

UNCLE'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

“YOU want a story, chickens mine,—a tale that must be true!

A tale of little children,—with a Christmas flavor, too?

My poor old brain will reel, I fear, attempting deeds like this:

You would not like to see, I'm sure, your Uncle crazy, Miss.

You doubt my word—you saucy scamps! Oh, well, oh, well, you'll see,

When, growling like a bear, I come, and eat you all for tea.

‘Don't fool so much—be sensible!’ Come now, I *do* like that;

If I've no sense in my old age, I'll eat my Sunday hat!

“I see there's no escape, so—in the good, old-fashioned way:

Once on a time—far, far from here, and at a distant day,

I went—a missionary—to preach to flocks so sparse and thin

It took me weeks to gather half my congregation in.

My Sabbaths were expended,—nearly all the live-long day—

In driving to my stations with my span of ponies gray.

‘Jehu, the son of Nimshi,’ wasn't in it,—not at all.

When I my bronchos speeded, like a North-wind in the fall.

“A service short I held at ten—then off to Holland's Bluff

To meet a congregation there, of diamonds in the rough;

Then on, ten miles, and Evening Prayer refreshed the heart like dew,—

Sweethearts, a prairie preacher's lot has compensations too;

Then pastoral calls, at distant homes, filled up my busy week;

With here a word,—and there a pray'r, I tried to fitly speak.