OLD CHRISTMAS CARDS.

THE SWEET AND SAD MEMORIES CONNECTED WITH THEM.

That Crude Little Picture of Two Snowshoes Crossed, Surrounded with Summer Flowers, with the Verdure of Spring in the

Did you ever open the drawer in which you have been storing the Christmas cards impersonal way, as one may admire anyou cherished most, for the past eight or ten years? I did the other day. I wanted more room for lots of things and I thought it foolish to keep so much valuable space lying idle. Newspaper people get to have a perfect mania for economising space in their daily work, and after a while it extends to everything else, and they want more space everywhere. So I took a spare hour and began my task.

fluence of a sudden watt of pertume, or a bar of music, in recalling some long forgotten scene, but I cannot imagine from Jennie," and Jennie's laughing blue any melody, or perfume as potent as the eyes have been closed in eternal sleep sight of a bit of writing in some well for five long years. Far away in the known hand to bring back in a sudden | East Indies she rests beneath the Southern flash of memory the scenes of other days. lilies, in the beautiful churchyard near the I could not have believed that a few pieces | home she went to as a happy bride. of printed pasteboard could move one, as I wonder if she ever grew weary of the those old cards moved me. How I laughed tropical splendor, and longed for a over some, and cried over others, and breath of her own Canadian air, crisp and what a perfect diary of past events they bracing with the frost, or laden with were with their little descriptive lines of the briny sm ll of the sea? I think she writing on the back sometimes a little verse, or a word of reference to some event in which the sender and recipient had taken part, and the date; which seems so far off now.

The Christmas cards of ten years ago were not as artistic as they are now, nor half as pretty, but they served their purpose and gave just as much pleasure I am sure, tunny as they look today.

Here is a crude little picture of two snow shoes crossed, appropriately surrounded with summer flowers, and with a landscape of smiling verdure for a back ground; but a line written across the back tells me that the shoes are a memento of a snowshoeing party we had been at the week before, and the lad who sent it was my partner "on the tramp." What a time we had! No aimless pottering about the sides of the streets, or little excursions into the suburbs, but a long hard tramp under the December moon, across the trackless marshes of the Tantramar. There was no one to beat the track for us, and we did not look for paths, we were all young and strong filled with life and vigor, and the hard work was the best part of the entertainment. We met at the house of our hostess, each lad had his lassie selected for him and was responsible for her welfare during the tramp, and when all were ready we set off straight across the country, regardless of fences, pords and other obstacles in our way. How the dogs rushed out and barked at us when we passed a lonely farmhouse, and how they retreated growling and suspicious, but slightly afraid of the long line of grotesque figures with huge feet, gliding mysteriously over snowbanks where their own honest toes would have sunk in, and stranded them at the first step. And when we came to the turning point how loth we were to go back! So we "lined up" and danced a quadrille and a set of lancers on the snow, just to rest ourselves. We were as much at home on our netted shoes then, as we were on the carpet and we all took at whistling and singing, for music.

Then we came back again to hot coffee and scalloped oysters and other good things that tasted like nectar and ambrosia, to our ngry palates. Tired? Not a bit, ten mi's was nothing to us, and when we had rer oved our frezen moccasins, peeled several layers of snow from our skirts and thawed our garments out generally, we ate an enormous amount of were getting just a little tired.

I did not destroy that card, it seemed went back to its old place in the right hand corner of the drawer.

A queer little card lies just beneath, and across its brightly gilded surface a group of grotesque Chinese figures are dancing. Once more the legend on the back tells me in excellent verse, that the dancers represent ourselves as we appeared the week before at an evening wedding when the fairest of the group of friends was married, and the rest of us danced our feet weary in her honor. Such a' lovely bride! the loveliest I ever saw, and one of the happiest. Only last summer her short married life came to an end, and she was laid in her quiet grave. Too many memories cling round that little card for me to part with it, and it, and it too, goes back to its

they used to make Christmas cards a few tack or circus ring. At a greater expense years ago! This one has an anchor of labor a tank can be erected here for in flowers on a black ground, emblem of swimming or other acquatic events. hope and appropiate too, because the one who sent it has had her hopes realized long ago. The hand that traced the words on the back of the card "With Helen's love and Xmas greeting" has seen dust for eleven years, but its owner is in paradise, if ever a woman passed the through the golden gates, and I am sure the angels love her as dearly as her friends on earth did, for her sweet soul was surely another card is put back in its place.

A whole handful comes up next, with such an odd one on the top. just a bowl and placque cf old china leaning against a sideboard shelf, and a few well-chosen words on the reverse side express the wish that I may have a very happy Christmas. The writing is delicate and rather effeminate, but I know the initials and they are those of a man I knew once and admired in an other girl's acknowledged lover! How handsome he was, and how true and manly and loving I thought him. I can see his fair curling hair now, and his violet eyes as they last met mine seven years ago. But somehow the character and the eyes did not match, the latter were true blue, but nothing else about him was, for he turned out to be false as fair and broke the heart of the girl who loved him. What did I I have heard too much about the in- keep that card for, it at least can find a place in the waste basket?

"To Astra with loving Xmas wishes did, for she faded slowly, and only lived a few years in her new home.

" Astra with love from Bertie." Bertie was a sweetheart of mine long ago and a handsome lad he was too, but he has been married I don't know how many years, and lives at the other side of the world. Probably he is the father of a numerous progeny by this time and I am sure he is tat. he looked as if he would be, but I did like him very much and I shall keep that card " for old sake's sake."

"With love from Marion" says a square white card with a wreath of daisies. Marion was my nearest and oldest friend, we were little children together, but she has been at rest for five years. She trod a thorny path at last and the rest was welcome even to those who loved her, but the the elder. These two writers had no rival day when I shall cease to miss her is still in their own line. Mr. Rudyard Kipling's

There are more cards in the drawer, but they are left undisturbed, and all but that one go back to their places. How many changes in ten short years, and how many vacant places left! I have sorted enough cards for one day somehow I don't care about having any more space, so I close the drawer with a curious feeling of having stood beside a grave.

St. Crispin's Day.

A pleasant story is told of the Emperor Charles V. One night he strolled into a cobbler's shop to get his boots mended. It happened to be the festival of St. Crispin. The cobbler was making merry with his friends and declared that no work could be done on that day for any man, even though he were Charles himself, but in the merrymaking. He did as he was bidden. "Here's to the health of Charles " said the cobbler. "Do you love him?" asked the emperor. "Love him?" said the cobbler. "I do. I love his long noseship well enough, but I should love him more if he taxed us less." They finished St. Crispin's day very pleasantly. Upon the morrow the emperor sent for the cobbler to the palace and greatly surprised dragon." Raisins are put into a large him by thanking him for his hospitality of the previous evening, asking him what recobbler asked for a night to think of it. a feat requiring some skill and courage. The next day he appeared before the emperor and requested that the cobblers of Flanders might bear for their coat of arms a boot with a crown upon it.

She Had Her Suspicions. A gentleman stopped at a cabin where an one of the children to get a bucket of fresh water, entered into conversation with her concerning the crop prospects. "I supper, and then danced till the first small | did hab to' or five hogs," said the old wohour struck, before we discovered that we man, "but dat's dwindled down till I ain't got but one now." "Somebody steal them?" "I nebber talks 'bout my neighbors, an' I doan' like to say what become too much like cutting an old friend, so it ob de shoats. I nebber makes mischief, I doesn't." "Did the hogs die ?" "Da muster died; but yer ain't agwine to say nuthin' ag'in my neighbors. De hogs disappeared away from heath while dat man was livin' but I ain't agwine to say nuthin ag'in him." "Do you think that he took them ?" "Mister, dat man's dead, an' l doan' want ter say nuthin' ag'in him; but, lemme tell yer, while dat man was libin' he was a powerful stumbling block ter hogs."

A Curious Theatre. A theatre that will probably rank as one of the most unque buildings in the world is in course of construction at Buenos Ayres. Seating five thousand perrons, it has the largest capacity of any building of its kind. By an ingenious architectural arrangement carriages are enabled to deposit persons on the level of the grand tier boxes as well as the box entrances on the ground floor. Elevators will convey patrons of the house to the upper floors. It is the work of but Here is another little card. How small a few minutes to drop the pit and stalls to

Japan Churches.

According to a correspondent of the New York Observer, a christian church in some parts of Japan cannot be established without the consent of the property owners in the neighborhood; in fact a church has the same status as a saloon has in a highly moral American village.

In Thuringia, Germany, there is a whole district which is dependent for its support on the manufacture of artifical eyes-husakin to them. So that card is sacred, and bands, wives, and children all working to-

IS CHRISTMAS VULGARIZED? So Said a Thoughtless Woman in the Street the Other Day.

Christmas has become dreadfully vulgarized in these days, a thoughtful looking woman was over heard saying to another in the street recently, and we imagined she went on thus: How little we hear of the simple souvenirs, expressing friendly sentiments, a considerate watchfulness of individual tastes, and the dainty workmanship of industrious hands through many weeks and evenings, which were in vogue a quarter of a century ago! Gentle, old-fashioned creatures, be not too pessimistic. There are worthy people, worthy deeds done, and much worthy thinking going on even in these so called degenerate times. The current is strong in the stream of city life, and scum and impurities float upon the surface. It is the superficial observer who assumes that the depths are also impure, and who generalizes disheartedly because of his own inconsiderable contact with life. "Christmas comes but once a vear." The old saying is repeated infinitely, and with infinitely varied meaning. What a pity that it comes not oftener, or that its spirit of generosity, friendly regard and tolerant feeling could not be changed from an annually into a perpetually blooming plant. To make Christmas sentiments so common might, perhaps, be deemed by sensitive exclusives to vulgarize them. Vulgarity is not a generally commendable quality, but it often does something in and for the world, while exclusiveness does nothing but carp and tell us what ought not to be done. Let us not be vulgar if we can help it, but, oh, let us do something, and feel ourselves a real part of the world we live in !

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. Something About the Popular Author who Died Last Week

By the death of Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson Britain loses one of her greatest romance writers. 'Treasure Island,' which brought him into notice, was held by many of the best read men and soundest critics to be the greatest book of its kind since 'Robinson Crusoe,' and its popularity for for a time was very great It does not seem to have maintained its hold upon the reading public, however, as its great predecessor has done, and is not much talked of. This may be because the work of Mr. Rider Haggard, somewhat in the same line, exceeds in imaginative power and weird impressiveness Mr. Stevenson's work, and the younger writer has eclipsed work is of a different kind. The spirit of romance so all-pervading in Stevenson's and Haggard's works are replaced in his by realism made impressive by great imaginative power. Mr. Kipling has had no predecessors. Mr. Stevenson's style was by far the finest and clearest of the three, and his influence in this matter upon writers has probably been greater than that of either Mr. Haggard or Mr. Kipling. though they have had more obvious im-

THE GAME OF SNAPDRAGON. Players Must He Quick and Not Mind

Burned Fingers. Few "Christmas gambols" exist in their original form. But the old gam is modified to suit modern taste as well as the new ones are just as full of fun and are entered into by the young folks nowadays with as much zest as were the rougher gambols the stranger was cordially invited to join over which in old England the "Lord of Misrule" presided. Although the authority of this lord was generally acknowledged at Christmas merrymakings 200 or 300 years ago, and he made things very lively, such disorders finally crept into his brief burlesque reign that he was suppressed.

One of the most quiet and genial of the gambols over which he was master has been handed down under the name of "Snapbowl, covered with spirit, which is ignited, lights in the room are extinguished, and ward he would like best. The amazed each one attempts in turn to grasp a raisin,

Saving Money.

That doesn't mean buying anything, just because the price is low. Cheapness means honest value, as to clothes, fit, finish and style, when clothes are the old woman lived, and, while waiting for subject. When we say "cheap" we mean a low price, offset by all that bestness of clothes means. We import all our cloths, and make the first saving that way-then, we get the best workmen-they cost more but do more and do it better-that's another saving—we buy for cash and save there—all this means the best thing in clothes and the least possible cost. Don't you want to buy right?

GILMOUR, Tailor.

Delaying Sunset. A British admiral experienced a peculiar priviledge recently, affording thereby one illustration to the question often presented to the curious as to what might happen should the senior officer of a ship or fleet choose, when "eight bells" or "sunset" is reported to him, to withhold his "Make it so, please," by officially delaying sunset for over an hour. It was during the trial of Admiral Fairfax some time ago. By the admiralty regulations courtsmartial may not sit atter sunset. The trial was almost over when sunset was reported on this day, and the admiral, being anxious to conclude the matter, officially put the sun back, or ordered that it stanc still. In consequence all the ships in Devonport kept their ensigns flying until after it was quite dark.

He Paints the Town Red.

The Hack Writer (preparing a biography of eminent modern men)-How shall I handle this man? I've got to praise him, and they say he drinks like a fish, and doesn't pay his debts.

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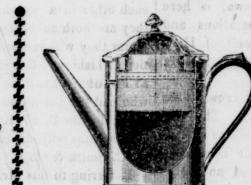
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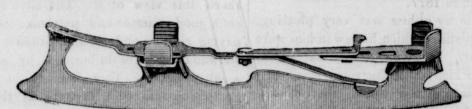




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