



### UP TO DATE SANTA CLAUS

By SUSAN CROWN ROBBINS.

PAUL FLETCHER was in the drawing room waiting for Lida to come. Lida lived with her brother, and every time Fletcher called to see her either the brother's door or his children were in the room, so there was never a chance to say anything to her alone.

At last, however, his opportunity had come. It was the day before Christmas, and Mrs. Safford and the children had gone to her mother's for several days.

Now, with Lida left at home with her two servants and her brother not coming till evening, Fletcher could say to her those things he had been long wanting to say, but which he could not bring himself to write in a letter nor declare before the assembled family.

At length, after what seemed a very long waiting, some one was coming. He stood up and looked eagerly toward the doorway. The portiere was thrust aside, and in walked Teddy—Teddy who, in Fletcher's opinion, was the worst pill in the whole box as far as staying power and keen observation were concerned.

"Hello, Teddy," he said, not very cordially. "I thought you had gone to spend Christmas with your grandma." "I didn't go," said Teddy.

"Do you expect a visit from Santa Claus tonight?" "Oh, I s'pose so," wearily. "I'd just like to see him, though." His manner grew more animated.

"Why, what would you do?" "I'd tell him what I think of him." "And what is that?" "Oh, that I think he's a fraud! Preceding he comes in a sleigh when the ground has been bare for a month! I'd reindeers too! Who does he think is going to believe that? Why doesn't he come on a bicycle?"

"He's far overcast would be rather in the way," said Fletcher gravely. "And why do you have the blues today?" "Fletcher, and then he did not look again, though Teddy tried to smile out.

"I've come to be in a brown study, looking roused him till Lida came and even then he did not say much to me, only a short time." "It was in the evening that a card was brought to Teddy. On it was written 'Santa Claus.' Teddy's eyes opened. 'Tell him to come in,' he called loudly.

A moment later Santa Claus stood before him, a tall, fur clad figure with a long white beard. Teddy shook hands and introduced the guest to his mother.

"Did you find it good sleighing?" "Very good," said Teddy. "And how are the reindeers?" "I did not come on reindeers, young man," said Santa Claus. "Perhaps you do not know that there is no snow on the ground."

"Bicycle," asked Teddy. "No, I came in a motor carriage." "A motor carriage?" cried Teddy incredulously. Then he ran to the window and looked out. "It is, Aunt Lida," he said excitedly, coming back. "You can see it just as plain out under the electric light."



### THE IRON REINDEER

They were well protected from the cold, being air by an abundance of furs and wraps. There was no moon, but after the lighted streets of the town were past the stars shone down on them brightly.

Teddy was wild with delight, and his tongue ran on rapidly. At length there were occasional pauses, then longer ones interrupted by disjointed remarks. Finally there was total silence. Fletcher bent over so that he could see the child's face; then he looked at Lida and smiled.

"I don't know how to say it," he burst out desperately at length. "I keep forgetting how I look, and if I say it the way I want to it will be perfectly ridiculous. And yet I must say it, for I may never have another chance."

She was looking at him, her startled eyes dark and luminous in the starlight. "Perhaps you do not need to say it," she said gently.

"Do you mean that you understand without my telling you?" he asked eagerly. "Yes," she answered very low.

When they reached the house Fletcher took Teddy in his arms and carried him in. He laid him gently on the couch in the hall and turned away, thinking the child still slept. "I can stop only a moment," Fletcher said. "Is it late?"

At that instant Teddy sat bolt upright, staring about him wildly. He caught sight of his father in an adjoining room. "Oh, papa!" he cried, his voice ringing out clear and shrill. "Oh, papa, Santa Claus is kissing Aunt Lida!"—Boston Herald.

### THAT CHRISTMAS PIE.

Confession of the Sinner Who Doctored the Mince-meat. It had been our family custom to put brandy in all the mince pies and to put in at Christmas time a sufficient amount to enable the partakers thereof to detect that there was really something in it. It often went so far as to deserve the remark of my grandfather that we put mince pie in our brandy.

With hearts as high as the fairy planet itself we all went and another cake that pie and served it.

The Rev. Jeremiah Scroggins, however, of an express of business for his was given a big portion.

No sooner had we a taste of the fine old than we discovered that that pie was nothing more than a small bit of mince. It was laughable as no other pie had been since the birth of time, you can imagine the cold chills which would round that festive board as we watched the Rev. Jeremiah begin to eat. I believe I actually shivered as the first forkful went mouthward.

The first forkful was followed by a second and the second by a third. Finally he had finished the whole portion, and he sat back in his chair. We saw he was a bit embarrassed temperance lecture right then and there.

### SOME EARNEST HOLIDAY DON'TS

Don't think that you are too poor to keep Christmas. You can't be so poor as all that. Don't spend so much on Christmas that you can't get even with the butcher and grocer until March. Don't give presents that are a pleasure for ten minutes and a burden and a worry for ten years.

Don't, young women, buy neckties for your men folk; don't encourage them in being bigger guys than necessary.

Don't give a drum to the children of your enemy who works nights. A watchman's rattle is just as good, and it is cheaper.

Don't give your wife something she doesn't care for just because you want it yourself. This "don't" works the other way just as well.

Don't forget that a basket of fruit or a box of flowers is just as nice a present in many cases as something that will last a good deal longer.

Don't try to find the price marks on the gifts you receive. If the gifts are worth having they mean something above dollars and cents.

Don't forget the Bob Cratchits and the Tiny Tims—that is, unless you are ungenerous Old Scrooge, in which case forgetfulness can be explained.

Don't put off everything to the last, because you had better for the joy of your friends give nothing than wear yourself out and be as cross as two sticks when the blessed day comes.

Don't waste any of your pity on the long haired youths who lie at the bottom of the heap in football scrimmages. You will need all your pity for yourself in the rush at the holiday counter.

Don't check off each gift you receive against each present that you gave and calculate whether you made or lost. Christmas is not the time to be any smaller or meaner than you can help.

Don't oppress children who are saddened to sadness with toys already by giving them more. There are other ways of making them happy, or if there are not it is because they are spoiled with many pleasures and are the most pitiful beings alive. In that case let them try doing something for poor children, who are blessed in powers of enjoyment, and see if the quantity won't prove increasing.

Don't expect, if you are a woman, to get in a stock of some simple things like handkerchiefs and sweater ties for unexpected emergencies if you like to meet various people with a reasonable toilet.

Don't set your own happiness up as the chief thing to be looked out for at Christmas time. Try to make other people happy and forget yourself, then you will be surprised to see how really happy you are.



### OUR CHRISTMAS ON THE PLAINS

NEVER shall forget our Christmas dinner in a construction camp in the year 1900, said a former Coloradoan. We were building a reservoir out on the plains about ten miles east of Pueblo. We had 150 men on the job, all white men.

We had a poor cook on the job and couldn't seem to find any other. As a result there had been men leaving every day and constant grumbling all the fall, and it came to a head Christmas day.

It was a beautiful, bright Colorado Christmas. The men were to work in the morning, have a turkey dinner at noon and lay off in the afternoon. The old man had bought three pounds of turkey per man—450 pounds. The birds had come out the day before.

About ten minutes after noon I heard a kind of an angry roar outside. I never heard anything like it before, and it made me jump. It meant trouble of some kind. I hurried out and saw a surging mob at the door of the cook tent. The men were all shaking their fists in the air and yelling with one steady, hoarse, prolonged yell. I went around behind the tent and slipped in. There stood the cook raging, fighting drunk, brandishing a meat ax and emitting a steady stream of profanity. In front of him surged the mob, just out of reach of the meat ax, crazy mad. I didn't blame them. They had come off work with their mouths all made up for turkey, and not a table was set, not a spark of fire in the stove and 450 pounds of turkey scattered over the section of alkali plain which formed the floor.

The battle was short. The men ran in behind the cook, tripped him, and the minute he was down had a rope around him.

"Hang him, hang him!" they roared and started off with him to the meat pole.

In all my life I never was so scared as I was that day. I didn't care in the least whether the man was hanged, drowned or died in his bed. Yet civilization rose up in me, and I knew I had to save him. I ran like a deer to get around the crowd and reach the meat pole first, and all the while I

run I was cursing the cook. When they got to the meat pole they found him on a box lying there with a gun.

"What do you want?" they roared. "Get quiet," said I.

Those in front called out, "Start up!" When they were still I said, "Stop! I'm sorry this thing has happened. It's my fault for not watching this fool closer. But we can wash those turkeys and have a good dinner yet if some of you'll turn in and help me. They aren't hurt any. As for the scum of a cook, I don't care any more about him than you do. But I'm in charge here and I can't let him be hanged. You can go ahead and hang him if you want to, but you'll have to kill me first. Now go ahead."

I waited, but no one stirred. There were plenty of guns in the crowd, but no one was ready to undertake the job of killing me. I gave them only a minute to think. Then I said to the man that held the rope, "Tie him." He did it. "Get out of here," I said to the cook. The fellow got up, white as death with fear.

Then I turned to the men and asked if there were any who had ever done any cooking, who would help me. Half a dozen volunteered. We washed the turkeys and put them on to boil. I never worked over anything in my life as I did that Christmas dinner. The men were still silent and sullen, and I didn't know but they'd hang me if the dinner didn't suit them. I tried desperately to remember all the cooking I'd ever seen my mother do, and thanked God when I found that one of the men could make pies and another soda biscuits. About 5 o'clock we had the best dinner the camp could turn out, boiled turkey, boiled potatoes, canned squash, canned corn, canned peaches, dried apple pie, hot biscuit and coffee.—New York Press.



### THE TRAIN'S MADE UP

THE train's made up. Already I am getting up the steam, while piling in the cars high the gifts of which you dream. With joy I stand upon my head and shout both far and near, "Goodbye unto the ancient sled—All hail the iron deer!"

—R. E. Mundt/trick in Success.

Christmas With Stevenson. Passengers aboard the steamship Lubeck unexpectedly spent Christmas at sea in the year 1899, but the fact that Robert Louis Stevenson, the famous story writer, was among them made that a most memorable holiday.

The Lubeck was en route from Australia to Samoa. She broke a shaft and limped along several days under sail. "Mr. Stevenson," says the captain in relating the incident, "cheered everybody up by telling funny stories that were better, coming offhand from his lips, than most literary men could write if they worked over them for weeks. He knew, too, that it was only a question of a short time before he would die of consumption and that he could never again go home for more than a brief visit. It was simply wonderful what a difference that one man made among all the passengers, and I guess almost all of us would gladly spend the time to take part under sail, with machinery disabled, if we could have a Stevenson aboard."

A Polish Custom. Peasant lads in the villages of Poland have a pretty Christmas custom which affords great delight not only to themselves, but to the other villagers. This is called the procession of the star. At Christmas time the boys make a large hollow star, two or three feet between points, lighted from the interior. This is carried aloft at the end of a pole or staff. It symbolizes the star of Bethlehem. The three wise men of the East—Casper, Melchior and Balthazar—are impersonated by boys. Others in the party bear a little puppet show cabinet, in which are performed the drama of the Nativity and other Scripture incidents appropriate to the occasion. From house to house around the village this procession trudges in the snow at night singing carols, and the villagers present the boys with small coins as Christmas gifts.

Mistletoe on Apple Trees. The growth of the mistletoe on oak is now of very rare occurrence, but it flourishes luxuriantly in many parts of England on the apple trees.

Christmas in the Colonies. 'Twas the merry Christmas season, and I got as excited in the breeze of the hot 'Tis December in an island overseas. And a beautiful maiden of the kind called Philippine sat and gazed with passive visage, on the sultry winter seas.

Well she knew that on the morrow all her folks would celebrate. Place a palm tree in the parlor, hang their stockings over the grate. On the heaped up Christmas table, groaning with its load, should be Applesauce, mince puddings and banana fritters.

"Let me see," she murmured softly; "father'll get his string of beads, blue and yellow. I am certain they're the very kind he needs. For his old ones, better quite stockings, though he never seemed to care. And his new set's quite the sweetest thing a gentleman can wear."

"And for mamma there's the nose ring that I bought at Christmas week. With the handsome wondrous sapphire for insertion in the cheek. And little brother's boomerang! He'll be immensely pleased. That or a bamboo jumping jack are the things for which he's teased."

"And as for me, I only hope they've got the things I need. Just one or two new costumes made of genuine coral beads. A toe ring would be lovely, and a piece of copper wire. To wear around the instep make up all that I desire."

"Except, of course, some other things that every girl receives. Such as various kinds of dresses made of nicely ripened leaves. For surely," said the maiden as she smiled a scornful smile, "I'm not like those American girls who always think of shoes."

A Timely Caution. Don't give any one a brace or pictures unless you are morally sure you know his taste. Presents that must be displayed are apt to be a great strain on the affections. No matter how the receiver may hate them, he must father them and deface his rooms with them or insult the giver. Now, a book, for instance, even if the receiver doesn't like it and doesn't want it, can be tucked away among other books and forgotten, but an ugly vase we have always with us—at least till we can smash it.



### REINDEERING A MEAT AX

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