

## IN LUCK.

Oh, the luckiest boy in the world am I,  
I've hung up my stocking, not too high  
On the bed post, ever so close to me,  
And the foot hangs just over my  
mouth, you see,  
And when it is dark, and mama comes  
To put in the candy and sugar plums,  
She'll pour and pour, but strange to  
say,  
That stocking will never be full, some  
way;  
And I'll tell you why, if you want to  
know,  
There's a great, big, monstrous hole  
in the toe.

## CHRISTMAS FROLIC.

The scene is a cotton plantation in Louisiana; the time, Christmas Eve. Company is coming from town, and the darkies are going to have a dance in the barn after the children have had their Christmas tree.

Miss Mattie has been at work all day with her girl friends who are visiting her, and young Mars Willie has climbed to the top of the barn, getting his good clothes dusty and his black curls full of cobwebs, fixing the tree and hanging the presents for the "little niggers."

The candles on the brackets around the wall are lighted, and an old three-legged sheet-iron stove in a corner gets red-hot and tries to go up its own flue, warming the room.

Now the children are sent to bed. The grown darkies huddle themselves about the wall, Uncle Ebenezer with his fiddle, and Jim with his banjo, take their places and tune up. Matt Bean must open the dance with a break-down. The music strikes up "Chicken in the Bread-Tray", and Matt shakes one foot and then the other, apparently to see that the hinges are in good order.

Now he is off.

Back-step and double-shuffle! cut the pigeon-wing! rock de cradle, and tipety-toe!

"Jis as easy! Git erlong dar nigger!"

"Chicken in de bread-tray, peck, peck, peck!"

"Lady in the parlor, step, step step!"

"Umphu, childun, give me room!"

The white folks clap their hands, sitting in chairs around the stove. The darkies pat time, slapping their knees and rolling their eyes up to the rafters. The music grows faster and wilder; Matt reels and rocks and keeps up a chanting undertone of words to the tune.

Mars Will comes in, sleek and smiling, with flakes of lint in his back hair and on his clothes.

No one notices him.

Matt carries the day.

The sweat rolls down his ebon face and the chant come only in broken pants.

"Time's up," cries someone and the music stops.

Then up jumps ole Massa.

"(Give us Dixie. 'Nezer!" he cries, "and all clear the floor."

He seizes ole miss round the waist and commands the boys to choose their partners. Ole Missus resists with all the laughing might of her 185 pounds but to no purpose. She is lugged to her place and the younger couples fill up their place in the cotillion.

"S'lute yo' partner, an' balance all!" cries ole Massa (they have had an egg-nog and a cherry-bounce since the boys came from the town that afternoon) flapping his coat-tails nearly over his shoulders and singing with the fiddle:

Oh, away down yander in de land of  
cotton,

Cinnamon seed an' sandy bottom,  
Look away, away, away in Dixie!

"Fust four forard an' back agin!" he goes on, never letting loose ole Miss' hand, for if he should she would make a break for the wall.

Oh the buckwheat cakes an' de good  
ole butter

Make my moult go flitter flitter flutter,  
Look away, away, away in Dixie!

The darkies sing to, patting their knees and saying:

"Yaw, yaw! go it ole Massa! You an' ole Missus is younger en 'em all!"

But alas! Ole Missus refuses to sustain her record. She breaks clean down, declines to budge, and Will and the girls interfere in her behalf. Off they scurry to the house, Will nearly carrying his mother, and the darkies have the floor.

Up comes the white moon, but her white fingers carry no sleep on their tips this time. On goes the dance till the candles are exhausted and the roosters are crowing on Christmas morning.

Meanwhile in the cabin, old mothers and grannies creep over the sleeping children to the little yarn stocking dangling from the smoked jams, and the flickering firelight plays on wooden dolls, tin horses, and red oranges in their hands.

Up in the big house glad feet that never tire patter up and down the stairs. Slam! go the doors, with a flash of light on the cold white floor of the halls. It is late, but the boys must have an egg-nogg, and ole Massa his apple toddy. Ole Missus directs Mattie in the brewing, sitting by the fire, too done up for active

service.

The younger children turn over and mumble in their sleep, disturbed by the unwonted noise and lamplight.

But after awhile, silence and darkness come. The children sleep; the boys and girls dream of parties and each other; ole Massa snores; ole Missus thinks of the first daughter, who died the first Christmas they moved in the new house—and the moon goes down, the stars fade away and a new day creeps over the red bluff of the river, and stands tiptoe on the brink of its eternity.

Boom! goes the first bladder-gun.

"Chris'mas gif, ole Missus!"

"Chris'mas gif, ole Massa!"

It is Christmas morning on the plantation.—Selected.

## Colonial Christmas.

The Puritans were sorely tried by the way in which Christmas was observed in the colony in 1658, and at the first General Court subsequently held the following law was passed:

"For preventing disorders arising in several places within this jurisdiction by reason of some still observing such festivals as were superstitiously kept in other countries, to the great dishonor of God and offence of others, it is therefore ordered by this court and the authority thereof that whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like either by forbearing of labor, feasting or any other way, upon any such account as aforesaid, every such person so offending shall pay for every such offence five shillings as a fine to the country."

The following from a letter from Amos Lawrence to his son, William K. Lawrence, then at school in France shows the beginning of the change of sentiment. Its date is December 27, 1830:

"I suppose Christmas is observed with great pomp in France. It is a day which our Puritan forefathers, in their separation from the Church of England, endeavored to blot out from these days of religious festivals; and this because it was observed with so much pomp by the Romish Church. In this, as well as in many other things, they were unreasonable as though they had said they would not eat bread as the Roman Catholics do. I trust and hope the time is not far distant when Christmas will be observed by the descendants of the Puritans with all suitable respect as the first and highest holiday of Christians, combining all the feelings and views of New England Thanksgiving with all the other feelings appropriate to it."