

## THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

and when the end came, and the visitors moved into the parlor once more, with Will in the best possible humor, and the head of the city cousins exuberant in the style and with the recollection of boyhood's days, a more happy little party could not be found in all Christendom. The city girls, Mamie and Rose followed Mary, who had gone to cast a momentary and motherly eye upon the doings of her elder daughters, Lizzie and Jane, who with a female help were busily at work in that intensely important and absorbing occupation known as dishwashing and city muscle soon showed itself to be equal to helping hands. When an hour had elapsed, Will proposed to his male visitors an adjournment, to the barns to cast an eye over the wealth which every farmer properly laudably and proudly displays. He was as much at home here as at the table. It was an agricultural exhibition on a small scale, with unaccustomed judges to award the praise. First to be visited were the fat Leicester sheep, not yet common to that section, and most highly prized of all Will's belongings; then came the turn of the Berkshire swine, rooting lazily amongst the straw scattered over the flooring of their shed; then the short-horn cows, comfortably housed, and betokening in their sleek coats the care bestowed upon them; then the working oxen - then common in country parts - chewing their cuds contentedly, or munching an extra feed of turnips or chopped stuff, a Christmas gift most thoroughly appreciated; then the horses groomed with English skill and Yorkshire love of horse-flesh; then the spacious barn yet filled with heavy sheaves; and then the granary where the cereal products of the summer's labor were piled up in golden heaps, for sale at the open

ing of navigation next spring when prices would be "up." These indispensable duties performed, amidst the loud congratulations of the Lighthearts the little party returned to the snugger of the best room, where the ladies were now all assembled, and spent the remainder of the afternoon in ringing laughter, and incipient flirtations amongst the young folks, with cider to moisten the dry jokes of the elders, and hickory nuts to crack with them, until the darkening shades of evening announced the approaching close of another Christmas day. The Merryweather family had determined, however, that the observance of this annual holiday should not cease with the setting sun, and had made preparation for the passing of the night in a fashion somewhat different from that of quiet after dinner chat. A step into the kitchen would have convinced even a blind man of the truth of this. Pies of different sorts stood upon the dresser; cakes, innumerable and varied, were piled in picturesque confusion upon the best dishes of the Merryweather porcelain; mince pies, fresh from the patty-pans, by the unnumbered dozen, were placed in pyramid form upon other huge plates; ginger-breads of strange design, and various flavors, were temptingly arranged for service during the evening. deep jars of wild raspberries, gathered last summer, just before the harvest time, and boiled with due exactitude until they took the form of jam, still retaining their woodland flavor and much of their natural and brilliant coloring, had been brought from dark closets where they had been stored, and with martyrlike fortitude awaited the plunging spoon which should break through their privacy; big dishes of . . . But we are exposing mysteries of the household into which