

"thread the needle," "grab and grunt," and half a dozen more of similar character came after each other in quick succession. And then some wight more wicked than his fellows, — urged to the proposal by Jack Lightheart, who evidently had an eye to opportunities, — suggested a trip on the light fantastic toe. Will's eldest son, Harry, was an excellent violinist, seeing that he had "taught himself out of his own head," and there was a well-toned melodeon, of which the bellows had not yet grown wheezy, and as half a dozen girls could play upon it, there was no lack of music. Contra dances were the order of the night, and such rows of healthy looking lads and lasses as stood up when the first strains of "Haste to the Wedding" were heard, would be difficult to match in these days, when our young farmers too often desert their fatherland, and are off in search of fortune in a foreign state. "The Triumph," and like contra dances succeeded each other, interspersed with an occasional set of quadrilles or lancers, which were caviare to some, and made all merry as Christmas keeping Christians deserved to be. The strains of the violin pervaded the house. Tapping feet in the parlor played havoc with several hands in games of whist, and provoked careless players into unexpected and unnecessary trumping, and caused at least one revoke. Nay, so infectious was the rhythm of the fascinating fiddle that several old people crept slyly out from the parlor to the improvised ball-room, found their way into line, and were speedily dancing as keenly as the youngest of the party. And even here the desertion from the ranks of the elders did not end, for a well advanced couple whose eyes had opened upon a sun-dance one Easter morning in ancient Ireland, "stood up" when

a quadrille had ended, asked for a jig, which the violinist played with good time and tune, and started off in a series of saltatory motions, which even more astonished than amused the appreciative onlookers. A son of Scotia, not to be outdone by "they Irish folk," demanded a fling, which was cheerfully accorded, and did his utmost to sustain the honor of his country. That he succeeded is almost unnecessary to tell, but that in agility and poetry of motion he had outclassed his competitors, there were none there, save two or three patriotic Caledonians, willing to admit. But dances must end at last, and when refreshments were handed round, in quantity as profuse, and in quality as substantial as the viands which had graced the tables at noon and eve, full justice was done to the culinary abilities of Mrs. Merryweather and her daughters.

Midnight had come and old folks, now unaccustomed to such late junketings, began to hint pretty broadly of home going, and the young people were reminded that Christmas Day was to be numbered with the past anniversaries of that birth which, eighteen hundred years before, had ushered in a higher civilization than the world had known. But Will interposed with a request that all would remain for yet another dance. So the intervening door was opened wide, converting dining room and parlor into one long apartment. Harry tuned up the fiddle once more, and Mamie Lightheart joined him skilfully in such a rendition of "Sir Roger de Coverley" as the old house had never heard before. Old and young lined up in two long rows, Will standing in the post of honor with Mrs. Lightheart as his partner and Mr. Lightheart gaily leading forth Mrs. Merryweather as his. What an ever to be remembered