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WASHINGTON NEWS.

Reports of Secretary of War—President Amends Civil Service Rules—A New Salad—Powers Accepting President's Peace Proposal—Senator Cockrell Can Get Whatever He May Desire.

Correspondence of the Enterprise.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 21.

In the annual report of the Secretary of War, William H. Taft, just made public, it is urged that all products of the Philippines, except sugar and tobacco, be admitted to the United States free of duty, and that upon these two products a material reduction in duty be made. The report shows a standing army of 59,181 men, and that a great improvement has been made in sanitary conditions, reducing the death rate. The building of a new Executive Department is also urged.

President Roosevelt has issued an order amending the Civil Service rules so as to include within the classified services the positions of Deputy Collectors of Customs and the Chief Collector at each sub-port. Future appointments, therefore, must be based upon competitive examinations. The order affects about 400 positions.

And now it is chrysanthemum salad. It isn't so very good, but if you want to be in fashion you must have it once in the season, anyhow. And you must remark, when your guests say, "Oh, how very unique," "Oh, we have it often since the Prince taught us how to make it." That gives you a kind of standing, don't-you-know. The "Prince" is Prince Fushumi, who was perfectly amazed with the chrysanthemum exhibit which was "on" in the Government hot-houses when he was here. He said that never in his life had he seen anything as fine as the big blossoms which were grown in the Government propagating houses. Then the Prince said that in Japan the chrysanthemum is used as an article of food. The method of preparing the flowers for the table, the Prince said, was as follows: First immerse the blossoms in boiling water for from five to six minutes. Then take them out of the hot water and plunge them in cold. After being thoroughly chilled, the petals are pulled off, and are seasoned to taste with oil, vinegar, pepper and salt. This, the Prince said, was a favorite salad in his country with all classes. Not only are the fresh flowers used that way, the Prince went on to say, but they are so dried for winter use. Before drying, the petals are plucked, and when the housewife wishes to use them they are soaked in water until they expand to their original size. Then they are treated with the boiling and cold water baths as the fresh flowers. The Prince said that as a general thing only the white and yellow chrysanthemums are used in the preparation of salads in Japan.

Colonel Bromwell, the engineer officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, reports to the War Department the practical completion of the two new green-houses for the White House, located in the Monument Grounds, and the commencement of a third house in the same locality for use in storing the bay trees from the White House during the winter. The new building will

be 170 feet long, 20 feet wide and 15 feet high.

One by one the Powers are accepting President Roosevelt's suggestion that another session of The Hague Tribunal be convened to complete the work outlined by the first Peace Congress. Secretary Hay has just received cordial responses from Sweden and Mexico. The Swedish Government expresses its gratitude to the President for calling the matter to the attention of the Powers, accepts the invitation and expresses the opinion that one of the most important subjects which the court should consider is the effect of war on the rights of neutral and a definition of contraband of war. Mexico's acceptance is equally cordial.

Senator Cockrell, of Missouri, has been offered his choice of two positions by the President. He can go on the Isthmian Canal Commission, or he can take the vacancy on the Interstate Commerce Commission. In either case his salary will be above \$7,000, which will be an increase of at least \$2,500 over what he receives as United States Senator, so it will have paid Senator Cockrell pretty well to have Missouri go Republican. Senator Cockrell is perfectly willing to accept anything that the President has to give him, but of course his term in the United States does not expire until March 4, 1905.

Christmas Buying.

Although the matter is presented in rather blunt fashion, there may be much truth in what the Philadelphia Ledger has to say, after all. Possibly it applies quite as well to the wife who presents her husband a sofa pillow, or the husband who buys a desk-chair for his wife. In making a present it pleases one to feel it was not bought for the giver so much as for the receiver.

Christmas giving and consequent Christmas shopping now occupy the minds of everybody, and from morning to night the cry is: "Oh, what shall I give Edith?" and "Oh, dear, James is so hard to buy for. I wonder what he would like!"

The text for a sermonette was suggested by the half-petulant exclamation of a pretty girl, made in the writer's hearing. "No! no!" she burst forth, "don't give me an umbrella, and don't give me a dress pattern, and don't give me the money for my dentist bill! Don't give me anything that I just simply can't get along without. Buy me something pretty and quite useless!"

The rule of common sense applies here, of course. To present a hungry man with a necktie, or a meagerly-clad woman with a canary, would be obviously absurd. And yet so queer a thing is human nature that even such unfortunates would probably enjoy the gift of a superfluity rather than that of a necessity. The man of the family is feminine in his weakness of liking to be surprised with something which he would never have bought for himself.

So, if you want to make your Christmas giving a success, select useful presents, if you must; but don't marvel at the ingratitude which causes them to be received with thanks, truly, but without enthusiasm. The merest trifle, if it be well selected from superfluities, will give more genuine pleasure.

LETTER FROM BILKINS.

The Major Cannot Please Mrs. Bilkins—Everybody Wears Themselves out Trying to Select Christmas Presents—He Has Given Up—Remedy for Cigarette Smokers—Advice as to How to Celebrate the Holiday.

Correspondence of the Enterprise.

Me an' Betsy air still negoshatin' erbout thet Christmas prisint an' we can't git no closer than we wuz last week. I hope the grate powers ov U'rope, Ashia an' Afriker will appint a internashunal cummishun ter settle the blamed thing fer I'm purty nigh distractted. I've bin made sick by it an' now hev the roomytiz, lumbager, newmoner, dispepsy, grip an' yaller jandis. Betsy iz sick with eroup, influenzy, the riekits an' the rackets an' nervus probashun. She got mad bekase I jollyed her erbout the furs an' sed she wouldn't hev them fer pay. Then I tried ter git her ter name sumthin' else. But she wouldn't. Sed she'd do without a prisint before she'd be made fun ov. Then I tried ter passify her by offerin' ter name a few things fer her ter seleck a prisint frum. I axed her if she wanted sum julry or a new cook stove. She 'lowed no, that she wouldn't never need eny cook stove, fer she wuz goin' back ter her muther an' broke out cryin'. "Hold up thar," sed I, "it won't be so powerful unconvenient fer me ter live erlone. But I'm erfrade your mother would cum ter see me az soon az you'd git home." I hev a powerful lot ov respekt fer Betsy's mother. She cummands respekt both cumin' and goin'. "How'd you like ter hev sumptin' new ter wear like a dress or a ortermobile or kimoner," sed I. She 'lowed she'd see me in Goldsboro before she'd wear enything I mite seleck. "Awl rite," sez I, "how'd you like sum bran new greenback money or a note fer five milliyuns sined by Andy Carneegy?" "You insult me," sed Betsy; "I don't want enything, go erway an' let me erlone."

That iz the way with a woman; if you try to be real gude ter her she will wanter raze a ryott, an' if you are mean to her sumtimes she will love you better. Blamed if they ain't a mystery ter me. The older I git the less I know erbout 'em.

I reckon other people hev their troubles, too, especially erbout Christmas. Everybody wears their selves out tryin' ter seleck Christmas presents. My bald spot iz twice az big az it wuz last summer an' by the time Betsy gits through lecturin' me fer cruelty an' other wickedness bekase I couldn't release her in a Christmas prisint, I won't hev over two dozen hairs on my dervoted head. I'm erbout kerlapsed.

I see by the papers that one ov the big docktors or scientists wants ter know what we air goin' ter do with cigarett smokers. Shoot 'em, drown 'em; just enything ter put 'em out ov their misery. They ain't no use in foolin' erbout that.

Well, az by the time I write ergin Christmas will be over. I hope everybody will keep sober an' hev a pleasant time. Gitin' drunk an' fitin' iz not the way ter spend Christmas. Let the Injuns an' Chinese do that. Go a rabbit huntin', bird huntin'; go to see your sweetheart if you hev one.

If you hain't got one, keep your eye peeled fer one. They air erbout the most pleasant, an' at the same time, the most onpleasant thing you kin hev. If you air married, love, serve an' obey your wife; that iz, if she likes that style; if not, disobey her, or you mite be sartin' ter hit the mark by doin' both. If Betsy don't git in a gude humer by Christmas, I'll prance eround ermong the gurls like I hed done forgot her an' I'll bet she'll cum down off the roof.

Merry Christmas ter all.

ZEKE BILKINS.

Cream of the Press.

Russia has now decided to overwhelm the Japs next spring instead of last.—Detroit Free Press.

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Dr. Dowie has paid all his debts, showing that there is profit in the prophet business.—Washington Post.

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The stand-patters at Washington fail to read the handwriting on the Massachusetts wall.—Mexican Herald.

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A great many more women would want genealogical trees if they could wear them on their hats.—Dallas (Texas) News.

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Colleges have wonderful success in teaching boys most everything in the world except how to make a living.—New York Press.

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The department store raid this week will make that little affair at Port Arthur look perfectly harmless.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

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The negro problem is always a dead easy one to the Northern man who never had to stand guard over his hen roost.—Macon Telegraph.

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The South would probably join the rest of the country in support of a bill to reduce Congressional misrepresentation.—Washington Post.

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It is a pity that the English sparrow cannot be persuaded to redeem its character by going after the boll weevil.—Washington Evening Sun.

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In view of that \$17,000 annually, General Miles can well afford to hold his own dress parade every afternoon on the Boston Comman.—Baltimore Sun.

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The editorial waste-basket rejoiced to learn of that part of the President's message which spoke of cutting down the number of public documents.—Columbia State.

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An illicit whiskey still blew up in New York City the other day. The Government ought to do something with the moonshiners in that town.—Memphis Commercial-Appeal.

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Cotton is down, but not down and out, just yet. Too many people are just learning to wear clothes for our staple to be retired.—Montgomery Advertiser.

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When a man in his pajamas bumps his shin on a rocking chair it is surprising what a weak, washy thing his vocabulary seems to him.—New York Press.