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## Original Articles

### OLD DOC'S CHRISTMAS

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Seated before a box-stove fire, in a round yellow armchair, of which his waiting-room contained two, and three black ones, like those usually found in the sitting-rooms of country inns, old Doc Lampard smoked his long, straight brierwood and gazed vacantly at the glowing coals intermittently dropping below the damper. It was Christmas Eve.

His right arm lay on a large oblong table once stained brown, as could be seen from the few stray patches covering its legs. Some old medical books, a few scientific journals mostly with their wrappers still on, an inkstand and pen, blue, yellow and red advertisement blotters, samples of pharmaceuticals left by the ubiquitous detail man, littered the table. By his side rested a letter-sized epistle only just laid down.

The table, which was of unusual size, occupied the space against the north wall and part of the east, the latter being all window and front door which led out onto a wide verandah. A step or two below this ran the village sidewalk, mixed ashes and gravel, now covered deep with snow.

A lamp was burning on the table, exhibiting his license to practise and diploma or "sheepskin" hanging on the wall above; and save for a big brown earthenware cuspidor, there was nothing else in the room.

The floor was bare and embossed with knots, the result of the