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The Acton Free Press

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Editor and Proprietor.

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Open from 8 a. m. to 9 p. m. Wednesday and Saturday evenings later.
Ladies' hairdressing in any style.

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INCLUDING Books, Pamphlets, Posters Bill Heads, Circulars, &c., &c., executed in the best style of the art, at moderate prices and on short notice. Apply or address
H. P. MOORE
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ESTABLISHED 1840.
INSURANCE on Mutual plan. Any communications forwarded to my address, Box 736, or telephone 68, will be promptly attended to.
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LICENSED AUCTIONEER
For the Counties of Wellington and Halton. Orders left at the FREE PRESS office, Acton, or at my residence in Acton, will be promptly attended to. Fees reduced to
$5.00 FOR FARM SALES
Also money to loan on the most favorable terms, and at the lowest rates of interest, in sums of $300 and upwards.

ACTON
Machine and Repair Shops
HENRY GRINDELL, Proprietor.
ARE well equipped with all the machinery necessary to execute all repairs to machinery, and agricultural implements, and to do all kinds of steam-fitting, horse shoeing and general blacksmithing. Woodwork repairs performed in a satisfactory manner. We can repair any machine or implement of any make. Saw gumming and filing done.

WANTED.
A GOOD MAN in your district to represent the "Foothill Nurseries of Canada," over 700 acres—the largest in the Dominion. Position permanent. Salary or Commission to right man.
With the increasing demand for fruit, a position with us as salesman will pay you better than engaging in farm work. Send us your application and we will show you how to earn good money.
School teachers! Its just the thing for you during the summer. Write for particulars.
STONE & WELLINGTON,
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REV. J. E. HOWELL, M. A. Pastor.
Parsonage, Bower Avenue.
Public Services 10.30 a.m., and 6.30 p.m. Sunday school 2.30. Bible Class conducted by the pastor. All cordially invited.
Strangers and visitors always welcome. A active ushers at the door.
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Miss MAGGIE H. MATTHEWS, President
Meets every Tuesday evening. All Young People invited.

We Have the Best Stock.
Not a Store in town can touch us in
LOW PRICES.
—AT—
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Dolls, Toys, Games, Children's Books, Bibles, etc. Neck Tie Boxes, Leather Goods, Pocket Books, Card Cases, Japanese Goods, Fancy China, Toilet Goods, Smokers' Sets, Iron Toys, Glove Boxes, Dressing Cases, Building Blocks.
One thousand and one other things for Xmas presents.
Cards, Calendars, Booklets.
Full up of nice New Goods, and our low prices win right along.
DAY'S BOOKSTORE.
GUELPH.
Day Sells Cheap.

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WATERS BROS.' PICTURES
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WATERS BROS.' BRASS "
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WATERS BROS.' 3 STORY STORE
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Boot & Shoe Store
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We operate our store on a determined policy of fair, square dealing, backed by resources and ability. This means that we give the customers the benefit of the lowest prices possible every time. We do not slaughter our goods, nor sacrifice any special line to bolster up another, but purchase carefully, buy closely, and are thus enabled to sell on narrow margins of profit. We have won a reputation for reasonable prices that we intend shall stay with us and this principle is in operation in every department and on every article in our stock. It pays to trade here, because you get what you like and what you need. It saves you to deal here, because there is a fixed honest system of value.
Our Stock is complete in every line of the latest and most fashionable styles in
Men's Ladies', Girls', Boys' and Children's
Boots & Shoes
WILLIAM WILLIAMS,
Mill St. - ACTON
Custom work and repairing promptly attended to

J. H. Hamilton,
DEALER IN
Marble and Granite,
Hamilton's Block, GUELPH.
Large New Consignment
Just Received a Large Consignment of
Granite — Norway, Swede, Russian, English, Irish, Scotch
OF BEST QUALITY.
The whole to be sold at prices never heard of before in Ontario
Call and inspect.
J. H. HAMILTON

Acton Flour Mill.
CHEYNE & CHEYNE,
Proprietors.
We have our roller mill now in complete and satisfactory running order, and are in a position to supply the wants of the public with
FLOUR, BRAN, SHORTS
and all kinds of Feed,
AT RIGHT PRICES.
Every order will receive prompt attention and will be delivered to any part of the town.
Our terms are cash and one price for all.
Don't forget to patronize home industry. Give us a fair trial and we will leave the matter for you to decide as to the quality of the goods we manufacture.
Orders taken at the Mill or at J. V. Kasmawin's Drug Store.
CHEYNE & CHEYNE.

The Traders' Bank
OF CANADA.
Capital Authorized $1,000,000
Capital Paid up 700,000
Rest 85,000
GUELPH BRANCH
3½ PER CENT INTEREST paid on sums of $1 and upwards from date of deposit to date of withdrawal, or compounded half yearly on 31st May and 30th November.
Deposit Receipts issued.
Farmers notes discounted.
The collection of sales notes a specialty.
A general Banking business transacted.
A. E. H. JONES,
Manager.

A Very Happy and Prosperous New Year To All
Is the Wish of
BOND & CO.
HARDWARE.
GUELPH.
Handsome Panels GIVEN FREE
With shoes bought during
XMAS WEEK
—AT—
The LEADING SHOE STORE
Guelph.
Fancy Slippers, Moccasins, Rubbers and Overshoes.
LOWEST PRICES.
All suitable for Xmas Boxes.
W. McLaren & Co.
GUELPH.

GUELPH CLOTH HALL
We are doing the most creditable class of business that we have always been noted for, and will be glad to see our Acton friends who are in need of good Fall and Winter Clothing.
Yours respectfully,
Shaw & Turner
Merchant Tailors.
Railway Fare Cheerfully Refunded

Main Street
PLANING MILLS,
ACTON, ONT.
John Cameron,
Architect and Contractor.
Manufacturer of Sash Doors Frames Moulding in all styles
DRESSING, MATCHING, and MOULDING to order on short notice.
Well assorted stock on hand at prices to suit the times
JOHN CAMERON,
Proprietor.

W. H. WALKER,
Painter, Paper Hanger, Decorator, Etc,
Has returned to Acton, his former home, and will give the benefit of his large experience to those who desire first class and artistic work in House Painting, Paper Hanging, or Decorating, in all its branches.
Satisfactory work always guaranteed and at most reasonable prices.
Orders left at Pearson's Hardware Store, or at my residence will receive prompt attention.
W. H. WALKER,
Bower Avenue

Farmer Stebbins as Santa Claus.

By WILL CARLETON.

[Copyright, 1895, by American Press Association.]

We went to Pegtown visiting, my good old wife an' me,
An' thought that we would bathe ourselves in Chris'mas joy an' glee;
For Sarah Ann, a buxom dame, an' daughter, too, of mine,
Resides there with her older half an' children eight or nine;
An' so we gathered gifts enough to make 'em all content
An' took the train an' landed there the very day we went.

The children warmly greeted us an' crowded round my chair,
With four a perchin' on my knees an' young uns still to spare;
An' asked about my spectacles, an' how I growed my wig,
An' if my papa bought my teeth before I got so big,
An' how my whiskers come to bleach an' other questions prone
To make a mortal realize that younger days have flown;

An' if I ever looked it up how far I was around,
An' when I run if it would shake the whole adjacent ground,
An' if the your-correct-weight box didn't think I was a fo
An' if I wouldn't have to put two pennies in the slot,
With other questions well designed to give a hint to me
That I was not a first class sylph so far as they could see.

An' when I told 'em fairy tales they wouldn't believe a word
An' said the Sin'bad sailor things could never have occurred;
An' all the pleasant little lies that used to cheer my youth
They set upon without delay as destitute of truth.
An' when of Christmas mysteries in solemn tones I spake,
They laughed an' said that Santa Claus was all "a bloomin' fake."

So Christmas eve I slyly told my daughter Sarah Ann:
"I'll show the tots a little sight to laugh at if they can.
You rake the fireplace clear o' fire, not tellin' them the cause,
An' I'll come down the chimney way dressed up as Santa Claus
It isn't very far to climb—the weather's pretty mild,
An' I would do three times as much to interest a child."

I went an' clad in hairy garb, with whiskers [illegible] an' white
An' other things to paralyze the inexperienced sight,
An' had some sleighbells bright an' new a-hangin' on my arms
An' pockets full o' Christmas things to add unto my charms,
An' with the strongest ladder rope that I could find in town
I entered in the chimney top an' clambered slowly down.

My goodness sakes! Who ever heard of such an timely luck?
The chimney narrowed all to once, an' suddenly I stuck
An' hung there like a roastin' hen a waitin' to be brown,
For spite of all my efforts I couldn't get up or down.
An' then the chil'ren heard the noise an' run distressin' fleet
An' looked an' yelled: "It's Gran'pa Steb. We know him by his feet."

[illegible] their mother had to tell what I had tried to do,
Wi' rent their little fancies sprung the subject to pursue.
They asked me if I'd traveled far, if chimneys injured coats,
An' where my span of reindeers was, an' if they'd like some oats,
An' told me, with a childish greed for Christmas gathered pelf,
If I would throw the presents down, I wouldn't come myself;

An' there I hung for quite awhile, with fury in my heart,
Until they brought a mason in, who took the [illegible] apart,
An' though they made the children stop, an' sent 'em off to bed
I knowed what they was thinkin' of an' what they prob'ly said,
An' when the mornin' did appear an' breakfast time occurred,
They set around the table there forbid to say a word;

A sufferin' so to laugh at me, afraid that I'd be gruff,
An' longin' for their presents, too—I knowed it well enough.
An' then a tear come in my eye, an' like a fond old dunce
I went an' dug the presents out an' give 'em all to once.
An' then I says, "If Santa Claus is what you call 'a fake,'
These pr'tty things he brought for you is real an' no mistake."

An then they up an' danced around an' kissed me one by one,
An' hugged me harder than the blamed old chimney just had done,
An' with a thousand looks of love incumbered me with thanks
An' made me like 'em more an' more in spite of all their pranks.
An' one, the prettiest of the whole, who always took my part,
She smiles an' says: "It's Gran'pa Steb. We know him by his heart!"

CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS.

A street urchin stood peering into the window of a toyshop one evening just before Christmas watching a prosperous father buying presents. Bigger and bigger the boy's eyes grew as the purchasing went on. Finally, when it was all over and the man had left the store, the lad sidled up to him and with great diffidence asked:

"Was all them things you bought for one boy, mister?"

"Why, yes, certainly," said the man impatiently as he turned away with the bundles under his arms.

The street boy's eyes grew bigger yet.

"Gee Whiz!" he whispered under his breath. "Itch men's boys must wear awful big stockings!"

LIFE NOT ALL RESISTENCE.

There is a tremendous power in the little monosyllable "No" when it is spoken resolutely and courageously. It has often been like a giant rock by the sea, as it has encountered and hurled back the mighty waves of temptation.

It is a majestic power, the power to say "No" to everything that is not right. But it is just as important to learn to say "Yes." There come to us offers and solicitations we must not reject, and opportunities we must not throw away. Life is not all resistence and defence. Whatever is wrong we must meet with a firm, strong, uncompromising "No"; but whatever is right, we should welcome into our life with a hearty, cheerful "Yes."

CHRISTMAS.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat,
Of peace on earth, good-will to men.

And thought how, as the day had come
The belfries of Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men.

Till ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good-will to men.

A Romance of Xmas.

No matter where men may be, no matter how far away from home they may go or how long they may stay away, when Christmas comes their minds revert to the loved ones of their childhood—tender memories of a mother, a sister, perhaps a sweetheart, are revived, and a longing seizes them to be back again amid the old familiar scenes.

With each recurrence of the glad season which heralds peace on earth to men of good will, this longing crept in to Richard Jennings' heart, stifling all interest in the fluctuations of wool on 'Change, and making positively distasteful to him all talk about the prospects of next year's cotton crop or the humored Wall street combine to effect a "corner" in wheat.

Whenever Christmas approached, he began to realize his loneliness, and he regarded with envy the people hurrying along the street carrying bundles of toys and candies and costlier presents to their homes.

Home! That sacred place is not to be violated at such a season by the presents of a stranger, and Richard Jennings' Christmases were spent alone. He was always glad when they were over, and he could again become absorbed in business cares.

For the past ten years he had been a member of the St. Louis Merchants' Exchange, and was rated at $100,000. He had no taste for society, and although he belonged to several of the best clubs in that charming old town, he could not be called a clubman. His tastes, his cravings were domestic, but they remained unsatisfied. Little was known of his previous history. He was not communicative, and his business acquaintances were not inquisitive.

One evening, just four days before Christmas, Mr. Jennings returned to his handsomely furnished residence and astonished his housekeeper by telling her he was "going home for Christmas." She had been in his service for more than five years and believed that all his relatives were dead, as she had never heard him speak of them.

"Here's something for you for Christmas," he said, handing her a $10 bill, "and I hope you'll enjoy yourself. I'm going east."

Sarah, to her rich, honest brogue thanked him.

There was a new light in his face Sarah, who was shrewd, noticed it. For 17 years this man had been away from home, and during his absence his parents had died, while he was riding wild ponies in Texas or digging gold in Colorado or gambling it away in Kansas City faster than he had gathered it.

As the train ran eastward over the level lands of Illinois and Indiana, through the rich farm lands of Ohio, and then amid the wooded hills and streams of his own native Pennsylvania fairer than them all his mind travelled backward from the present Richard Jennings, successful broker and respectable member of the St. Louis Merchants' Exchange, to the dissipated days of his fresh young manhood, when his wild life had separated him forever from one he could never forget.

As the train approached Philadelphia and he looked out of the window at the numerous domes and spires and cupolas, he reflected how time, which had wrought such a difference in the appearance of the city, must have changed the sweet girl of 18, from whom his own misdeeds had sundered him.

They had been sweethearts from childhood. But old Ezra Kent, her father, was a stern man, and when stories got abroad about the dissipated set of which Richard soon became the leader, and when one day he came home from his counting house and found Richard "Dick" everybody called him then intoxicated he said it was the last time Eleanor should receive him. She was a dutiful girl. It wounded her life, but she obeyed. The Kents came of a stern stuff, and beneath Eleanor's gentle woman nature lay heroic strength.

Now he was returning, a very different man and regretful that he had stayed away so long. It was such a short journey from the Mississippi to the Schuylkill he wondered that he had not before summoned enough courage to return. Seventeen years!

For the twentieth time he drew forth a letter and read it with the same absorbed interest as if for the first time:

DEAR DICK—Will met Mr. Coles last week. He had just come from St. Louis and said he met you there. You naughty boy! Why have you never written or come home to see us? We want you to spend Christmas with us. All the children are crazy to see you. There are five now. The baby, a beautiful girl, is 10 months old and has two teeth. The children often talk about Uncle Dick. Eleanor has told them so many Tom Brown at Rugby sort of stories about you when you were at the university. Mr. Kent failed four years ago and died last March. Eleanor and her mother still live in the old house. They are very poor. Eleanor teaches music and sings at St. Bride's. Mrs. Kent looks very old, but she sews beautifully and makes the prettiest things for the baby. Do come and spend Christmas with us. The children are dying to see you and so am I and Will. Ever your loving sister,
MARY McCRAY.

P S. The children's names are Mary, Alex (he's named after father, of course), Sam, Dick (after you) and Eleanor, the baby. She's a little angel!

* * * * * *

The street where Richard Jennings' home was, where he was born, and where his married sister still lived, had once been fashionable. You could tell that from the houses—big, broad, roomy, old fashioned brick residences of a bygone day, with quaint colonial doorways, elaborately carved, the lintels in many cases supported by the classic Ionic or Doric columns affected by the builders of a century ago.

But their glory had departed. The spirit of decay had fallen upon them, and the children of those who built them had moved to finer and more modern homes.

But the Jenningses and the Kents were an exception. They had withstood the general exodus and continued to live in the house which had been their family roof tree for nigh a hundred years. They were plain, quiet conservative people, and not of the "smart" sort, like the gay, fashionable families who had all moved away.

* * * * * *

"Here's Uncle Dick!" shouted the boys as they grabbed his big travelling bag almost before the hackman had time to carry it into the hallway.

Hugs and kisses were exchanged all around, and his sister wept a few memorial tears. He had grown so like his father, she thought. Ah, if mother could see him now—that mother whose patient, loving face was pictured on canvas in the quaint old fashioned frame hanging on the parlor wall.

His nephew, Alex, a handsome lad, led him up to the same room in the old fashioned house which he had occupied when a boy, furnished with the same high backed rush seated chairs, and the low bed, with tall, carved corner posts, the old prints and knick-knacks and books. And over the fireplace was a photograph of Eleanor Kent!

He threw himself into a chair, overcome with emotion at the many memories of his younger days that arose before him like ghosts from the past.

In the afternoon he went out with his two eldest nephews, Alex and Sam, to see the shop windows, and when they returned all three had their arms filled with presents. He was very happy. If those married fellows in St. Louis could see him now! The sense of loneliness which had haunted him for years was gone, and yet—in a week he would be back again in that quiet house in St. Louis, with no other occupant save the faithful Sarah Burns!

* * * * * *

It was Christmas eve. All the lights were burning brightly in the McCray mansion. Uncle Dick and the children—he had never realized before what good companions children were—had been busy all afternoon decorating the huge Christmas tree. Again evening it was a glorious sight to behold. The children had never been so happy. All of them had gotten an unusually large number of presents. Uncle Dick alone had brought three and four each, even to the baby. In the big sitting room the presents were displayed on an old mahogany table that reminded you of some wild beast of the forest when you gazed down at the formidable looking claw which served for its feet. But the table could not contain them all, so several chairs were placed on either side of it to hold the overflow exhibition.

As the evening waned Uncle Dick and Papa McCray went out for a walk. They had been gone but a few moments when there was a ring at the doorbell, and Eleanor Kent and her aged mother entered, both bringing presents for the children.

Although dressed very plainly, Eleanor never looked handsomer. The 17 years which had passed since her early and only love affair had touched her lightly. She was now 35, but looked much younger.

She was a great favorite with the children, who called her "Aunt Eleanor." They shouted her the tree, the presents and then "Uncle Dick's home," they said, watching her face to see a reflection there of their own delight at the return of one whom she had so often told them about. But only a little nervous smile trembled on her lips and died. And very soon afterward she said she must return home. She must write the names of her Sunday school scholars in the pretty cheap books she had bought for them and practice the offertory she was to sing on the morrow, and, and—

But the children would not hear of it. They dragged her to the piano and forced her to play for them as they sang "Jolly Old St. Nicholas." They shouted the rollicking song with such a lusty chorus that old Mrs. Kent was afraid they would awaken the baby, whose wrath when aroused was terrible, but Mrs. McCray reassured her and begged Eleanor to sing the offertory she was to sing at St. Bride's, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night." But Eleanor didn't know it without music. Her hands strayed over the keys, making little impromptu chords and cadences and then struck the prelude to Tosti's "Memories," one of those songs that play upon the human heart-strings. Many a time when alone she sang it, but it was not a song for Christmas eve; it was too sad.

As Richard Jennings and his brother in-law re-entered the house, the sound of her rich, sweet voice reached their ears.

"Who is singing?" asked Richard.

"It's Eleanor Kent," was the reply.

Low and clear and sweet the words, molten into music, reached their ears:

There is no note of all your songs of yore
That does not speak to me of you once more.
There is no place we two have ever seen
That does not whisper of the night have been.
There is no path of all that once we knew
That does not hold some memories of you.
Still though they call the wild tears to mine eyes,
I would not yield them for a paradise.

The two men entered the room softly, and Eleanor went on singing, unconscious of their presence:

There is no hand clasp that you ever gave
That does not live, though love be in its grave.

Richard Jennings drew nearer to his old sweetheart, gazing intently at her lovely face. An instant later and he held her in his arms and imprinted a fervent kiss on her blushing cheek. Philadelphia *Ledger*.

CHRISTMAS CHARITY.

Christmas snows are on the moor,
Sing, sweet Robin!
And the Christmas star burns gold,
Sweet Robin, sing!
Hungry birds are at the door,
Sing, sweet Robin!
All their feathers puffed with cold
Sweet Robin, sing!
There's a babe sleeps in the stall
Sing, sweet Robin!
With the grass for blanket warm
Sweet Robin, sing!
Him the beasts have given their all
Sing, sweet Robin!
Sheltering him from winter storm
Sweet Robin, sing!
Ope the door and call them in
Sing, sweet Robin!
Newborn babe and starving birds,
Sweet Robin, sing!
And all children cold and thin,
Sing, sweet Robin!
To the best our house affords
Sweet Robin sing!

—*London Sketch*

OLD WORLD XMAS PROVERBS.

Every one in America knows the old world proverb, "A green Christmas makes a fat graveyard," but few others of the old world Christmas saws are current here. Some of these saws are exceedingly interesting and not less instructive as showing the changes that time and location have made in the proverbs of the country people. Here are a few:

"A warm Christmas, a cold Easter."
"A light Christmas, a heavy sheaf."
"A green Christmas, a white Easter."
"If there is a wind on Christmas day trees will bear much fruit."
"If ice will bear a man before Christmas it will not afterward."
"The shepherd would rather see his wife enter the stable on Christmas day than to see the sun shine in at the stable door."
"If the sun shines through the apple tree on Christmas day, there will be an abundant crop the following year."

The meaning of all these is clear enough, but there is one that is not so clear:

"If Christmas finds a bridge, he'll break it; if he finds none, he'll make one."

From the German Christmas come "Santa Claus" and "Kris Kringle." The latter is a corruption of Christkindlein, or Christ child, of whom they have the beautiful fable that with his own hands he places Christmas toys in the stockings of good children, while in the stockings of the bad ones a birch rod is placed by one "Pelsnichol," literally "Nicholas with the fur" that is, St. Nicholas dressed in fur. The dread of getting the rod from old Pelsnichol on Christmas keeps many a German child in order the whole year round.

St. Nicholas, as the patron saint of the children, now termed Santa Claus, was canonized, died, according to tradition, at Myra, Italy, and was there buried in the cathedral crypt. Six hundred years later his body was taken to Bari, and there in the eleventh century the great priory of San Nicolo was built. It is at that priory that on May 9 each year the festival of St. Nicholas is held with great rejoicings by pilgrims from all parts of the world.

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

Gold must be the heart that has no response to this great Christmas sentiment, barren indeed the home into which no recognition of the Christ child enters, no thought of that inestimable gift that has made all men brethren. To the poorest and humblest of us this Christmas message speaks. The wise men required the guiding of a star, but to the watching shepherds the angel spoke face to face, and there is a Christmas sentiment in all those gay streets and jostling crowds that the wise men of our own day are not always the first to understand.

In a few days more the evergreens will have faded, and we shall be going about our business with all the stern realities of the new year before us. But we shall carry something over from this great holiday that will not fade if we care to keep it green, a new impulse of faith and love that will keep the world still growing brighter and better because of Christmas day. Philadelphia *Times*.

CHRISTMAS CHANGES

The Yule log has given place to the steam radiator, the furnace register and the base burning heater, but we who are warmed by any of these means on Christmas eve are quite as likely to enjoy Christmas as was our forefathers and foremothers, who used to celebrate its festivities when gathered about the old time fireplaces. There have been changes in the heating apparatus, but human nature and Christmas remain as they were and will probably so remain after the present apparatus has been displaced by electric heaters. We grumble about our furnaces, our radiators and our stoves and will probably grumble about our electric heaters, but in Yule log times our ancestors were often roasted on one side and frozen on the other.

A Christmas Fact.

The future has a golden tinge,
The past, too, may seem pleasant,
But just about the Christmastide
There's nothing like the present!

—*Ex.*