

"That's easy for a parcel of girls, who only want to mull over the fire, and chatter, and drink tea; but it's rough on us fellows, who come for the outside fun. House is well enough; but when you've seen it once, there's an end. Eating is jolly, but you can't stuff forever. We might dig, or snowball, if it did n't blow a gale. Never saw such a beast of a storm!"—and Geoff flattened his nose against the window-pane and scowled at the elements.

A laugh made him turn around, and forget his woes to stare at the quaint little figure that stood curtsying in the door-way of the keeping-room, where a dozen young people were penned while the maids cleared up the remains of yesterday's feast in the kitchen, the mothers were busy with the babies upstairs, and the fathers read papers in the best parlor; for this was a family gathering under the roof of the old homestead.

A rosy, dark-eyed face looked out from the faded green calash, a gayly flowered gown was looped up over a blue quilted petticoat, and a red camlet cloak hung down behind. A big reticule and a funny umbrella were held in either hand, and red hose and very high-heeled, pointed shoes covered a trim pair of feet.

"God bless you, merry gentlemen!
May nothing you dismay;
Here's your ancient granny come
To call, this Christmas day,"

sang Minnie, the lively member of the flock, as she bobbed little curtseys and smiled so infectiously that even cross Geoff cheered up.