

Year gallops in close behind the old veteran, who limps out of the way just in time to save his weary old legs from danger, and merry, genial Christmas throws its magic charm all round the cheerful family circle. And though the times have changed, and we in America no longer hear the little knots of boys and girls in their warm caps and hoods, and their little pink cheeks and blue hands, singing cheerily their roundelays and carols as of old, yet we cannot altogether banish the thoughts which the holidays bring to mind. We don't make the welkin ring with our shouts now on Christmas Eve, as was done years ago when the old Snap-dragon held the boards. And what good fun it was, too, as the laughing groups ran round the table and tried over and over again to snatch the plump rai-in from the blazing flames that leaped and danced in delightful excitement. And then old Snap's song, too, was full of the season's influences :

“ Here he comes with flaming bowl,  
Don't he mean to take his toll,  
Snip! Snap! Dragon!

Take care you don't take too much,  
Be not greedy in your clutch,  
Snip! Snap! Dragon!

With his blue and lapping tongue  
Many of you will be stung,  
Snip! Snap! Dragon!

For he snaps at all that comes  
Snatching at his feast of plums,  
Snip! Snap! Dragon!

But Old Christmas makes him come,  
Though he looks so fee! fa! fun!  
Snip! Snap! Dragon!

Don't 'ee fear him, be but bold—  
Out he goes, his flames are cold.  
Snip! Snap! Dragon!”

As all the lights in the room are extinguished, save the blue flames in the centre dish, quite a weird halo is thrown round, and one could almost fancy himself among the ancient Druids attending fire-worship.

But why need we recapitulate the many, many Christmas festivities of the past (but few remain to delight the present generation)? Why need we go back to our childhood's days and speak of the Mummers, the Christmas tree weighty with good things from famous “Santa Claus,” (Why will mothers and fathers, and that family nuisance, the elder brother, break this glorious delusion? What delight was experienced the night before Christmas, when the pendant stocking stolidly gazed on our infantile head through the little hole in the toe of that garment, wrapped in admiration of Santa Claus and what he was going to give us! It's a grievous shame.) the burning of the “famous log for Yule,” the Waits, and the countless games and sports which this day conjured up from the smoky olden time.

Our literature at this period is therefore necessarily light—very much so, in fact. The mind has a month's holiday; and free from