkey."

A block farther up an old woman crouched in the lee of a high board fence grinding out some melancholy tune on a wheezy hand organ. Without a word the young fellow approached her and dropped one of the remaining turkeys into her lap.

"I'm a trifle short on poultry," he said, with a merry chuckle, as he hopped aboard his street car.

On the opposite seat of the dummy sat an urchin, red eyed and sobbing.

"What's the matter?" asked the turkey dispenser of the gripman.

"You see, the kid's mother is a poor woman living out near the park, and she sent him down town to buy a cheap turkey for their Christmas dinner. Well, he got it right enough, but some thief snatched it from him at the corner of Seventh street. That's what's the trouble."

"Say, take this home to your mother," said the man who had been to a raffle, as he flung the bird across the car and came near knocking off the gripman's cap in doing so.

In the morning some one knocked at his bedroom door.

"What's the matter?"

"Matter enough. Somebody got into the larder during the night and stole our turkey."

The man in bed laughed so loud that his sister, who had called to him, pronounced him an idiot.

"Say, sis."

"Hello!"

"Doesn't the Bible say something about casting your bread upon the waters and having it come back again?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Oh, nothing—only it don't work with turkey. But we can get along without one for Christmas. Why, we could have a bird every day in the year if we wanted one."

A Christmas Pie.

The following appeared in the Newcastle Chronicle of Jan. 6, 1770: "Monday last was brought from Howick to Berwick to be shipp'd for London for sir Hen. Grey bart., a pie the contents whereof are as follows—viz, 2 bushles of flour, 20 lbs. of butter, 4 geese, 2 turkies, 2 rabbits, 4 wild ducks, 2 woodcocks, 6 snipes and 4 partridges; 2 neat's tongues, 2 curlews 7 blackbirds and 6 pigeons. It is supposed a very great curiosity was made by Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, housekeeper at Howick. It was near 9 feet in circumference at bottom, weighs about 12 stones, will take two men to present it to table: it is neatly fitted with a case and four small wheels to facilitate its use to every guest that inclines to partake of its contents at table." Thus it is no wonder George Wither sung so merrily:

So now is come our joyfulest feast.
Let every man be jolly.
Each room with ivy leaves is drest
And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown your cares in a cup of wine,
And let us sing merry.

Christmas In Russia.

The Russian Christmas is ten days later than the English one, but is celebrated very much in English fashion. Families all meet upon that day and country house parties are many. The tree is a Christmas yew and is beautifully decorated. The gifts are placed on small tables near the tree. The churches are decorated with greens and so are the houses, but no mistletoe is used. Two or three days are public holidays at Christmas time, and the people greet each other with, "Happy feast to you." A huge pyramid of rice with raisins in it, which has been blessed at the church, is served at the Christmas dinner, and the meats are goose, duck and sucking pig. A great delicacy at a Russian Christmas dinner is veal which has been fed entirely upon milk for that special day.

An Old Time Christmas.

Heap on more wood! The wind is chill!
But let it whistle as it will
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the newborn year
The fittest time for festal cheer,
And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled
And brought blithe Christmas back again
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night.
On Christmas eve the bells were rung.
On Christmas eve the mass was sung.
That only night in all the year
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen.
The hall was dressed with holly green.
Forth to the wood did merry men go
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all.
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

—Sir Walter Scott.