FRANCES STOREY'S HAPPIEST CHRISTMAS

By HILDA RICHMOND

"Papa says one of you girls must accept Aunt Caroline's invitation for the holidays," said Mrs. Storey, with a troubled look on her motherly face. "I am sorry to have you go to that dead-alive little village, but you know papa seldom says 'must,' so we will have to make the best of it. Now which will it be?"

"It's simply impossible for me to go, mamma," said Margaret, whirling lightly around on the piano stool. I've practiced for weeks on this Christmas music and the entertainment could not go on without my playing. Frances or Kate will have to sacrifice this time, and it's only fair, for they have not so much on their minds as I have."

"Why, Margaret, my time is as precious as yours," said Kate, looking up from the new dress she was finishing, "and besides I am going to sing at the party next week."

"I might go if someone would finish dressing these dolls for the tree down at the mission. Poor Aunt Carrie must be lonesome since her only daughter went to Oregon to live and I'd like to see her again. She used to let us make little pies and muss around in her clean kitchen, and at home Sarah never allowed us to spoil her domain," said Frances.

"I'll attend to the dolls," said Margaret, promptly, "and help you pack your trunk if you need help. I have no doubt you will have a good time at Cedar Hill, for Aunt always thought so much of you."

"And I'll finish the white dress so you can take it along," added Kate, inwardly rejoicing over the solution of the vexed question. "You may have my blue silk waist, too. It is a little too tight for me and nobody down there will suspect it was not made specially for you."

In spite of her 19 years the whole family considered Frances a mere child and no one but the mother thought it made any difference that she was to spend the holidays in a lonely house with Aunt Caroline, instead of having a share in the city celebrations, which she so much enjoyed. Mrs. Storey slipped a number of packages marked "open on Christmas eve" in the big trunk and provided a stylish traveling dress, but her heart welled as the trim figure disappeared amid a chorus of farewells and the noise of the busy station. Mr. Storey gave his daughter some bright gold pieces with the instructions to spend them as she liked, but Frances reflected that she was likely to bring them home gain for want of a chance to invest in anything except goods found in a country store at Cedar Hill.

It was late in the afternoon before the brakeman announced "Cedar Hill," and Frances was surprised to see a number of passengers get off. "Is this really Cedar Hill?" she asked of an old man near.

"It really is," he answered with a smile. "If I am not mistaken, you are Fanny Storey that used to play with my granddaughters. Don't you remember Grandfather Devon?"

"Of course I do. How are Nellie and Ruth? The reason I thought this was not Cedar Hill is because the town when I knew it, was only a little place, and this looks like a city."

"We've had a boom since those days. Here, Horace, help Miss Storey with her luggage. I can take care of myself. This is the young lady who used to play with the girls a dozen years ago, but I don't suppose she remembers the freckled boy who built playhouses for her."

"Yes I do," said Frances, shaking hands with the elegantly dressed young man. "You always built the very nicest houses of any boys we knew, Mr. Devon, and I still recollect them with pleasure."

"It used to be, Horace," put in the old gentleman, "and if I remember correctly, this young rascal called you Sissy. He's an architect now, so you see his early training comes handy."

All this time they were leaving the train and looking for Aunt Caroline, who evidently had not received the letter announcing Frances' visit, for she was not in sight. "We'll take you to Mrs. Howard's, for she lives close to us," said the young man, loading himself with "Sissy's" baggage. "You never would find the old house without a guide, for factories and stores and churches have sprung up in such profusion that it is entirely overshadowed. Your aunt and grandfather and some more of the conservative old residents bewail the new order of things as much as they would a national calamity, but I must confess that I like to see paved streets where we used to make mud pies."

"I wish mamma and the girls could see me now," said Frances, gazing at the latest styles in dresses in a store window. "Mamma cried to think of my coming to this out-of-the-way place and I very nearly started with only a satchel, thinking I would only need a few clothes. We write and get letters from Cedar Hill so seldom that I never dreamed of the change I see to-day."

"You'll be glad enough you brought your trunk, for things are lively during the holidays."

"What is that beautiful building we are coming to?" inquired Frances, as they neared a stone structure that might have graced a city.

"That is the public library," said Mr. Devon. "I suppose you have a supply of books in that big trunk for fear there would be nothing to read in our town. I won't mention it to the citizens though, for fear they might put you on the first train for home. There is Mrs. Howard on the porch. She knows you."

The days that followed were busy ones for Frances. She sent a telegram telling of her safe arrival and found only time for the briefest notes till after Christmas, on account of the many places to go and the delightful things to do. Aunt Caroline enjoyed the company and the frolics to the utmost and urged her niece to make the old house as lively as possible. The girls and boys she played with years before flocked to see her, bringing friends with them, till Frances declared this the nicest visit she ever had in her life.

"You and I are the committee on dolls for the poor children's Christmas tree," said Horace, coming into the parlor where Frances was putting up holly for the great day. "Imagine waiting till three days before the twenty-fifth before looking after dolls! But it's not their fault, for Miss Gray would have attended to it if her mother had not taken sick. Come, get your sunbonnet and we'll make short work of the infants."

"I'm going to buy some candy and fruit for the people at the hospital," said Frances when the dolls were disposed of. "Papa gave me some gold pieces to spend and they are burning holes in my pockets."

"A good idea. I'll go halves, for I feel like celebrating, too."

Over and over again Frances wished the folks at home could see her during the happy holidays. Every letter assured them that she was having a fine time, but it is impossible to put the spirit of good times on paper. The Christmas tree for the Sunday school of Third street church was a complete success and then the young people trooped off to the mission to distribute gifts and candy to the factory people who could not attend "the big church up town."

"Are you homesick, Fanny?" asked Nellie Devon, with an arm around Frances as the gay crowd sat waiting for the clock to strike 12 on Christmas eve in Mrs. Howard's old-fashioned parlor. "I don't want to remind you of home or make you sad, but you must have so many pleasant things to do in the city that we never heard about."

"I don't know what they are," laughed Frances. "I think I could give the president information about 'The Strenuous Life' since I've been here.

"HERE, HORACE, HELP MISS STOREY OFF WITH HER LUGGAGE."

This is the busiest and happiest holiday time I ever had, except that I want all the folks at home to enjoy it, too."

"You must all come to dinner to-morrow—no, to-day—" said Mrs Howard as the young people started home. "It has been so many years since I had such a flock around me that I must make the most of it. I want Frances to have a good time so she will want to come every year."

Frances felt a touch of self-reproach on Christmas morning when she remembered the neat little parcels she was to have opened on the evening before. She had fallen into the happy sleep that visits the pure-hearted without a thought for the lovely time she was having and a little prayer for her family and friends. As she smoothed out the note slipped through the beautiful ring, she smiled to read the tender message—"My Dear Daughter: I hope this will be the happiest Christmas of your life to reward you for giving up your own pleasure to gratify Aunt Caroline. Many happy returns of the day, sweetheart. Mother."

Mrs. Howard found time on Christmas day for a long letter to her brother, in which she said, "You must be prepared to give us your little Fanny, for I am sure Horace Devon has persuaded her that Cedar Hill is a good place to spend a lifetime. He is a rising young architect and has a fine place in the city, to which he goes every day. This may sound like strange tales, but I did not want the news to strike you too suddenly. Of course the young people are not rash enough to make plans far into the future without consulting you, but I can find no fault with their anticipations. Horace is a——"

But Mr. Storey had laid down the letter with a bewildered look that plainly showed his pain and astonishment. His wife expressed no surprise, though tears came into her eyes as she said, "You might have taken a hint from the child's short letters in which she spoke of being perfectly happy. I have been hoping this would be a happy day for her, but I am not quite prepared to say I like the realization of my wishes."

With the light streaming through the stained glass windows on the evergreen and holly wound around the stately pillars of the church and the Christmas music in her ears Frances found it hard to keep her thoughts from the mental picture of the bare little church Cedar Hill had boasted in other days. "Glory to God in the Highest," sang the sweet voices just as the choir in the church at home was doing at that very moment, but there was no homesickness in her heart.

Under cover of her big hymn book Horace Devon softly pressed her slim hand while the ushers seated late arrivals in the little pause that followed the anthem, and she smiled to think her mother's Christmas wish had come true.—Baptist Union.

An Exploded Myth.

"Do your little ones believe in Santa Claus?"

"No. They did till last Christmas, when their papa played the part. I had the children in the hall and he was to come from upstairs with a lot of presents for them."

"Yes?"

"Well, we had the lights turned low and he thought he was down when he wasn't. They recognized his language."—Chicago Herald.

THE FAVORITE TREE

By Estelle Kerr

It is lovely to ride in the tall poplar tree;
When I climb to the tip-top and float
Through the sunny blue sky, just as blue as the sea,
In my bonny green poplar boat.

The scarecrow is king of the red cherry-tree,
A cross-looking chap he is, too!
He won't let the birds touch the fruit, you see,
But I'm not afraid,—are you?

The gum from the spruce-tree is lovely to chew;
In the maple I have a fine fort;
I've chestnuts for bullets,—Between me and you
They hurt when they hit,—It's great sport!

When the apples are sweet, oh I just eat and eat
Till my buttons are most apt to fly,
And Daddy can't see what the trouble can be
When I say that I don't care for pie!

When the leaves of the beech-tree are turning to gold,
When the hazel-nuts dropping keep time,
When the butternuts fall and the squirrels are bold,
Then games in the forest are prime!

But my favourite tree only comes once a year,
When the others are covered with snow;
It springs up in the night in the drawing-room bright,
And both apples and nuts on it grow
With toys for each child,—so I know you'll agree
That the best one of all is the gay Christmas-tree.

THE REVOLT OF BOBBIE

By TOM MASON

"Now, Bobbie, Christmas is almost here, and if you are a real good little boy, Santa Claus may do something for you."

Bobbie—You mean that you will do something for me, pop. That old Santa Claus racket is played out.

Bingo—Do you mean to say you don't believe in Santa Claus?

Bobbie—No, sir, I don't. I hope, pop, you don't expect me to hang up my stocking the night before?

Bingo—Why, certainly I do.

Bobbie—And I suppose you think I am going to crawl out of a nice warm bed about four o'clock in the morning, and sit by the chimney-place in my bare feet? No, sir! Just give me a list of things you thought of getting, and I'll check it off and let you know what I want.

Bingo (petrified)—Well, this is a pretty pass. You don't think there's any Santa Claus, eh?

Bobbie—I know there ain't. I've known it for three years; but I just hated to hurt my parents' feelings, so I have caught cold every Christmas morning, just to please you, until I am tired of it.

Bingo—But, Bobbie, consider. There are relatives of mine coming to spend Christmas with us. What would they say if they thought you didn't believe in Santa? Think of Aunt Jane. Why, she would never forgive me. Think of the talk it would make.

Bobbie—I can't help it, pop. This has got to stop. I can't go on deceiving people any more.

Bingo—Haven't I always been good to you, Bobbie?

Bobbie—Yes, sir.

Bingo (locking the door)—And would you go back on your father for a little think like that? It's only a little thing I ask of you. You wouldn't disgrace your poor father and mother, now, would you, Bobbie?

Bobbie (firmly)—Don't try to move, me, pop. I can't do it, that's all.

Bingo (reaching for a strap)—You can't, eh? Well, we'll see about that. (Whack.) I'll teach you not to believe in a Santa Claus. (Whack, whack.)

Bobbie—Oho! aw! aw! Please stop!

Bingo—I'll show you (whack) the duty you owe (whack, whack, whack) to your loving parents. How do you feel now? Any more like believing?

Bobbie (boo-hoo)—Yes, sir.

Bingo—That's right. And are you going to hang up your stocking? (Whack.)

Bobbie (promptly)—Yes, sir.

Bingo—And get up at three o'clock as you always have done?

Bobbie—Yes, sir.

Bingo—And are you going to talk to those relatives of mine about dear, good old Santa Claus, and wonder what he's going to give you, and clap your hands together, and get excited like a genuine innocent little boy?

Bobbie—Yes, sir, I am.

Bingo (releasing him)—Well, you see that you do, or I'll give you the worst licking you ever had in your life.

Bobbie (half an hour later, standing on the corner with Willie Slimson)—You see that man passing by over there?

Willie—Who? Your father?

Bobbie—Yes. Well, Willie, there goes the biggest liar that ever drew breath.—Harlem Life.

Santa and Little Marion.

Little eight-year old Marion had been invited to spend Christmas with a friend of her mother, of whom she thought a great deal. While she wanted to go very much, she was afraid Santa Claus might not know where she was, and so would pass her by in his distribution of presents. The invitation was received several days before Christmas, so she had plenty of time to think it over. Her mother told her she must let her know three days before, so she could let her friend know whether she was to come or not. On the last day Marion came to her mother and said:

"Mamma, I'm going with Mrs. Clark."

"And run the risk of losing your presents from Santa Claus?"

"Yes, for I think if he don't find me he will give my presents to some poor little girl who may want them more than I do," and she turned away so as to hide the tears which were bound to come.

Her mother did not say anything, but when Christmas came Marion found that Santa Claus knew where little girls could be found, whether they were at home or away.—American Agriculturist.

Feet.

The clergyman did not altogether forget the spirit of his stern old theology.

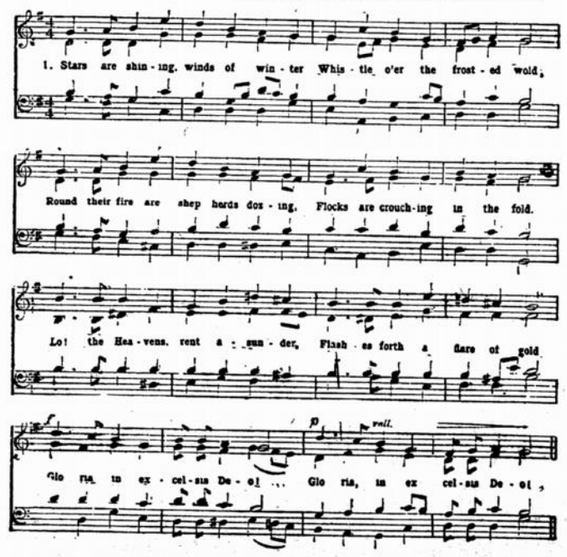
"I am a worm," he protested intensely, "but I am no centipede."

In these words did he find voice for the thoughts that surged up in his breast, as he contemplated the 34 pairs of carpet slippers which the Christmas donation party had left.—Puck.

STARS ARE SHINING

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Words and music by Rev. S. Baring-Gould, MA., (Author of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," etc.)



See! amidst that blaze of glory
Stands a seraph, wings outspread,
Radiance as of summer morning
O'er the barren landscape shed.
Rouse, ye shepherds! shake off slumber,
Banished from each drowsy head!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

"Lo! of tidings glad the bearer,
I am come, and news I bring;
Born on earth this day a Saviour,
Christ, to Jew and Gentile King,
Rouse ye, therefore, link your voices,
Then with angels' carols sing:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

"Peace on earth, to men good favour,
Token this—the Heavenly Child,
Lying now in Bethlehem's manger,
Born of Virgin undefiled,
Christ, Messiah, long expected—
Earth and Heaven reconciled:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

Then from thousand times ten thousand
Angels, in supernal light,
Burst a chorus: "O ye people,
East and West, in one unite,
Praising God, the Lord Jehovah!
Sing with angels in the height:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

Trying to Fool Santa.

Willie's scheme might have worked if he hadn't kicked off the bedclothes, showing that the apparent size of his feet was due to papa's hunting boots.—Chicago Daily News.

THE CANDY CHILD

What Happened to a Little Boy Who Ate Too Much

By R. W. DUTTON

Aunt Matilda was busily engaged in the kitchen, putting the finishing touches to the innumerable delicacies designed to grace the Christmas table. The children of the household were interesting spectators of the old woman's work, being present by special permission of their mother.

"What you chil'ren wants to do to-morrow—dat is, what you chil'ren doesn't want to do," remarked the old woman, as she paused in her work, "is to see dat you doesn't eat too much to-morrow. 'Cause if you does, you is liable to be like er chile dat I has in mind, an' de Lawd knows dat you doesn't want to be like dat chile."

The little ones well knew that these words of Aunt Matilda were preliminary to one of those stories with which she so often delighted them, and they impatiently awaited it.

"Dis chile dat I speaks of," continued the old woman, as she resumed her labors, "had one of de mos' rapacious appetites dat you ever heerd of. Eatin' all de time, an' eatin' all sorts of tings. His ma an' pa tell him, of course, dat all wrong, an' at dere is er time fo' eatin' as well as er time fo' not eatin', but Lawd bless you, chil'ren, dat boy he pay no mo 'tention to what his ma an' pa say den ef dey didn't 'zist. Why, dey even see de Wizzle Wuzzle Man 'bout him, but Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle he say dat he ain't gwine to do anything jes' yit, an' fo' to let de chile keep jes right on ef he wants to.

"An' de chile he keep right on," remarked the old woman, as she completed frosting a giant cake, "notwithstandin' to de contrary, an' matters go frum wuss to wuss. Bimeby, Christmus come 'round, an' dat boy he gin to eat frum de minit he wake up, candy an' cakes an' apples, an' de Lawd knows what. Course his ma an' pa 'monstrate wid him, an' tell him dat dey has no' jections to his eatin' jes' what he like, purvided he eat in mod'ration. But, Lawd bless you, chil'ren, he pay no mo' 'tention to what dey say den befo', an' den de strangest t'ing happen dat you ever heerd of."

Aunt Matilda paused to note the effect of her words upon the little ones, and then she continued:

"It wus gittin' toward de dark," she said, "when dis chile's ma an' pa miss him. Dey hunt high an' dey hunt low, but don't find him, an' off sots his pa fo' de house of de Wizzle Wuzzle Man. He find Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle settin' befo his fire smokin' his pipe, an' when de chile's pa 'splain matters Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle puff out er big cloud of smoke. De smoke it fill de room, an' when it die 'way over in de corner was dat chile. Dat is, what was de chile, fo' he had done turned into er mixture of candy an' cake, an' all sorts of t'ings.

"Of course, chil'ren," solemnly remarked the old woman, as she noticed the surprise of the little ones, "it was dat chile, an' den ag'in it wasn't. De leetle boy's pa was mos' grieved to death to see what done happen, an' he ask de Wizzle Wuzzle Man what kin be done in de matter. Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle puff out nuther big cloud of smoke, an' when dat die 'way, de chile was gone. Den he take his pipe out his mouth an' 'splain dat nuthin' kin be done fo' er y'ar at de leastest.

"De chile's pa he beg, of course, dat de Wizzle Wuzzle Man do somethin' right 'way, but Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle he say no indeedy, an' de leetle boy's pa know well nuff dat when Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle say no indeedy, dat it is no indeedy, sho' nuff, and he go home. But befo' he go, Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle he say dat ef he was a mind to, he could do sumthin' right 'way, but he 'splain dat de chile mus' l'arn by 'sperience, ef he won't l'arn no way else, an' den he tell de chile's pa to come to see him nex' Chris'mus eve.

"It was a mighty long y'ar," said the old woman, "fo' de leetle boy's pa an' ma, an' you may b'lieve me, chil'ren, it was still longer fo' dat chile, who had in all dat time to be nuthin but er chile of candy, an' cakes, an' all dat sort of t'ings. But at las' Chris'mus eve come 'round, an' de chile's ma an' pa both wisit Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle. Dey find him settin' befo' de fire an' smokin' de same pipe, an' after dey say howdy an' he say howdy, he say dat he is sho' dat de chile done l'arned er lesson dat he ain't liable to furgit. Wid dat he puff out er bigger cloud of smoke den ever, an' when dat die 'way, dere was de leetle boy, standin' right befo' his ma an' pa, an' in his right self.

"De chile jump right into his ma's arms, an' as she hug and kiss him," said Aunt Matilda, "he say dat he ain't never gwine to eat an' eat like he did befo', an' dat he was gwine to mind his ma an' pa all de time. But I remembers dis, chil'ren, an' I hopes you remembers it," remarked the old woman, in a rather severe tone, "dat Mr. Wizzle Wuzzle say, as de chile's pa' an' ma start off home, an' say dey is much 'bliged, 'I done bring back dis chile, but I wants it 'stinctly understood dat I ain't 'bliged to bring back all chil'ren dat persists in doin' what he done. No, indeedy!' "—Washington Star.

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR.

Jack-in-the-Box—There she sits, my beloved, under the mistletoe, while I, like a great gawk, seem glued to the spot, unable to make use of my opportunities.—Chicago Daily Chronicle.

Prudence.

"Don't smoke?" exclaimed the friend.

"No," was the reply. "I always quit just before Christmas. I do it to oblige my wife."

"But why do you select this particular season?"

"It obliges her to select something besides cigars for my Christmas present."—Washington Star.

A Red Letter Day for Dolly.

Little Elsie—Papa.

Mr. Williams—Well, Elsie?

Little Elsie—I hope Santa Claus will bring something nice for dolly. You know he gave her to me last Christmas, so this Christmas will be birthday and Christmas both for her.—Boston Globe.

The Rycroft children—Hilda Irene, Grace, Harold, Roy and Douglas—were having a party during the holidays, and one afternoon they talked about what they could do to amuse themselves and their guests.

Their Cousin Donald, who was spending his holidays with them, said suddenly:

"Have you ever played at Living Shadows?"

None of the children had ever even heard of them, and they said so.

Then they all gathered round Donald, who told them what to do and how to do it, and when the evening came this is what they did:

They made the schoolroom into a theater by hanging a big white sheet across it on a string and putting some rows of chairs for the audience.

When the audience was seated they turned out all the lights, leaving only one candle behind the sheet, which threw their shadows clearly upon it.

On the sheet appeared the picture of a little girl (Grace) in a cloak, carrying a basket. She stooped down and appeared to be gathering flowers, when suddenly a big animal (Garry the collie) came bounding up and began to walk beside her. He did not look a bit like a dog, for he had a long shaggy coat which the children's mamma recognized at once as one of the skin rugs out of the drawing-room; but being very sweet and kind, and liking to see the children enjoying themselves, she did not say a word, but only gave a gentle sigh.

HERE YOU SEE DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT WITH THEIR SHADOWS THROWN ON THE CURTAIN.

Donald asked the audience to guess what the picture meant, and of course the answer was: "Little Red Riding Hood."

The children then acted "Dick Whittington Sitting on the Milestone" (assisted by Mowser, the tabby cat); "Robin Hood and His Merry Men" (with wonderful bows and arrows made of sticks and string); "Who Killed Cock Robin?" and many other scenes from nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

They were very careful to keep close to the curtain (or rather sheet), and also to keep the candle at the right distance from it. When change of scene was being made, another light was put near the curtain and taken away when all was ready.

CHRISTMAS IN HISTORY.

Many Noteworthy Happenings of the World Have Occurred During the Holiday Season.

While no event comparable with the event of all events in the history of the world which is commemorated by all Christendom on December 25, has ever taken place on or about that day, it has nevertheless marked the occurrence of not a few noteworthy deeds and other happenings in the annals of our race. Some of these things have been of that happy and propitious character in keeping with the spirit of the time itself, and others have been quite the reverse of this. Among what may be regarded as joyous events taking place on Christmas day, or thereabouts, may be included the coronation of William the Conqueror, which took place on December 25, 1066. In the same category we would place the landing of the Pilgrims, which occurred only four days before Christmas in 1620. The same happy season in 1841 witnessed the ratification of the quintuple alliance for suppressing the slave trade.

But, strange to say, occurrences of a sad and tragic nature seem to have been more common on Christmas than any other notable events. During the fourteenth century there were dramatic Christmases. In 1348 the black death was raging. In 1384 the persecution of Wycliffe was rapidly bringing on that paralytic stroke by which he died on December 31. Saddest perhaps of all was the Christmas spent by Isabelle, dowager queen of Edward II., in Castle Rising, where she remained a prisoner for the next 27 years of her life.

For the Stuarts of England Christmas sometimes breathed a tragedy. Mary, queen of Scots, was born on December 8. Eight days after she was hurried off to France, immediately after the death of her father, James V., on the 13th. During December, 1644, Montrose opened his fruitless campaign in Scotland; on December 23, 1648, Charles I. made his last mournful journey, under escort, to Windsor, and in 1650, on Christmas eve, Edinburgh surrendered to Cromwell. On December 22, 1688, James II. escaped to France, leaving Judge Jeffreys to flee for safety to the Tower, and on December 28, 1694, Mary Stuart, wife of William, died, comparatively young. On December 22, 1715, the old pretender landed at Petershead, and, curiously, in 1745, it was during December that the campaign opened in Cumberland.—Philadelphia Ledger.

For Christmas.

"The ladies of the Sewing society are very busy now," announced the minister's wife, "but they will not let me know what they are doing."

"Yes," remarked the minister, with a bitter smile, "they're making bookmarks and carpet slippers, I suppose."—Baltimore American.

Out of the Frying-Pan.

Crawford—It's a good thing for us, now that Christmas is here, that the $500 sealskin has gone out of fashion.

Crabshaw—Oh, I don't know. Hasn't the $1,000 automobile come into style?—Judge.

Don't Fool with Santa Claus.

(1) Hilarious Harry. I'll just put this live mouse into my stocking before I hang it up, and then—

(2) "When Santa Claus comes—

(3) "I shall know who it is!"

DEFECTIVE PAGE