The Christmas time has come again, the glad-some Christmas time? The evergrees are berried bright, the boughs are white with rime; From ever skepple, far and near, the joy-bells that the property of the pr

The mistletoe hangs coy aloft, its polish'd beads of white Mir's with the laurel and the bay and scarlet bearing the property of the property

nter, once again made young, bethinks im of his Spring; with the street and go in the spring looks up in Winter's face whilst outh is on the wing. It is not the cific amples. Pausing thus, I will be the seemed to say that necessary that the seemed to say that necessary that the seemed to say that necessary the seemed to say the seemed to say that necessary the seemed to say the see

PLAIN JOHN SMITH.

I have heard it said that few, if any, ourney from the cradle to the grave without pourney from the cradle to the grave without experiencing some romance in their lives. Be this as it may, we will not stop to argue the point: but proceed at once to say that l, incredible as it may appear, once acted drama, the story of whall a purpose of the property of the pro

commonplace a new war romance contrived to creep into it.

There was my name, too—John Smith!
Who ever heard of a John Smith winning spurs for himself, or rescuing distressed damsels? (To be sure there were extant certain acions of our family who, having aristocratic predilections, dubbed themselves "Smythe," and I strongly suspect that I had an equal right to the y and extra letter, our great-grandfathers having been one and the same.

I lived with my widowed mother in a little ordinary house in a common little terrace—of those everlasting red-brick, bowwin.

"But I tell yer they do; may—stir—from—'ere if they don't!

the same.)

I lived with my widowed mother in a little ordinary house in a common little terraceone of those everlasting red-brick, bowwindowed, six-roomed domiciles, run up by jerry builders in such profusion on the outskirts of our large commercial towns; there was a tiny garden before, and a tinier yard behind.

How well I remember it all!—the chimneys that would smoke, the windows that wouldn't fasten, the rain that came in, and the draughts we couldn't keep out—the children who screamed and gamboiled in the exuberance of their youthful mirth about our gate by day, and the members of the feline tribe who did ditto during the silent hours of night—the raids prepetrated on these by our young domestic, and the raids of my dear mother on that damsel.

Such were the exciting scenes of my early youth. youth.

The only romantic thing about me at the imerry lazy to work, or evime when I consider the romance of my life keeping body and

West."

The thrilling adventures of Diok Tarpin and the "Boy Tar" had never stirred in ma aspirit of emulation.

Later, I had perused Sir Walter Scott, Bulwer Lytton, and even Harrison Ainsworth, and never dreamt that I might possibly wake one fine morning and find myself some young prince in diaguise—changed, you know, in my oradle-days. I can remember no wild visions of this sort crossing my mind; therefore I conclude I was not imaginative.

The sole ambition of my life at this time was the acquisition of hirraute adornments. I flatter myself I am by no means a vain man; but somehow I had become firmly convinced that my physique required these embellishments. The species vulgarly termed "i nuttun-chop" was the order after which my soul longed. Oh, the time and money I secretly spent in oeaxing and fostering those manly accessories: I flow assiduously I cultivated the down upon my upper lip I and then how recklessly I shaved, in the delusive hope that next time it would grow more worthy the name of mountache. But who does not know the hopes and fears that assail the manly bosoon of twenty concerning that to-him-all-important subject—which my soul conged. The name of mountache. But who does not know the hopes and fears that assail the manly bosoon of twenty concerning that to-him-all-important subject—which was very common-place individual I was, and what very ordinary ideas occupied my mind.

My mother, dear soul, was just such another every-day kind of person, wholly engressed in housekeeping and in enteleavour providence. Lord 'won't the old chiust now when them wig'd fellers when the man and interest or the surple solve the core when them wig'd fellers when the my surplement the my surplement the surplement the surplement that the s

mind.

My mother, dear soul, was just such another every-day kind of person, wholly engrossed in housekeeping and in endeavouring to stretch our small innome to its utmost limit. Her one excitement seemed to be in discovering our domestic's various little delinquencies; and her one pleasure in relating them afterwards to me, or one or two choice cronies who dropped in occasionally to partake of the "oup that cheers with us.

She was a woman much given to "cleaning." It's my belief that spring was chiefly welcomed by her on account of the excuses it brought for the free use of dusters and brooms.

Spring cleanings were a great institution with my mother—I don't suppose such a thing as a cobweb was ever seen in our house; nothing was ever to be found awny; I don't think the chairs dare stand out of their places; and I am sure a paper would blush if it found it self by an accident left lying carclessly about.

The one extraordinary point about my mother was a phasently in perpetual dread lest some designing fair one should run away with me.

The dexterous way in which she contrived each Sabbath to interpose her dear old form between my lined vision and the pew in which sat the three Miss Robinsons, supposed to be irresistible, was simply unique. Diplomatist might have taken a lesson indications of the aby.

Was I not ridiculously commonplace and matter-of-fact?

I had served my time in a wool-broker's office (I won't tell you the name of our firm, because it's of no consequence; nor will I tell you the name of the town in which we sojourned, leat, from my graphic descriptions, you should some of you make enquiries concerning asid. John Smith, and as, finding me out, quite frustrate my intentions). As I said, then, I had received the last penny of the hundred pounds, paid me in course of my five years' service per agreement, and being a steady young man, not given to smoking, drinking, or other little tregularities these things are supposed to lead to, was still kept on as a sort of junior clerk, earning a modest salary, with distant prospects of a "rise."

It was in consequence of another fixed idea of my mother's (which led her to suppose that no diet contained the same nutritive qualities as that prepared beneath the maternal roof and eye) that each morning

saw me provided with a neatly-packed par The every greates are betragent. He joy-bells pealing ring.

The voloce of man's good-will to man speaks for the neverthing.

I. Warm glow the lights by cottage-hearth. In lordy mansion high. And many a tale of love is told neath frosty stardies are light from the lordy mansion high. The strains of love is told neath frosty stardies were lightly stardies. See the bells ring and sliver laughter sweet. Bleans with the crunching of the snow beneath the ponice feet.

Here: strains of joyous music come from younger cowder hall. And sounds of mirth and twirling feet proclaim the Christmas ball; and glowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; and flowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; and flowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; and flowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; and flowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; and flowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; the christmas ball; and flowing cheeks and gleaning gems and the christmas ball; the

Ring on, ring on, O Christmas bells, peal out upon the air;
Grasp hands. O salwart bearded men; smine
Laugh, darling bright-hair'd little ones, in your
white-blossom'd prime;
Pay loral homage, one and all, to happy Christs
mas time!

VIII.

The time of mutual good-will, the season to forgive.
Forget we bygone injuries, but kindnesses let
Let Love swear flowers user users
Friendship cheefs the old.
Friendship che

The only romantic thing about me at the time when I consider the romance of my life began was my age, which was twenty; and even this, truth compels ms to observe, was but an ordinary occurrence, which must perforce be shared in common with many another.

Looking back through the long vista of years, which enables me to judge impartially, I feel bound to confess that I was neither handsome or good-looking; I fear I was not even of the ugy-interesting type, where manily figures and deep grey ever prove saving points. No! I was merely an ordinary spectmen of the "geoms home," possessing in uncompany follow-men.

I was not imaginative; in proof of which let me tell you that I had read Captains Marryat and Mayne Reid, together with the usual literature with which schoolboys love to feed their fancy; and my soul had never yearned after the delights of the 'trackless prairie," the "Indian war trail," nor yet the glories of the "far West."

The thrilling adventures of Diok Turpin and the "Boy Tar" had never stirred in me as pririt of emulation.

The dexterous way in which she contrived each Sabbath to intarpose her dear old form between my line of vision and the pew in which sat the three Miss Robinsons, supposed to be irresistible, was simply unique. Diplomatists might have taken a lesson from the very clever manner in which she always frustrated our neighbour Miss Sweet love's little attempt to get up a mild flirtation across the front-garden palings; horticultural proclivities leading that young lady thitherwards, each summer evening, about the time I wended my steps towards home and the eventide meal. How sweetly she blushed amidst the Virginian stock and consumptive-looking mignocette, that struggled for existence in our luxuriant parterres—an bject of admiration to the passers-by, and of never-ending annoyance to my mother. Poor mother! her experience of married life must have been of the dismallest; she showed so much anxiety lest her son should be tempted to enter into that state—or, was it that she wished to spare my susceptible heart, doubting its power of resistance against the wily charms of the fair sex.

On what grounds she founded her fears I mever could make out—certainly I showed no predilection for female society; but this was my mother's idiosyncrasy, and perhaps this socounts for the singular fact that, at the romantic age of twenty, no more romantic oldes filled my brain shan the proper cultivation of my whiskers. As yet I had never come in contact with any young person whom, for a moment, I had funcied and the court family in the manne of our "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth, my darling from the prisoner's pale line, "The truth,