

At the Sign of the Maple

About Christmas Giving



SOMETIMES we hear people say that after all Christmas is a bore, and that it is always a relief to them when it is over and done with. And if you show the least inclination to sympathize they will probably go on and tell you that Christmas shopping is no longer the pleasure it used to be. They

dread the noisy shops and the crowding throngs of people and Christmas is all very well for children, but for grown men and women—well, they tell you they think it is high time someone had courage enough to do away with the old-fashioned nonsense of distributing gifts on that day. But you must not believe that they really mean it. Everyone loves Christmas and would see the old customs that go with it pass out of existence with the deepest pangs of regret. These people who complain have probably lost sight of the original idea and look on the interchange of gifts in the light of a commercial transaction, and the annual tax on their bank accounts as an unnecessary evil. And it is not always the people with the slim pocket books that complain. A great deal of thought and very few dollars and cents is the actual expenditure for their remembrances, and after all it is by kind thought alone that we value our gifts. And we all know that to receive some simple little thing that causes us to exclaim "this was truly meant for me," gives much more happiness than the elaborate remembrance so evidently purchased at random.

There is a girl who has most everything the world can give, including four initials to her name, which she insists on using on all occasions. After Christmas last year she told me that of all the beautiful gifts she had received none gave her more pleasure than a box of handkerchiefs from a girl friend who lived in the States. "And think of it," she said to me, "that dear thing had worked my four initials on every one of those handkerchiefs. I never had anything I felt was so much my very own before."

So that it is always best to keep the commercial attitude from taking any share in our Christmas preparations no matter how much we are tempted. Begin to think of Christmas earlier. Spend less money and more thought, you will be happier yourself and give more happiness to others. No other remedy seems to suggest itself for the bored Christmas shopper.

* * *

Toronto's Civic Reception

By MARGARET BELL

NEVER had Toronto's regal-looking City Hall appeared to better advantage than on the night of November the twenty-eighth, when the great doors were thrown open to a civic reception for the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. Never did Toronto's policemen look more imposing, when a hundred of them formed lines and palisades at every available corner in and around the building, and never were Toronto citizens given such an opportunity of displaying their different tastes in dress. All the newest effects in ciel blues and moonlight greens were there, strolling leisurely around

through the lordly corridors. And there were flame-coloured gowns, as brilliant as the name suggests, and frocks of purple as royal as the bouquets of orchids in the several corsages. And then there were plain shirtwaists, just a few of these, and shimmering wedding dresses, worn by brides of two months or six and seven years. Truly it was a brilliant spectacle, the multi-coloured gowns, the blushing debutantes, the handsome mothers, the wives of diplomats and democrats, the grand *tout ensemble* of Toronto's citizenship.

And this is not all. There were men there, hundreds of them, all immaculate in evening suits and linen. It is doubtful if the doors of Toronto's City Hall will see so many stiffly starched evening costumes, for many months to come. Within an arbor of palms, a military band sent patriotic strains up to the lines of waiting sightseers who thronged the

boredom to shadow her countenance. She was particularly gracious to a dear, old woman in a simple black gown, who curtsied low before her and walked slowly past the line of military men who formed a cordon on either side. And Miss Pelly, the beautiful lady-in-waiting, smiled and bowed also to the sweet-faced woman with the snow-white hair.

The military officers were presented last, and formed such a picture as made a murmur of admiration wreath itself around the whole gallery of the Council Chamber, and caused a sweet, young debutante to exclaim, "I declare I'm going to marry a soldier man."

And when it was all over, when the Council Chamber was closed, the royal pair stepped down from their dais and chatted quite informally with their friends, the Duchess burying her face deep in the bouquet of American Beauties she carried, and offering them to different

members of her party to enjoy likewise. The Duke noticed the large portrait of his mother, Queen Victoria, hanging behind his chair on the dais, and called his Consort's attention to it. Together they looked at it, in silence, and the guests in the gallery were silent too.

And then they passed out quietly, to the waiting carriages, and Toronto turned over the most memorable page in her Book of Public Events.

* * *

Books on the Christmas List.

METHODICAL people always have a shopping list, but at Christmas time some people who are not methodical find one very convenient too, so it is safe to conjecture that about this season of the year there are a good many shopping lists in use, and that nine out of ten of these call for a visit to the book shop before the arrival of the great feast for which everyone is making preparation. The word "book" on our shopping list always has a vague sound and often it is very difficult to know just what book will be most appreciated by the particular person for whom it is intended. If it is fiction you are looking for here are a few suggestions which may keep you from going astray, and may help in the selection of gifts:

NOVELS WORTH READING.

- "The Broad Highway," by Jeffrey Farnol.
- "The Prodigal Judge," by Vaughan Kester.
- "Hilda Lessways," by Arnold Bennett.
- "The Iron Woman," by Margaret Deland.
- "The Miller of Old Church," by Ellen Glasgow.
- "The Glory of Clementina," by W. J. Locke.
- "The Sick-a-Bed Lady," by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott.

BOOKS FOR GIRLS.

- "Mother Cary's Chickens," by Kate Douglas Wiggin.
- "When Woman Proposes," by Anne Warner.
- "Her Little Young Ladyship," by Myra Kelly.
- "A Weaver of Dreams," by Myrtle Reed.
- "Molly Make-Believe," by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott.
- "Just Patty," by Jean Webster.

FOR SMALL BOYS AND GIRLS.

- "The Young Railroaders," by F. Lovell Coombs.
- "The Sweep of the Sword," by Alfred H. Miles.
- "Tom Stapleton, the Boy Scout," by Capt. F. S. Brereton.
- "The Witch's Kitchen," by Gerald Young.
- "The Secret Garden," by Frances Hodgson Burnett.
- "Peter and Wendy," by J. M. Barrie.
- "The Bees," by M. Ellen Thonger.
- "When Knights Were Bold," by Eva March Tappan.



THE KING'S CARD

Cedric, the ancestor of the Royal Family of England, accepting the Crown, A.D. 519.



THE QUEEN'S CARD

William and Mary accepting the Crown of England. Painted by Howard Davie.



THE PRINCE OF WALES' CARD

Edward the Black Prince after the battle of Crecy.



QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S CARD

"A Voice Divine."

ROYAL CHRISTMAS CARDS

Reproduced by courtesy of Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, who have granted permission to issue them to the public.

second floor, and added a spirit of gay but dignified camaraderie to the radiant assembly.

There was a hush when the Royal party arrived, as if a sacred, silent finger had been placed on each spectator's lips. That hush was Toronto's greatest tribute to her Royal Governor-General and his beautiful Consort. The Duchess wore an exquisite sable cloak which, when later removed, revealed a regal gown of gold lace over pale green satin. A handsome string of diamonds was around her neck, and a tiara in her hair. She toyed with the diamond necklet, as she sat bowing to the hundreds who were presented to her. It was a noticeable sign of nervousness on the part of those presented, that many bowed carefully to the Duke, but, being seized with an insatiable desire to gain the exit door, forgot all about the gracious Duchess who was never tired, never allowed the slightest expression of