

Dressing Your Presents

Have you ever noticed how varied are the manners and methods in which presents are packed? The bulky plain brown paper fellows which come through the post, resplendent with thick string and sealing wax, are, perhaps, the most exciting, because parcels which come through the post are, somehow or other, always more interesting than those which are discreetly slipped on to one's plate at breakfast time.

The presents which do not come by parcel post do not vary so much, perhaps, but even they express care, or lack of it, in their wrappings. But nowadays there is no excuse for parcels looking dull or unexciting because they are packed at home and are given by hand. Even in the days when decorated labels were not available, when fancy papers and strings were not procurable, many meticulously-minded people held and carried out original ideas in the way of present-wrapping.

One girl who could never afford to spend very much on her presents became quite famous in her little circle of friends for the dainty way in which she always packed her gifts. Snowy white tissue paper finished with scarlet cord or narrow ribbon, and one of the small Christmas labels which are procured by the dozen at stationers', gave her gifts a very festive appearance. And sometimes, when the present was very small, she would finish the parcel off with a tiny bunch of violets, especially if that flower happened to be her friend's favorite.

A pair of silk stockings looks far more expensive if placed in a fancy box. The same rule applies to handkerchiefs, ties, or any little items which make insignificant parcels when simply wrapped in paper. And if you have no fancy boxes by you, you can very easily contrive some if you treat some ordinary cardboard boxes to coats of shrapnel wallpaper.

Odd pieces of flowered wallpaper pasted on boxes give them a very bright and decorative appearance; sometimes is better still, but care must be taken with the corners as, being firmer and more difficult to handle than paper, it is easier for the edges and corners to look a little ragged and untidy.

Sheets of colored paper can be used instead of brown paper, but white tissue paper is always best for small or dainty gifts. Narrow scarlet ribbon can be bought very reasonably, but green and other colors look equally attractive, especially if they match your gift in some way or other. It is difficult to be original year after year in the choice of presents, but it is not so difficult to give them original jackets.

Many of us this year will not be able to afford a great deal for the presents of our nearest and dearest, but you can always make your present look as if it has been packed with very loving care.

Where the Fruit Grows

When you buy your Christmas supplies of currants, raisins, figs, Brazils, or dates, do you ever give a thought to what they are, how they got their names, or where they come from?

Dates, from Arabia and Persia, grow on the date-palm. The name is derived from the Greek word "dactylos," meaning a finger. Dates, before being pressed, look like human fingers, and the resemblance still remains in those you buy.

"Brazils" are from Brazil. They are the produce of a tree called the "juvia." They grow in a hard shell about the size and shape of a child's head, and each shell contains about fifty nuts.

Currants are a variety of small grapes, dried. The name is our corruption of "Corinth"—where they grow most abundantly.

King of Kings

O sleep, celestial Child, O sleep: Who hath been born The nations cannot say, But Thy proud heritage They will become one day.

—Alessandro Manzoni

Hemlock Boughs

The pungent fragrance of the hemlock brings Long thoughts of lingering, dreamy, summer hours. Of winsome brooks—green fields, starred white with flowers, Hushed bird notes, woodland's quiet murmurings.

Those hemlock branches bending with the weight Of brittle ice and heavy, crusted snow, Are warm and green and pulsing far below, From winter's winds and storms inviolate.

Why are they symbol of the Christmas tide? Because the heart is warm beneath the frost, Its springtime verdure never wholly lost, It blooms anew and spreads its branches wide.

The hope of Christmas in the heart warm glowing, Finds a bright green oasis in the dry And parching desert wastes, because close by Renewing streams of love are overflowing.

Green, fragrant, incense-bearing hemlock bough, Here in our homes—and those white hemlocks still, Snow-clad, austere, on some bleak northern hill— In winter's heart are Christmas blossoming now!

—Charlotte F Babcock.

And Glory Shone Around

The night, like most nights of the winter season in the hill country, was clear, crisp and sparkling with stars.

By the gate, hugging his mantle close, the watchman walked. . . . The midnight was slow coming to him; but at last it came. His task was done. . . . He moved towards the first, but paused; a light was breaking around him, soft and white, like the moon's. He waited breathlessly. The light deepened; things before invisible came to view; he saw the whole field, and all it sheltered. . . . He looked up; the stars were gone; the light was dropping as from a window in the sky; as he looked it became a splendor; then, in terror, he cried, "Awake, awake!"

"What is it?" they asked, in one voice. "See," cried the watchman, "the sky is on fire!"

Suddenly the light became intolerably bright, and they covered their eyes, and dropped upon their knees; then. . . a voice said to them, "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

The voice, in sweetness and soothing more than human, and low and clear, penetrated all their being, and filled them with assurance. They rose upon their knees, and looking worshipfully, beheld in the centre of a great glory the appearance of a man, clad in a robe intensely white. . . . Suddenly the light, of which he seemed the centre, turned roseate and began to tremble; then up, far as the men could see, there was flashing of white wings, and coming and going of radiant forms, and voices as of a multitude chanting in unison, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Not once the praise, but many times—From "Ben-Hur," by Lew Wallace.

Three Yuletides a Year

There is one place where Christmas is kept three times a year—in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, the reputed site of the Stable of the Inn.

The Roman, Greek, and Armenian-Greek bodies have each their respective section of the church, but their Christmas celebrations do not occur on the same day. The Latin Christmas is celebrated at the Roman Catholic altar on December 25th. Thirteen days later the Orthodox Easterns perform the Greek rite. Another thirteen days later the Armenian Church keeps its own ceremonial of Byzantine Faith.

Gifts

O shepherds brought their gifts to Him, (Christ dwell with us to-night) And kings came riding from the dim Great lands beneath the eastern sky, And patient ox and ass stood by; With wondering eyes and bright; And cherubin and seraphim Sang glory up the height.

—Nora M. Holland, "When Half Gods Go."

Will the various hued typewriters and telephones recently introduced, tend to make writings and conversation more colorful?

Looks Proud of It



HAMISH

The year-old reserve grand champion steer, sold at \$156 a pound at the Royal Winter Fair. He was raised by M. J. O'Brien Limited, Renfrew, Ontario; fed by Joseph Eaton; weighed 1,090 pounds, and was sold to Canadian Packing Co. for shipment to Pittsburg. The price is a record.

Dolly's Bassinet

In preparing the layette for a Christmas baby doll for my three-year-old daughter, it occurred to me that a bassinet was necessary.

Accordingly, I bought a fifteen cent market basket with two folding handles, just long enough for the doll to lie in. I placed four thicknesses of cotton batting in the bottom of the basket, with one thickness tacked around the sides with heavy thread. One handle I arranged flat along the edge and the other upright for the hood; then a piece of pink satteen was laid around the inside of the basket and over the edges, with slits cut to allow the handle to remain upright.

The edges were gathered and drawn up snugly around the bottom of the basket; and another piece of satteen was stitched on the raised handle, and tacked down to the basket edge. For the trimming, I joined two widths of dotted muslin, hemmed narrowly on one edge, and on the other an inch-wide heading.

A narrow elastic was run through the heading and the muslin slipped over the edge of the basket—an arrangement which made it easily removed for laundering. A like heading was stitched on the hood muslin, and a tape run through it. This hood could be raised or lowered as desired—a feature that later seemed to furnish considerable pleasure. Rosettes of pink and blue ribbons were tacked around the hood, handle and on a tiny pink satin comforter, hemmed with blue French knots. A tiny pillow covered with a white pillowcase completed the outfit.

Christmas

Magic word describing God's surpassing love, Symbol of His great gift from Heaven above, Wonder of childhood, chief source of life's cheer, Charming and joyous still each melting year.

Magic season of true hearts made strangely new, Filled with kindly thoughts of worthy deeds to do, Freed from enmity, all evil put away, Unpretending hearts where love of Christ holds sway.

Magic feet through ages past of sin and wrong, Bright Star of Hope of future centuries long O Priceless Gift of Bethlehem's manger King, Help all men thy Peace on Earth, Good Will, to bring.

Christmas Cradle Song

Dr. Isaac Watts, author of "O God, our help in ages past," was singularly unequal in his poetical output. He wrote such doggerel as "How doth the little busy bee" and "Let dogs delight to bark and bite," and also the following exquisite carol:—

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber, Holy angels guard thy bed! Heavenly blessings without number Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe, thy food and raiment, House and home thy friends provide; All without thy care or payment, All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended Than the Son of God could be, When from heaven He descended, And became a child like thee!

Lo, He slumbers in His manger, Where the horned oxen feed; Peace, my darling, here's no danger, Here's no ox near thy bed!

Mayst thou live to know and fear Him, Trust and love Him all thy days; Then go dwell for ever near Him; See His face, and sing His praise!

Link by link, the chain stores seem to be tying up a lit of trade.

Recipes to Spice the Christmas Tree

Banana Circle Cake

Use your favorite recipe for white cake and bake in two round layer pans. Whip one pint of cream and flavor with orange juice and sugar. Just before serving cover one layer with sliced bananas and spread with whipped cream. Place the other layer on top and cover with whipped cream. Garnish with circles of sliced bananas and walnuts.

Tomato with Spinach and Glazed Onions

1 cup thick tomato sauce, 1 cup small glazed onions, 2 cups canned, seasoned spinach, salt and pepper. Heap the spinach in the center of a serving dish and make a cavity in the center. Pour the tomato sauce into this, then surround the spinach with the onions that have been boiled until tender, then glazed in butter and sugar and seasoned with the salt and pepper.

Quick Chocolate Icebox Cake

1/2 pint cream, 3 boxes chocolate wafers. Arrange in alternate layers in a shallow glass baking dish chocolate wafers and sweetened and flavored whipped cream. Start with the crackers, laying them close together to cover bottom of dish. Then spread generously with a layer of the cream, next crackers, and so on until mixture is used, leaving the last one cream. Garnish with chocolate sprinkles and place in refrigerator for twenty-four hours.

Brown Sugar Nut Cake

1/3 cup butter or other shortening, 1 cup light brown sugar, 2 egg yolks, 1/2 cup milk, 1/2 cup flour, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 1/2 cup fine chopped pecans, 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Cream the butter and sugar together thoroughly. Add the egg yolks beaten until light. Mix and sift the dry ingredients; add them alternately with the milk. Then add the vanilla and the pecans, and pour into a shallow loaf cake pan which has been oiled or buttered.

Bake in a moderate oven 35 or 40 minutes. When cool cover with brown sugar icing, which is made as follows:

Brown Sugar Icing

Boll 1 cup of brown sugar with 1/3 cup of water until the syrup forms a soft ball in cold water. Pour very gradually into 2 stiffly beaten egg whites while beating constantly. Continue beating and when light and fluffy add 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. Spread on top and sides of cake and sprinkle with 1/2 cup chopped pecans.

Doctor—"You'll have to send for another doctor." Patient—"Am I so ill as all that?" Doctor—"I don't know how ill you are, but I know you are the man who cross-examined me when I appeared as an expert witness. My conscience won't let me kill you, but I'm hanged if I feel like curing you, Good day!"

Mr. Scinger would persist in wearing his suits until the last possible moment, with the result that he found himself continually in argument with his wife. Strolling down a fashionable thoroughfare one afternoon, they happened to pass a modern Beau Brummel. "There!" exclaimed Mrs. Scinger. "Why don't you dress like that?" "I am far too intelligent," replied her husband proudly. At that moment Mrs. Scinger caught sight of a beggar and his wife in the gutter. "Then thank goodness your intelligence isn't increasing," she snapped, "or we should be like those poor people."

The Spruce is the most beautiful of Christmas Trees. Have you thought of the gifts handed down from the Canadian Spruce to the people of Canada each year. Scores of pulp and paper towns live on a spruce payroll; hundreds of millions of dollars a year are poured into myriad homes of Canadian workers by the kindly hand of Spruce. We speak of the Christmas Tree as the decorative background of dolls and bugles and father's yellow-striped necktie. How often do we stop to think that the Tree itself is one of God's mightiest benefactions to the Canadian people.

The Christmas Tree to millions of children in Western Europe and America is the symbol of rejoicing. No other altar of youth commands such instinctive or loving adoration.

But the Christmas Tree has not always enjoyed its sentimental dominion over the hearts of Christian nations. Other peoples in dim antiquity owed allegiance to trees but they lived in lands where the spruce and hemlock were unknown. The Egyptians held mammoth celebrations in the month corresponding to our December but they centered their devotions upon the palm. The palms of Egypt gave birth to a leaf each month and the tree with its twelve leaves suggested the completed year. Maybe the palm was the forerunner of the Christmas Tree as we in Canada know it.

Three thousand years later, the Romans celebrating their Saturnalia raised aloft a conifer as the sign of their joy over the winter solstice. Thousands of such trees, garlanded with their vivid decorations, set loose a flood of riotous rejoicing. But Santa Claus was not of the Roman era, and the children of that great Empire knew nothing of the glorious fellow who with all his ponderous girth can suspend the laws of gravity, and every other natural law, crawl through tortuous chimneys, lay his own tracks across the clouds, and make personal visitations in a single night to perhaps a hundred million babes, every one of whom, he cleverly identifies by name.

It seems likely that the Italian tree custom was carried to Gaul by the legions of Drusus in his campaign against the Germans, about 15 B.C. Certainly about this time the Teutonic St. Nicholas made his appearance and has remained with us ever since, one of the priceless blessings and inspirations of a large part of the human race.

In the course of time, the English adopted the German Santa Claus, and the symbol of the tree at Yuletide. It took four or five centuries for the church to fix December 25 as the date of Christmas, but ever since there has clung to the celebration of Christ's birth the borrowed pagan rites of the Roman tree and the holly and mistletoe of the Druids.

A thousand years later, the excesses of Puritan rule in England banished the visible accompaniments of Christmas Day, but so deeply was the custom ingrained in long generations of the English that the passing of Roundhead rule found the old forms restored.

However, the imprint of puritanism for many decades depressed the Yuletide demonstrations of England and the American colonies. The realistic writings of Dickens and of Washington Irving in America revived the ancient practice and there seems today no threatening sign that the fine old custom of the Christmas tree will ever be taken from us either by tyrannical mandate or by the slothfulness of our imagination.

Yule-Tide Gifts

Blessed Yule-tide, bring to us These fair gifts, we pray: Clearer vision, strength to do Right from day to day; Kinder hearts, more sympathy For all upon life's way;

Tenderness to bind the wounds Of the sick and sad; Wisdom to direct the feet Of the weak and bad; Tears shed for others' woes; Laughter to make glad.

And not least of all thy gifts, Speech bold, unafraid, For our little brothers dumb; Willing hands to aid Every weak and harmless thing By the Father made

Louella C. Poole.

Eternal

The star that lighted Bethlehem Is young to-night; Time has not dimmed its diadem Of shining light. Time cannot move immortal things To brevity;

In a star's wide motions swings Eternity. Fanny de Groot Hastings. Written for "The Christian Science Monitor."

MUTT AND JEFF—By Bud Fisher.



The Inventor Has Mutt Guessing.