

of eatables in the house?" and John went over the list for the sixth time.

"Yes," laughed Edith, "and I've got bacon, canned goods, potatoes, celery, milk, cranberries and a whole lot of things, besides the case of pipes and the slippers."

"Tobacco?" called back Will as he was going out first with his arms full of parcels.

"Yes, Will, and tobacco," and she indicated with a nod a red tin she was carrying in her arms.

"Come on, then; let's hurry! It's going to eight, and we have twelve miles to drive," and John took a last hasty look around the parlor to see if anything was being left behind.

* * * * *

James Walker had gone after exacting a half-hearted promise from Old Doc to come and have Christmas dinner at his home. That was why his wife, Mary, had sent him to the doctor's office that night.

Old Doc still sat on dozing, awakening every little while as some cutter or sleigh sped by, then gazing into the fire. He seemed unconcerned now. His bed was forgotten. He was living his Christmas eves over again.

Now two faces are looking in at him over the frosted panes; two faces he loves well, John and Will, who had left the sleighs at the lower end of the village. They had got Edith's telegram at the hotel in town and so knew that it would be a surprise to the old man to see them all, and they didn't want it to be too sudden. There was a glad light in their eyes as they took in the bent form, the well-remembered head, the shiny crown, the snow-white hair and beard.

"John," whispered Will, "you must take him home with you!"

"I would, gladly, but Edith says she's going to have him for good and sure this time, and I guess that will be for the best. Come!" and he took Will quietly by the arm and softly opened the door.

"Merry Christmas, dad!" and both were upon him, their arms around him.

"John—Will! Oh! This is too good," as he arose tremulously and put an arm around the shoulders of each.

Sleigh bells came jingling, quivering. Youngsters' lusty throats were calling heartily. There was a rough and tumble scramble to see who would be out first and in to see grand-dad.