

SANTA'S TIRED!



When Jane Fixes the Knickknacks

LIKE to loaf in the kitchen while Jane in her wifely way is puttin' the finish on knickknacks for the dinner on Christmas day. Say, tollible early o' mornin's, when the coffeepot's shimmerin' low, An' the roosters is crowin' for daybreak—like nobody else didn't know—An' out through the white curtained window the stars is beginnin' to fade, An' the hills that was hid in darkness is at comin' out o' the shade. Directly a silence settles, so plain it is mighty nigh seen, An' me an' the past stand together, with scarcely a might between, For I feel unusually tender—in a glad, half sad sort o' way—While Jane is fixin' the knickknacks for the dinner on Christmas day.

A person don't never, I reckon, disremember the old folks at home, No matter how feeble he grows an' no matter just where he may roam, An' they show pretty clear at such minits, true an' brave as in days gone by, Till I push my chair in the shadders—a-hidin' the mist in my eye, I see the grave face of my father as he reads by the candlelight there, An' I hear some hymn of my mother as she rocks in the hickory chair; Then the firelight falls on the ceiling with the rose o' the old time glow, An' I dream only dreams o' the future 'stid o' dreams o' the long ago, Heigh ho! What a world o' changes from the lad to the man now gray, Watchin' Jane as she fixes knickknacks for the dinner on Christmas day!

Then my thoughts travels on an' onward from mista where the old folks be, An' I wonder if our own children is thinkin' o' Jane an' me, If they heard some organ sendin' the sonar, "Do They Miss Me at Home?" Through the holy Christmas mornin', through the holy Christmas gloom, If they heard their children shoutin' in pleasure beside their toys, Would they think once more o' the homestead, where they lived when girls an' boys, The young has the world before 'em, but fer us it lies behind— A dim, dear land o' memories, where even I keep in mind, Wee, faded clothes in the attic, broken toys long laid away, As I watch Jane fixin' knickknacks for the dinner on Christmas day.

—Will T. Hale.

ELECTRIC CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

Still New Enough to Have Novelty Element Dear to Americans.

Electric Christmas gifts still possess that element of novelty dear to the American heart and thus solve the problem of giving Christmas gifts that are "different." Imagine how pleased most men would be to receive an electric shaving cup or electric cigar lighter instead of neckties, socks and handkerchiefs "as usual."

A teakettle for grandmother, a samovar for mother's 5 o'clock teas, a chafing dish for the college girl, a disk stove for the bachelor, a flatiron or sewing machine motor for the practical housewife—all these novel and useful gifts will be appreciated by the recipients.

It should not be forgotten that these electric Christmas gifts are all useful gifts. Each of these devices is designed to do some one thing better than it can be done any other way, whether it is to percolate coffee, toast bread or furnish the power for running a sewing machine.

The presence of an electric percolator on any table adds a touch of something different and something better. The electric tea samovar is rapidly becoming quite the thing for the modern tea table.

"Wassail! Drinkaell!"

The wassail bowl, which is still used in some old European families at Christmas, succeeded the skull of the Norseman's foe as a drinking vessel. In these old wassail bowls, some specimens of which are of brown ware and others of massive silver, were placed the ale, the ginger, the sugar, the nutmeg and the roasted crab apples. Where the old custom still prevails the ale is served spiced and sweetened in the wassail bowl, but the apples are omitted.

Still Bring in the Boar's Head.

The ancient Christmas ceremony of bringing in the boar's head is regularly performed on Christmas afternoon in the hall of Queen college, Oxford, England. The head is borne in on a silver dish, shoulder high, at the head of a procession formed by the college choir augmented for the occasion singing "The Boar's Head Song."

Not only in costly gifts or rich rare food lies Christmas joy or blessing. It lies—no one can tell another where it lies. The finding must be for one's self alone. I can only say to all little children, to all grownup children, to all who are looking back as well as to those who are looking forward, to them I can say with Tiny Tim, "God bless you each this happy Christmas time," and if you would be very sure to get its meaning best make a real Christmas for somebody who might not have it but for you.—Kate Langley Boshier.

Christmas In The Farmhouse

When as a child you read stories of Christmas celebrations where the houses were decorated with holly and mistletoe and the people had such jolly times putting them up, didn't you look around your own house and wonder how that would look if trimmed with those same greens? And didn't you long to smell their spicy fragrance and to have a hand in putting them up where you thought they would look the best? And didn't you long to feel that peculiar Christmas spirit that is in the very air in cities and villages for more than a week before Christmas day itself? And then did you just settle back and say to yourself: "Well, it's no use."

"As long as I live on a farm Christmas must be just the same as it always has been—an exchange of gifts and afterward an unusually big dinner?"

I want to tell you that you are mistaken—that you can have just those very same things, even to bringing in the old time Yule log, if you are so fortunate as to have an open fireplace in the farmhouse.

City people pay from 35 cents to \$1 for a small house Christmas tree, and every one who can afford it buys a tree every year for his children. How often do farmers' children have trees? And why not? Because the parents say, "We haven't gifts enough to make a pretty tree." Many people never put a gift on—simply make it a tree of beauty for the children. Strings of popcorn, wishbones and canes gilded, gold stars—anything bright and shifty hung on a tree delights a child—a bag of popcorn with a few candles in it tastes five times as good if it has only once hung on a tree. Even if the gift must be underwear, shoes and things actually needed to wear, have them come as surprises and in as "Christmas" looking packages as possible. It is well to keep the Christmas spirit in the home.

It seems a pity for us country people, surrounded by these beautiful things deemed luxuries by our city friends, to make no use whatever of them and to let our lives become so commonplace. Christmas is not solely a day for gift giving and receiving and eating. It is a day for doing everything in your power to add to the joy of the children—a day to remember the feeble and lonely old people—a day to think of the strangers and the poor. If you haven't money to spend for gifts for them you can give some of yourself and of your own home Christmas cheer. There are homes that it is an inspiration to enter, because of the Christmas spirit they breathe forth. I trust the farm homes will not be lacking in Christmas beauty or Christmas cheer—that all of them will truly "keep Christmas."—Bertha G. Markham in Country Gentleman.

When the dawn creeps up from the darkly slumbering ocean Christmas morn and speeds brightly around the world, circling it with a golden girdle of light, myriads of bells in many lands awake and from steeple to steeple ring out the glad tidings that "the Messiah is king."—Eloise Boorback in Craftsman.

A Happy Tree.

"Oh, look at me!"
Sang the Christmas tree—
A jolly young evergreen—
"I'm dressed up here
For a show, that's clear,
And I'm anxious to be seen.
To grow in a wood
Is very good—
Of air you've a trifle more—
But I declare
It cannot compare
To a block on the parlor floor!
You may stand in the cold
Till a century old,
Not a blossom to speak of comes,
But here in an hour
I'm all in flower
With mittens and dolls and drums,
I know so well—
And daren't to tell—
So much that I'm like to burst;
There's a mystery hung
Or a secret swung
On each branch from last to first.
How I'd love to shout
All my feelings out!
But I daren't even cough;
And just the half
Of a great big laugh
Would shake all my candles off.
So I have to hide
All the fun inside
Till I'm full as I can be.
Whatever folks say,
I'm king of the day!"
Sang the jolly Christmas tree.
—Youth's Companion.

YULETIDE CANDLES

By MARIAN V. DORSEY

EVERY year the little green bayberry candles are sent as luck bringing gifts to an even greater extent than during the past few holiday seasons. The reason for this is that the people who received them the past year or two—and who did not?—thought that they really did seem to bring them good fortune; hence this increasingly rapid growth of the candle's popularity as a substitute for the conventional Christmas card or as constituting in itself an unpretentious little gift symbolizing every good wish.

But, while a great many people both send and receive bayberry candles as gifts, there are but few who know whence they come or why the luck superstition is inseparable from them.

The candles, or "dips," as they were first called, are the product of a revived industry started a few years ago in the old Massachusetts towns of Deerfield and Hingham and in the kitchens of the Cape Cod people, all of them using the old pewter or tin molds that have descended in the families from colonial times. Old southern villages have not as yet realized the opportunity offered its women in this revived industry, although the bayberry candles were made by the early settlers in all the coast colonies where the berries grew, never being found inland.

As to the origin of the good luck idea, we seek it in vain among colonial chronicles as applied to the candle itself. Yet from times far earlier the bay tree and the laurel were considered sacred to good fortune, and it is



LIGHTING THE BAYBERRY CANDLE.

from this immemorial belief that we must trace the present day faith in the virtues of the bayberry candle.

The bay is a species of laurel, and as poets and victors were crowned with the laurel or the bay, wishing them long life and happiness, so is the same wish conveyed in the bestowal of a candle made of the waxen berries borne by the sacred tree.

Bayberry dips are also made as well as the molded candles. These dips are smaller and less even in shape and show us how candles were made by repeatedly dipping the wicks in the melted wax of the bayberries and drying each layer till the dip was of proper size. That was before molds were introduced, early in the eighteenth century.

To accompany a bayberry candle one should send in the little box in which it is daintily wrapped a card on which is printed, in red and green lettering, the legend:

ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

A bayberry candle burnt to the socket
Brings luck to the house,
Food to the larder
And gold to the pocket.

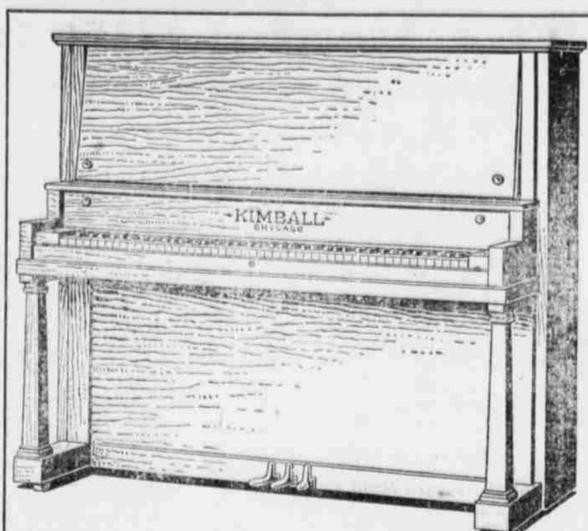
When these cards are not to be found the luck rhyme may be written on the back of one's visiting card and wrapped with a candle, but in that case it must not be forgotten that the inclosure of writing necessitates extra postage.

Their color, a soft olive green, blends beautifully with other Christmas decorations, and they burn with a steady flame, emitting a delightfully pungent fragrance, and they are consumed evenly all around without making unsightly gutters or ridges of wax down the sides as ordinary candles do.

From New England comes the tradition that if lovers separated by distance each lights a bayberry candle in honor of the other at the same hour the aroma or incense arising from the burning wick will drift in the direction of the absent one; hence the candles make a strong appeal to young people of romantic temperament.

A candle must be presented to you, not bought by yourself, in order to insure good luck, and you must not light your own; that must be done for you by some other person, not necessarily the donor.

Christmas eve is the time for burning, either at dinner or later, and to follow out the old idea of the laurels and the bays to the victor a candle should surely be bestowed on the relative or friend who has recently achieved some success or won a distinction.—Philadelphia Press.



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