THE HICKMAN COURIER.

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CURRENT PARAGRAPHS.

Southern News.

The extra session of the Tennessee legislature can draw pay for only twenty days, but can remain in session as long as it pleases.

Smalls, the convicted South Carolina colored congressman, is said to be "in a state of deep humiliation." The kindness of Smalls to the family of his former owner, the McKee family, of Beaufort, seems to have made a profound impression in his favor.

The Vicksburg Herald says the farmers of Bolivar, Washington, Sharkey and Issaquena counties are taxed for levee purposes as no people ever were taxed before. The tax is levied on cotton and cotton-seed until the burden is a practical prohibition of the production of that state, and not over half the money collected is honestly used.

Memphis Appeal: Judge George C. Benham is saving all the cotton on his plantation this season. Already, in addition to the regular colored field hands, he has on Longwood plantation sixty-five white men picking cotton every day. It is wonderful with what facility these men gather the fleecy crop; men who had never before seen a cotton field. They begin, as his weights show, with about sixty or seventy pounds per day, and within a week they go up over two hundred pounds a day, and so make good wages with light labor. The judge pronounces his experiment a complete success, and says the men are contented and well pleased.

Atlanta Constitution: Gen. Matthew C. Butler, South Carolina's new senator, is the son of ex-congressman William Butler, and a nephew of Gen. Pierce M. Butler, who fell at Cherubusco. He is also a nephew of ex-Senator A. P. Butler. On his mother's side he is a nephew of Commodore C. H. Perry. He was elected to the legislature in 1856, his only civil office he had held up to his admission to a seat in the United States senate. He rose during the war from the captaincy of a cavalry company to the rank of major general. His ability as a lawyer and his eloquence as a speaker are sure to win for him a high rank in the national councils.

Industrial Notes.

Mining industries in Colorado are gaining at a rate of 50 per cent. annually.

According to a writer in the Kansas Farmer, the culture of the silk-worm can be made very profitable in Kansas.

Machinery is being made in New Orleans to be used in manufacturing hats from the fiber of palmetto leaves at Orange park, Fla.

It is estimated that 5,000,000 cans of tomatoes, corn, etc., grown and packed in Hartford county, Maryland, will be shipped this season.

Six hundred men are employed in the granite quarries of Hurricane Island, Maine, preparing stone for the St. Louis postoffice and custom house.

England has become so fond of American apples that it is estimated that she can certainly take an average of from 12,000 to 15,000 barrels per week for the whole market-year of nine months.

The decrease in the sales of high-priced gloves is due to the fact that American manufacturers have brought their gloves to the excellence of foreign makes, at prices low enough to place them within the reach of all.

Captain Joseph and his band are now nicely and snugly quartered at Fort Leavenworth, with nothing to do but eat their hog and hominy and smoke their pipes in peace.

The enterprise of shipping fresh beef from Boston to Europe, which at one time promised so well that refrigerator-rooms were put into several Cunarders, has failed, because the beef did not arrive in good order. Except for that, a regular business at fair profit was sure.

Mr. M. L. Bamberger, a wholesale wine dealer of Berlin, has lately published the component parts of the various brands of German, French and Spanish wines on sale in Germany. All were analyzed and found to contain deleterious matter. But few were made from grapes, and two were found entirely destitute of any natural product.

An Englishman in India has invented a solar battery consisting of two hundred small mirrors, so arranged that they focused the sun's upon a small copper boiler, and generated steam in it in twenty minutes. He contends that he could by the same means generate heat enough to drive the largest spinning-mill in Bombay.

The competition between the American manufacturers of gold watch cases has been so sharp that these articles are sold for the bare value of the gold and the cost of manufacture. The only profit is in the spring that throws the face of the watch open. This is weighed with the case, and the maker gets its value in gold.

A new wrinkle in adjusting watches: All the works except the mainspring are placed upon a circular frame, supported at the center, and by means of a geared rim round the inside of the case; this is turned entirely around once in two hours. This arrangement gives the works a circular motion round a common center, independent of their own proper movement, and secures a balance of all the parts by constantly changing their relative positions.

From Washington.

The president will not make any of his appointments of cadets at large to the military academy until next spring.

The president will hereafter decline to consider applications for appointment of civilians to places in the army, leaving that matter entirely to the secretary of war. In the meantime Adjutant General Townsend is endeavoring to have a stop put to the practice of appointing civilians to the army.

Advices have been received at the war department which lead to the belief that some of the Indians now committing depredations around the Black Hills were of the number recently in Washington with Spotted Tail and Red Cloud. About 3,000 are scattered along the route this side of the new agency, where the winter provisions are stored. They refuse to go on to the agency and no money is appropriated to bring the provisions to them. At the war department it is thought a general Sioux war will be waged during the winter, and that it will require a very large military force to meet the Indians.

The taxes paid by national banks vary greatly in different cities. The controller of the currency's report states that the aggregate national and state taxes on bank capital is 3 per cent. in Boston, and 5.4 per cent. in New York, 6.6 per cent. in Albany, 2.8 per cent. in Philadelphia, 1.9 per cent. in Pittsburg, 1.8 per cent. in New Orleans, 1.9 per cent. in Louisville, 4.6 per cent. in Cincinnati, 5.2 per cent. in Chicago and 3.9 per cent. in St. Louis. It will surprise many to find that the lowest rate of tax is in New Orleans. The difference between the rates there and at Albany is 4.8 per cent.

Notes of General Interest.

The country population of California is only equal to the population of San Francisco.

The population of France on the last day of last year was 36,995,840; Paris, 2,410,849.

There are now 2,265 letter carriers employed in the free delivery service of the United States.

The Canadian journals are exceedingly well satisfied with the award of the fisheries commisson.

The famous Madame Bonaparte, of Baltimore, is now over ninety years of age, and in very feeble health.

Europe has purchased $2,500,000 worth of our American fruit within the past twelve months, principally dried fruit.

"Two huudred and forty button kid gloves" are the latest novelty on hand. the wearer has to get into them feet first.

Twenty-nine women were advertised in a recent issue of a Chicago paper as about to preach and conduct religious services on the folpwing Sunday.

The Mexican Minister Zamacona, was a member of the Mexican claims commission and also a centennial commissioner. He is reported to be a man of sense and more than ordinary tact.

The official canvass shows that the vote of Colorado on the woman-suffrage question was: For, 6,612; against, 14,053; majority against, 7,441.

The Red Cross society has been dissolved, but the rival organization is in a flourishing condition and has sent a pretty good sum for the relief of the Russian and Turkish wounded.

Judge Ellison, of an English county court, declared recently that there is more perjury committeed by women than by man. He added: "They don't seem to care what they swear!" This judge may have a special spite against the sex.

The Anti-Horse-thief Association has 361 lodges and 8,000 members in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois. It does not encourage lynching, although that course is permitted in places where the officers of the law cannot be relied on to prosecute thieves.

In San Francisco a paper was found posted on a house intimating that those employing Chinese would be shot down without further warning. The author said he was a good shot, and meant business, and concluded the note as follows: "I have had no food for two days nor my family. This is the last notice—look sharp."

FEW people are aware of the damage done by wild geese on the wheat fields in California. They come in myriads, and pull up the young wheat by the roots, and eat it, roots and all. It is stated in the San Francisco Bulletin that, on one ranche alone, 6,000 geese have been killed this season, and in the county of Colusa alone, last season, the damage done by the web-footed fowls was estimated at $200,000. A whole family was lately poisoned by eating geese which had been eating corn soaked in strychnine. The California varieties of geese are the Canada, Snow and Laughing geese. Quails, also, have become so plentiful, in many places on the Pacific coast, that they are poisoned by thousands, as they destroy the grape crop. But a greater nuisance are the ground squirrels, which are nearly as bad as the grasshoppers this side of "The Divide." Great country this—for plagues nuisances.

THE HURON'S CONSTRUCTION.

Views of an Experienced Shipbuilder—Iron vs. Wood for War Vessels.

In an interview with Mr. Nathaniel McKay, the experienced ship builder who has just returned from an extensive visit to the ship and navy yards and docks of Europe, the following views were expressed respecting the late disaster to the Huron. Mr. McKay says the loss of the vessel cannot be attributed to anything except bad reckoning. "As to the efficiency of the vessel and her construction," he remarked: "there can be no question. I saw the vessel while building, and saw her when she first came to the Philadelphia navy yard; have also seen the specifications, and I have a copy of them. They are all in accordance with the rules of naval architecture. The class of vessels of which the Huron was one were, built very strong and substantial. The frames were made very heavy, and also the plating. Although never in favor of building iron vessels for the navy for cruisers, yet I consider the Huron as good as any that can be built of her class. She was intended to carry light batteries, and would have been a good vessel for the purpose for which she was built if they could have kept her afloat. But the moment she grounded on any bank or shoal she would be worthless. In Europe they cover all their iron hulls with wood to the water line. They build iron ships for navy purposes as cruisers in Europe because they have no live-oak timber, such as we have. If the Huron had been a live-oak ship, she would have thumped in the sand for weeks, perhaps for months; but this would not have saved the lives of those on board, for the sea would still have washed over her. These were experimental ships, ordered by congress to ascertain whether the iron ship would last as long as a wooden one, and we now have the result of the first, which I have no doubt will be the case with the others if they should touch bottom, under almost any circumstances. They are built to stand the sea, and that is all they can possibly bear. Under any other circumstances they would be immediately disabled. The British government is now building steel corvettes in Glascow and covering them with wood (four-inch teak) on the outside of the iron plating. The United States' government can not afford to build their crusiers of iron. Farragut said he would rather fight in a wooden ship than an iron one. In regard to the Amerique—the French iron steamer—as compared with the Huron, it must be remembered that the former was about four hundred and fifty feet long and fifty feet wide, giving her a very large surface, and laid in a bed of sand off Long Branch, which was as soft as possible could be made for her. In the case of the Huron she was a little short vessel, one hundred and seventy-five long, thirty-two wide and sixteen deep. She was going at the rate of ten knots per hour when she struck, and the momentum of the vessel, with the force of the propeller and the sails and the sea, dashed her on the shore with a velocity probably ten times the weight of the ship, which the hull could not withstand, and she must necessarily have become a total wreck. In regard to Mr. John Roach's statement, which I read in the Herald this morning, I know when the specifications were made for the ships they were made very heavy, in order to see whether they would last as long as a live oak ship, five of which were under course of construction. Many people find fault and criticise the the construction of a ship when they have not the least knowledge of the hull, the engine, the sails or the rigging."—*N. Y. Herald.*

..A little Ottawa miss was taken to church for the first time, after being duly impressed with the necessity that she should keep "as still as a mouse." She behaved herself well until the preacher became warmed up to his work, and then, thinking he was going too far, she raised her finger, and looking straight at him, cried: "See here, don't you make so much noise."

..According to a scientific journal, 15 per cent. of the inmates of lunatic asylums are musicians and singers. It neglects to tell the percentage of musical lunatics outside of asylums, playing accordeons, fiddles, pianos, brass horns, and hand-organs.

SANTA CLAUS'S VISIT.

BY FANNY WARNER BICKNELL.

On snow-clad hills, as still midnight,
The moonshine lies in beauty bright,
The world is hushed in slumber now,
For balmy sleep from every brow
Hath smoothed away the lines of care,
And stamped repose, 2-night's blessing—there.
Day's busy, bustling crowd is still,
Relieved awhile from cares that fill
All hearts wherein the pulse of life
Exceeds the throbs of infant strife;
The mingled voices of the crowd
No longer heard—each head is bow'd
In mansion rich and poor abode,
Forgetful of the heavy load
Poor human nature has to bear,
In homespun clad or silken wear—
The sweeter sleep to toil is given
Than to the idle, blessed of heaven,
With every luxury wealth can bring.
While laborers toil and blithely sing,
The rich oft rave in discontent
And mourn at eve the day misspent.
But midnight brings to all surcease
From daylight's cares—to all sweet peace;
Thus resting in the close embrace
Of Sleep—night keeper of our race—
The world awaits the coming dawn
That ushers in glad Christmas morn.
The spirit of the season by
Steals swiftly, while each youthful eye
Close sealed remains by Nature's laws,
As o'er each house goes Santa Claus.
A pack of gifts his back bestrides,
As down the chimney quickly glides
The fur-clad elf, with pipe and whip;
His twinking eyes and smiling lip
A promise give of something nice,
As through the room like creeping mice
His footsteps glide, he stops the last
The eyes of children in the bed
Where hang the stockings overhead,
With nods, and winks, and funny shrugs,
His well-filled pack around he lugs,
Until a chair he finds to mount,
So that their number he may count
"One, two, three, four—I was five last year,
(He stops to wipe away a tear.)
I'll look again—the smallest feet
Are missing; they have gone to meet
The babe of Bethlehem, at whose birth
The shepherd sang, 'Good Will on Earth.'"
He glanced around; on bed of straw
The little errand boy he saw;
"Ah, there lies one I did not see,
'Tis likely he, too, dreams of me;
To him warm clothes I'll give instead
This toy I brought the child that's dead."
Then stooping down, and putting back
The silver trumpet, from his pack
The other gifts he quickly drew,
And stuffed the stockings number two,
And three, and four; the smallest
He filled the last. When all was done
He chuckled low, and made a pause,
Then vanished—dear old santa Claus.

John Holland's Merry Christmas.

The day before Christmas every store window was wreathed in green, every rare and beautiful thing exposed to tempt the passer-by was labeled "Christmas gift." Even the corner groceries and baker shops had green boughs and a generous display of ginger-bread horses and white-sugar hearts enriched with gilt beading, and impossible pink fowls, popularly supposed to be doves. There were myriads of dolls and hundreds of sleds, with names taking in the whole animal kingdom. The streets were crowded with fur clad, smiling women, who were making the last selections of pretty things with which to swell out the fair proportions of many little stockings.

John Holland, leaving his office earlier than usual, made his way slowly through these waves of happy womanhood, carrying his aching head a little forward, watching with sullen eyes the joy about him, until the tide of the bitterness in his heart rose high, and forced from his lips a curse on the morrow that would bring so much happiness to others and so much misery to him. A lonely man was John Holland, over whose dead past stood no monumental marble with name and date thereon—a weary man by his drooping shoulders and uncouth gait—an unhappy man by the wistful look that crept now and then into his sullen eyes. And so in weary, lonely fashion he walked on, leaving the city far behind, and coming at last upon a country road that wound its rough, snow-powdered length through shrubby hollows and up the hills between leafless gray-barked trees. Now and then a thin sheet of ice cracked beneath his feet—he did not hear it above his head, close to the soft, gray clouds, fat, inky crows sailed round and round, cawing companionably—he did not heed them; while here and there the bare, brown fingers of some shrub or tree held out to him a bunch of scarlet berries, which he did not see. All the grays and browns, touched here and there with green and scarlet, appealed to him in vain. To-morrow was Christmas day. He stood alone—he made no one's happiness; therefore to him the world could not be fair. He remembered how, not many years before, he and his wife stole tip-toe through the house, to cram with candies and many wondrous toys the little woolen stockings hanging near the fire. He remembered how the Christmas sunlight, striking through the frosted window pane, turned into burnished gold the ruddy locks of their sturdy baby boy; and now he stumbled up the hillside, blind with rage and pain. Now two mounds of chill, cold earth held all that made life a dear and precious thing to him. At the top of the hill he paused involuntarily to regain his breath. Up there the wind blew keenly, the ghastly gleam of ice could be seen in the river winding far below. The wood was darkened by many slender pines and stunted hemlock trees—a wintry scene—and Holland thrust his hands deep in his pockets and turned to retrace his steps, when a sound broke the silence all about him—a sound that set his heart a throbbing, a sound that drew his feet from the beaten road and sent them striding through the brown dead leaves until they brought him to the spot where little Ruth sat sobbing.

A strange place to find a child, yet there she sat, flat on the ground, her well-worn, copper-toed shoes stretched out before her, one little hand doubled under her arm, as a bird draws its foot under its wing, the other hand grasping with all its childish might a branch of one of the many small hemlock trees growing about her. So mottled with cold were her face, her hands, and her little bare knees, she might have passed for a figure carved in good old castile soap.

John Holland's sudden appearance did not startle her in the least. She seemed to accept him as one accepts things in dreams, without surprise or fear.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"I'm cold."

How strange the childish voice sounded up there in that chill, bleak place!

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm waiting."

"Poor baby!" thought John Holland, "you are learning the great lesson early. I should like to know the brute who left you sitting here while he or she drinks or gossips in the town below."

"Whe are you waiting for, child?"

The chill, tear-stained little face broke into smiles as she whispered:

"I'm waiting for Santa Claus."

The answer smote him with astonishment. As a boy he had heard much of the genial old man for whom little Ruth was waiting, but he had never heard of his paying a visit or transacting any business in the day-time. So he told her; but she, looking sorrowfully wise, answered:

"Yes, I know he goes down the chimneys at night, but to-morrow is Christmas, Aunty says so, and Santa Claus must come here to-day to get his trees."

"Why, yes; his trees like this, you know," and after a slow, numb sort of search for something in the depths of her pocket, her cold little hand drew out a leaf of a child's story-book, torn and soiled, but bearing on one side a highly-colored picture of the good Santa Claus.

"There," she continued, eagerly, "see the tree he has on his arm—they don't grow in the city; see, he must come up here to get them."

"I understand; but why wait here in the cold for him, when he night he will come down your chimney with all sorts of pretty toys?"

"But he won't come; he does not know the house is here; he thinks all the boys and girls live down there in the city; so when he comes to get his tree I'm going to say, "Please, Santa Claus, I live here on the hill. Aunty says I'm pretty good. Can't I have a doll-baby and a picture book?"

John Holland's voice was very tender when he spoke again to ask her name, and then he lifted her to her feet and said:

"I'll tell you what we will do, Ruth. You go home before Aunty misses you and thinks you are lost, and I'll stay here and watch for Santa Claus."

She shook her head.

"You'll get tired and go away."

"No, I won't; I'll wait until I see him."

"Truly?"

"Truly."

Little Ruth raised her face and Holland kissed her baby mouth.

"Where do you live, child?"

"Only a little ways back in the woods; there is the path." And running across the dead leaves she struck into a faint narrow path, and following it disappeared behind the trees. Holland watched her out of sight, then tying his handkerchief to the top branch of that tree which Ruth had selected as the very one Santa Claus most wanted, turned his face cityward and strode down the hill.

Low down in the west he noticed a long golden rift in the dull gray sky, and it widened and broadened until the golden glory burst its bonds and flooded all the scenes with wintry sunlight. Even so had the childish faith of little Ruth forced its way through clouds of loneliness and grief to fill his heart with sunlight. More than one woman smiled that night at John Holland as he stood in a crowded store, examining with supernatural gravity dolls dressed and undressed, A light wagon carried him and his books and toys out from the city and up the woody hill to Ruth's poor home. After peering into the window like an amiable burglar he summoned Ruth's aunt. A few words outside the door, a gentle little laugh, a tear or two, a great rustling of paper, and then the door was closed, and Holland, whistling softly to himself, made his way to the tree from which waved a white handkerchief, and, after much hacking, pulling and digging, succeeded in removing it. Driving home under the starry sky great tears filled his eyes as he thought of "the wife and baby boy gone before;" there was no curse on his lips, only a tremulous smile, as he thought of the joyous awakening for little Ruth to-morrow. Next day John Holland gave a dinner; there were four at the table—Holland himself, Ruth, Ruth's aunt, and Ruth's doll Rosey, who ate nothing, but looked lovely and smiled indefatigably. It would be hard to tell how many times Ruth laid her doll on Holland's knee, whereupon her waxy eyelids instantly would close and she fell into a most profound sleep. 'Twould be harder still to tell how eagerly she questioned him as to the exact appearance of Santa Claus when he came for that tree—the very tree she sat beside when she was waiting.

And John Holland telling stories to the little Ruth, hugging her precious Rosey, had indeed a Merry Christmas, for on making the happiness of another he had found his own.—*Clara Morris, in N. Y. Graphic.*

How to Cook Christmas Turkey.

Young housekeepers may find the following hints useful in preparing for the Christmas roast:

The turkey should be well singed and freed from "pin-feathers," and thoroughly drawn by opening one side just below the breast-bone. Be sure to take everything out that is inside, not forgetting the parts lying between the ribs and the "soul." Wipe dry, after washing well in cold water. Then dip the turkey two seconds into boiling water, and immediately two seconds into ice-water. This will give it a very plump appearance. Cut the neck off close to the body, leave the skin longer, draw it over the neck, and tie; also tie the legs close to the side, having cut off the first joint. Fasten the wings to the sides with fine skewers, having cut off the pinions. Put the gizzard, liver, heart and neck to boil in a quart of water; allow two and a quarter hours to roast a turkey weighing ten pounds. If the specimen happen to be one of many summers, boil it one hour or so before roasting. Baste with salt and water once, then cover with lumps of butter, and afterward baste with the drippings.

THE DRESSING.—Take three pints of bread-crumbs for a medium-sized turkey; chop finely, with one-quarter pound of salt pork, a good lump of butter, salt, pepper-sauce and savory or majorum, and break in two or three eggs to make it of the right consistency. Fill both the breast and body, and sew up. Riched mashed potatoes also make a good stuffing.

THE GRAVY.—Having boiled the giblets in a quart of water till tender, strain the broth thus obtained into a dripping-pan, having removed the turkey. Take the liver and mash it very fine with the back of a spoon and return to the gravy. Then chop very fine the heart and gizzard, and add to the gravy, and thicken with browned flour; stir and season well; boil five minutes.

Christmas Chimes.

This great festival of the church, observed in all Christian countries, is unlike Easter, for the shadow of the Cross does not rest upon it, and no strains of sorrow mingle with the carols which commemorate the birth of the child Jesus of Bethlehem. Merry gatherings and unbounded fun in our homes, ringing hallelujahs in garland-entwined churches, join together on this one day in a double devotion of joy. Around Christmas-tide are clustered many superstitious fancies, but all of them are beautiful. One of the oldest is that of all powers of evil are prostrate from Christmas Eve to Christmas night. Shakspeare says, in "Hamlet:"

Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Christmas does not meet with the same recognition here, nor is there so much observance of it as in European countries, but the fact that each year there is a growing tendecy to more heartily celebrate the time is another proof that history repeats itself, and that the efforts of the Puritans to obliterate it from the calendar, has been futile, for although they denounced the observance of all such days, excepting Sunday, as superstitious and unscriptural, and yet it had its effect for generations, yet these old days which bring before the memory the three great events in the life of the "Man of Nazareth," especially the first, are resuming their influence over the people, and a few years hence Merrie Christmas may be celebrated as heartily among ourselves as it was in "England of ye olden time," when

All haile! with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crowe,
Brought tidings of salvation down;
'Twas Chrismas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Chrismas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas Gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Many seldom or never reall the fact that it is the anniversary of the Saviour of men—the Divine Philanthropist; but His character has unalterably shaped the character of observances of His anniversary. Being the Prince of Peace and good will, the day that commemorates His entrance into the world has become the day, more than all others, of love and fraternity. It is the day when, if ever, one yields to the spirit of human sympathy, because it is inhonor of one whose sympathies were as wide as humanity. It is the day when there is a universal impulse toward good deeds, because He from whom the day is called went about doing good. Thus whatever one may think of Christ[illegible] the nobility and p[illegible] Greatness and goo[illegible] illustrated set in motion [illegible] influences that go on multiplying forever. Reason may deny them or their origin, but they live nevertheless. They are manifestations of immortality among men—the form in which man may surely live through all the generations.

Germany and England are the two countries which pay the greatest attention to Christmas, and as it is from the loins of these two nations that America sprung, it is not surprising that the celebration of this festival should be growing in favor among her people. It is a curious fact that in the two countries mentioned there is a great diversity in its mode of observance. Santa Claus and the Krisskringle are entirely unknown to English children. They get their presents in a mere matter-of-fact way, and expect all of their friends to bring them a "Christmas box," and until the last few years the glories of the Christmas tree had not been revealed to them. But it is in the homes of Germany and England that the brightest side of Christmas enjoyment can be seen. In the morning, all go to church. Even those who go at no other time will not fail to visit church on Christmas morn; but all strict religious observance of the day ceases at the close of the service, and after dinner, a very important part of the proceedings, which has to be provided with certain dishes—roast beef, plum pudding and mince pies being indispensable, and in the wealthier families a huge boar's head is provided, and all who sat under the hospitable mahogany of an English gentleman on that day, will have a very good idea of what a substantial square meal is like. In their Christmas parties there is a notable relaxation of those rules of etiquette which are on other occasions so strictly adhered to, for one day in the year old and middle-aged people become children again; all join in Sir Rogers de Coverly, blind-man's buff, snap dragon, and other games of a like character. The mistletoe hangs in the centre of the room.

And many a maiden's cheek is red,
By lips and laughter thither led
And fluttering bosoms conceal and go
Under the dried mistletoe.

These Christmas merry-makings are jolly gatherings, and there is one feature about them very pleasant to look upon. The care that is taken of the poor and needy—even criminals are not forgotten, and are provided with some amusements and a good dinner. Once in the cycle of the year a universal brotherhood and charity prevails among all. "A Merry Christmas to you!" is the salutation that rings out from cheery lips on every hand, and the happiest are those that have the most bounty to spare.

Then leave your door upon the latch
For whosoever comes;
The poorer they, more welcome give,
And scatter out your crumbs;
Soon winter fall upon your life,
The day of reckoning comes:
Against your sins, by high decree
Are weighed those scattered crumbs.

Significance of the Fall of Kars

Kars is so well known throughout the east that its surrender into Russian hands will be regarded in England with a certain degree of trepidation Those eastern interests of Great Britain, which every Englishman is so ready to go to war to defend, are certainly threatened now. Persians, Circassians, and the wild tribes of Asia will be thrilled by the intelligence that Armenia is practically in Russian possession. Once before this has happened; but Russia was then fighting allied Europe; and the disasters in the Crimea compelled the eventual relinquishment of the advantages gained in Asia Minor. But the former reduction of Kars will long be remembered in the east as a notable event in the history of that struggle. It was only a few days ago that Disraeli dismissed all hopes of speedy mediation or interference by England. He announced that the policy of neutrality would be maintained so long as British interests were not assailed. The time has not yet come when it can be truly said that those jealously guarded interests are menaced. But the fall of Kars must nearly affect the object of Great Britain's solicitude. So far as the conclusion of the war is concerned, the event may, in this intent, be more important than now appears.—*New York Times.*

A Budget of Home-Made Christmas Gifts.

Who is it that every year invents the thousand-and-one new and pretty things which hangs on Christmas-trees, and stuff the toes of Christmas stockings? Who is it who has so wise and watchful an eye for the capacities of little people, and the tastes of bigger ones, providing for each, planning for tiny purses with almost nothing in them, as well as for fat wallets stuffed with bank-bills and suggesting something which can be made, accepted and enjoyed by everybody, large and small, all the wide world over? Who can it be that possesses this inexhastible fertility of invention and kindness of heart? No ordinary human being, you may be sure. Not Father Santa Claus! He has enough to do with distributing the presents after they are made; besides, fancy-work is not in a man's line,—not even a saint's! But what so likely as that he should have a mate, and that it is to her we are indebted for all this? What an immense work-basket Mother Santa Claus's must be! What a glancing thimble and swift needle and thread! Can't you imagine her throwing aside her scissors and spool bag to help the dear saint "tackle up" and load the sledge? And who knows but she sits behind as he drives over the roofs of the universe on the blessed eve, and holds the reins while Santa Claus dispenses to favored chimneys the innumerable pretty things which he and she have chuckled over together months before the rest of us knew anything about them?

This is not a fact. It can be proved in any way, for none of us knows anything about the Santa Clauses or their abode. There is no telegraphing, or writing to the selectmen of their own town to inquire about them; they haven't even a postoffice address. But admitting it to be a fiction, is surely a pleasant one; so, as the children say, "Let's play that it is true," and proceed to see what Mother Santa Claus has in her basket for us this year. We will first pull out some easy things for the benefit of those beginners who are not yet up to all the tricks of the trade; then some a little harder for the more advanced class, and, at the bottom of all, big girls not afraid to dive will find plenty of elaborate designs suited to their taste and powers.

A WALL LETTER-HOLDER.

This is something which quite a little boy could make. Cut out three pieces of thin wood, a foot long by six inches wide; smooth and sand-paper two of them, bore a hole in each corner and in the middle of one side, and fasten them together with fine wire, cord, ribbon, or the small brass pins which are used for holding manuscripts. The pieces should be held a little apart. Cut one end of the third piece into some ornamental shape, glue it firmly to the back of one of the others, and suspend it from the wall by a hole bored in the top. It will be found a useful thing to hold letters or pamphlets. A clever boy could make this much handsomer by cutting a pattern over the front, or an initial, or monogram, or name in the middle. This wood should be oiled or shellacked.

SHOE-CASES.

These cases are meant to take the place of paper when shoes are to be wrapped up to go in a trunk. They are made of brown crash, bound with red worsted braid. One end is pointed so as to turn over and button down, or the top has strings over the braid to tie the mouth up. There should be three or four made at a time, as each holds but one pair of shoes; and you will find that mamma or your unmarried aunts will like them very much.

A NEW KIND OF CHRISTMAS PIE.

Nothing can be droller than to hang up one's stockings, and nothing prettier or more full of meaning than a Christmas-tree. But for some of you who may like to make a novelty in these time-honored ways, we will just mention that it is good fun to make a "Christmas-pie" in an enormous tin dish-pan, with a make-believe crust of yellow cartridge paper, ornamented with twirls and flourishes of same, held down with pins, and have it served on Christmas Eve, full of pretty things and sugar-plums, jokes and jolly little rhymes fastened to the parcels. The cutting should be done beforehand, and hidden by the twirls of paper; but the carver can pretend to use knife and fork, and spooning out the packages will insure a merry time for all at the table. And one more suggestion. Little articles, wrapped in white paper, can be put inside cakes, baked and iced, and thus furnish amusing surprise for the "pie" or the Christmas-tree.—*St. Nicholas for November.*

Love Out Toward the Setting Sun.

Washita (Kansas) Herald: They were leaning on the balustrade of the bridge, looking into the water. He had a hand like a palmleaf fan, an ear like a pickle dish, and no collar. She had a foot like a center-table and no teeth. They were cooing. He cooed first, and in a tone as gentle and musical as a Kansas zephyr, he said: "Nancy, jist as soon as I sell my purtaters I'm goin to claim you fur better or fur wus." Then she cooed, and with the customary shrewdness that women are wont to display in emergencies, she queried in a soft, sweet monotone. "Buck, what air taters fetchin' in the stores now?" And thus did they coo till it got too cool.

A HEROIC GIRL.

Wherever the deeds of heroic women are remembered or recited, the story of Madeleine de Vercheres should not fail to be repeated. It is one of probably very many that have been overlooked and almost forgotten; but Mr. Parkman has rescued it from its obscurity, and embalmed it in the pages of his latest work, "Count Frontenac, and New France under Louis XIV." The incidents of the tale—ascribing, as they do, almost superhuman courage, sagacity and intrepidity to a young girl scarcely entered in her teens—make a considerable demand upon credulity: yet the historian who relates them had before him two versions of the narrative as it was taken from the heroine's lips; and himself, a cautious investigator of the value of evidence, accepted them as authentic. Then, too, Madeleine came of heroic stock. Her father was in a French regiment, and was, in 1690, a commander of the Fort Castle Dangerous, of Canada. He was at one time forced to be absent, leaving his wife and young family with only three or four armed men for their defense. A band of savage Iroquois fell upon the fort; but the daring soldier's wife, with her few followers, kept the bloodthirsty assailants at bay until a company of troops came to her relief, at the end of two days.

It was two years after this that Madeleine, now fourteen years old, happened to be at the fort at Vercheres, twenty miles below Montreal, while her father was on duty at Quebec, and her mother was at Montreal. The place was under the command of her father, but, at the moment, was occupied only by two soldiers; two brothers of Madeleine, aged respectively ten and twelve years; an old man of eighty, and a number of women and children. On the morning of Oct. 22, Madeleine was on the river's bank, not far from the entrance to the fort, with a hired man named Lavislette Suddenly guns were heard from the place where the settlers about Vercheres were at work. They announced an assault of the dreaded Iroquois. "Run, mademoiselle, run; here come the Iroquois!" cried Lavislette, as a party of forty or fifty Indians appeared within pistol-shot, brandishing their tomahawks and uttering their shrill war whoops.

Madeleine ran to the fort with the speed of the wind, while the Iroquois, seeing they could not overtake her, sent a volley of bullets whistling about her ears. When within hearing of the fort, Madeline shouted "To arms! to arms!" but no one responded. The two cowardly soldiers had taken refuge in the stout block-house connected with the fort by a covered way, while a couple of women were crying, in an excess of terror, at the gate. The girl swiftly pushed them inside the fort, made the entrance secure, and then ran around the palisades to test their security. Several had fallen of the enemy, but they were hurriedly set up, and then Madeline sped to the block-house for ammunition. There she met the craven-spirited soldiers, one of whom was in the act of lighting a match. "What are you going to do with that match?" demanded the girl, "Light the powder and blow us all up," was the reply. "Leave this place, you miserable coward!" cried Madeline with so resolute a tone that the man unhesitatingly obeyed.

The girl then threw off her bonnet, thrust a hat on her head as a disguise, and, seizing a gun, exhorted her young brothers to fight with her to the death in defence of their country and their religion. Inspired by her fearless bearing the lads, together with the recreant soldiers, began to fire through the loop-holes at the Iroquois, who, ignorant of the scanty force within the fort, were reluctant to attack it. To further the appearance of a vigorous defense, and also hoping to warn some soldiers hunting in the vicinity, Madeline ordered a cannon to be fired. Meanwhile the women and children in the fort kept up a ceaseless wailing, until their spirited young defender peremptorily ordered them to be still.

Presently a canoe, containing the family of a settler seeking refuge at the fort, was seen approaching the landing-place. Madeline pleaded with the soldiers to go to their aid, but the caitiffs dared not. She then went out alone to convey the new-comers to the fort. The Iroquois were in full sight, but the bold conduct of the girl made them believe there was plenty of soldiers to sustain her in case of assault, and they allowed her to pass in with her little party unmolested. A terrible storm of wind and snow came on after sunset, and Madeline feared that, in the commotion and darkness of the night, the savages would attempt to scale the palisades. She therefore assembled her troops—they were now six, old and young, altogether—and said to them, "I will take charge of the fort, with an old man of eighty, and another who never fired a gun; and you, Pierre Fontain, with LaBoute and Lachet (our two soldiers), will go to the block-house with the women and children, because that is the strongest place; and, if am taken, don't surrender, even if I am cut to pieces and burned before your eyes. The enemy can't hurt you in the block-house, if you make the least show of resistance."

This braver than Joan of Arc then placed her two brothers on two of the bastions and the old man of eighty on another, while she held a fourth, and all through that terrible night their cheery cries of "All's well!" resounded from point to point in the fort. The place seemed alive with soldiers, and the Iroquois decided over their council fire that the fort was too strong to be captured while such vigilance was maintained in its defense.

At one o'clock in the morning one of Madeline's sentinels called out that the remnant of cattle left by the Indians was at the gate. Madeline, used to the tricks of the red men, feared this might be a ruse whereby they hoped to get within the palisades. However, with great precaution, her two brothers standing by the entrance with guns ready cocked, she finally opened the gate and let in the cattle. With the return of daylight, the hopes of the besieged party revived. Nevertheless, the enemy were still present, and there could be no relaxation of their watchfulness. For forty-eight hours Madeline never entered her father's house, nor did she pause to eat or sleep, but remained at her post on the bastion, or paced from the fort to the block-house to see that her people were at their duty, and behaving with proper spirit.

For a week the Iroquois kept the fort in constant alarm, but at last relief was sent, and a lieutenant with forty men arrived in the night. He came silently, fearing that the fort had surrendered. One of the soldiers, hearing a slight noise, cried, "Qui Vive?" Madeline, worn with fatigue, was dozing, with her head resting on a table and her gun lying across her arms. The sentinel roused her with the report that he had heard a noise from the river, and the girl sprang to the bastion. "Who are you?" she loudly called. The glad response came, "We are Frenchmen; it is La Monnerie, who comes to bring you help." the gate was opened. Madeline stationed a sentinel at the spot, and went down to the river to meet her deliverers. "Monsieur; I surrender my arms to you," was her greeting to the lieutenant. On his entrance he inspected the fort, and found everything in perfect order and a sentinel on each bastion. "It is time to relieve them, Monsieur," coolly said the young girl; "we have not been off our bastions for a week."

And thus ends the story of Madeline of Vercheres. One of the brothers who assisted her in the defense of Vercheres was killed at the attack of Haverhill in 1708, sixteen years later. A pension for life was bestowed upon the heroine of Vercheres, through the interposition of Madame de Ponchartrain, wife of the French Minister. Many years after the occurrance of the incidents here described, they were written down from the recital of the chief actor, by the order of the Marquis de Beauharnais, governor of Canada.—*Chicago Tribune.*

ABOUT WOMEN.

A new and stylish color is toad green.

The Breton costume is now worn only by young girls.

Some of the handsomest imported dresses are made with the round waist, which is worn with a belt.

The long blouse reaching down to the knees, with a yoke and worn with a belt, is one of the repulsive fashions.

Unless the coming woman is born with a longer arm than those now in use, she can't wear any more buttons on her kid gloves than the present fashion permits.

The new material for morning dresses very much resembles the old "Dolly Varden" cloth, as it is covered with large designs, such as birds, flowers and insects.

Handkerchiefs can no more be stowed away in pockets, but must be carried in the hand or attached to the waist, and therefore none but nice ones can be used.

The fashionable style of wearing the hair is [illegible] outside the front of the bonnet, and resembling false teeth in the stiffness and rarity, are no longer in vogue.

A little girl who had often heard her mother speak of her father, who was somewhat bald, as being a self-made man, asked her one day why, if he was a "self-made" man, he didn't put more hair on his head.

Holland has a town where visitors are required to le