

AMUSEMENT FOR CHRISTMAS TIME
FOR THE YOUNG.

POTATO PANTOMIMES.

"Potato Pantomimes" may be old as the hills, but I confess not to have heard or seen them until quite lately. So perhaps you have not. Take a good-sized potato with a smooth skin; twist curled horse-hair into the shape of a wig and whiskers or moustache, and fasten on with pins; then make a hole for the forefinger to go into; this gives the head a throat. Wrap a bit of cloth, a handkerchief or what-not round the hand, arranging one corner of it around the second finger. Then you have a little man with hands and arms, capable of bowing and moving his head. Make a screen, let four or five youngsters be behind it, each with their potato characters, and as they say the words of the charade, burlesque or tragedy, let these potato men perform. It is capital fun, and beats Punch and Judy out of the field. Punch and Judy is a brutal performance at best. Potato Men have amiable dispositions. They are generally friends, fond of shaking hands, embracing, and nodding their heads cordially at each other. They also have a thoughtful way of rubbing their foreheads that is very funny. Sometimes they fight, I admit, but they don't bang each other all the time as Punch and Judy. Try them.

MARK TWAIN'S FARMING.—In July Galaxy, Mark Twain gives an account of a disagreement he had with the editor of an agricultural journal, who, Twain complains, called his contributions "a disgrace to journalism," because he did not make a proper distinction between a harrow and a furrow, because he wrote of the moulting season for cows, because he recommended the domestication of the polecat on account of its playfulness, and its excellence as a rat. He then gives some extracts from his contributions, from which we extract a few sentences:—

Turnips should never be pulled; it injures them. It is much better to send a boy up and let him shake the tree.

The guano is a fine bird, but great care is necessary in rearing it. It should not be imported earlier than June or later than September. In the winter it should be kept in a warm place, where it can hatch out its young.

It is evident that we will have a backward season for grain. Therefore it will be well for the farmers to begin setting out his cornstalks and planting his buckwheat cakes in July instead of August.

Concerning the pumpkin—this berry is a favorite with the natives of the interior of New England, who prefer it to the gooseberry for the making of fruit-cake, and who likewise give it the preference over the raspberry for feeding cows, as being more filling and fully as satisfying. The pumpkin is the only esculent of the orange family who will thrive in the north, except the gourd and two varieties of the squash. But the custom of planting it in the front yard with the shrubbery is fast going out of vogue, for it is now generally conceded that the pumpkin, as a shade-tree, is a failure.

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JOHN CARLING,

Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works for the Province of Ontario.