

panting loudly. Then he started again, in the opposite direction.

Again there was crashing and thundering, as the great beast went tearing round the room. When at last he stopped, the teacher's chair was hopelessly ruined; the water-bucket was trampled into splinters and the gourd into fragments; many of the bench-legs were broken, and the few school-books that had happened to fall under his feet would never be studied again.

When the steer had plunged into the house, the cowboys dashed up, and hastily dismounting tried to get the door open; but Lum had accidentally jerked the latch-string out of its hole, and the door could not be opened from the outside.

Then the two men hurried round to the side of the house, where they now stood looking in through a big crack. Each of them had a six-shooter in his hand, ready to kill the steer, if necessary to keep him from hurting anybody.

"If some of you will unfasten the door," one of them said, as soon as the steer had stopped his clatter, "we'll push it open and let him out."

"Columbus, you're there over the door," said the teacher; "can't you climb down and raise the latch?"

The steer was standing sullenly near the centre of the room, looking toward the door. Lum shook his head.

"Believe I'd rather stay up here," he replied.

Mr. Jenks would have worked his way round to the opposite end of the room, but as one side-wall was lined with boys and the other with girls, that was out of the question. So he tried to persuade Lum to take the risk; but Lum refused to be persuaded.

"Wouldn't do any good if I did unlatch the door," he said. "Lot of benches tumbled over here against it."

This was true. Three of the benches, which were half-logs and very heavy, had been overturned by the steer, and had fallen so that the door could not be opened until they were lifted out of the way.

Here was a predicament. It would have been as much as any one's life was worth to climb down there. The teacher did not know what to do, nor could the cowboys or any of the scholars suggest anything.

The steer, seeing the row of girls on the wall, now rushed at them. Several pairs of feet were in reach of his long horns, but were quickly moved up a log or two, some of the girls screaming, the others shouting, "Shoo there!"

Not being able to reach any of the girls, he found a red sunbonnet in a crack, horned it out and trampled upon it.

While doing this, he caught sight of the boys opposite, and plunged at them, causing them to climb as high as they could. One boy found an empty milk-bottle in a crack, and shattered it over one of the great horns.

The owner of the horn shook his head angrily. After this the steer kept charging back and forth across the room, at any one he thought he could reach.

At first the children were much frightened; but finding themselves safe, they began to get all the fun they could out of the situation.

"Your big scholar's making lots of trouble, aint he, Mr. Jenks?" called out Lum Williams, from his perch above the door. He was sitting on the top log, with his heels in a crack below.

Mr. Jenks, who occupied a similar position at the opposite end of the room, only smiled in reply.

"He's broke the most of the rules already," said Dick Bailey.

"Yes, and he's tearing them all down, too!" Molly Shoemaker exclaimed.

Mr. Jenks craned his long neck to see. Sure enough, the steer, attracted by the white paper, was horning it to pieces. The teacher's face flushed angrily. It would be a good half-day's work to rewrite all those rules carefully.

Reaching down, he took his bundle of switches out of the crack, and drawing the longest, began to lash the steer. The big beast shook his head, switched his tail and stamped his feet, but the teacher's practised hand kept plying the dogwood, until the steer was glad to retreat.

"Here, boys—girls," said Mr. Jenks, as he untied the bundle; "take these and use them on him whenever he comes close enough." And he began to pass dogwoods along the wall in both directions. Mr. Jenks had great faith in the efficacy of switches to cure all kinds of meanness.

The pupils took them eagerly, partly because, for personal reasons, they wanted those dogwoods used up. Soon the switches were distributed all around the walls, wherever they could be used to the best advantage. A single joist spanned the room, near the middle, and the three boys who had climbed out and sat astraddle of this were given switches, so that they could lash the steer whenever he passed under them.

Soon the steer tried to hook a boy off the wall,

and the whipping began. At first the big fellow was more furious than ever, and rushed here and there in a rage, shaking his head and stamping his feet; but after about fifteen minutes of punishment, all the fight had been taken out of him, and he was only eager to save his hide from the stinging blows rained on it wherever he went. The scholars enjoyed the sport, and the two cowboys looked on and laughed.

While the switches were being plied on the frantic steer, something happened which added greatly to the excitement. As the steer was passing under the joist, which was only a peeled pole, put in loosely, the three boys on it leaned over so far that it turned with them, and they suddenly found themselves hanging heads down over the steer.

It was a terrible moment. For everybody believed that they would fall, and some of them be gored to death; but the boys clung to the treacherous joist with arms and legs. They tried to climb back upon it, but it turned again. Not till they had worked their way along its under side to the wall did they escape from their perilous and uncomfortable position.

This danger past, the castigation of the steer was renewed, and kept up until the big fellow plainly realized that he was helpless, and in desperate straits. He stood trembling, and turned his eyes fearfully.

Looking out through a crack by the door, he could see the prairie, with its tall grass waving gently in the summer breeze, and also the drove of cattle he had left. Doubtless he was heartily sorry that he had run away from the drove and come to school, where dogwoods were so numerous, for he loved anxiously.

"Don't hit him any more," said Mr. Jenks. "We've conquered him. I tell you, boys," he exclaimed, enthusiastically, "the dogwood's the most useful bush that grows, isn't it?"

The two cowboys grinned, and so did some of the pupils, but nobody agreed with the statement.

Here a horseman galloped up and dismounted. He proved to be the owner of the drove, and had come to see what was the matter. When the situation was explained to him, he quietly reached back to his belt and drew a six-shooter.

"The only thing to do is to shoot him, and let you folks eat him," he said, as he cocked the weapon, and moved along till he could get an aim at a vital spot.

"No, don't do that," interposed Mr. Jenks. "He's a fine steer. I don't think I ever saw a bigger animal on the range, or a fatter one either. There's no use in shooting him. Besides, he's so big that it would take ten times as much work to get him out of the house dead as it will to get him out alive."

"How will you get him out alive if you can't open the door?" asked the man.

"I think if one of the boys over there will climb down far enough to raise the latch, you men can push the door open a few inches, then lift it off its hinges."

"All right," said the steer's owner, returning his six-shooter to its leather case.

The teacher's suggestion was quickly carried out. Lum was prevailed upon to climb down till he could reach the latch with his toes, when he raised it, and hastily climbed back. The door was now pushed open a little, and then lifted up, till its wooden hinges disconnected, it fell back with a clatter.

"Now drive him out!" shouted one of the cowboys, as they rushed for their ponies.

But the steer did not wait to be driven. The moment he saw the opening he made for it, running over the overturned benches and over the fallen door. Turning his head till his horns could pass through, he plunged out and dashed away, followed by the two cowboys.

Mr. Jenks and his pupils now climbed down from the walls, and hurried out to watch the chase. The steer made a bee-line for the other cattle, and did not stop till he had plunged in among them. Then the drove began to move across the prairie.

The owner of the steer, after walking through the school-house, handed the teacher a coin—a twenty-dollar gold-piece.

"Guess that will about cover the damages," he said, cheerfully.

"Half of this will pay for everything injured, I think," Mr. Jenks replied, after a rapid mental calculation.

"Then keep the rest for yourself, to pay for the steer's schooling," said the man, laughing. "He learnt mighty fast while he was here—learnt to behave himself and stay in his place; and that's more than some men ever learn. Guess you're a right good teacher. You educated that steer, and educated him quick, too. Good-by!"

And springing into the saddle, he galloped away after the drove. LEWIS B. MILLER.

How the Queen Spends Christmas

By the Marquis of Lorne

I HAVE often thought that the interest in the queen, and indeed the affection felt for her, is as great in America as in England. To all descended from ancestors who lived in Great Britain or Ireland she is "the queen." No other sovereign is spoken of as "the queen," and many in the United States feel as if she belonged quite as much to them as to any.

Now that her reign has lasted longer than that of any former monarch in the old country, there is an increase in the veneration of the people for the personality which for so very long a time has guided affairs.

The English monarch cannot direct a policy as can an American President. The head of the state in England has great influence if possessing high personal character and good judgment, but she (or he) reigns, and does not govern. The President actually governs during his short term of office. The British state is governed by the

Christmas, or their children, for English children cannot thrive in India, and have to stay with grandmamma at home.

In the United States the younger members of the family who are grown up may be away, but as a rule they are not out of reach, or in foreign lands. There may be one or two who are amusing themselves in London or Paris, or in making a rapid tour, but as a rule they are all employed in some business in their own country.

That is not so in the world-wide empire of England. Her sons are scattered, fighting the life battle for self-interest, or for the extension of the power of their country, in remote regions, where very often it is impossible to reach them by telegraph or post; but all have a thought at Christmas-time of "home," and many like to read of that home of their sovereign, whose life seems to them part and parcel of their own history.

Few men and women can remember any time when the queen was not reigning. "Our country—and our queen," has been the watchword for themselves, and even for their fathers. "Memory runneth not to the contrary," as the old saying has it. The interest taken in the White House at Washington is well known, and to judge by the papers is strong enough; but imagine what it would be if, instead of a President governing the nation from that White House for four years, there could be a President there who had governed without interruption for sixty years!

Why, who can correctly name the last fifteen Presidents of the United States? Not all my readers, I am sure. Yet there have been eighteen Presidents of the United States since the queen was crowned. Fancy if, instead of having had all these eighteen, the United States had contented themselves with one President all that time, and that President a lady! Would not the interest in her doings and life be very great, and would not people see with joy her happiness, or sorrow with her sorrow?

And the love that goes out to our queen sees her at Christmas-time either in the fortress-palace, which the British people have kept for their monarchs since the days of the Norman Conquest, namely Windsor, or residing in the seaside house of Osborne, which she and her husband built and filled with beautiful things.

At Windsor there is more state than at the queen's private place on the south coast. The inland fortress is a national possession, and is not her own. Within its ancient battlemented walls, which include the whole crest of a hill above the Thames, there is a fine church, with all the buildings for a number of clergy and officer pensioners, in what is called the lower ward or division of the fortress. Then comes the central ward, with the immense Round Tower rising from an artificially strengthened circular mound, and then the upper ward surrounded with palaces. Here the queen lives, and at Christmas-time fifty years ago there was much gaiety.

Shall we talk at all of fifty years ago? Why not? Contrasts are interesting, although sometimes melancholy. At that time there was only a small Capitol building at Washington, with ten columns in front, and a dome above that was a pigny compared with the present towering edifice. Yet the queen's family life was much the same at that distant date as it is now; but so many of those who then took part in the domestic festivities have gone!

Christmas not a State Affair.

Christmas was always with her a domestic more than a state affair. So it has continued to be. Of course there are at Windsor and in London the great ceremonial alms or present-givings, which are matters of state; but with these we need not concern ourselves. The main thing to be dwelt on is that it has always been her wish to make all around her happy at that season, as far as it lay in her power to do so. Her husband was a German prince, and it is to his example that England owes her custom of having a Christmas tree, lit up first, not on Christmas day itself, but on Christmas eve.

The American author, Irving, gives an excellent account of the festivities carried on of old in English country houses. The German custom of giving presents to all the assembled family, and of having decorated trees, came in only during this reign. For the queen there was in her youthful days always the early walk with her husband alone, or accompanied only by her



QUEEN VICTORIA.



"FLYING THE DOGWOOD."



"THE TREACHEROUS JOIST."

children. Then came work, the reading of despatches and so on. Then lunch with the family, and then, if the visit had not been paid earlier, a drive to see some school or charitable or useful institution.

Sometimes it was on Christmas eve, sometimes on the day itself, that all the aged and infirm were assembled, that presents might be made to them by the queen herself. Then there were all the servants to consider in the same way, sometimes about three hundred of them; and each retired from the queen's presence grateful for some careful thought as expressed by a suitable gift. Then in another apartment, where a lighted tree was placed, were the more costly things, given as souvenirs to the noblemen, ladies and gentlemen of the court. So that all were thought of before the queen allowed herself to devote time to the family affections, about which most people think first and foremost, and too often only, at such times.

But at six o'clock in the evening came the hour when the family and immediate guests staying in the castle were to have their turn. A large room was reserved for them, and they all entered it, following her majesty. There they saw a row of separate tables, each covered with a white cloth, stretching to right and left of the lighted tree, which was full of what used in those days to be called "French and German bonbons;" but the bonbons or sweetmeats were inside the gaily decorated boxes and figures and pretty things which hung from the boughs. It was to the tables that attention was turned; for each member of the family or guest had a separate little table, and on these were laid out the remembrances sent from far and near.

The queen's table was inspected first, and each of her guests and family pointed out to her that which was his or her gift, as many things were sent by persons who were absent in other parts of England, or by friends and kinsfolk abroad. The number of gifts for the queen and prince was always great, and they took the keenest pleasure in viewing and examining them.

Then the queen would make the round of the other tables, on which the articles laid out had inscribed on cards on each the name of the recipient and the donor, and the thanks offered the queen for her contributions gave her as much pleasure as the offerings made to herself had given.

The Court Views the Gifts.

Then after a time the rest of the court were invited to enter, and the exhibition of lovely objects was generally admired. One can fancy the groups. The youthful queen, with her sensitive and delicate face with large blue eyes, her tall and handsome prince by her side, his tightly buttoned coat showing a bit of the blue ribbon of the Garter below his black cravat, the children following them, the queen's mother, the Duchess of Kent, a handsome, portly lady, and then the ladies and gentlemen of the court, among them several distinguished by beauty, and officers who were known for capacity and bravery. But it was never a great assembly, because Christmas is with us, as in the United States, a family festival. Without inviting others not on duty at the court, the party was large enough.

Music would follow the dinner, where a wonderful "baron of beef" was placed on the side table, a mighty back of some prime steer. Beside this immense dish were others. For instance, there was always a boar's head, sent from Germany by the Duke of Coburg or some other relative. Then there was a mighty pie, whose interior held I do not know how many cooked woodcocks from Ireland, and another, a great game pie, into whose mysteries it would be profane to inquire.

On Christmas day itself there was the beautiful service, with the choristers of St. George's Chapel to sing the lovely English carols, and again the visiting of people who deserved notice among the poor or institutions where a royal visit would gladden the inmates, and the lighted tree and a fresh inspection of the gifts in the evening. Following this there was often music,—Mendelssohn came with his choir once to give his "Athalie,"—and so the stately cheer went on, work and hospitality and public duty mingling with the family happiness and thankfulness.

And as it was in early days so it is now, but alas! with how many changes of the persons who meet! Old faces are no more seen, but there is an abundance of young voices whose merriment cannot be marred by any such thoughts. As with all parents and grandparents, it is in them that the queen takes delight. She loves to give pleasure to all her people, although her own share in joy may be small, and she watches with sympathy the enjoyment of others.

In all the observances of the festival she keeps to what her husband did. This is always good in her eyes. As he ordered things, so she desires that they be now. He was no niggard in such matters, and his wholesome discipline and the rein he gave to pleasure is the ideal of his widow to-day. In the unselfish thought of others he found his best reward.

One of the dearest pleasures men can have is to keep a family and its connections together in harmony and well-doing. Christmas festivals give an opportunity to do this, and it has been the queen's wish, and a wish that has found fulfilment in success, to do this, and to make her family life an example to her countrymen. Her

time, as far as she has been able to influence it, has therefore been that of which the Christmas tree may be thought to be a symbol: namely, stanch and strong, and bright with lights that gladden many beyond the grateful faces of children and children's children forming the family circle around the Christmas trees at Windsor or at Osborne.

Now we must have one little look at Osborne, which belongs wholly to the queen. The Isle of Wight is separated from the main south shore of England by a sound or part of the sea called the Solent. Opposite to the north side of the island, which is over twenty-five miles long, are the harbors of Southampton, from which the American liners sail to New York, and Portsmouth, the great war harbor of the British navy. So that the queen, when she looks from the windows of her fine palace, which stands built high on terraces among woods only a quarter of a mile from the shore, sees the ships going to America and hears the great guns of the war-ships practising firing at Portsmouth. Then she always has one battle-ship as a seaguard of honor lying in an adjacent bay of the island. On this bay is the little town of Cowes, and it is off this bay that all the racing yachts are anchored when German and American and English yachts compete—and the Americans usually win.

As the queen has a good many farms on her estate, and these employ many laborers, there are numbers of people in her own employment besides the servants whom she likes to see at Christmas. If time allows her to do so, she likes to take her remembrances herself to those who are too infirm to come to her house.

Seated in a little carriage drawn by a pony which is led by a groom, she starts at twelve o'clock to make this pilgrimage, followed by some of her family on foot, and two Highland servants. She is always back soon after one o'clock, and then gives an hour to work before lunch.

The Highland servants in their kilts are also reminders of her husband's days, for he had some always in the Highland dress. Since his death they are dressed in black kilts and jackets, except on occasions of state. Then there are always two of them who play the pipes, and habitually wear the red Royal Stuart tartan, and then play the bagpipes, walking up and down on the terrace beneath the windows of the queen's room when she is at breakfast.

After breakfast newspapers and letters and despatches are read until the going out. Again after lunch, at half past three, there is a drive, usually taken with any guest in the house, and with a lady-in-waiting. The horses in the carriage are always gray, and there is an outrider on a gray horse. If the queen intends to go to any of the little towns in the Isle of Wight, there is also a mounted equeury or gentleman in attendance. This gives another opportunity to pay any visits that may be a recognition on the sovereign's part of good and faithful service.

On Christmas day there is always service at Osborne, held in a decorated large room where there is an organ, and all the house is ornamented with sprigs of red-berried holly and evergreen.

The English winters are so uncertain that there is often no snow. The neighborhood of the palace is thickly planted with groves of evergreen pines, firs and shrubs. Even cork-trees and flexes, or what are called in California "live-oaks," flourish in the mild and moist climate.

Occasionally there is a "hard winter," but even then there is seldom any skating to be had except for a fortnight, or at most three weeks. When this does happen, there are great games of hockey indulged in by the house party on the ice, and the queen comes to look on for a time, while her Indian servants are attentive observers of the game, and look strange enough in their turbans and white garments at the edge of the ice. They are Mohammedans, and do not come with the rest of the household to church, but live by themselves, cook by themselves, and have their wives hidden away in cottages near the palace. They are good and loyal subjects, although they cannot join in the queen's favorite Christmas hymn:

Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!

Some day, when one of the readers of the *Youth's Companion* sails from New York to see Old England, he will coast along the southern English shore, and entering the Solent, will see on his right the Isle of Wight marked out by the white cliffs of chalk at first, and then by green slopes and woodland. Before he turns up Southampton water, a long inlet, he will see, rising over the woods of the island, two tall Italian towers. These mark the home of the queen.

On a fine, calm day he may even hear from

shipboard the sound of the bell of the great clock in one of these towers, and if he feels as English boys do, he will hope that the sound from that clock tower may for a long time yet mark the hours of the life of good Queen Victoria, who has always been a kind friend to the United States, and has shown in many ways her respect for its people and a sympathy with the free institutions, and a reverence for the laws which they have inherited from Old England. God save the queen!

A Christmas Conscience.

ALL of the neighbors thought it strange when Bertram Dodge, after the death of his widowed mother, announced his intention to remain at the old home place with his little sister Helen, who was but five years old. "We shall manage very well together here," Bert had said concerning the offer of some distant relatives to adopt Helen.

"It was mother's wish and it is my wish that Helen and I should not be separated. I may be standing in her light by not allowing her to go into a fine, luxurious home, but I can give her more real affection than they can give her, and she shall not suffer for want of food or clothing. They would want to change her name if she went to them, and that I could not have. No, we'll stay together, won't we, little sister?" He stooped and kissed the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired little girl as he spoke.

Old Mrs. Hooper, to whom he had been talking,



"HE SEEMED SO ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE DOLL."

said, "I don't know but you're right, Bert; and there's one good thing, you know more about cooking and housekeeping than many girls know. Having to help your mother so much, especially when she was bedfast all those last ten weeks, has been a good thing for you. You've got a real woman's faculty for doing things."

This was true, although dishwashing and cooking and sweeping and kindred duties were as repugnant to Bert Dodge as they would be to any boy; but poverty had obliged him to do these things, and he had done them cheerfully and well.

The house was a tiny red and white one in the suburbs of a small New England town. There was only one dwelling very near it, and that was just across the road—a tiny wooden building where lived the Widow Hawes and her seven noisy, rollicking children, whose boisterous fun did not disturb their warm-hearted, easy-going mother in the least.

It was a mystery to her neighbors how she ever found room for so many children in such a tiny box of a house. When they said as much to her she laughed her loud, cheery laugh, and said:

"There isn't much room in my house, but there's room enough in my heart."

Bert's determination to remain at the old house and to keep Helen with him was partly due to the fact that Mrs. Hawes had encouraged him to do so.

"I'll help you all I can," she said, "and Helen can come over and play with my little Susie and Maggie and the others when you have to be away at work. She won't be any trouble or in the least in the way."

Bert was thus able to accept any temporary employment he could find. He was a robust boy of seventeen and willing to work. It was

not easy to find employment in a small town like Horton, and simple as his wants and Helen's were, he did not find it easy to supply them, and there were the debts caused by his mother's long sickness and funeral to be paid.

"If I could only get steady work somewhere I should be all right," Bert often said to the Widow Hawes.

"Oh, you will, before long," she always returned, cheerfully. "One who is as willing to work as you are is always in demand, sooner or later."

But there had been no demand for Bert in any permanent position when the long and cold New England winter had fairly set in, and occasional work became more difficult to find.

Helen and Bert were eating their very frugal breakfast one cold and snowy morning in December, when Helen said, "What you s'pose Santa Claus will bring me Christmas, Bertie?"

The question startled Bert a little, for he had that very moment been thinking of Christmas, and of his inability to buy a quarter of the things he wanted to get for Helen.

"I don't know, dearie," he said.

"O Bertie!" she exclaimed, with a startled look, "you don't suppose I'll not get anything in my stocking?"

"Oh, you shall have something, little one."

"What, Bertie?"

"What do you want most?"

"A big, big doll with really and truly hair, and eyes that will open and shut! And if it could squeak when you squeeze it I'd like it better! And if it had on a really truly hat! And shoes—O Bertie, I'd want it to have shoes most of anything! The kind that would come off and on! And a little muff to put its hands in! O Bertie, if I could have a dolly like that I wouldn't want anything else! You s'pose I could?"

"We'll see about it."

"I've got two cents to send to Santa Claus for it. Would it cost more than that?"

"Oh yes; much more."

"I want it awfully," she said, with a sweet seriousness that clinched Bert's resolve.

Ten minutes later a knock came at the door. When Bert opened it he found Jason Woods outside. "Haven't time to come in," he said. "Got anything to do now, Bert?"

"No, sir; I haven't."

"Want a job?"

"Yes; very much."

"Well, I can give you two or three weeks' work down at my sawmill. Joe Hill, who has been helping me, fell and broke his arm yesterday, and I must have some one to help me get out a lot of lumber I've contracted for. Do you want the place?"

"Yes, I should be glad of it."

"All right. Come down to the mill right away and I'll set you to work. We ought to be there now."

Bert did not wait to wash the breakfast dishes. He wrapped Helen up warmly and carried her over to Mrs. Hawes's for the day, and half an hour later was at work with Jason Woods.

It was hard, cold work in the old sawmill, and Jason Woods was a hard taskmaster, but Bert bore the faultfinding in silence, and did his utmost to please. He kept steadily in mind the thought of the happy Christmas he should be able to give Helen as the result of his labor. The doll, he planned, should go into her stocking, and he would get her some little toys for the tree they were going to have at Mrs. Hawes's.

He had promised Helen that the doll should surely come. His work at the sawmill would be finished two days before Christmas, and he had planned to walk seven miles to Hillsboro,—a much larger town than Horton,—where he was sure that he could find just such a doll as Helen had described.

Jason Woods owed Bert twenty dollars when the time for which he had been hired was up, but when the last day and the last hour's work was done Jason was not ready to pay.

"Well, Bert," he said, "I'll say for ye that you've done your work first-rate, and I'll hire you again if I need any one. I owe you twenty dollars, don't I?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's the way I figure it out. Well, you come over to my house the first day of January and I'll have the money for you. I won't get the money on this contract until then, and my folks have ding-donged all my ready money away from me for their Christmas nonsense."

Bert was too much surprised and disappointed to speak for a moment. Then he said, "If you could let me have just a part of it."

"Don't see how I can, Bert. I need all the money I've got on hand. It's only about a week until the first of January. I guess you'll have to wait. Wish you'd pile up them boards behind you before you go. I've got to be off right now."

He took his overcoat from a peg in the wall