

as to the future. So may, and no doubt in many cases, does age, either from prejudice or exaggerated ideas of the past, or want of capacity for the enjoyment of the present, come to the conclusion, too often erroneously, that when they were young boys and girls, men, women, and things, aye, even the Times and Seasons, were better then than now, and so they lament over and sigh for the "Grand old Times," and mourn over the degeneracy of the Times that are present and passing quickly away, and sometimes tell you—

In mournful cadences and slow,

Things are changing for the worse you know
To what they were in days long, long ago.

Now, whether this be so or not as to things and matters generally in which the Church and the world alike, in the opinion of some aged, and it may be middle-aged pessimists or

excellence of the year. In the North and North-western Counties the New Year Day divides the honour with Christmas Day. In Yorkshire, for instance, Christmas is universally observed with the same degree of joyousness as in the Eastern, Southern, and Western Counties, while in the adjoining County of Lancashire to a very great extent, even yet, New Year Day is observed on almost equal terms as Christmas Day, is more, rather than less, of a holiday.

No impartial person who can remember as I do the way and manner in which Christmas, from the eve to *Boxing day, during the past sixty-five years, can long halt between two opinions "as to which were and are most consonant with the great event which was made known to the world by the angel hosts, who

total disappearance of these ancient institutions. They still linger, however, in some of the nooks and corners of England, but are mere shadows of the past. How often, when I was young, have I listened to the music of the Waits, and noted the difference in time and style between commencement and finish. How often have I noted with what fervour of feeling and reverent tones or manner the village choir has started on its Christmas Eve round, commencing with "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night," etc., till towards the dawn of the joyful day, the tune, style, and manner have gradually changed so completely that Byron's grand hymn: "Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn," etc., could scarcely be understood, and few would suppose the singers were



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR GRANDPA IN OLDEN TIMES.

optimists, I would not now in the presence of dear old Father Christmas stop to discuss. As one who has reached his "three-score years and ten," and fifty-five of these as a loyal and loving communicant of the Glorious old Church of England, and fifty of the fifty-five in dear old England, I am not prepared to endorse the view that in the way and manner of celebrating the joyous and ought to be, holy, season of Christmas, was better in one instance when I was a boy or "young man" than it is now. Christmas in those days was not, and is not even now, observed in all parts of England in the same manner and degree, and scarcely equal to New Year's Day in Scotland, except by the "Episcopal Church," while in the Eastern and Southern Counties and most of the Western, it is the festival par

sang in sweetest notes of celestial melody the glorious song:

"Glory to God in the highest,
On earth peace, good will towards men."

To the present generation of Church people, especially Canadians, the Village Waits with their clarionets, trombones, and big, big drums, and the peripatetic choirs which have now become small by degrees (I scarcely like to say, and beautifully less), are but merely picturesque figures on the pages of "venerable chronicles," or in the memories of those who may be considered by their younger contemporaries as ancient fathers in the Church. I am one of them. I cannot say I am altogether sorry nor entirely glad at the almost

*The day after Christmas Day, so called as Christmas gifts or "boxes" are collected on this day.

the same who had commenced the round of singing on Christmas Eve. It was by contributions received from the dwellers in houses before which they sang, the Village Choir used to collect whatever remuneration they received in those days, and the rustic waits hoped to be enabled by the contributions received to purchase new instruments if needed, or repair their old ones, or put a new head in the big drum, if, as not unlikely, it gets broken by the tremendous beating it too often received in the larger hours of the night, or "the wee sma' 'ours o' the mornin'." The reason may be easily guessed, as from excessive generosity, or from the mistaken notion that Christmas time was such a season for joy and gladness, and this could only result from a few extra glasses or bottles of wine (so