

TWO CHRISTMAS EVES.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE FIRST ONE CAME.
"Not another word, sir," said old Eben Withers in his usual decisive manner.

Young Eben said more than his prayers sometimes, and it would not do to set down all he said to himself as he left the room.

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had ever listened to. "You can have no claim on me henceforth."

"As you choose," said the lad, his voice breaking, "let us part in kindness at least."

"I cannot take it, father," said young Eben, with some spirit, though not defiantly.

"Am I indeed in his loneliness, but I never can cease loving him."

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great open fireplace, where the flames were roaring up the chimney.

With an angry cry he leaped forward, his indignation giving him a strength he had not felt for months.

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the address it bore, which was simply, "Santa Claus, Esq."

"Huh! some tomfoolery of the office boy, I suppose," he continued.

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beautiful dollar and a quarter umbrella, and expose it to the elements?"

"But, mamma, it's raining!" "Of course it's raining. Is that the kind of weather to which you would expose a costly new umbrella that has been given you as a token of esteem and affection?"

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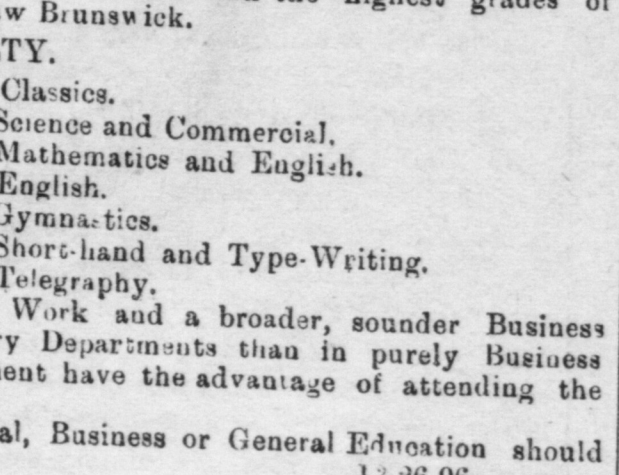
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