

CHRISTMAS ADVICE.

By Minnie J. Reynolds.

Go through your list of friends carefully and cross off those who didn't give you anything last year.

It is to be hoped you have postponed all Christmas shopping until Monday, the 13th. It is such a comfort to the salespeople.

If you are engaged to a young man it is perfectly proper for you to consider yourself aggrieved if he does not spend his November salary on your present.

Buy a showy present for your daughter to give her teacher, and when she gets home ask her if any of the other children gave a present as good as hers.

In passing on Christmas presents care should be taken not inadvertently to return them to the donors.

If your boy wants to give his teacher a Christmas present tell him you pay taxes for the support of the public schools and that's enough.

Do not pay any attention to the individuality of the person to whom you are making a gift. Buy the thing that will be the most showy and effective.

Calculate your presents carefully, according to the wealth and social position of those who are to receive them.

Give unto those whom you desire should give unto you.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The Christmas debt makes towards us all.—N. Y. Times.

TIME BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

December Is the Most Inspiring Part of All the Year.

The early weeks of the month of December are, in a way, the most inspiring of the year. The inspiration comes not from the outside, but from within. It is not like the spring season, when the sap begins to flow in trees and the blood to run with new vigor in the veins; nor like full-bodied summer, when all the world looks green and fair, and the spirit of man is filled with the glory of God's beautiful world; nor like autumn, when things animate and inanimate seem to be settling down to rest after work accomplished—the twilight of the year. Unlike these, early December has a distinct atmosphere of anticipation, as of a time of reckoning, as of a time of reward. In every heart, in spite of the rush of business or the daily work, there is a feeling akin to that which in the old days we felt when counting the days to the school vacation—and home, says the Indianapolis News. The thought of Christmas days is in the very air every day; a thousand things keep it in mind from the early-lighted shop windows filled with their invitations to good cheer to the happy look on many faces that testify to some unselfish preparations made, or making, that a friend's Christmas may be joyful.

Some Quaint Traditions.

Berlin has some curious Christmas traditions. Thus, the clothes line must not hang in the loft between Christmas and New Year's day on penalty of bad luck. Dreams dreamt within the same period are sure to be true, while children born on Christmas day will have the gift of prophecy. To insure wealth, people must eat the rose of the carp on Christmas Eve, because fish rose signifies money; and scales from the Christmas carp carried in the purse will keep it well filled throughout the year. Herring roe will suffice for those who are too poor to buy carp. A less cheerful practice is to make little sand heaps with a thimble for each member of the family on Christmas Eve, and whoever's heap has fallen in by next morning is sure to die during the year.

When She Learned.

"Of course," said the wise mother to her young daughter, "if there is a bird in your stocking all the Christmas presents will drop out." "How so?" "That's happened that the girl became very indolent in learning to dance, which was a thing that had not interested her previously."—Chicago Evening Post.

A Hint.

He—Didn't you know that you were standing under the mistletoe? She—Why, no! I didn't see anything.—Town Topics.

Empirical Unbelief.

Little Girl—Don't you believe in Santa Claus? Little Boy—Naw! We live in a flat.—Brooklyn Life.

During the holidays a pointless drum for the small boy would fill a long-felt want.

HIS CHRISTMAS SURPRISE.

How a Wall Street Employee Was Rewarded for Years of Faithful Service.

In a large New York business institution there was an employee whose Christmas gift had the saving grace of individual consideration. He was a bookkeeper, nearly 40 years in harness, and he had been overlooked in former years of fatness in Wall street, except for a customary and unvarying \$10 gold piece, says the Detroit Free Press. Several days before Christmas last year the office became agitated with rumors of an unprecedented flood of good fortune. The old bookkeeper tried to keep calm, but his hopes ran riot, and the day before Christmas found him in a nervous flurry. He saw his fellow employees called into the cashier's office one by one, each returning with a sealed envelope. The bookkeeper waited for his summons, but it came not, says the World's Work. Even the office boys emerged, bringing new gold pieces to test them, and the roll was complete an hour before the bookkeeper announced courage to send in an inquiry whether a mistake had been made in the case of Mr. Blank and whether an envelope had been overlooked. The answer was: "There is no envelope for Mr. Blank, but the president wishes to see him for a moment."

The bookkeeper saw only one interpretation. This meant his discharge for falling efficiency. He fairly tottered into the sanctum, a pitiful figure of pale fear.

"Sit down, Mr. Blank," said the president. "I have omitted your name in the list of Christmas rewards for faithful service, and I regret that the bank will have to find another man to fill your position after to-morrow. Compose yourself, sir, tears are undignified in this office. You should know better after being here for so long a term of service. Don't go. I have a few words more to say before you leave. The directors have decided to retire you on full pay for the rest of your life, and the year's salary will be paid to you in advance. This does not establish a ruinous precedent, for employees with 28 years of faithful service to their credit are not sprinkled very plentifully through Wall street."

THE YULETIDE IN AUSTRIA.

Its Celebration Is Picturesque Among the Non-German Population of the Nation.

Yuletide, as kept by the non-German population of Austria, is very picturesque. On Christmas day the Poles in Galicia first attend mass, and then sit down to the family supper. The chief dish on the table contains consecrated eggs, which the father distributes. After eating, all eyes are closed and all heads bowed down to the table, in the belief that Jacob's ladder is then descending from heaven to earth, and down the ladder the angels are coming to bless the worshippers and to carry away their earthly troubles to heaven. Among the Czechs the legend runs that he who most strictly fasts on Christmas eve will see the Holy Child in his dreams that night. In the evening the real celebration begins. All lights are then extinguished in the house; the children crowd together in fear and remain perfectly silent, as otherwise they know they will receive none of the presents brought by the Christ Child and laid at the entrance of the house.

First English Christmas.

The first English child to enjoy a Christmas tree was Mary daughter of Henry VIII, who was afterward known as Bloody Mary. When she was four years old a rosemary bush, hung with red jewels and silver spangles, and lighted with rushlights, was set up in the great hall of the castle, for the amusement of the little maiden who grew up to be such a cruel queen. From this little rosemary bush the custom spread until now no English Christmas is complete without the Christmas tree.—Albany Argus.

Successful.

"What's the matter with your finger, that you've got it in splints?" "My oldest boy's ingenuity." "How so?" "He set a steel trap in his stocking to catch Santa Claus."—Smart Set.

Concerning Christmas Books.

Christmas books are so common we are prone to think we have always had them. This is not so, however, for the first Christmas book was issued from a publishing house in London in January, 1750.

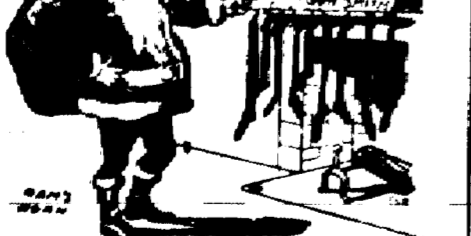
As Usual.

Mickey—Say, Swispey, what do yer expect to have in yer stocking Christmas mornin'?" Swispey (mournfully)—Holes.—Chicago Daily News.

TOMMY SMITH'S SCHEME.

Tommy—I see these smoking jackets are marked "A bargain at \$6.50." Were they selling at more?

Department Store Clerk—No, ma'am, but they haven't been marked up from a lower price, like most of the Christmas things, ma'am.



Mrs. Bargaingrab—I see these smoking jackets are marked "A bargain at \$6.50." Were they selling at more? Department Store Clerk—No, ma'am, but they haven't been marked up from a lower price, like most of the Christmas things, ma'am.

THE YEAR THAT IS PAST.

It Is Always the Record of What We Have Done in the Past That Counts.

New Year's day is in some way recognized by every people having a formal calendar, yet the hours of the last day of the old year generally pass with little variation from ordinary routine. Nevertheless, it is the completed book whose story impresses the reader for good or bad, not the cover or the frontpiece of the new one. Nearly all the words of our language applying to a course not absolutely marred out describe the path that is left behind and not that which is before, says the Youth's Companion. "There is no counterpart to the ship's 'astle' for the course which the prow is about to break, nor of the trail of the explorer, nor of the sport of the tiger, nor of the trail of numerous animals. It may be noted incidentally that many states and cities have recently passed laws or ordinances requiring automobiles to carry a number in large figures, hanging from the back. Nobody who sees an automobile coasting carelessly what its number is. Only what it happens to leave some record behind it is its track in the snow—because the future is so full of possibilities, whereas the past constitutes a record which cannot be changed, that most of our festivities center about the anticipation of the new year rather than in a retrospective affection for the old. In the older days of the world prophecy laid a place of prominence among all people, but of history in the scientific sense there was none. This has been reversed by the severely practical modern world. History is at a premium, prophecy at a discount. Yet for almost disregarded last day of December stands for the completed record, as New Year's does for the prophecy of what is to come.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS.

We Never Get Too Old or Too Good to Have No Need of Them.

What! make New Year resolutions again? Certainly, no one is too old or too good to have need of them. But curb your enthusiasm, weigh well your chances of success, and be a little more lenient with yourself than you were a year ago. Better to set an easier task and win than to risk weakening your will power and self-respect by another failure, says the Country Gentleman. Have your ideal of perfect manhood, or womanhood, by all means. Life is indeed prosaic and commonplace without one, and—alas! it is a bitter disappointment with one, unless we remember that we build the ladder by which we rise to a noble character, and that more actual progress is made by gaining one strong round than by ten shaky ones.

Just what particular step is most needed each one must determine for him or herself. Probably 99 out of every 100 of us "boys and girls grown tall" need most to brace up and strengthen the round of cheerfulness, and I question if there are many of you who can make a resolve that will do more to develop and strengthen your higher nature than an earnest one to be cheerful—even when things go wrong—for from its roots it sure to spring thoughtfulness of others, and hope and courage.

Think of these things and remember not only the precious assurance of help to him who "worked out his own salvation," but that the dear "Lord" loveth the cheerful giver; of hope and courage, as well as him who readily giveth of his "tongue and fishes."

Reprehensible.

I do not like the auto some folks perform with far too little charity. Nor can I cherish Christmas jokes. That's a sort of Christian charity. But cheer! those remain! And don't their actions reprehensible. Who at this season seem it kind. To do out gifts that they can "reasonably"—Town Topics.

A Good Send-Off.

Robert—What do you do on New Year's day? Richard—Oh, I got out my last year's resolutions and make a fresh, brisk start.—Detroit Free Press.

To-Day.

January 1—Resolution: Swore off. January 2—Resolutions were off.—Atlanta Journal.

Ask your druggist for a calendar if you want fresh dates.

A REAL BARGAIN.



Mrs. Bargaingrab—I see these smoking jackets are marked "A bargain at \$6.50." Were they selling at more? Department Store Clerk—No, ma'am, but they haven't been marked up from a lower price, like most of the Christmas things, ma'am.

Light of a New Year.

By CATHERINE EDDY CLEAVER.

JUST as the clock struck the man laid down his magazine with a sigh, and glanced at the time-piece on the table before him. Ten o'clock, and to-morrow was New Year's day—to-morrow, that would end this lonely life of his and take him home. Home to the people who, with the dear faith of one's own kin, still believed in the genius he had failed to prove to the rest of the world. His face brightened as he pictured his welcome there, and with childish impulse to quicken to-morrow's coming he rose from his chair and began his preparations for the night.

As he undressed his mind reverted to the story he had been reading—a tale of a man whose family had been cursed with hereditary blindness, and who had at last seized the coward's refuge rather than face the tragedy of his inheritance.

He shuddered slightly for the story had made its peculiar appeal to him. He too, knew the sick horror of such a heritage. His grandfather and great-grandfather had spent their last years in darkness, and although his own father had served, he knew too many victims of the caprice of nature to hold himself exempt.

The chill air of the December night struck his face as he opened his window and he shook off his momentary depression as the little refrain, with all it meant, sang once more in his brain—"to-morrow is New Year's day."

At length he fell asleep, his eyes resting on the cheerful little point of flame in the night-lamp which shone through the open door of his dressing-room full on his pillow.

Outside, the wind in the valley was blowing the clouds into a heavy pall across the sky, then, rising suddenly in a passion of destructiveness, it snapped the trees beside the man's window with a crash that roused the sleeper to a sitting posture.

Gazing, unknowing into the blackness around him, with his first consciousness he raised his hand to his eyes to brush away the veil of sleep.

The action woke him to a sudden realization of the intense darkness before him. Where was the light that always met him from the faithful little night-lamp? Where was the gray out-of-doors that meant early morning? Blackness, thick, impenetrable, closed in on him. God! could it be that the light still burned—but not for him? That the sun was rising—but to him it would always be night?

He slid from his bed and groped his way to the window, straining his eyes vainly to perceive the slightest outline in the formless darkness. Then terror gripped him close and its panic made him scream—fly—escape from this den of night that had folded him in her infernal embrace.

With one last effort at control he reached for the familiar match-box and struck one of the tiny torches that meant life-long night or day to him. He heard the scratch and snap, but not a spark of light rewarded his agonized effort to see. The match fell from his nerveless fingers and the cold sweat of despair soaked his night-clothes with its dank chill.

His whole future was silhouetted before him, a black shadow against the sunlight of the world. His eyesight gone, his career ruined, his great book still unwritten—only life's empty shell left to mock him. To-morrow would begin the drear, black procession of days stretching like pallbearers to the grave. To-morrow! Oh, God! the irony of it—to-morrow was the new year! An impotent sob rose choking in his throat. Was this to be his home-coming—led like a blind beggar, to be a burden where he had hoped to help?

All his man's courage and fierce resistance to Fate rose in him. He would never yield to that. Rather—

With his sudden energy his fingers closed on one remaining match and instinctively, with the vigor born of desperation, he struck it along the wall. A quick blue flame sprang to life and showed the open door, the extinguished lamp, the headless match at his feet—objects so meaningless before, so fraught with the joy of life now.

With a cry of relief the man sprang to the gas-jet, and as the room was flooded with the blessed light he sank trembling to his knees, and the bells of midnight sang in his ears: "To-day is the new year."—The Wright Magazine.

Apprehensive.

"Cheer up!" said the candid friend, as they met at the dressmaker's. "For the bride of a year you look indigo blue. What's the matter?" "It's—It's John," was the hesitating reply.

"What's the matter with him? He looked all right in church Sunday." "Well, he kissed me when he came home to dinner last night." "Goodness gracious. Well?" "He kissed me again when he went to business this morning." "Did you ask for an explanation?" "He didn't give me time. But I am determined to find out what's behind it. It means to crawl out of giving that automobile he promised me for Christmas, why—kisses don't go."—N. Y. Times.

Too Bad.

He (tentatively)—It's too bad that mistletoe should only be hung up on Christmas!

She (nervously)—Yes! That certainly makes it a long time between kisses!—National Tribune.

BITTER SARCASM.



Little John—Pa, don't you suppose Santa will get burned up in our chimney?

John's Pa—What! In the smoke stack of this flat? No much. He'll be lucky if he isn't frozen to death.—Chicago Daily News.

THE "BLUE CHRISTMAS."

A Little Incident That Occurred in the Childhood of Miss Frances Willard.

Among the beautiful and tender memories of the happy childhood which Frances Willard always counted one of the richest possessions of her life was that of the "Blue Christmas."

Times had been hard that year, and although actual want had not visited the prairie home, there was no money for gifts, and to the father, ill with age, things looked dark and gloomy. But the children were not sick and they did not know discouragement, Christmas had always brought its gifts before, why should it fall now? So the two girls hung up their stockings, and the brother put his book-straps on the front door-knob.

Of course the gifts came. When in all their lives had their mother ever failed them? The next morning the book-strap held Pollok's "Course of Time," and each stocking contained a few little sea shells long treasured by the mother, an artificial flower and a false curl, relics of a fashion of Mrs. Willard's younger days.

Poor, pathetic gifts they sound to us, but to the happy, healthy-hearted little trio they were all that could be desired, says the Youth's Companion. As for entertainment, what could be more full of winter delight than going to the woods and dragging home great branches for the Christmas tree?

Frances Willard, the woman, looking back through the years, those kindling flames still shone with their old rancor.

"We thought it was great fun," she wrote, "but father called it his blue Christmas."

There are always, and always must be, those who dwell upon the shadow side of the Christmas joy, not only the very poor—to them more and more each year warm hearts and eager hands are sending the gladness—but the men and women of narrow means whose hard toil wins them no margin for luxuries or pleasures. One's heart must always be tender for the women who have nothing to give at Christmas time.

Does not Miss Willard's memory of her happy Christmas bring a message of hope to those whose purses are empty? Children are the happy possessors of two magic powers which those of older years too often lose—freshness of imagination and a keen zest for life. A tiny home-made present and a holiday atmosphere, if it be created by nothing more than a Christmas pie, will make the day a shining one in the child's memory.

Took In the Situation.

"John, here are your slippers." "Thank you." "And your smoking jacket?" "How good you are!" "And your pipe and tobacco?" "That's kind!" "And now sit down and let me rub your head—for I know you're tired—poor fellow!" And then he looked inquiringly at her and said: "Mollie, let's be perfectly candid with each other. What kind of a Christmas present do you want?"—Atlanta Constitution.

Model of Christmas Chapels.

In great cities of the north, when Christmas trees are trimmed, humble Germans buy tiny plaster chapels, which, lighted with a single candle, lend an innocent sanctity to the children's festive corner. How many know that those modest emblems are modeled upon the Moravian church at Emmaus, Pa.; and what would not the little ones give if they, like the children of that town, could welcome the Saviour's coming within the time-honored walls?—Ladies Home Journal.

At the End of the Year.

I glibly upbraid the calendar, And think of all dead years, Of friendships yet remembered, But of, alas! in tears, I think of many winters, Of dreams—the broken yre—While gazing at the calendar, And gazing in the fire.—N. O. Times-Democrat.

A Good Investment.

"Why did Mr. Clicker give his rich brother's little boy such an expensive Christmas present?" "To save money. Mr. Clicker has seven boys of his own, and he knew that his rich brother would reciprocate."—Brooklyn Life.

A Harbinger.

Mrs. Motheras—See what a beautiful Christmas present mother has sent you, Henry! Henry (sourly)—I suppose it means she is coming to stay about a month.—Brooklyn Life.

Truth for the Holidays.

"Does mistletoe bear fruit?" "Yes, my son, very often. Forbidden fruit."—Town Topics.

IS ALWAYS WELCOME.

The Christmas Saint Finds a Hearty Reception Wherever and Whenever He May Come.

It matters not whether you call him St. Nick, Kris Kringle or Santa Claus, or whether he comes by sleigh and deer or in an automobile, he will be welcome. Can you imagine the patron saint of Christmas cheer finding any door barred against him?

And how good it is, forsooth, for us to give to this jolly St. Nick the freedom of the world, and a right-of-way even over our house-tops and down our chimneys.

Some men sigh at the annual season of holly and mistletoe, and groan at the thought of the Christmas tree, and the night-before-Christmas stockings, but those same men would miss the gift time, and the feasting, and the fellowship, and the good cheer.

It is the season when the children are happiest, and who at that time, is not a child? "Men are but children of a larger growth," says Dryden, and God pity the man who ever joyfully out-grows his childhood.

Let us all fill the bumper figuratively speaking, and drink a health to Christmas time—to the gathering of the family and friends at the fireside and at the table, roasting with its roasting turkey, its chicken pie, and its fat plum pudding, steaming hot.

Let us all be children of the time being—even if, with some of us, it has to be a second childhood.—Four-Track News.

ROMANCE OF MISTLETOE.

A Berry Is Plucked for Every Kiss That Is Given Under the Branch.

When we hang our rooms with holly wreaths and bunches of mistletoe we are keeping up a time-honored custom which can be traced through hundreds of merry Christmases to the days of the Roman Saturnalia and even early Persian customs. Our own custom of decorating our rooms comes more immediately from ancient Germany, where evergreens were hung in honor of the midwinter festival.

The Druids used to cut the mistletoe from their sacred oaks with elaborate ceremony; a golden knife was used to sever the parasite from the tree.

During the ceremony two white bulls were sacrificed, and music and professional games formed part of the rite. The groves of Mona, once the favorite retreat of the British Druids, were cut down by the all-conquering Romans and have passed from the popular memory, but the mistletoe, which the old Druids called "all-healing," is still an object of veneration. In some parts of England a berry is plucked from the mistletoe for every kiss that is given under it, and when there are no more berries left no more kisses are allowed.

Christmas Boxes.

The bestowing of Christmas boxes is of great antiquity, and was formerly the bounty of well disposed persons who were willing to contribute something toward the industrious. Later the gift came to be demanded as a right and became somewhat of a nuisance. The Roman Catholic priests had masses for everything, and if a ship went to the West Indies they had a box in her under the protection of some patron saint. In England "the day after Christmas is known as 'Boxing day,' from the Christmas boxes which used to be in circulation, and in the British museum can be seen boxes covered with green glaze with a slit in the side for money and presents.

Christmas Plum Pudding. Among the foods peculiar to Christmas is one so common as plum pudding. The date of the introduction of this favorite dish is relegated to the vague past, but it is probable it is not older than the eighteenth century, and it appears to be a "House of Hanover" dish. Searchers of the symbolical content that on account of the richness of the ingredients the plum pudding is emblematic of the offerings of the Wise Men. Plum pudding is essentially an English dish and does not seem to flourish so well in other countries.

Reciprocity.

"Mildred," whispered the poor but intellectual young man, "Emerson says 'the only gift is a portion of thyself.' My Christmas present to you is this poem, and all I ask of you in return is a lock of your hair."—Chicago Tribune.

The Lap of Penury. Briggs—If you want to see misery, you should pass a Christmas in the slums.

Griggs—That's nothing. I once passed a Christmas with some fellows employed by Russell Sage.—Town Topics.

To Drown the Noise. Tommy—But, pa, how will Santa Claus get down the chimney without being heard?

Pa—Your big brother will hang up some of his new socks.—Brooklyn Life.

AN UNTIMELY FATE.

One good thing about most Christmas presents is that they don't last more than a day or two.—Chicago Record-Herald.

