

Slipper's Soliloquies

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By Fred Slipper

EDITOR'S NOTE: Nina Cook was one of the daughters of Mortimer Cook, a legendary figure in local history. I have a copy of her diary and will print portions of it from time to time. — Fred Slipper. -

December 30, 1886

I have a great deal I should do but thought I must write in you one last time in the year 1886.

We did have a real nice time Christmas. We had a tree; the Clears and ourselves had the Bensons and Mr. Wood down. It looked ever so pretty. Claude and I gathered snow drops, which we strung instead of popcorn. We made lanterns out of tissue paper and used them instead of candles.

I must put down what I got. Mama gave me "Ivanhoe" and some collars and cuffs (and the promise of a pair of bedroom slippers) and Papa gave me a jackknife that I have been dying for for a coon's age. By the way, Mr. Wood caught the coon that had been getting our chickens. It was a very pretty one.

Mr. Wood gave me a beautiful card for Christmas, about the prettiest card I think I have ever seen. Mrs. Benson also gave me a little card and George gave me a vase with an exquisite pink rose on it and a linen handkerchief inside of it (the vase, I mean). Fairie gave me her photograph in a raised glass and framed in plush. — It looked so nice.

Nellie and Denie sent me some wild flowers from Santa Barbara pressed upon a card and a cute little needle roll. Grace Hale sent me "Sweet Cicly," a story by Josiah Allen's wife. Ah Wing (just think!) sent Fairie and me some lovely silk handkerchiefs. Aunt Lizzie sent Fairie some very pretty presents and as Fairie and I both liked the art souvenir which she sent, we drew lots and it went to me. It is beautiful — I hated to take it, but I did. . .

The Grahams sent us each cards and Mrs. Judge Hall sent a card for all of us.

I guess that is all I got and I had better not try to tell what the others received. I have not received the present from Granny yet, though. She has gone to San Francisco for the vacation.

Papa is at Seattle. He was here before Christmas, though. I gave him a pond lily pen wiper. Gave Fairie a pin cushion.

Adios, N.C.

P.S. — Mama was splitting kindling and a piece flew up and struck her on the eyelid. It is frightfully black. Today it is worse.

There was a dance party at the Warner's last night.

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Fred Slipper comments: In reading and typing Nina's diary, it is apparent that 100 years ago the giving and receiving of gifts wasn't judged by the monetary value, but the love behind each one. Think how difficult it must have been to just secure a gift for your loved ones — there wasn't a store just next door that you could go to. Sometimes I think maybe the "old-fashioned" way must have been the best, after all!