THE ENTERPRISE

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EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

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HER CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

TIME—Evening, Dec. 26.

Place—Boarding house bedroom.

Actors—Nellie Cox, artist; May Lowell, stenographer.

Nellie—Thus are my sins visited upon me. Did you ever see such an ugly, inartistic collar as this orange thing with the red freckles?

May—No; unless it is the purple tie in your other hand. But the blue and the yellow collars are both pretty.

Nellie—Neither harmonizes with my blue shirt waist and my complexion.

May—How did you happen to receive so many collars? Did you ask for them?

Nellie—Ask for them? Hardly. I never wear anything except linen collars. As I said, however, it is my own fault. Last year my aunt sent me an expensive but hideous collar which I immediately donated to a church rummage sale—

May—Then wrote your aunt that it was just what you wanted.

Nellie—My conscience would not allow me to do that. I filled up four pages, however, on the one redeeming feature of that collar. I spoke of the texture of the silk and dwelt on its wonderful richness.

May—I should have thought your aunt would have seen through that.

"SHE OUGHT TO SEE YOU NOW."

When a girl goes into raptures over some detail of a gown I know she does not like the thing as a whole.

Nellie—My aunt's education has been neglected, for she doesn't know that. Let me read you her letter:

My Dear Child—There was so much pathos in your note of thanks last year I could see how you loved and longed for the beautiful, and I know that I am not making a mistake in sending you one more pretty thing to go with you all through the year. I have told your eastern cousins how you enjoyed the collar I gave you last Christmas, and they are going to send you some. We have hired a poor seamstress to make them, so I have added pleasure to my own life in holding out a helping hand to two dependent women.

May—She must have a sense of humor if she calls you dependent. She ought to see you now.

Nellie—I'll have to waste 16 cents postage in writing letters of thanks, and I have already paid 20 cents extra for postage on the packages. I could have treated myself to a good magazine or a box of chocolates for that amount.

May—Last year I learned that an aunt was going to give me a year's subscription to a journal which devotes its pages to telling girls how to treat their employers and how to dress on $50 a year. I get all that kind of thing I wish without reading about it, so I took pains to criticise the paper before her and at the same time displayed my worn gloves.

Nellie—And she gave you a pair of gloves? Lucky girl!

May—I think not she would, but she sent me a housekeeping magazine and wrote telling me that I ought to learn to cook, as if a business girl has half a chance. She said that I might not like the magazine at first, but would become attached to it in time. I became detached.

Nellie—What do you mean?

May—I sold it for 50 cents on the dollar, went to the theater and wrote gentle that I had derived more pleasure from her present than from any other she had ever sent me.

Nellie—Total depravity!

May—No; only good business management. I suggest that you sell your mint presents.

Nellie—I'll do it. I know a girl who likes fussy things, especially if she thinks she is getting them cheap. I will tell her the collars are too elaborate for my plain clothes but will just suit hers. I am certain that she will take them, so I will invite you to the theater for next Saturday.

May—Thank you, dear. After all, there is nothing like making the best of things.—Chicago News.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

Where America's Supply of Mistletoe Comes From.

Year after year Christmas comes and goes. Its joys and merrymaking losing no whit of interest and sentiment for young or old, and, while always new each season in their giving of pleasure, the same old customs continue to prevail with alterations in detail only.

The day would hardly seem like Christmas without the hanging of Christmas greens, and, though a greater variety is offered in the way of decorations than formerly, those are still most liked and used that bear out the old practices and significance, and chief among them are the mistletoe and holly, whose very names carry one back to the days of ancient English cheer and Yuletide, with wassail bowl, Yule log and joyous merrymaking.

The most favored mistletoe comes from across seas, but some is sent from Canada and the south, where, particularly in Texas, it grows in large clumps on the live oak trees, always to the latter's gradual destruction, for, being a parasite, it saps the oak's lifeblood, flourishing luxuriantly the while. It is not so artistic in appearance as its English cousin, the leaves more commonplace and the berries smaller and poorer in quality, though more in quantity. Strange to say, the Texas mistletoe, like the prophet in his own country, is not greatly prized at home, and at few of the Christmas festivities does it make part of the decoration, while in all other quarters a cluster of the oddly shaped green leaves and opaque white berries must almost of necessity be suspended in the doorway or from the chandelier when Christmas comes in, and it never fails to cause the same jesting and merriment, for a kiss stolen under the mistletoe is one's right, and the pilferer cannot with justice receive rebuff.—Selected.

S. CLAUS' MAIL HELD UP.

Bushels of Letters That the Old Man Never Will Receive.

Sometimes the address on the envelope starts "Deer," which, of course, means "Dear," and again it is "Dere" or "Deir." But even these remarkable spellings are nothing compared with the two words that follow. They read "Santy Klaws" or "Sant Clos" or "Saint Claus," and they are in handwritings compared to which Babylonic cuneiform is as a primer.

They are coming into the dead letter office in this city by the hundreds these days, and, although the clerks in that division are the most painstaking of men and can decipher an actual address from a mass of hierogyiphs, they never have been able to learn the exact location of either the business office or home of one S. Claus, Esq., manufacturer of toys.

So these letters never reach their destination. They would be returned to the senders only for the sad fact that when they are opened the inclosures almost invariably look as if a spider had got drunk on a bottle of ink and had tried to perform a mixture of highland fling and cakewalk on the paper. The most that can be made out is the invariable beginning, "Please bring me"—

Last year in the dead letter division there was a bushel basket of these missives, doomed never to be seen by Santa Claus. And this year letter boxes are furnishing additions at every collection.—New York Press.

THE YULETIDE LOG.

An Ancient Custom Still Observed In the North of England.

A custom at one time prevalent in England and still observed in some of the northern districts of the old country is that of placing an immense log of wood—sometimes the root of a great tree—in the wide chimney place. This is often called the Yule log, and it was on Christmas eve that it was put on the wide hearth. Around it would gather the entire family, and its entrance was the occasion of a great deal of ceremony. There were music and rejoicing, while the one authorized to light it was obliged to have clean hands.

It was always lighted with a brand left over from the log of the previous year, which had been carefully preserved for the purpose. A poet sings of it in this way:

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending
On your poultries play
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-tending.

The Yule log was supposed to be a protection against evil spirits, and it was considered a bad omen if the fire went out before the evening was over. The family and guests used to seat themselves in front of the brightly burning fire, and many a story and merry jest went round the happy group.—New York Mail and Express.

What He Heard.

Little Montague—I was awake when Santa Claus came, dad.

Father—Were you? And what was he like, eh?

Little Montague—Oh, I couldn't see him. It was dark, you know. But when he bumped himself on the washstand he said—

Father (hastily)—There, that 'll do, Monty. Run away and play.—Punch.

Just Her Luck.

Mrs. P. Nurius—I dreamed last night that you gave me a diamond ring for Christmas.

Mr. P. Nurius—That's just your luck. Dreams always go by contraries.

With Apologies to Riley.

There's a Christmas touch in the air,
I feel it, somehow, everywhere.
I feel it at home—it makes me blue.
I feel it at the office too.
My bank account is tinged with care;
There's a Christmas touch in the air.
—Life.

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

At Christmas play and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year.
—Tusser.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.
—Clement C. Moore.

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.
—Tennyson.

This is the month and this the happy morn
Wherein the Son of heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing
That he our deadly forfeit should release
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.
—Milton.

In December ring
Every day the chimes;
Loud the gleemen sing
In the streets their merry rhymes.
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire!
—Longfellow.

No trumpet blast profaned
The hour in which the Prince of Peace was born;
No bloody streamlet stained
Earth's silver rivers on that sacred morn.
—Bryant.

What Babe new born is this that in a manger cries?
Near on her lowly bed his happy mother lies.
Oh, see the air is shaken with white and heavenly wings!
This is the Lord of all the earth; this is the King of kings.
—R. W. Gilder.

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall;
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall.
—Thomas Haynes Bayly.

For little children everywhere
A joyous season still we make;
We bring our precious gifts to them,
Even for the dear child Jesus' sake.
—Phœbe Cary.

His Delicate Proposal.

Gladys (on Christmas morning)—What a dear little clock! Who gave you that?

Marjorie—George, of course.

Gladys—Is it going?

Marjorie—Oh, no! George wishes me to understand that I may set my own time.—Smart Set.

Stupid George.

"Are you going to hang up any mistletoe?"

"No, I'm not. I put some up last year, and George asked if it wasn't asparagus."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

THE TRUTH ABOUT .....SANTA CLAUS

Of course there's a Santa Claus! Every one knows it—
That is, every one who has good sense and shows it.
There are those who doubt love and religion and morals—
Those people who always are seeking for quarrels
On questions of faith and are ever lamenting
The existence of things to which there's no dissenting.
They would have all the dear little children believing
There isn't a Santa, but their aim's deceiving.
He's jolly and big, and his nickname's Kris Kringle;
God pity the child who has not heard the jingle

Of his silver bells as he comes swift a-sleighing
When his annual visit of love he's a-paying!
He's round, and he's fat, and his whiskers are whitened
With centuried snows, but his good face is lightened
With the cheery warm nature that keeps you supernal
And will make dear old Santa Claus last time eternal.

So, children, don't think when you hang up each stocking
That there is no Santa Claus—that would be shocking—
Because while you're snugly and cosily sleeping
He'll come with his reindeer all madly a-leaping
And from his rich load in a trice will be taking
And leaving the gifts that will gladden your waking!
—Washington Star.

NEW YEAR'S AT BLUE RIDGE

"SPEAKING of New Year's," said the Nevadian, "I always call to mind this time of year the blowoff we boys give a young doctor chap who came up to Blue Ridge just at the time that camp was the liveliest, to which I might add that though the days of the Ridge was few in the land, as the book says, while it did last there was no camp on the Pacific slope from Puget sound to the Rio Grande that could furnish as much fun in a week as transpired in Blue Ridge every twenty-four hours.

"But the sport didn't need no medicine. It was not, as you might say, a sickly neighborhood, which it seems

PLANNING A SURPRISE FOR THE DOCTOR.

peculiar to remark, seeing as how we had the most likely looking graveyard, considering the population, as you would find in all the Sierras. But the gents as populated the graveyard was mostly a lively and healthy lot up to and inclusive of the moment of their demise.

"That's what the boys was speaking of when the doctor came into camp.

"Long Bill remarked to me that the boys who was hurt ought to make an effort to last until the doctor could arrive, which would give him a legal claim on any dust they might leave. He was just the kind of a chap for the camp if so it had been that there was any trade for him, for he was quiet, nervy, had more book learning than the editor and was cheerful and obliging, especially obliging, for he preached a beautiful sermon over the late dealer at the faro bank, though the said dealer had died of his wounds before Doc arrived.

"Some said as how we ought to send down in the valley where they were all shaking eternally with malaria and import a bunch of the shakers for Doc to practice on and pay him so much for the cleanup. He laughed when we proposed this and said it would be unprofessional, because he knew the party as had the practice in the valley.

"Then we proposed that thereafter, any party dying of his wounds before the Doc could arrive, the said party's effects should be levied upon for a fee to be paid to Doc, at [illegible]

"All the boys agreed to that, and we got so worked up over the prospect that a disagreement resulted that very night, in which a Wells-Fargo shotgun messenger blew all the Latin parts out of a friend with a ten gauge duck gun, which the same, for purposes of stage robbers, was of a sawed off character. The party as was shot was mostly missing between his hips and his chest, the remains being only two-thirds, but we joyfully sent for Doc just the same.

"Well, he came, and when he saw the state of the case he said as he wasn't an undertaker he couldn't be of any service.

"Then we told him of the new rule and offered him the pile of the deceased, which was in a canvas sack behind the bar. He wouldn't take it, not even a sample for assay, and the disappointment of the boys was sad to see, especially the shotgun messenger, whose intentions had done honor to his heart and aim.

"It was a few days before New Year's that the editor showed us a piece in a San Francisco paper, which was a kind of local notice, stating that our Doc was going to be married to a lady in that city. That sets us thinking, and we thought harder than ever when the Doc tells us that he was going to leave us on New Year's day to take up his practice in San Francisco. We held a meeting and discussed the state of affairs, having a pretty good idea of how the [illegible] financially with Doc, because his money was on deposit with the express agent and he was chairman of our meeting.

"Well, at that meeting we laid out a plan that worked as slick as a diamond drill. On the day before New Year's Doc was sent for by Long Bill, who told him his old rheumatic was working again like a forty stamp quartz mill. Doc prescribed, and when Bill asked what was the ante Doc says it would be $5. Bill said he'd hand it to him when he did him good by at the stage office next day. Then I sent for Doc and said that old bullet wound in my leg was on strike again, took my prescription and promised to pay next day.

"I don't suppose any doctor in the world ever had as busy a day as ours did that day. It seemed like every man in camp was sick. There was trouble about noon because the boys run out of names of diseases, but I went up to Doc's office and copied out a lot of names from one of his books, and then we kept things booming. Some of the younger boys got stuck on the names of sicknesses I dealt out to them to make a choice from and played the whole deck, which seemed to puzzle Doc somewhat.

"Well, the next day we met and marched around to the stage about starting time, and there was Doc, looking a little worried, but he looked a lot more surprised when he saw all his patients so callish.

"We gave him a sendoff and an envelope.

"Did you ask what was in the envelope? I disremember the odd dollars, but it was enough over $5,000 to leave him that clear after he had paid his expenses down to the bay."—New York Journal.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS.

Old Fashioned Greens Were Rosemary, Ivy and Bay.

The old fashioned holiday greens were rosemary, ivy and bay, but in the 2,000 tons of wreathing and decorating material which it is estimated that we now use every year there is a much greater variety. Best loved of all is the glossy red berried holly. "Holm" was the old English name for it, and it is thought to be identical with the "greenwood tree" of British ballads and of Robin Hood fame. On our side of the Atlantic the American holly, Ilex opaca, is found from Maine, where it grows as a shrub, to North and South Carolina, where it lifts a symmetrical cone of dark, shining leaves set with scarlet berry clusters along a beautiful trunk of gray and silver to the height of seventy or eighty feet.

Delaware and Maryland are usually credited with furnishing the best grades of holly to the holiday market, but their "Three X" brand, as seen after shipment to northern cities, is not so finely berried as the Carolina holly, plentiful in the regions around Asheville.—Country Life In America.

New Year's Calls.

New Year's calling in New York was purely the outgrowth of an early Dutch custom, yet strangely enough many of the descendants of the early Dutch settlers fought against the continuance of a practice which they declared had long since passed beyond the bounds to which the fathers limited it and had been made the excuse for great excesses on a day which ought to be given over to the forming of good resolutions.

In the early days of Manhattan Island the male Dutch settlers every New Year's day started out as a matter of duty to visit the houses of all their friends. The good wives who received them were arrayed in their Sunday finest and had bowls of steaming hot punch upon the "best room" table. The latter day Dutch descendants denied the punch and said it was coffee. The irreverent latter day champions of New Year's calling denied the punch also and told their opponents that their forefathers would not know a punch if they saw it and that they drank nothing but ill smelling hot gin.

Whatever it was that the good burghers drank, they succeeded in calling within the compass of the day upon every family of any note on Manhattan Island.

A New Year's Cyclone.

Is that a cyclone ragin'?
Is the roof a-tumblin' down?
Is that a earthquake shakin'
All the winders in town?
Is that the river roarin'
Above its banks of green?
Has Gabriel blowed his trumpet
To make the dead scene?

They stood and heard in terror
While loud the noise arose,
Like the warwhoops of the Indians,
The shouts of foreign foes.
But a voice brought better comfort
(Let not the sainted scoff):
"Thar ain't a bit of trouble;
That's daddy swearin' off!"
—Atlanta Constitution.

A Time of Peril.

Clarissa—I'm always glad when New Year's day is safely over.

Fidelia—Yes; it is a saddening anniversary.

Clarissa—Oh, I don't mean that. Clarence and I always have a horrid quarrel suggesting improvements in each other's conduct.

To 'Naughty-two.

Come in, New Year, come in, come in;
Don't stand out there in the cold and grin.
Put on some clothes; your legs are bare;
You haven't half enough to wear.
The old man's gone; the coast is clear;
The world's your oyster, kid New Year!
—Chicago Tribune.

Stock on Hand.

Bradds—Going to make any new resolutions this year, Spikes?

Spikes—New ones? I should say not. I've got a lot of old ones I've never used, by Jove!

Wreckage.

Break, break, break—
No, not the waves of the sea—
Only the resolutions
That the foolish made, ah, me!
—S. E. Kiser.

As Good as New.

"How about those good resolutions you made the first of the year?"

"Oh, they are still good."—Smart Set.

Foolish Resolutions.

The New Year's vows that Perkins made
To keep will prove a strain.
He vowed to shave himself this year
And use not words profane.

NEW YEAR'S IN RUSSIA

In the smaller cities of Russia New Year's day is in the Twelve Days' festival. The Russians in many parts have held to the old ways from time immemorial. The preparations for the season begin early in November. The host of some great house begins to lay in stores of salted beef and sausages, liqueurs, etc. The hostess calls on all her friends and invites young and old. Next day she is succeeded by the nurse, who makes the same rounds of visits. Her duty is to invite especially the young ladies. She is hailed with joy, and the lady of the house hastens to mix for her the cup of wine. She delivers her errand and is plied with questions as to the invited and rejected. But the most important question is, "Who are the elected?" These are the young men invited by the hostess for the girls, or "fair maidens," as they are called. The duty of the young man thus designated is to look after the amusement and pleasure of his "fair maiden" during the "twelve days." The responsibility of the choice lying with the hostess, she has to be careful in her selection.

But the invitation has again to be repeated, this time by the master of the house in the person of his servant, or "swat," who, with mace in hand, performs his mission. On entering each house he offers a prayer before the shrine of the saint to which it is dedicated. He then delivers the invitation in the name of his master and mistress. At first, according to etiquette, the invitation is refused, but after much pressing it is finally accepted. When the day arrives, the young ladies who are the heroines of the occasion appear in a sledge accompanied by their mother and favorite companion, generally a girl of inferior rank, who sits at their feet. This sledge is followed by another containing firewomen charged with caskets and dressing boxes. Other sledges follow—the longer the procession the greater honor to the house visited. On the arrival the host and hostess meet the guests at the gate, bow without speaking and conduct them into the house.—New York World.

Self Approval.

"Have you kept your New Year's resolutions?"

"Yes, I have faithfully kept a New Year's resolution that I made three or four years ago."

"What was it?"

"Never to make any more resolutions."—Washington Star.

An Arrested Intelligence.

"Charlie Binks isn't as slow as he seems."

"How is that?"

"He woke up yesterday and asked what year it is."

His Happy Calls.

Wilkins—How many calls did you make yesterday?

Dilkins—Three, and, say, it was the best game of poker I ever sat in!

THE OLD and THE NEW

The New Year came to the Old Year's door
When the sands were wasting thin,
And the frost lay white on the Old Year's thatch,
And his hand grew chill as he slipped the latch
To let the New Year in.

And the New Year perched in the Old Year's chair
And warmed by the Old Year's fire,
And the Old Year watched him with wistful gaze
As he stretched his hands to the fading blaze
And cinders of dead desire.

And the Old Year prated, as Old Years will,
Of summer and vanished spring,
And then of the future, with grave advice,
Of love and sorrow and sacrifice
That the seasons' round would bring.

And the New Year listened and warmed his heart
In the bloom of the Old Year's past,
But he gave no heed of the thorns that lay
In the bud and blow of a coming day,
And, nodding, he dreamed at last.

The New Year came to the Old Year's door
And warmed in the Old Year's chair,
And the Old Year talked till the New Year slept,
Then forth in the night he softly stepp
And left the New Year there.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

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