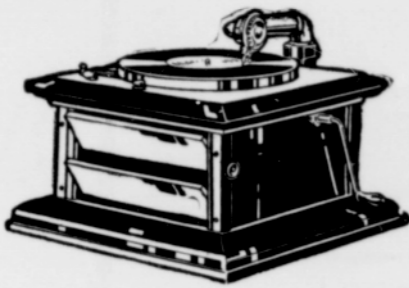


Xmas Suggestions

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 VIOLINS GUITARS MANDOLINS
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 PICTURES CIGARS ETC. ETC.

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MR. MARDIFIELD'S CHRISTMAS GRANDSON

"I wonder who they are!" said old Mr. Mardifield. He was standing at the window of the breakfast room, looking across the sunny street at an unpretending little cottage.

"Whom do you mean, uncle?" asked Clara Barton, who expected to be her granduncle's heiress.

"Why, those people across the way?"

"Oh, common folks, I dare say. No body else would live in that house."

Old Mardifield came to the breakfast table. He sighed softly as he took the cup from Clara's jeweled hand.

"Uncle, dear, you are very silent," said Clara.

"I was only thinking, my dear," said the old gentleman apologetically.

"Only thinking?" Yes, his mind had gone back years along the dusty track of time, and he had been mutely pondering upon what the result would have been had he shaped his course differently in the days that were gone.

He had had a son once, of whom he had been proud and fond, and if—

"I would have done anything for him—anything," thought Mardifield, swallowing his coffee, "if he would only have been willing to consult my feelings a little. But when he married that western girl it was like drawing a gulf between us, and he knew it. But he's dead now, and even on his deathbed he was too proud to send for his old father."

These were the thoughts that were passing through old Mardifield's mind.

As the old gentleman was returning from a walk later in the cool sunshine a little fellow hanging over the gate accosted him eagerly.

"Sir, are you Santa Claus?"

"Not that I know of. Why?"

"You are like the picture in my book," said the boy—"a fat old gentleman, with a long white beard and lots of parcels. And my mamma said Santa Claus wouldn't come to our



"MADAM, I AM SANTA CLAUS."

house 'cause we were so poor. And I want a stocking full of toys, like the other boys, and a new sled, and a pair of skates, and I thought if I saw Santa Claus I'd ask him."

Here a soft voice from the window called "Lionel! Lionel!" and the apparition slipped down from the gate and ran away.

"A cunning little rogue!" thought Mardifield. "Santa Claus, eh? An old gentleman with a long white beard—ha! ha! ha! And I might have had just such a chubby rascal of a grandson as that if only—I wonder if they would object to my adopting him! Santa Claus, eh? Well, I believe I will turn Santa Claus for once!"

The stars were shining out, tiny points of gold, through the darkness of the Christmas eve, when Mr. Mardifield knocked at the door of the little cream colored cottage.

"Come in!" a gentle voice called, and Mardifield, groping his way through a semilighted hallway, found himself in the presence of a sweet faced woman, in a pillowed chair, her fingers busied in some piece of knitting.

"Madam," said he, bowing courteously, "I am Santa Claus!"

And then he told her the story of how little Lionel had accosted him in the morning.

"You are very kind, sir," said the woman tremulously. "We are poor—so poor. In fact, that the barest necessa-

ries of life are sometimes beyond our reach—and little Lionel's dream of Santa Claus must have gone unrealized if it were not for your thoughtful consideration."

She smiled faintly, with a motion of her white transparent hand toward the chimney, but as Mr. Mardifield turned round to look he started as if smitten by some sudden blow.

"My God!" he gasped, "whose picture is that hanging over the mantel?"

"My husband's portrait, sir."

"Your husband's! Then," and he turned once more to face her, "you are Charley's wife!"

"My husband's name was Charles Mardifield," she answered. Little Lionel, awakened by the loud voice in which the old gentleman had spoken, sat up in his bed, with disheveled curls and big eyes.

"Santa Claus, Santa Claus!" he cried "Mamma, I knew he'd come!"

"My child," said Mr. Mardifield, lifting the little form in his arms, "Santa Claus has sent you a grandfather."

CHRISTMAS AMONG THE MIKADO'S PEOPLE

WORDS adequate to a description of the festive season in Japan are difficult to command. Even the camera and brush would fail to do justice to a scene of such gay activity and color. As Christmas approaches city, town and village take on a new appearance, and the diversions of the people a new turn and tone. In Japan Christmas is not a mere holiday. It represents a holiday season in the fullest sense of the term.

For weeks before the dawn of Christmas day preparations elaborate in kind and degree are under way. Men in tight fitting costumes, their professions, or the contractors' names printed on their backs, spend day after day decorating the streets and houses. Stands for the lanterns and the festive greenery must be erected, and a thou-



THE STREETS RESEMBLE WINDING AVENUES OF CHRISTMAS TREES.

said little matters have to be seen to before all is in complete readiness for the burst of gladness.

Every house of the many that shelter the fifty millions of the Japanese empire, however humble the abode may be, has some sign of the New Year idea. Before every gate and doorway is placed the chief symbol of the season, what the Japanese call the kadomatsu, or pine tree of the honorable date. At each side of the entrance to the house or garden three short pieces of bamboo tree, cut at an acute angle, stand tied together as a pedestal from which rises the ever glorious pine tree, in shape something like a Christmas tree, for the young pine is the emblem of a loyalty and life that are ever fresh and green.

In addition, over the door of each house is set up a lobster attached to an orange. These are usually the gifts of a friend to express the good wish that the recipient will live till the loins are bent up like a lobster. Whether the orange represents orange blossoms and plenty of weddings in the family is not clearly known. Above the ornaments of the doorway is stretched a piece of artistically woven straw rope, the shinto sign of reverence for the ancestral gods. As one goes along the streets they seem gradually to be transformed into long and winding avenues of trees, suggestions of the ancestral hunting grounds, and at night the whole is lit up by innumerable lanterns that shed a varicolored light on the decorations and the crowds that throng the thoroughfares. The blaze of lantern color lends the scene a magic touch that charms the Japanese mind and has no little attraction for the foreigner.

To tell of the endless array of gifts that at this season pass between friend and friend, neighbor and neighbor, would be impossible. Among the more common may be mentioned a basket containing a dozen eggs or oranges, a box of sponge cake, or a cake of soap, the latter gift being in no way intended as a reflection on the beneficiary.—New York Post.

Shattuck's

Holiday Suggestions

Watch the Sales Day ad. for prices and look over these suggestions.

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