A Christmas Joke

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

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SHE was a young bride. Every present she had received was very welcome. She had depended on presents to furnish her new home. When she had received duplicate which were not initialed she hastened to the place from which they had been purchased and picked out other articles of beauty and of household necessity.

Her friends had really been remarkably kind. She had been surprised to find how ready the shops had been about taking back gifts and substituting with others, or in engraving presents which had not already been engraved. Only one had charged for engraving—the gift had been purchased at "wholesale rate" and so engraving was not included.

Altogether from the point of view of presents as well as from the point of view of a mate she had done remarkably well. This would enable them to make a very good appearance in their home without having to draw from the none too plentiful savings.

She viewed everything over again one evening, presents and those which were exchanges. There was just one thing among them that was not necessary and not particularly pretty. It was a gravy-dish. She knew of no particular use to which she could put it—she had one of the kind she really liked.

She could not exchange it. It had a monogram in the center.

"I know what I'll do with it," she said to her husband. "I'll give it to Molly Stevens for a Christmas present. She has been so good to us and I'd like to show her how much I appreciate it.

"You know she is going to get married in the spring—that is—her engagement is all but announced.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea? She was so helpful about my wedding and she has told me, quite confidentially, that the wedding will be in the spring.

"It would be a good idea to give her



"I'll Give It to Molly Stevens for a Christmas Present."

something for Christmas that she could have for her new home.

"We really can't afford to buy another thing just now and that will do beautifully."

"But the monogram?" her husband inquired.

"Oh, that can be taken off you know, and another one put there in its place. I heard some one ordering that to be done in one of the silver shops the other day."

"Yes, that's a splendid idea," her husband heartily agreed.

"I'll go down-town and attend to it tomorrow. I haven't much time. Christmas is almost here."

"Our first Christmas," said the young husband as he clasped his bride to him.

"Our first Christmas," she murmured.

The next evening he asked her if she had arranged about sending the gravy dish to Molly Stevens.

"I couldn't send it," she said.

"Why not?" he queried.

"Because of the monogram in the center," she said.

"But you told me that that could be erased by the silversmiths and a new monogram placed there" her husband persisted.

"I know I did," the young bride answered, "but you see they told me today at the shop that it would be possible to do it were it not for the fact that it had been done so often to this gravy dish that they wouldn't dare take a chance with it again. They'd not be able to avoid boring a hole this time! It has been given away once too often for me to put to any use," she sighed sadly.

"And I shall just send Molly a Christmas card. After all she did no more than any one else!"

Celery and Banana Salad.

Cut the bleached portions of crisped celery into half-inch lengths. Mix with it an equal quantity of diced banana. Arrange in small mounds in lettuce cups, dress with mayonnaise and garnish with English walnut meats, or, if novelty is desired, serve in banana cases.

GIFTS OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Frying-Pan for Queen Victoria—Man Gives Wife Five Pounds to Buy Washstand.

THE king of Siam used to send Queen Victoria a very curious gift every Christmas. It may have been want of imagination, or he may have heard that the frying-pan was the curse of the English cook, and thought they must want constantly renewing. Whatever the reason, her majesty received a silver frying-pan as regularly as Christmas came round.

Thomas Carlyle once quite forgot to buy a Christmas gift for his wife. There is nothing unique about this. Other men have done the same. Nor is there anything particularly generous in the way he made up for his neglect to remember the day. He wrote the following letter:

"The prophecy of a washstand to the neatest of all women. Blessings on her bonnie face, and be it ever blithesome as it is dear, blithe or not. —T. Carlyle. December 25, 1850."

The great man did really give his wife five pounds with which to buy the promised washstand, at which he, no doubt, washed quite as often as she did. But that's a man all over.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE SPRIG

Punishment Meted Out by Oxfordshire Maids to Men Who Refused to Obey Commands.

IN SOME places in Oxfordshire, every maid-servant had the privilege and frequently exercised it, of asking a man for ivy to decorate the house. If the man assented, well and good; but if he refused the maid stole a pair of his breeches. The next day they could be seen nailed to the gate of the highway. But a worse punishment than this was sometimes meted out to him; he was deprived of the privilege of the mistletoe.

The first maid to pass under this evergreen on Christmas day was sure to be married within the year, and equally sure of being kissed—for that was the penalty, if it can be called such, to be paid by any maid who passed under it. After each offense a berry was plucked, while the privilege was supposed to end with the last berry.

"Christmas Past."

IT WAS indeed a "gracious" time, and as we read of the revels and ceremonies and find foolish beliefs of Christmas Past, we might regret what we have lost in this tamer and less picturesque age, if we did not know that, never before in history was Christmas kept so truly and heartily in the spirit of the day as it is now. We have dropped a good many rude and some pretty customs, but we have gained a broadening spirit of almost universal charity, a feeling of real brotherhood, that it is held in check a good deal during the rest of the year.—Charles Dudley Warner.

The Great Giver.

Christmas is the birthday of Jesus, who never gave the world a dollar, and bestowed upon mankind no other material gift. "He carved no statue, painted no picture, wrote no poem, composed no song, fashioned no piece of jewelry, built no edifice, founded no city, erected no triumphal arch; but He stands in history as the Great Giver." Such as He had He gave: the sympathetic hand, the genial mind, the generous heart, the courageous spirit, which all worked together to build up out of the human the divine. The Father gave us first His universe; then He gave His Son; now He offers His Spirit.—Adapted.

Sweet Sauces.

It is usual in England to serve what American housewives call "soft sauce" with the Christmas plum pudding, but the delicious "hard sauces" which we ourselves affect make a nice change. Soft sauces take the form of a thin hot custard, which will be all the more creamy if a few spoonfuls of condensed milk are stirred in after the custard is made in the ordinary way. Another favorite sauce is made by adding sugar to melted butter.



AS USUAL

"I suppose you've finished your Christmas shopping?"

"Yes, and it's finished me."

The Portable Lamp.

The cheapest and most generally useful electrical appliance and at the same time the one most seldom taken advantage of in the ordinary household is the portable lamp. This simply consists of a few yards of flexible insulated wire, at one end of which is fixed an ordinary plug to screw into a wall or chandelier socket and at the other a lamp socket. The cost is very little.

HANGING UP THE STOCKING

Time-Honored Christmas Custom Dates Back to the Days of St. Nicholas of Padua.

FROM Italy comes the legend from which we are supposed to get the time-honored custom of hanging up the Christmas stocking.

Good old St. Nicholas of Padua used to throw long knitted purses tied at both ends, into the open windows of the very poor people. These purses were made of yarn not unlike a footless stocking. Finally it became the custom of the people to hang them outside of their window on the night before Christmas, so that St. Nicholas could put a gift into them as he passed by. By and by, when coin became scarce, toys were put in for the children, and useful presents for grown people. In the North country where it was rather chilly at Christmas time, the purses were hung on the mantelpiece, and it was believed that the good old saint would come down the chimney and fill them. When these purses were out of use, stockings were substituted and have been used ever since.

CHRISTMAS TIME IN FRANCE

Yuletide Season Great Time for Display of Green Plants; Houses Filled With Decorations.

IT IS the Le Petit Jesu that brings gifts to the French children at Christmas time. He never forgets a good child and is sure to slip something into the wooden shoe of the child if it is left at the door. He has, however, been known to leave pebbles in the shoe of one who has been naughty.

To the French, Christmas is the great time for greens. Everywhere one sees the brilliant poinsetta flower displayed. The houses are filled with mistletoe and holly, and half the fun of Christmas consists in getting the greens and decorating the houses. The houses are then ready for le Jour de l' An, or New Year's day, which is the gayer of the two festivals.

The Hodening Horse.

ABOUT the middle of the Nineteenth century it was the custom in Kent for the male farm-servants to go on Christmas eve from house to house with the hodening horse, which was an imitation of a horse's head, life size and made of wood, and fastened on a stick about the length of a broom handle. The lower jaw had hinges and was arranged by means of a cord so that it would open and close. The strongest of the lads was selected for the horse. He stooped and supported himself by holding to the stick. Then he was covered with a horse cloth, and one of his companions mounted him, and such a kicking, rearing and gnashing of teeth as there was! They made the rounds of the houses begging a gratuity.

Wandering Jew's Christmas.

There was a common belief in some countries that the spirits of the lost had rest on Christmas night, and that when the hour comes that ushers in the holy season, the wandering Jew rests his weary feet, and with sad, upturned face gazes in the direction of Jerusalem where he struck the Savior in the time of his trial. A lamp or candle must not be permitted to burn to its end on Christmas, as that forbodes a death in the family during that year. For the same reason a live coal must not be taken out of the home on that day.

Celery Soup.

Take the coarse outer stalks of a bunch of celery and scrub them well. Cut into small pieces; cover with boiling water and boil until tender in an uncovered saucepan. Drain and save the water. Mash the celery through a colander, return to water and boil for ten minutes. To each cupful of celery water add a cupful of hot milk, two level tablespoonfuls of butter and one level tablespoonful of flour rubbed together. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle chopped parsley over the top of each bowl and serve with croutons.



START NOW

Try to save a little
From the cost of livin'
Christmas time is coming,
With its cost of givin'.

Christmas in Peru.

A midnight mass is generally held the night before Christmas in Peru. Christmas day is generally celebrated by a huge spectacular bull fight, and after this has taken place, a religious procession follows, at the head of which usually is held a statue of the Virgin. When this ceremony is over people are free to enjoy themselves as they choose for the rest of the day.

GUIDE FOR SHOPPERS

CHRISTMAS is less than three weeks away and now is the time to make your selections. Our Christmas stock is larger and more complete this year than ever before—Hundreds of beautiful suggestions to choose from.

Come in and look around--There are many new things we are sure will delight you--We gladly lay aside anything you may choose--You will find a host of gift suggestions here in:

New Canadian Books

By Ralph Connor, H. A. Cody, L. M. Montgomery, Nellie McClung and others

Cut Glass, Community Silver, Brass Jardiniers

We are showing the beautiful new designs in these ever-popular Gift Goods

Hot Water Bags make a nice gift especially for elderly people and invalids

Here are a Lot of Suggestions:

Ivory and Ebony Brush and Comb Sets
Hair Receivers
Manicure Sets
Perfumes and Toilet Waters
Fancy Box Stationery
Leather Hand Bags and Pocket Books
Jewel Cases
Cameras
Cigars in Xmas Boxes
Shaving Sets
Fountain Pens
Military Brushes
Pipes
Bed Time Story Books
Picture Books
New Canadian Annual
Stationery
Drawing Sets
Games

TOYLAND

This department will be open in a few days and here the little ones will revel in the delights that Christmas brings.

This is the twenty-sixth Christmas that we have led in a general assortment of Christmas goods. If our stock is not as large this year as some other years it is because our experience has taught us the kind of goods our customers want. Hence you can choose here a gift for every member of the family, and you can choose easily, for you will not be confused by a mass of things you don't want.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, EVERYBODY—COME AND SEE US

Estey & Curtis Co., Ltd.