

A MERRY CHRISTMAS: FIFTY YEARS AGO.

About fifty years ago, the young city of Thrivewell, in Upper Canada, was prosperous, ambitious and plucky, with dreams of future wealth, schemes of present progress, and men of "go" and energy. At all costs, and under all circumstances, it was bound to push ahead. It had wholesale houses, well known throughout the western portion of the Province, budding factories, "a real smart trade" with widely spread rural settlements, a large forwarding business, and a steady growth. That its merchant princess and professional men should regard themselves as already forming a superior class, a sort of upper crust composed of broadcloth, nails, briefs, and pill boxes, was natural even if absurd, and it was not at all surprising that Thomas Lighthouse, of the widely known firm of Goodman, Lighthouse, Pluck & Co., should in conjunction with Mrs. L., deem it time to look for a permanent and eligible place in that same superstratum of society for their elder son and daughter. The Lighthouse family, in addition to its two heads had two sons and two daughters, the elder boy being familiarly known as Jack, and Miss L. being generally addressed as Mamie. They had already reached what was then known as a marriageable age, and Pater and Mater were acutely alive to the fact. In the days of the Forties, those whom the Gods loved married young, and, if they obeyed their parents, generally married well. That Jack had not yet made selection of Mrs. Lighthouse, jr., although he had been suspected of sundry efforts in that direction, was a matter of concern to Mrs. Lighthouse, and her husband, as in duty bound, shared in all her perplexities. Various names had been canvassed by the parents, but although many

were called before them in the family conference, none was chosen. Jack was permitted to drift even yet a little longer, but it was determined that he should be brought into safe anchorage, by and bye, where wealth, standing, respectability, appearance and family connexions were to be regarded as indispensable. And so with Mamie. Although society gossips had reported several "engagements" in which she was an important personage, her heart was still untouched, and she, too, was looked upon by parental eyes, as awaiting the turning up of just the right man to fill the vacancy. Such was the condition of affairs when Christmas week arrived in 1841, and with it a letter from Mrs. William Merryweather, of Daisydell, duly addressed to Mrs. Lighthouse, of Thrivewell, containing a warm and pressing invitation to the whole Lighthouse family to drive down to that quiet little village, and spend Christmas Day with their old friends, in real old Christmas fashion. A family council was forthwith called, and although Pater Familias entered demur on the ground of trouble, cold, rough roads, inconvenience, short notice, and so forth, and his amiable if calculating spouse sympathized to some extent with his objections, Jack and Mamie, Tom and Rose, were caught by the promised spice of novelty, an expectation of country fun, the prospect of good sleighing, which was assured by then falling snow, and a desire to make better acquaintance with the Merryweather family, and, it is almost needless to say, ultimately prevailed. So the invitation was duly accepted, the big double sleigh was uncovered, the rich buffalo robes, lined with bright blue and scarlet, were deliberately and thoroughly beaten, gifts for the Merryweathers were purchased, and the warmest winter wraps brought from their summer