

## TRY IT THIS YEAR

What does Christmas mean to you? A day off, a few remembrances from relatives and friends, and a good dinner—is that all? Surely you are going to make it an occasion for more than usual rejoicing this year, a real old-fashioned Christmas. Going to be liberal in spirit and pocket, and scatter merriment as you never did before. Been a little selfish, maybe, devoted so much time to enjoying yourself that you have forgotten other folks. Good folks, now, aren't they, the best folks in the world! And you're just going to show them how appreciative you are. You don't like this modern way of turning dear old Christmas into an occasion for trading and the exchange of meaningless printed cards, and you're going to see all the friends you can that day and shake hands with them and pat them on the back and tell them how glad you are to be with them; and to those you cannot see you are going to write long, warm-hearted letters, and tell them you want to hear from them oftener. Of course you will make presents, more than ever, but you're going to let the recipient know that there is a lot of good, warm heart-beats back of every little gift. Isn't that how you feel about the greatest of all birthdays?

## CHRISTMAS DON'T'S

- Don't forget your Christmas duty.
- Don't forget the old folks at home.
- Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
- Don't on this day of sweet memories forget those who have passed away.
- Don't leave the religious feeling behind you in church.
- Don't forget to send the crumbs to those who may need them.
- Don't allow your sympathy for the poor to spend itself in words.
- Don't speak of your zeal for the faith if you do not take a Catholic paper.
- Don't forget the words of a Kempis: 'It is not the gift, but the will of the giver.'
- Don't let the real significance of the day pass your mind. Christ was born to-day; celebrate the feast in a becoming manner.
- Don't make your Christmas present a mere formality or obligation. The beauty of making a gift is to leave the recipient convinced that it is sent as an expression of friendship and love.

## FAMILY FUN

When the Cards are Handy.—Of the many curious things which may be done with a pack of fifty-two cards, perhaps the most interesting is the 'spelling out' of an entire suit. To do this, take the thirteen cards of any suit, place them face down, and arrange them in this manner: 9-6-3-Jack-10-5-7-2-King-8-1-4-Queen. When they are thus placed they are faced up, with the 9 on top and the Queen at the bottom. Now turn them over, so that they are face down with the Queen on top. Take the top card and place it underneath the pack and say 'O'; place the next card underneath the pack in the same way and say 'N', and the next card turn face up on the table, saying 'E'—ONE. Leaving 'E' face up, place the next top card underneath the pack, saying 'T'; the next the same way, saying 'W,' and the next lay face up on the table, saying 'O'—TWO, and so on through the suit. Remember, when you come to the last letter of a card, to lay that card face up on the table, leaving it there. When you have laid out the ten you continue by spelling out J—A—C—K and Q—U—E—E—N. Of course, after you have laid the Jack out you have only two cards left; but continue as before, and the Queen will come out, leaving only the King in your hand, which, of course, you lay on the others, completing the suit.

Shark in the Fish Pond.—The shark is made of stiff letter paper, that is, split up the centre of its body, which centre forms a little round dock with a narrow channel emerging at the tail. The fish should be about two inches long, the hole in the centre being a half-inch in diameter, or less. Put the fish on the water in such a way that the part below the division is well soaked, while the upper part lies on the surface dry. You then dip your finger in a little oil, put one or two drops carefully within the circle, and the fish will soon be propelled forward. The cause of this is that as the oil lies on the surface of the water it expands, and its only outlet being the channel from the centre of the shark, the force it exerts in getting down the channel will drive the fish forward, until the oil is released and able to spread itself further.

## All Sorts

A town in North Prussia has decreed that any woman who promenades the streets in a trailing skirt will be fined.

'I see that Sir Joseph Ward is busy at his trade just now.' 'A trade! I didn't know he was a mechanic.' 'Oh, yes! He is a cabinetmaker.'

'I never saw such a storm in all my life.' 'Pardon me, my friend, since you "saw" the storm, no doubt you can tell us what color it was.' 'Certainly! The wind blew and the storm rose.'

Mamma—'And what did you say when Mr. Titewodd gave you a penny?'

Tommy—'I was as polite as I could be and didn't say nothin!'

The Christmas customs at the present time appear to have been drawn from all the nations. The Christmas tree is German, Santa Claus is Dutch, the stocking is Belgian, and the 'Merry Christmas' is English.

'What business is papa in, mamma?' 'Why, he is a tea sampler; he samples the different kinds of teas.' 'Mamma.' 'Yes, my boy.' 'Do you know what I want to be when I grow up?' 'No.' 'What, my boy?' 'A pie sampler.'

Here is an extract from the prospectus of a hotel in Switzerland: 'Weissbach is the favorite place of resort for those who are fond of solitude. Persons in search of solitude are, in fact, constantly flocking here from the four quarters of the globe.'

Scotsman: 'Hae ye ony hair restorer, mister?' Chemist: 'Yes, I have—something that will make the hair grow in twenty-four hours.' Scotsman: 'Aweel, gie yer ain heid a bit rub wi't, an' Ah'll look back the morn, an' see if ye're telling the truth.'

Since early days, it has been the custom in Scandinavia to observe what is called the Yule Peace. This lasts from Christmas Day to the feast of Epiphany, and is proclaimed by a public crier. Any violation of this peace is severely punished. All quarrels are adjusted, and old feuds laid aside during the period.

Sand falling on a wheel has for years been used in operating various small toys. The natural curiosity of the child, however, as to the motive power, often leads him to destroy the toy in order to discover the secret of its action. This has suggested an improvement in toys of this kind, which consists of a glass back by which the flow of sand may be observed. The inventor has also patented an arrangement that prevents the clogging of the wheel.

The Christmas season is the season, as Washington Irving says, for gathering together of family connections, and drawing closer again those bonds of kindred hearts, which the cares and pleasures and sorrows of the world are continually operating to cast loose; of once more calling back the children of a family, who have launched forth in life and wandered widely asunder, to assemble about the paternal hearth, that rallying place of the affections, there to grow young and loving again, among the endearing mementos of childhood.

A juryman came breathlessly into the court. 'Oh, your Honor, if you can excuse me, pray do. I don't know which will die first—my wife or my daughter.' 'Dear me, that's sad,' said the innocent judge. 'Certainly, you are excused.' The next day the juryman was met by a friend, who, in a sympathetic voice, asked: 'How is your wife?' 'She's all right, thank you.' 'And your daughter?' 'She's all right, too. Why do you ask?' 'Why, yesterday you said you did not know which would die first.' 'Nor do I. That is a problem that time alone can solve.'

The custom of putting various greens in the churches on Christmas Day is a very ancient one (says the *Ave Maria*). It would seem to be strictly in accordance with Holy Scripture; for we read in Isaiah (lx, 13): 'The glory of Libanus shall come to thee, the fir tree and the box tree and the pine tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place of my feet.' An old Saxon couplet ran—

Whosoever against holly doth cry,  
In a rope shall be hung full high;  
while a fifteenth carol begins,  
Holly and ivy, box and bay,  
Put in the church on Christmas Day.