

## ANNESLEY CHASE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY OF THE NORTH COUNTRY.

## PART I.

'Twas Christmas tide at Annesley Chase,  
A stately, old time-honored place;  
A mansion such as one may see  
In England or in Normandy.  
A park surrounds the ancient pile,  
A park, whose area's many a mile,  
Where oaks, whose bolls are gnarled with age  
Have stood the fiercest tempests' rage  
For many a century; larches tall  
Raise high their towering heads o'er all.  
Beneath the trees, in darksome glade,  
The dappled deer seek out the shade,  
And refuge take from Phoebus' rays  
In the long, sultry summer days.  
But 'tis not of the summer time  
That now the minstrel chants his rhyme,  
But of the merry Christmas tide,  
When o'er the country, far and wide,  
The snow lay deep, and all the scene  
Was wrapt in pure and glittering sheen.  
The frosted crystals on each bough  
Flashed like the gems on snowy brow  
Of high-bred ladies, such as grace  
The halls of stately Annesley Chase.  
The chill breeze o'er the country swept,  
And bade the brooks sleep—and they slept:  
The icy touch of Winter's breath  
Had made them motionless as death.  
The feathery snowflakes, pure and fair,  
Fell fluttering in December's air.  
What though 'tis cold outside, I ween  
Inside is quite a different scene.  
Inside the walls of Annesley Chase  
The humblest hind may find a place  
At Christmas tide; the poorest churl  
Will be as welcome as an earl,  
And none need ask for leave to stay,  
And none need fear being turned away.

## PART II.

Sir Neville Grenville's high-bred face  
Amongst the guests at Annesley Chase  
With welcome smile full oft is seen,  
As, with his proud, though courtly mien,  
He passes through his crowded halls,  
Where hang the portraits on the walls  
Of many a Grenville, dead and gone,  
Who perished at Northallerton;  
Or who mayhap, his life did yield



On Hastings' distant battle-field,  
Where, fighting 'gainst the Norman foe,  
Full many a Grenville was laid low.  
From noble stock the Grenvilles spring;  
The border minstrels used to sing  
The glory of the ancient race,  
Which e'er has dwelt at Annesley Chase.  
The gallant Grenvilles are renowned  
For many and many a mile around.

## PART III.

'Twas Christmas time, as has been said,  
And Gertrude Grenville is to wed  
Upon the morrow—Christmas day—  
Young Rudolph Rupert Rondelais,  
A gallant youth of Norman blood,  
And pedigree beyond the flood.  
A comely youth, withal, was he,  
As on the longest day you'd see;  
As I have said, of lineage old,  
And owning many a chest of gold.  
In everyway 'a splendid match,  
And all said Gertrude "had a catch."  
And here I'll just insert a piece  
Of information: she was niece

To good Sir Neville: now I've said  
My little say: let's go ahead,  
The banquet hall was filled; each guest  
With knife and fork had done his best:  
The servants stood around the board  
To do the bidding of their lord.  
The butler Muggins, portly, stout,  
With noiseless step moved round about,  
But it was noticed that he stood  
As near to Gertrude as he could,  
And once, instead of filling up  
Her crystal sparkling champagne cup  
As he affected, in her ear  
He whispered something low but clear.  
She plainly heard what he had said,  
But never even turned her head.  
The guests were mirthful, each one quaffed  
The health of Gertrude, smiled and laughed.  
Drank Rudolph's health and wished him joy  
And said "You are in luck, my boy."  
And Rudolph smiled with careless ease,—  
The happy are not hard to please,—  
And gazed with pardonable pride  
On beauteous Gertrude by his side,  
And whispered sweet things in her ear  
Which must have been quite nice to hear,  
For Gertrude smiled with action coy,  
And whispered back "You dear old boy."  
Fat butler Muggins oft would pass  
And frown when filling Rudolph's glass;  
It seemed as though he felt some spite  
Against that happy, youthful wight,  
And every time that he passed by  
And managed to catch Gertrude's eye  
He actually—what d'ye think?—  
He actually gave a wink!  
And Gertrude scarcely could refrain  
From—what?—why, winking back again.

## PART IV.

The banquet's finished, grace is said,  
The guests soon after go to bed:  
Beneath a sprig of mistletoe  
Fat Muggins speaks in accents low  
To Gertrude, she who in one day  
Will be my Lady Rondelais;  
And as she softly says "good night,"  
The butler winks—perhaps he's tight.

The morrow dawns; 'tis Christmas day;  
And Rudolph Rupert Rondelais  
With lightsome tread bounds down the stairs,  
With heart as light and free from cares  
As any young man's ought to be  
Upon the very day that he  
Makes that important step in life  
By which he comes to own a wife.  
He bounds into the breakfast room,  
He sniffs the coffee's sweet perfume,  
He smells the scent of broiling steaks,  
And sees the toothsome griddle-cakes;  
He sees the guests; he sees the chair  
Of Gertrude—but she is not there;  
He'd not anticipated this,  
And sadly missed his morning kiss—  
"Sir Neville, is not Gertrude well  
Or is she—yes—is this a sell?  
She said last night that she would be  
The first of all to welcome me.  
I should have liked it, I must say,  
Because this is our wedding day."  
"She's not down yet," Sir Neville said,  
"Perhaps she's not yet out of bed.  
But ring for Muggins; he can go  
And see if she be well or no.  
If ill, pray act the part of host  
And take her up some tea and toast;  
I really hope she's not unwell;  
However, please to ring the bell."  
The bell was rung; a page replied  
And glided to his master's side.  
"You rang, sir?" "Yes, send Muggins here,  
Why does not *he*, not *you*, appear?  
He knows I like it, when he's able,  
To see him round the breakfast table.  
So send him here at once," "Sir Neville,  
He's not down yet," "Not down, the devil!"  
"No, not the devil, sir, I mean  
The butler, and he's not been seen  
This morning." "Well, you go, young man,  
And get him out of bed, you can  
Just knock upon Miss Gertrude's door  
When passing through the corridor,  
And tell her that it's getting late,  
And that for her alone we wait."  
The page retired; Sir Neville said,  
With courteous motion of his head,  
"It's only natural that she  
To-day a *little* shy should be."  
And as he spoke the page returned,  
His eyes and cheeks with horror burned:  
His hair stood up, his chattering teeth  
His pale lips rattled loud beneath.  
"What is the matter?" roared the host,  
"What ails the boy? Hast seen a ghost?  
Speak out?" "Sir Neville, when I knocked  
At lady Gertrude's door, unlooked,  
It open flew: my lady fair—"  
"Well, what of her?" "She was not there.  
The bed with sheets and covers white  
Had never been slept in last night,

Upon her dressing table lay  
This note for Mr. Rondelais.  
To Mr. Muggins' room I flew—"  
"Well, what?" "His room was empty too.  
His bed, of course, was there all right,  
But it had not been used last night."  
"Read, read the note," the guests all cried,  
"Oh I read that letter from your bride."



"My bride," howled Rupert Rondelais,  
"My bride by now is far away."  
And into shreds he tore the note  
And placed the pieces in his coat;  
(Of course the pocket's understood)  
"I will not on this matter brood;  
It's no use kicking up a row  
But—Gertrude's Mrs. Muggins now."  
'Twas even so; the faithless maid  
So cunningly her plans had laid  
That whilst young Rupert fondly hoped,  
The girl and butler—had eloped.

## A WORD IN SEASON.

Our toiling editor takes this opportunity of stating, for the information of his kind friends who, by card and otherwise, have wished him a "Merry Christmas," that he has had a Merry Christmas. And now he anticipates the Happy New Year they have all coupled in their benisons. If a good cigar can aid in producing the desired bliss, our editor is safe to that extent, for Messrs. S. Davis & Son, with their usual thoughtfulness, have laid upon his table a couple of boxes of the fragrant El Padre brand. Thanks, friends and brethren, one and all, and may your good wishes return upon your own heads a thousand-fold.

During a dense fog, a Mississippi steamboat took landing. A traveler, anxious to go ahead, came to the unperturbed manager of the wheel, and asked why they stopped. "Too much fog. Can't see the river." "But you can see the stars overhead." "Yes," replied the urbane pilot; "but until the biler busts we aint going that way." The passenger went to bed.

"No use to take your medicine," said a patient to a doctor, "for as I never expect to get well, I could not pay you!" "Had you intended to pay me?" the doctor asked. "Yes, sir." "Well, then, I'll change your treatment. It's a hard matter and somewhat unprofessional, but as you entertain an idea of paying me you'd better take a little of this harmless powder instead of the dose I had mixed for you."

Rev. J. G. Calder, Baptist minister, Petrolia, says: "I know many persons who have worn Notman's Pads with the most gratifying results. I would say to all suffering from bilious complaints or dyspepsia; Buy a pad, put it on and wear it, and you will enjoy great benefits." Hundreds of others bear similar testimony. Send to 120 King-st. East either for a pad or for a treatise, etc.