

For an Improved Christmas
by GRACE ARNOLD

HE woman with brown eyes was gazing meditatively out of the window at the people hurrying through the falling snow with their Christmas bundles.

"You are thinking?" her husband suggested.

"About Christmas, that's all."

"We have left undone the things that we—"

"Not this time, my dear. Merely about everybody in the world."

"No one could call you narrow minded!"

"People have the right spirit about it," she explained. "They are so full of good will toward men that they try to do too much—that's the trouble! You see, most of us and our good intentions are hampered by average salaries and moderate strength."

"I've noticed it."

"We want to give to everybody. We want our homes super-scrupulously tidy. We plan festivities which require new party clothes for the whole family, extra special cooking and preparation for guests."

"Then we set about doing these things. At first it goes well and we enthuse. The common, everyday affairs interfere and complicate matters."

"At the beginning of Christmas week—with many frolics deleted—we find ourselves growing tired, awfully tired. But we see that it's impossible then to stop and rest. That's where the strain begins. We feel compelled to finish what we've started and to carry the program through to the last item of buying, making, packing and shipping."

"Unexpected demands interrupt. Then the strain begins to tell on our nerves. Perhaps we don't say anything for fear of spoiling Christmas for the others, but in our hearts we wish mankind had kept Christmas free from this sort of thing."

"When Christmas day comes we are too weary to bother about the true meaning of it all or to take very keen

pleasure in the results of our back-breaking work, much less to go out and hear beautiful music and uplifting sermons."

"I've always wondered why women attempt so much."

"Because everybody does. And if one poor, lone, sensible woman sits down and flatly refuses to kill herself working for Christmas, her family and friends will think she is a quitter—a social slacker."

"Well," suggested her husband, "why not let the rich people have all the fuss and feathers, and let those in medium circumstances realize they can't keep up that pace?"

"You don't understand," said the woman with the brown eyes; "as long as rich folks do it, those less able will strain to do likewise. That's why the wealthy people will have to see the trend and institute a change."

"In place of so many mere presents we must give such things as love, courage, kindness and generous impulses—things which our present physical and mental strain forbids. Throughout the rest of the year, if any one felt inclined to send a regular gift to a friend or relative, that could be done very easily and the recipient would know it was a voluntary, not a compulsory, remembrance."

"It's a great idea," said the brown-eyed woman's husband, cheerfully. "A bit of real affection in place of some of the monstrosities now exchanged would be a great improvement."

"You can make fun if you want to," she replied, "but when the world wakes up to the real meaning of Christmas—and the war I believe has helped to wake it up—you'll see the effect spread over the entire year. Then the first of January won't be associated with bills and pills, but with the genuine eagerness to live the next 12 months better than those preceding."

"In the meantime," sighed her husband dramatically, "I hope you haven't bought me another smoking jacket."

"That reminds me!" said the woman with the brown eyes. "I haven't time for talking here talking. And it won't be of your affair until tomorrow anyway." — Chicago Daily



Gazing Meditatively Out of the Window.



Christmas Dawn

TIS Christmas morn! 'Tis Christmas morn!
Oh hear the sil'ry bells!
How softly rare upon the air
Their mellow chiming swells!
Behold the skies whose million eyes
Through silent spaces peer,
Like brilliant gems, fair diadems,
High set in vesper sphere.

LET us be merry and happy and gay,
And welcome the Prince with a sweet virelay;
We'll garner the holly and ever be jolly,
For blessed is He Who is coming today.
The bells will ring, to bliss we'll cling,
Our myrtle will bring to greet the King,
For blessed is He Who is coming today,
Cheerily chant Him a sweet roundelay,
Merrily, merrily, merrily!

TIS Christmas morn! 'Tis Christmas morn!
How swift the hours fly!
And winged-fleet on magic feet
They vanish like a sigh;
Now dreamy-dim o'er Orient rim
The gold-fringed eyes of morn
Shed loving light on drowsy night
Ere yet the day is born.
Now gleams the star whose beams afar
Weave Heaven's silver hem,
How dove-demure, how seraph-pure,
Bright Star of Bethlehem!

THEN let us be peaceful and joyous and gay,
And welcome the Prince with a sweet virelay;
We'll garner the holly and ever be jolly,
For blessed is He Who is coming today.
The bells will ring to prayer we'll cling,
Our incense bring to praise the King.
For blessed is He Who is coming today;
Soulfully sing Him a sweet roundelay,
Merrily, merrily, merrily!

—Clare Gerald Fenerty

Verses to Send With Christmas Presents

- With Embroidery or Any Needlework.**
May all your years be glad and bright,
Deep filled with pleasant days,
And all your hours know sweet delight
Of love that lives and stays!
With some such wishes, true and kind,
Each Christmas should begin.
While some of these must surely bind
Because they've been sewed in!
- With a Gift to a Smoker.**
When clouds of smoke around you float
Think sometimes of this loving (friendly) note.
When pictures in the smoke you see
Waft now and then a thought to me,
But though you never joys evoke,
Don't let our friendship "end in smoke."
- With a Box of Candy.**
"Sweets to the sweet," the wise old saw,
I quote because 'tis fitting.
And tribute pay unto the law
With gladness unremitting.
"Like unto like" is also true,
Therefore these candies haste to you.
- With Music or Musical Instrument.**
Because the very thought of you,
Makes music in my mind,
Pray let me share the music true,
The sweetest (gayest) (brightest) I could find.
- With a Laundry List or Bag.**
This gift is clean, as you may see,
So, every time you'd cleaner be
Just send a pleasant thought to me.
- To "Her" With a Pair of Gloves.**
O little thumbs, and fingers, too,
I can but wish that I wore you,
Since you, unchild, may clasp her hand
Tell her—but no! She'll understand.
- With a Book.**
I cannot make new worlds for you
Yet these closed covers truly frame
A wondrous world of rapture true—
Be pleased to enter in my name!
- To a Lady, With Slippers.**
O pretty slippers, small and slight,
Be sure to lead her steps aright,
And when her dainty feet you hold,
Guard them alike from hurt and cold.
- With Shaving Materials.**
Should you cut yourself in shaving,
Don't—blame—me!
Small effect has bitter raving
When the wound one may not see.
But should your razor smoothly glide,
Include me in your smile so wide.
- With Picture of Some Rural Scene.**
If your thoughts of town are weary,
Rest your eyes and dream,
Gazing on this picture cheery
Of woodland (rural) (springtime) (vernal) vale and stream;
Remember that had I my way,
Such joys would greet you every day.
- With Any Christmas Gift.**
Here's a thought of joyous cheer
For Christmas and for all the year!

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