

HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

The Young Folks' Happiest Hours.

GOING TO THE COUNTRY DANCE WITH OUR BEST GIRL BY OUR SIDE.

Zeke Ruminates on the "Long Forgotten" Past—But do we Ever Forget our Youthful Frolics And Good Times at Christmas.

To us Older Folks Each Christmas Brings to Mind Some Former One.

Old Uncle John, the weather prophet of the neighborhood, stood leaning on the bars, and with half closed eyes was scanning the heavy banks of grey clouds lying low on the horizon. Slowly straightening his long gaunt frame, and turning up the collar of his shaggy overcoat, he rapped his hands deep into its capacious pockets, remarking with a drawl as he walked away: "Boys, look out for a heavy fall of snow here tomorrow."

It was not because the snow was good for wheat, neither because there was an old saying "green Christmas makes a fat graveyard," that we were interested in the old man's remarks, for in those boyhood days back on the farm, we were not giving much thought to the practical or serious affairs of life, and just at that time we were more interested in a run of sleighing for the holidays, and the fun that came with it.

True to Uncle John's prophecy, the night the storm set in, and the flakes fell thick and fast my spirits rose, and I was correspondingly happy, and hurrying through with the "chores" I went to the house to settle the question that was uppermost in my mind.

Father was seated by the fire reading aloud to mother, who, busy with her knitting, was sitting opposite, and as I drew up to the fire I was a little nervous and fidgety as how best to broach the subject, but father, glancing up from his reading, realized there was something on my mind, and putting aside the paper, said: "Well, my boy, what is it?"

I know I stammered and turned as red as a penny, as I blurted out: "Well, father, I thought I would ask if I might have the use of the mare and Swallow for Christmas."

Father's eyes twinkled as he glanced at mother, and by the quiet smile on her face, I knew my request was granted, and I don't not that thoughts of days gone by flitted across their minds as he replied: "I guess so, but you must be on your guard with the brute, as she is in high fettle, and you know neighbor Brown sets great store by that girl of his."

Mother laughed, and I blushed as I thanked them, and ran upstairs to bed and to dream the mare ran away and threw Mary into the drifts.

I was aroused in the night by a poke in the ribs from brother Tom, as he said: "Zeke, the wind is coming up, and it's drifting badly." In the morning we were out of bed with a bound, at father's call, and ran down stairs to draw on our boots by the fire. The snow on the window sills was piled high against the panes; the trees were beading with its weight; the hay stacks appearing like miniature snow capped mountains, while the fences were nearly buried from sight.

Plodding through the snow to the stables, we fed the cattle and returned to the house for breakfast, and then came the serious business of the day, "breaking out the roads." With our warm caps drawn down over the ears, and mufflers bound tightly around the neck, and thick woolen mittens, the snow had no fears for us.

That the cattle from their stalls should be so cold, and the patient and patient till we had a cross road, and as it turned into

side, all bent on the same mission. Young, healthy and full of life, we enjoyed the work, and jokes were free and shouts of laughter filled the air as some unlucky wight would roll from the sled and for the moment was buried in the drift; and many a sly glance was cast towards the houses we passed, where at the windows, bright eyes, rosy checked lassies were watching and laughing at the baps and mishaps of the boys in the snow.

The storm was over, the roads had settled, and the afternoon of December 24 was spent in "getting ready" for the Christmas Eve dance. The mare was well groomed, the robes shaken and well cleaned, and the bells were given an extra rub.

As I led the frisky animal from her stall, I patted her sleek sides and gave the bells a shake just to hear them jingle, and I was the proudest and happiest lad in the country, and why not?

The air was crisp and cold, the full moon shining brightly on the crusted snow and the sleighing all that heart could wish; Mary, in my eyes, was the sweetest and prettiest girl in all the country round, and there was not a horse in the county could throw the snow in our faces. What more could a boy of sixteen desire?

As I turned into the yard farmer Brown came out on the porch and said, "Zeke, hitch the nag and come in." But I told him that as she was a little nervous I thought I would stay by her, and I was mighty glad of an excuse to escape the good natured jollying that awaited me.

When Mary stepped into the cutter, and I was tucking the robes around her—my heart pounding like a trip-hammer, the old man called out, "Zeke, you young rascal, keep an eye on that mare, 'cause if you spill that gal in the snow, you and the old lady will cry quits." Mary laughed, and I did not reply, but picked up the reins and we went skimming over the snow, and for a mile or two I said naver a word. I was tongue tied. Too happy for utterance—or perhaps I was bashful.

Soon we saw a rig coming down a cross road, and as it turned into

the road ahead of us, Mary said, "Zeke, there goes Bill Young and Nellie Williams. Bill is driving the black horse, and he says it can out step anything in the country." My pride was touched, and as I tapped the mare's flank with the whip I eased up on the strings, and the way the little beast went after the black horse was a thing to stand out of the way of. With her ears laying well back, the gallant little animal entered into the spirit of the race, and as Mary hid her head behind my shoulder to protect her face from the flying snow from the mare's heels, the blood was boiling in my veins and I was determined to pass Bill Young or kill dad's horse.

Nellie waved her hand in defiance and as Bill was using the silk, we were simply splitting the wind, and the mare was going level, and as she had the foot she soon had her nose at their backs, and under a strong pull, I was watching for a chance to lap and take the lead.

The opportunity soon came, and I pulled to the right, and we were away like a bird, passing them as though they were standing still, but not taking the track quite quick enough I ran onto a bank, the cutter careened, slid away on one runner, and Mary, followed by the robes and blankets, took a flying plunge at a snow drift, while I, face downwards, was plunging the snow behind a thoroughly frightened horse. As we went over I lost my hold on one of the reins, but hanging to the other my weight soon brought the mare to a stand still in the corner of the fence.

I was on my feet and had the cutter righted when Bill drove up with my girl, and I think I acted a little sheepish as I asked her if she was hurt.

As she shook the snow from her clothing, she laughingly replied, "There is no fun in a sleigh ride without a tip-over."

We arrived a little late at the dance, and as we drove to the door, above the music of the fiddles, we heard "Balance to your partners," "Swing at the corners," "Everybody swing." The Christmas fun had started, and—Well, I wish I was a boy again at Christmas time.

A POPULAR PASTOR.

The Work Rev. D. W. Hiott is Doing at Mt. Pisgah.

Rev. D. W. Hiott is one of the best known and one of the most popular Baptist ministers in the county. His many friends will read with interest the following from a late issue of the Baptist Courier:

Dear Courier: I would be pleased to write you concerning a portion of the workings of our church, Mt. Pisgah, while under the leadership of Rev. D. Weston Hiott.

It was, I believe, in May, 1876 that Rev. D. Weston Hiott, who had just finished his course at Furman University, was called as co-pastor to assist Rev. E. Z. Long, who was pastor at that time. Bro. Long, who has in the long ago passed to his reward, after having served the church in a most satisfactory and successful manner for a number of years, by consent of the brethren, turned over the pastorate of the church to the assistant, young and inexperienced as he was. The older heads of Mt. Pisgah saw more in him than the manly looking boy that he was. Bro. Hiott was then called to the pastorate of the church and filled that position for two years, to the joy and satisfaction of the entire membership. During these two years, through the continued, earnest and untiring efforts of the pastor, great spiritual progress was made in the church and lasting good accomplished. This, I think, was Bro. Hiott's first pastoral work.

Early in life that he had been called to preach the gospel, he went about his work with an earnestness and devotion which have ever proved his calling and his success as a winner of souls to Christ. During these two years of his gospel ministry at Pisgah there were many accessions to the church, forty-five having been baptized at one time. Bro. Hiott's power and influence as an ambassador for Christ spread abroad, and like a great many other young men, he was desirous to see more of the

world; therefore, he accepted a call to another field, and his absence for the period of nineteen years at Mt. Pisgah was notably conspicuous. While away, the pastorate of the church was tendered him a number of times. During this long period of nineteen years, despite the rousing efforts made by the many excellent divines who ministered to the spiritual wants of the members, the membership of the church decreased, and its influence and power as a body of united Christians were fast waning. It was apparent that something must be done or failure would be the inevitable result. The wiser heads of the church, realizing this fact, fastidied themselves to greater action, the result of which was that an urgent and pressing call, accompanied with the prayers of the church, was again extended Bro. Hiott. This call was accepted, not only to the delight of the church, but other denominations hailed his coming with equal delight. His return to the church of his first gospel work was the signal for a forward move. It is needless to say that his return was welcomed. This was indeed cheering and caused his heart to rejoice, and gave him strength and stimulation, two factors in the make-up of a successful gospel minister. But with all this, it soon dawned upon the new pastor that a difficult and laborious task was before him. The fearful and deplorable condition in which he found the church made his heart sad. He found that prejudice, strife, differences and bickerings were prevalent in the church. As a matter of fact, this state of affairs would have to be changed.

and with that spiritual energy and valor so characteristic of the man, he set himself to the task of eradicating these destructive evils. This he did in such an effectual way and with such little friction that even the most disinterested spoke his praises, to say nothing of the kindly manner in which he is treated by the members of the church. Our church is constantly increasing in numbers and usefulness for the Master. Upwards of one hundred and fifty members have been

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baptized during Bro. Hiott's pastorate of the church.
At the last election for pastor, Bro. Hiott was unanimously elected by a rising vote, there being no opposition.
The members subscribe liberally to pastor's salary. The entire amount of pastor's salary is deposited in a bank at the beginning of the year, and at the end of each month one-twelfth of this amount is checked out and paid to the pastor.
In addition to other laudable undertakings of the church, a successfully conducted mission work under the auspices of the lady members is in progress. These Christian ladies are doing a great and telling work in a quiet and unostentatious manner. They must and are receiving the encouragement of the entire church.
The church, under the wise leadership of our pastor, is thoroughly aroused, wide-awake, progressive and devoted to the work of the Master.
A husband has often passed his companions in a saloon and home, because a baby's face was watching at the window for his return. A man has been lifted from slumbering indifference and pressed forward to make the best of life for baby's sake. Hard faces will soften, discouraged ones will grow more hopeful, gloomy lonesome homes will be made bright and merry, lives are made pure and happy, thus a tiny bit of humanity is a redeemer of mankind—Ex.