

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

rein, lumbered past its more humble competitors, when opportunity offered, and looked down with contempt upon all following in its wake. And then the riders in the various sleds and sleighs and cutters! Bluff farmers, clad in warm and heavy homespun, prim storekeepers, spruce clerks, smiling matrons, young wives, blooming misses and country beaux, were all alive bent on hearty enjoyment of the day, and determined, in the bottom of their hearts, to make the most of it. And if loud and healthy laughter, cheerful songs, and pleasant recognition of passing travellers indicated anything, they told that every sleigh carried a merry company. The Lighthearts had a drive of twenty miles before them when they started, and judiciously divided it, as sensible people did in those days, by half an hour's stoppage at a roadside inn, where hay was given to the horses, and the occupants of the sleigh enjoyed the warmth of an open fireplace, in which blazed a buck-log of sufficient size to afford timber for the construction of a modern building. Lightheart, senior, cracked a round of pleasant jokes with the occupants of the bedroom, with proper Christmas solicitude for the happiness of all the world, and the party set forth once more on its journey. The horses travelled faster after their brief rest, and Daisydell was reached as the twenty clocks, which the village boasted in its scattered houses, announced, within five minutes of each other at utmost, that noon had struck. The house of William Merryweather, "Yorkshire Will," as he was sometimes called, and for which we are specially bound, was detached from the rest, and stood on his farm at the outskirts of the little rural community. A rare and cosy-looking spot it was too, although partly log

and partly frame, and innocent of other coloring than a coat of white paint on the siding and whitewash on the logs. A broad stoop or verandah along its front, latticed with green stips, the work of some rustic carpenter, and of William's willing hand, gave promise of hearty cheer within, and threw the spectator into that indescribable flutter attendant upon love at first sight, of which youthful poets often sing, and alas! know so little. The great expectations thus excited were not disappointed. The ready smile of Yorkshire William shone at one window, and was duplicated by that of Mrs. Merryweather at the other, as the barking of the farm dogs announced the arrival of guests, before the tinkling bells were heard, and then a wide open door, with Mr. and Mrs. M. upon the threshold, preceded the hearty greeting of "A Merry Christmas to you all," which was sent up on the winter air as the first shot in the day's battle with Old Melancholy of the allied forces of Fun and Frolic. And when the visitors emerged from their cozy buffalo robe environments, such a grip as was given by William to every occupant of the sleigh; such smacking kisses as each lady was saluted with by Mrs. Merryweather and her grown daughter as they entered the house; such pleasant officiousness as was displayed in the unharnessing of the horses, such an armful of split pine as was laid upon the open fire in the sitting room, such clatter through the building, emanating from bustling feet running to meet the city cousins; such numerous enquiries, exchanged in a dozen different voices upon a dozen different matters, had surely never been known even in Daisydell before, and formed a cheerful medley contrasting charmingly with the winter aspect of all without. The whole building