



**Christmas Greens.**  
A quaint old writer thus spiritualizes the practice of Christmas decorations. "So our churches and houses, decked with bays and rosemary, holly and ivy and other plants which are always green, winter and summer, signify and put us in mind of his Deity—that the child that now is born was God and man, who should spring up like a tender plant, should always be green and flourishing and should live forevermore."

**Christmas Means Love.**  
We cannot picture it without seeing the sprangled Christmas tree girt with the faces of gleeful youngsters, glad parents and happy bodies returned home from town or far metropolises. It sounds like bells and crackling logs and shouts of children. And even our old, round shouldered, sorrow ridden planet, with his eye knocked out on his cheek, pauses to smile from sea to sea, and love is everywhere rejuvenated.—James Whitcomb Riley.



BY WILLIS BROOKS

(Copyright, 1917, Western Newspaper Union.)  
O f course the village paper had issued a very creditable Christmas edition. I was looking over the news section by the front window. My wife sat near, absorbed in the story part.  
"What's that?" she asked, listening. She was always on the lookout for more eggs. What she heard certainly did sound like a hen announcing the arrival of one-twelfth of a dozen.  
"That," I answered, "is Ezra Barnstable in a state of amusements."  
We looked through the window, and, sure enough, here he came down the street, an expansive smile illuminating his moonlike face.  
"What on earth can the man be laughing so about all alone?" my wife wanted to know. She was that way—never content to let a man be happy unless she knew the reason why.  
So I went to the door and sang out to Ezra, "Isn't it kind of stingy to enjoy it all by yourself?"  
When he had unwound the wool tip-ty from his neck and taken the rocking chair which the missis had set before the fireplace for him he leaned back and cut gashes in the atmosphere with another flourish of his sharp exclamations. "I've heard o' Santa Claus playin' tricks before now," said he, "but I don't guess he ain't never played none no funnier than this."  
"It was like this: Three, four days ago my boy Chet come home with a rabbit—one o' them big white critters with the pink eyes—that he'd swapped off one o' his mittens to the one armed Mayhew boy fer. When he come in, luggin' the thing in his arms, his ma ast him whose it was, an' he said it was his'n an' its name was Jimmy an' Eddie Mayhew give it to him.  
"Them Mayhew boys ain't givin' nothin' away fer nothin'," says she. "What'd you give him fer it?"  
"Chet knowed he was cornered, so he owned up that he'd give Eddie one o' his wool mittens. 'I don't never wear but one much anyhow,' says he, 'an', besides, Eddie's a poor, one armed boy, an' his hand was cold, an' it was couin' Chris'mus."  
"I seen the look in his ma's eye, an' I felt sorry for Chet, so I says, 'Chet,' says I, severe-like, 'you come to the barn along of me,' like I was goin' to lick him."  
"That satisfied his ma. So Chet an' me went to the barn an' made a box to keep the rabbit in. I knowed the thing 'd freeze to death if he kep' it anywhere but in the house, an' I knowed his ma wouldn't listen to his doin' that, so I puts him up to gittin' rid of it by invitin' his Cousin Artie over for Chris'mus an' givin' it to him fer a Chris'mus present.  
"Artie, you know," Ezra explained, "is my wife's brother's boy. You remember my wife's brother, Dan Baker, over in Center township, the one that died an' left a widder with eight children?"  
"Waal, when Chet told his ma what he was goin' to do she said he could keep the rabbit in the attic till Chris'mus an' not a minute longer. So he went to Artie, an' this mornin' bright an' early here comes the hull family—Miss Baker an' the hull eight children.  
"Chet, he hadn't even got up yet, but I roused him out, an' when he come down he tolt Artie about the Jimmy rabbit he was goin' to give him. Then Miss Baker chips in an' says she never 'lows one o' her children to accept presents unless all the others gits the same thing. 'It makes the others jealous,' says she, 'an' creates dissensions.'  
"I seen trouble comin' to Chet in flocks an' herds an' I says to myself they's jest one way to settle this thing. You know, if you give a rabbit a little cuff on the back of his neck he never knows what hit him. So I sneaks up to the attic, but ole Santa Claus had got there ahead o' me."  
Ezra rocked back and let out a few more staccato notes of merriment.  
"What had happened?" my wife asked.  
"Walt 'till I tell you," said Ezra. "I called Chet to come up quick, an' he come a-runnin'. 'Look here,' says I to him, 'you give the eight little ones to the children an' the old one to Miss Baker. If you do it nice she can't refuse 'em, specially when the little rabbits needs the services of Jimmy fer awhile yet.' So Chet he lugged the hull box o' rabbits downstairs an' made sech a eloquent presentin' speech that the widder couldn't do nothin' but thank him an' take the hull mess home with her."



BY CHARLES S. PEASE

(Copyright, 1917, Western Newspaper Union.)  
O f course you want to know at once how a Christmas tree can be any more real than the one you had last year, so I shall explain that the tree Ralph and Rhoda had by accident one winter was rooted in the ground in the Lake Superior woods.  
First you must be told that the town children up there had the good times in both summer and winter, but the miners' boys and girls had the hard times all the year around, and that's the reason why mother said to Ralph and Rhoda the day before Christmas: "I don't see how you two are going to have a happy holiday when the children up at the mines do not expect to have any tree at all. How would you like to go up the mountain and take them a lot of presents and things? You can get back before dark. I will telephone the mine captain that you are coming."  
"Just the very thing," said the children. And away they went soon after with a sled loaded with everything you can think of for a jolly Christmas, just lots of gifts and royal trimmings for a tree.  
They were making good time along the mountain side when Rhoda stumbled over a root.  
When she tried to stand up again her ankle would not work.  
Of course Rhoda would not hear of leaving the miners' children's "Christmas" in the snow and coasting back home. So Ralph went back to the Halfway store for some help, but the place was locked and barred. Before they decided on what to do next a flock of the mine children came racing down the road. It seemed as though the telephone message had emptied the settlement of youngsters.  
"We've come to help take the 'Christmas' up the mountain. It's a hard pull farther along," they explained.  
When they found that Rhoda was hurt they wanted to take her home, but she wouldn't listen to a word of it.  
"I'm going right up to see that tree properly trimmed and hung with these things," announced that young lady and, being of the sturdy and determined kind, tried to forget the pain.  
So the swiftest runners of the mine boys started back to get a sled to carry Rhoda to the summit.  
Before the ambulance corps could return, down came one of those howling blizzards so dreaded in the rough northern country, and there was nothing for it but to retreat and take refuge in the Halfway store. This old log house proved a hard nut to crack, but Ralph finally managed to get in through a rear window and soon had a roaring fire going in the big stove. The plucky lads got back from the mountain, and everybody thanked his lucky stars to be safe and warm. Outside the storm roared and the trees bent low in the gale. All the evening Rhoda stood the ache bravely and said it was nothing, but Mary Martha Murphy knew better. When all was quiet she brought a pail of water so hot that Rhoda squealed when her nurse put the swollen ankle into it, and these two girls, one who had a lovely home and rich furs and many other fine things and the little poor girl with a warm Irish heart, sat up till "all hours."  
During the night the storm turned to rain and then it became cold, so very cold that the forest was covered with an icy coat. In the morning the blizzard drifts were many feet deep.  
So the only thing to be done was to wait till a rescue party came out for them with shovels and horses and snowplows. And then a great thought occurred to Rhoda.  
A giant hemlock tree stood right in front of the store, in a place swept clear by the wind—that is, it had been a hemlock, before it became one great, dazzling emerald with pearly icicles hanging all over it.  
When night came, clear and perfectly still and inky black, the rescue party found a celebration going on the like of which had never been known. The children had taken hundreds of miners' candles from the store and had wired them all over the hemlock. All the presents and the gift ropes and the other ornaments had been hung about the branches, and the candles lighted.  
Rhoda, half smothered in furs and tucked up on a high seat, was mistress of ceremonies, while a ring of singing, dancing children circled around the tree, and in the background, all about the dense forest, shot back millions of sparks of light.

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**Logical.**  
"Bay!"  
"Mum!"  
"Stop that noise with your Christmas drum! Do you want to deafen us?"  
"Yes'm; then you won't mind the noise."—Life.

**Risky.**  
"I'd like to give my wife fifty dollars for Christmas."  
"Well, why not?"  
"I ain't certain that I could come it away from her again."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

**A Sign of Age.**  
"Just when does a woman grow old?"  
"When she ceases to regard the hanging of the mistletoe as an event."—Buffalo Express.

**All He Remembered.**  
The Preacher—And did you remember the poor on Christmas?  
Little Albert—No, I didn't remember nothin' much, except about pa catchin' me with my hand in the box where ma had the raisins hid.

**Up-to-Date Xmas Maxims.**  
Never look a Christmas gift in the price tag.  
There is nothing so rare as a present you wanted.  
A ton of coal is rather to be chosen than gaudy jewels.  
Beware of mistletoe; it grows on the border of matrimonial jungles.  
Better broken toy drums than broken eardrums.  
Christmas spirit seldom intoxicates, but it generates bankrupts.  
Christmas belles manage to ring in quite a few gifts.  
Just now the most popular book seems to be the pocketbook.  
Never put a gift cigar in the mouth.  
Christmas gifts are somewhat like babies—you can't always get what you want, but wisely be contented with what came.—New York American.

**Good Old Soul.**  
"Why haven't you gone," they asked him.  
"To your snowy mountain ranges!"  
"I'm waiting," said Santa Claus, "to make The regular exchanges."

**Christmas Anticipation.**  
"I don't believe the approach of Christmas brings you a single joyous anticipation," said the sweet young thing.  
"Don't che!" replied the savage bachelor. "Listen to my secret. That youngster on the third floor is sure to get a tin trumpet for a present."  
"Yes."  
"Then he will get careless and leave it on the hall floor. And then I shall step on it with both feet. Don't you call that a joyous anticipation?"

**A Long List.**  
Parke—Have you decided what to give your wife for Christmas?  
Luce—Not yet. There are so many things I can't afford.—Judge.

**The Canny Scot at Yule.**  
A commercial traveler had taken a large order in Scotland for a consignment of hardware and endeavored to press upon the canny Scottish manager who had given the order a Christmas gift of a box of Havana cigars.  
"Naw," he replied, "Don't try to bribe a man. I cudna tak them, and I am a member of the kirk."  
"But will you not accept them as a Christmas present?"  
"I cudna," said the Scot.  
"Well, then," said the traveler, "suppose I sell you the cigars for a merely nominal sum—say, sixpence?"  
"Weel, in that case," replied the Scot, "since you press me, and, not liking to refuse an offer well meant, I think I'll be taking two boxes."

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