



FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON

Christmas After All Is Giving

How the Big Truth Came to Dawn Upon the Prince of Pumperdink.

A WEEK before Christmas and not a thing had been done about it! No, not one thing! All the scribes and wise men of the court had been poring over catalogues for months, and the prime minister had visited every shop in the kingdom, but here it was, as I say, the week before Christmas and nothing done.

Instead of jollity and cheer the whole kingdom was plunged in gloom. And all because—well, I'm sure you will laugh at the idea—the young Prince of Pumperdink could not find a single thing he wanted for Christmas. There he sat at a golden table and there before him lay a long, white scroll, headed thusly—

"Christmas List of His Most Royal Highness, the Prince of Pumperdink." A continual stream of courtiers passed through the room, each one with a suggestion, but at each the prince would sigh deeply and shake his head.

"Have that already. Have dozens of those. No—no—NO!"

And out the courtiers would tiptoe, for the prince was growing so cross that not infrequently he flung the golden ornaments on his desk after the offending lords and ladies. Shocking, I admit, but nevertheless, true!

"What's the good of Christmas when you won't get any presents!" he grumbled. "And now I received the same things I did the year before that—"

"But your majesty has already everything that you can desire!" mildly observed Jan, the court jester.

"But his highness the king demands that I write this list, as he spent two months shopping for me last year and still found nothing that I had not already. Can none of you blockheads about here do anything?" the prince screamed, his patience entirely exhausted.

"I'll look into the matter," chuckled the jester, refusing to be ruffled, and turning a somewhat which made the prince angry and the king frown.

"Why are you the only one who has not suggested anything to me?" exclaimed the boy, suddenly.

"You never asked me," laughed the jester. "Let the wise men of the country solve the problem—for they tell me I know nothing but nonsense."

Just then a page from the king came timidly into the hall and asked the prince if his list was ready, as the king and queen could not wait any longer.

"NO!" roared the prince, with such a threatening gesture that the poor little page fell over backward. Thumping on the table, the prince called loudly for the scribes and wise men, who were busily at work in the next room.

"Write this list—and at once!" he ordered. "And see that there is nothing on it that I have already!"

The old wise men seized the list with trembling hands and retired in great confusion. "My, how un-Christmasy everything was. One would think that this prince was a terrible chap. But, really, at other times no one could be more considerate and charming."

Jan sighed and looked out the window, where a lot of peasant's children were rolling in the snow.

"Would your majesty care to skate this afternoon?" he asked.

"Or we might go see the Christmas players in the village," he suggested brightly.

But the prince only shook his head and stared gloomily into the fire. The jester continued to look out of the window—truly it was a problem and truly his young master needed helping. But could he, a humble jester, hope to solve a question that even the wise men gave up as hopeless? He drummed on the pane absentmindedly and continued to watch the merry youngsters below. Then, all at once he sprang into the air and snapped his fingers with glee.

"I have it!" he exclaimed, hopping around on one foot.

The prince looked up in surprise. "What?" he asked curiously.

"Why, the answer to your riddle," laughed Jan. "Listen—"

He whispered long and earnestly in the prince's ear and next thing the two went rushing out of the room together.

"The royal coach at once—do you hear me?" called the prince.

"At once, at once, and lively, please. And mind your own and mind your own," trilled Jan, hopping after the prince.

The footmen ran this way and that, and next thing the great coach of state, with 10 princely horses, came rattling up to the door.

"We'll drive ourselves, thank you," said the prince, and while every one stared with wide eyes, Jan and he ran up to the prince's apartment.

Down they came, with arms full of rich robes, and games, and books, and



An Old, Old Story

OH, once, this happened years ago In brave old London Town, A little wren-out lad, who swept The gentry's chimneys down.

Fell fast asleep on Christmas Eve And dreamed he was invited To the children's Christmas ball!

Poor little sweep—so sound asleep! The snow came drifting down, The midnight stage went rattling by, And through the silent town

The carol singers went their rounds, And, hark! Their joyous singing Awoke the bells and set the silver Christmas chimes all ringing!

But still the weary sweep slept on. But, sh—h—, just as the stars Winked out and morning poked her head

Through night's dark window bars, That dear old saint, who loves all children,

In his magic sleigh, Came clattering o'er the roof tops and, My dears and ducks—well, say!

He trimmed the broom of that poor laddie With the finest toys, And then, without a bit of fuss Or making any noise,

He lifted him into his sleigh And whisked off toward the Pole, And from that day to this, sweet-hearts,

Though don't you tell a soul, He's been adopted by St. Nick, And goes with him each year, To help him fill the stockings and To sweep the chimneys clear!

And, though that happened years ago, He never will grow old— No one does who believes in Kris, Or so I have been told!

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Old Kriss and his reindeer And toy-laden sleigh Had an accident, honeys— It happened this way:

They were flying top speed Over hill, field and vale, When they crashed, all at once, With the airplane mail!

He hadn't believed in St. Nick, I surmise!

"Dear me," laughed St. Nick, As he reined in his sleigh, "In the sky I used always To have right of way:

"But I see in the future I'll have to be careful, You chaps and your planes. Have just filled the whole air full!"

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Hail Santa Claus and Good Cheer

Little Eyes Will Glisten and Little Ears Will Listen for Coming Visit.

By Mrs. Helen Ekin Starratt, President of Alameda Parent-Teacher Association
THE SILENCE of objects Santa Claus will I continue to travel through the air in his Christmas-laden sleigh, filled with gifts for the hung-up stockings and the Christmas tree. Little eyes will glisten and little ears will listen with delight as they imagine they hear the sleigh bells and the patter of the hoofs of his reindeer team on the roof; and they will be brighter and happier children for the experience. Yes, Santa Claus is coming! and the practical question for parents and friends is about the gifts with which he is to be provided to put in the stockings and upon the Christmas tree.

Here again we all know that it is not the material value of the gift that affords pleasure to the child. Is it not James Whitcomb Riley—that wonderful observer of child life—who tells us of the little boy who does not like Aunt Jane's Christmas gifts, "Cause she always gives us something useful like mittens and things." In my own memory of the Christmas gifts of my childhood, one little wooden toy that cost 25 cents stands out preeminent as affording me weeks of pleasure. It was a little flat wagon, about six inches long, on which the standing figure of a peasant doll turned round and round as the wagon was drawn over the floor or table. If a family has but a little money to spend it is worth careful consideration what inexpensive gifts, including those that are not merely useful but only pleasant giving, may be purchased. One thing is certain about expensive toys, even mechanical ones, they are often the source of disappointment and regret for wasted money.

Another consideration is that too many gifts often distract the child's mind and do not really give the pleasure that a few gifts upon which it can concentrate its attention will give. A surfeit of gifts is as possible as a surfeit of food. I have in mind a family Christmas tree in a home of wealth, where the children were allowed to remain in the parlor with their professor of gifts while the family went to breakfast. Presently a singular crashing noise was heard. It was found that the children, already surfeited with the toys given them, had piled them in the corner of the room and were jumping on them, with results that can be better imagined than described.

Of course, the true Christmas spirit cannot be present where the satisfaction and joy of remembering and giving to the less fortunate has not been emphasized. In all the present discussion about the training of children, one universal truth is recognized: viz: The cultivation of the graces of the spirit—unselfishness, kindness, courtesy, generosity, filial affection, sympathy with suffering—must be begun in the home in the earliest years of childhood if these graces are to have their full development and effectiveness in the later life of the child. Educators are more and more realizing that a child's moral bent is largely determined and its spiritual nature developed or blighted before the age when it can be taught in the school.

In the cultivation of these graces, the Christmas festivity and Christmas spirit should have a prominent part. Children should be made to realize that they enjoy their own gifts and pleasures all the more because they have helped in some way to give pleasure and a happy Christmas to others less fortunate than themselves.

The perplexity about gifts for the children disposed of, or coming to the greater ones of gifts to friends. It really causes an unpleasant feeling of embarrassment to receive a gift from a friend whom we should have remembered but did not. After the gift is received it is too late to send one as the sending may seem to be the result of a reminder. If it should come to be a universal understanding that Christmas gifts are to be made only to children and that other gifts are to be reserved for birthdays and anniversaries much social and friendly embarrassment might be avoided. The social leader who will promulgate such a rule in regard to gifts would prove a public benefactor.

Of course, the Christmas card has to a large extent superseded the Christmas gift; but their expenseiveness and ephemeral nature makes one almost regret that the price had not been invested in a good book or a growing plant. Either of these beautiful and enduring things constitutes one of the most delightful and unembarrassing of Christmas gifts.

But let not any of these small perplexities about Christmas cause us to overshadow its festive hours with regrets or regrets. It is a day for loosening the bonds of care, and for rejoicing in the blessings which the advent of him whose birthday we celebrate has brought to us. It is a day in which the heart may sing:

The air is full of Christmas cheer, And fluttering soft like flakes of snow, The thoughts of loved ones far and near, With happy fancies come and go; And memory wipes the mist of years From off her glass, and mirrors true The friends of long ago; and bears The wisest dear that once we knew. Oh happy time for young and old! No sweeter joy thy season lends, Than this, which in our hearts we hold The Christmas memories of friends.

Fashion Hints

I saw the darriestest capes for baby dolls. They were made of white flannel with pink and blue feather stitching around the edges and had a tiny hood fastened on the back. Of course, the doll babies have a little white cap on—and the hood is only used when they are in the trolley or motor to keep away the draft. See that your babies have on little booties, too—cause their little footies get too cold without them.

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Decking Christmas Trees

Suggestions Are Given as to How to Produce Best Effect at Yuletide.

By Winifred B. Hammond
Plenty of articles have been written on decorating the Christmas table, but none, so far as I know, on decorating the Christmas tree; yet if the latter is worth doing at all, it is worth a little care and taste. Better results can be obtained from cheap materials, well arranged, than from expensive things thrown onto the tree at random.

The first thing is to choose the tree, and of course it should be a fir tree if possible. Cedar and hemlock are pretty, but have not the real Christmas fragrance. Madrons is not bad, and no doubt pine could be used if necessary. For one or two children a small tree will do, but a large family should have one that nearly or quite reaches the ceiling. Whether large or small, it should be thickly branched and not one-sided. Most fir trees have a long thin shoot at the top, which should be cut off.

In choosing ornaments for the tree, much depends upon the lighting system. Electric lights are pretty and have the advantage of safety, yet it seems a pity to banish candles; they have more of the old-time Christmas flavor. If they are used, the tree must be so well supported that it cannot possibly fall, and there must be no decorations made of paper or other inflammable materials. It is best to blow out the candles when they have burned a few minutes—children love to do this—and then if the tree remains in place until twelfth night, as it should, they can be lighted again and again.

The most gorgeous of Christmas-tree ornaments are the stars, round or oval, large and small. Fortunately the family that has a supply of them left from former years, when some things were cheap, like the plain round or oval balls better than those with knobs or cavities, and the frosted finish better

than the bright; but whether you agree with me or not on these details, let the colors be bright and clear. Purple and magenta generally "swear" at every other color, and have to be relegated to the darkest corner.

If balls are not available, nice red apples (not too dark) are better than nothing, and oranges would be beautiful if there were any way of suspending them. Perhaps it could be done by sewing through the tough skin. The red tissue paper balls are quite pretty, and said to be fireproof, but if there are candles on the tree, the balls had better be hung from a doorway or a chandelier.

Be sure to have plenty of the rope-like silver tinsel, and also of the thin strands called "silver rain" or "jambata." These can be had in gold and copper colors as well, but I prefer to use silver alone. I think a beautiful effect could be made with stars cut out of pasteboard and covered with tinsel, but I have not tried this. It would mean a lot of work, but children might like to do it. I should like to see a tree covered with these stars and silver rain, with candles all of one color; but I suppose the effect would be fairy-like rather than "Christmasy."

Having got together our materials and set up our tree on a strong standard, we provide ourselves with a step-ladder and a hook for pulling the branches, and we are ready to begin work. If electric

lights are used, they should be arranged first of all, as their weight pulls down the branches and alters the shape of the tree. Any heavy gifts should also be put on at this time. Next arrange the ropes of tinsel, and be sure to let them hang freely from one branch to another in a graceful curve, instead of resting on the foliage, or trailing straight down. In decorating a large and well shaped tree, five or six tinsel ropes may be fastened together at the very top, and brought down on all sides of the tree, winding round it in spiral fashion. If there is not enough tinsel, pieces it out with popcorn strings, which are very pretty in their way, and can be kept from year to year as well as the other things—for of course popcorn isn't fit to eat after it is cold and tough enough to string.

Now put on the balls. They should be hung on loops of black thread, which slip easily over the twigs, and are invisible at night against the dark tree. See that the candles stand up straight or they will drip badly. This is the reason for putting them on last of all, as anything added afterward may bend the branches and the candles with them. Finally, take your "silver rain" and sprinkle it on very carefully, one strand in a place, letting it hang straight down, and see if it doesn't give the finishing touch of beauty to your Christmas tree.

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Santa Claus Collides



OLD KRIS and his reindeer And toy-laden sleigh Had an accident, honeys— It happened this way:

They were flying top speed Over hill, field and vale, When they crashed, all at once, With the airplane mail!

The flier man scarcely Could credit his eyes—

He hadn't believed in St. Nick, I surmise!

"Dear me," laughed St. Nick, As he reined in his sleigh, "In the sky I used always To have right of way:

"But I see in the future I'll have to be careful, You chaps and your planes. Have just filled the whole air full!"

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