

## Lilla's Xmas Presents.

LILLA SPRAGUE seemed to blow in at the door with a gust of wind and a drift of snow. Then, having kicked a pair of snow encrusted overshoes into a corner of the hall, Miss Lilla ran upstairs in a hurry.

"See here, mother," said Lilla, "it's all over now."

"What, dear?" Mrs. Sprague asked, looking up absently from a letter she was writing.

"It's all over—I say, it's all over between Randolph—oh, what a fool—fool I've been!" And she flung herself, sobbing, on a big horsehair sofa.

"But why, Lilla?"

"Don't ask me like that, mother. Don't! I've told you before. And this—this is the sec—sec—second time. Oh!" More sobs.

"I don't understand you, daughter," said her mother, leaving her batch of Christmas correspondence and going to carry comfort to the tragic figure on the horsehair sofa.

"He's run away again!" Lilla roared.

"Done what, dear?"

"The same as he did before."

"What did he do before?"

"Mother, I told you, day before yesterday—ran away from me. He thought I didn't see him."

"Mr. Watts ran away from you?"

"Yes, mother, and I'll never speak to him again. Day before yesterday he at



"IT IS ALL OVER NOW," SAID LILLA.

least had the politeness to bow. This time he just turned and went down a side street. He was with that frump of a cousin. I just hate her, and him, and the whole lot."

"Don't be foolish, child. Mr. Watts will be here to explain it all. You'll see."

In answer to this Lilla only rose from the sofa, grimly took off her wraps and hat, muttering: "Yes, I'll see," and dis-

"Yes. I came to speak to you again about it. I forgot—"

"Oh, it's no use now, Cousin Mattie. She will not receive me or my letters—never."

"Pooh! Did she tell you so?"

"She wrote to me—I mustn't go there."

"Look here, Randolph," said the common sense matron, "this is all nonsense. If Lilla Sprague won't receive me, she must be a ninny—"

"Don't say that!"

"I will say that. But anyhow, her mother will see me. I am going now to call on Mrs. Sprague. And now, look here, about this bracelet."

"Shall we go on with that?" said Watts, with a faint smile.

"Of course we shall, stupid. Higgins says he has tried to set the watch with the face in, as you wanted it, and he can't make any better job of it than Moore could. Now I think I'd better go and take it back to Moore's and tell them to set it with the face out, don't you?"

"Very well," said Watts, with almost childish resignation.

"And then the miniature can go inside with the original crystal over it, eh?"

"Very well."

"And then I'm going straight to Mrs. Sprague's."

"Are you?"

First to Higgins' Mrs. Sucher went, where she took possession of a remarkably pretty and uncommon gold bracelet, a tiny old-fashioned watch and the miniature. Then to Moore's, where she left the bracelet, the watch and the miniature. Then to Mrs. Sprague's.

As Mrs. Sucher entered Mrs. Sprague's private and individual sitting room she heard a whisk and rustle of skirts and a door closed behind a rapidly retreating figure.

"Lilla not well?" said Mrs. Sucher, with an incredulous laugh. "Too bad. These Christmas preparations are undeniably fatiguing. I have spent three weeks, my dear Mrs. Sprague, running about town in search of the right present for the right people."

"You must have laid yourself out to be generous," said Mrs. Sprague.

"I am generous. I give my time and labor to help other people give presents. That brings me to the object of this visit. Can you keep a secret?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Sprague, "and I am burning with curiosity. So make haste and tell me."

"Oh, then you know?"

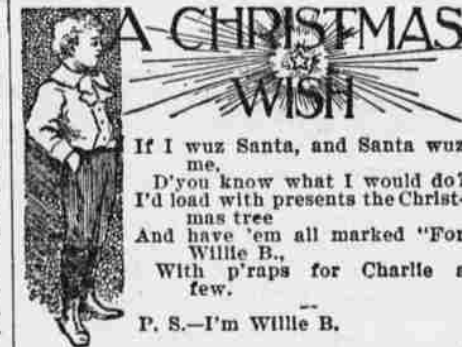
a consultation on that wonderful bracelet, we saw Lilla coming along. I said to him: 'Randolph, if she meets us she'll want to walk along with us, and then the whole plot is ruined. Let's turn down here before she sees us.' But it seems she saw us after all."

On Christmas morning, in spite of many earnest assurances from her mother that that morning would bring a clearing-up if all her trouble, Lilla was as terribly cross and out of tune with the chimes as she had been for four days past. Moreover, she awoke with a headache.

She found a stocking tied to the head of her bed, as she had expected, and took the stocking down and opened it mechanically. Then she found the bracelet with a scrap of paper in which, in her mother's writing, were the words, "Press the spring and look inside, behind the watch." And when she looked a lovely, loving face looked back at her—a face that was very like Randolph Watts' own.

And at the bottom of the stocking—away at the very toe—was another paper which said, "The bracelet ought to tell you why I ran away. R. W."

Then she laid her head and bracelet on her pillow, and wet both bracelet and pillow with tears until her headache was all gone.



## A CHRISTMAS WISH

If I wuz Santa, and Santa wuz me,  
D'you know what I would do?  
I'd load with presents the Christmas tree  
And have 'em all marked "For Willie B.,  
With p'raps for Charlie a few.

P. S.—I'm Willie B.

## A Happy New Year.

Delight and pathos are inextricably mingled with the thought of New Year's day, says the Boston Watchman. It is only a conventional point of time; any other would do as well. Every day closes an old year and begins a new one, but for all that we cannot help feeling that this day, which is agreed upon throughout Christendom for the beginning of a new year, is somewhat unique. The pathos comes from the review of the past, and from the sense that another notch has

were far north of the tree line. But they took bones of the whale, walrus and other animals, and tied them together so as to make a trunk with branches. That was the tree. A Christmas without candy would seem strange to you, but instead of candy, they made balls of whale fat, or blubber, of which the Eskimo children are as fond as you are of chocolate drops or peanut brittle. They hung these on the tree, and prepared some presents of buttons and beads, and that was all. But it was enough for a delightful time for the little Eskimos, and their pleasure made the men so happy that they forgot their loneliness and homesickness.—Home Magazine.



Boiled turkey is very popular in England, and is certainly a most delicious dish—a handsome one, too, with a proper sauce. A good way to "boil" a turkey is to steam it. Use a baby wash-boller, and arrange a rack or something on rests that will hold the bird up above the water. Steam until it is perfectly tender without falling to pieces.

For salad rolled bread is in very good taste. Take fresh bread and cut off all the crusts with a very sharp knife. Then butter one end, slice thin and roll up, buttered side inward. When a sufficient number of rolls are prepared tie them in a clean white cloth and keep in a cool place for quite a while before using.

A dinner never needs it, but chicken pie is a regulation item on Christmas menus. It may be prepared the day before if the reheating is carefully done.

Never under any circumstances use a flour-and-water thickening for making gravies. It is quite as bad as boiling tea—both culinary sins.

Stuff turkeys or any fowl not more than three-quarters full, or less, as dressings swell and so become solid if packed tightly.

Unless scalloped oysters are on the Christmas menu oyster soup should be the soup selection.

Salted nuts are always in favor during the progress of the Christmas dinner.

The old-fashioned mince pies are always in order.

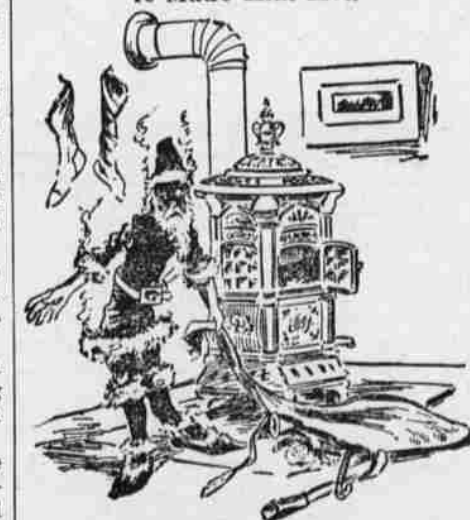
of which Tennyson has made immortal, we read: "With trembling fingers did we weave the holly round the Christmas hearth." So that the holly has before its present vogue in cemeteries been associated with the memory of those no longer in our midst.

Botanically speaking, the holly is a genus of trees and shrubs of the natural order Aquilifoliaceae, chiefly natives of temperate climates, with evergreen, leathery, shining and generally spinous leaves. The common holly, the only European species and a native of some parts of Asia, also is a well-known ornament of woods, parks and shrubberies in Great Britain, the stiffness of its habit being so compensated by the abundance of its branchlets and leaves as to make it one of the most beautiful evergreens. It is found as a native plant in Scotland, although Britain is nearly its northern limit. It attains greater size and displays greater luxuriance in the northern than in the southern parts of its geographic range, often appearing in the former as a tree of considerable size—20 to 50 feet high—while in the latter it is generally a mere bush. The name holly used to be derived from the very ancient use of the branches and berries to decorate churches at Christmas, said to be connected originally with the Roman Saturnalia, from which the tree was called holly tree.

## Best of All Gifts.

The best of all gifts at the present time is yourself. Make yourself in some way more pleasant and helpful to others. You may have been neglectful of them; be mindful henceforth. You may be quick in temper and have spoken hastily; put on restraint and speak kindly now. Restrain all evil habits and make yourself a joy and a help to others. They will bless you.

## It Made Him Hot.



Santa Claus—There, confound these hard-coal burners! I've singed my whiskers and ruined another suit of clothes!

## First of All.

If Santa Claus would ask the horse,  
Who has to pull the loads,  
The gift he'd like for Christmas  
He would shout, "Good Roads!"