

Christmas Suggestions

Paper given by Mrs. W. G. Spence at Waterdown Women's Institute Meeting.

Madam President and Members,

I almost wish you had asked me to talk on Christmas, instead of Christmas Suggestions, for the papers and the stores are so full of them, each one advocating their own wares that there is little left for me to say. However here are a few thoughts I would like to leave with you.

Christmas is especially a children's time and I think we owe it to our little ones, to make our homes just as attractive as ever we can. A time that they will look back on with pleasure in after years. I do not think we should stop there, but extend our good will to the stranger within our gates.

Many people seem to me to have lost sight of the Spirit of Christmas. To many it is a very sad time. Sad, why? Because they have lost the dear ones, who helped to make Christmas so happy and joyous. But one can look about and try and help some one less fortunate than themselves, to know a little of the blessings of Xmas. By so doing adding greatly to their own happiness.

R. L. Stephenson says, "Our joys will always last, for hope will gladden days to come, and memory guild the past."

Others find Christmas a time of worry and over-work, instead of a season of good will and joyous outpouring of the spirit of thankfulness for the manifold blessings bestowed upon us in this beautiful country of ours. To some people the giving of presents becomes a real burden, they think it is their duty and must be done, therefore they stumble through it. What a grave mistake that is. No real pleasure attached to it, and often how useless and absurd the whole thing seems to the on-looker.

You see, ladies, I am trying to give you a wee "peep behind the scenes." I know, I have been there and I have seen people worry and fuss just because Mrs So and So has remembered her and she has "clean forgot all about her." Then away she rushes and buys something, no matter what, and sends it off, with a sigh of relief, that's over.

A good plan is, before one starts to make up their Xmas gifts, to sit down quietly and make a list of those one wants to remember, adding to the list as the occasion arises or one recalls others whom they wish to remember. Then think and note down what you will give them, a letter or card or some more valuable gift.

And here let me say, try and make your gift fit the person, not the person the gift. Many a gift has failed in its mission of love through not being suitable for the receiver. By

this I mean, don't send Jane a flower when she is longing for a certain book; and Mary a book when she would just love a flower.

When selecting for another try and find out what they really need or prefer. You may decide that Mary needs a new "pull-over", and you go to the trouble and expense of buying or making it for her. You like robin egg blue and think it will be becoming to her. So you make it that color, never dreaming that Mary hates blue and just loves old rose, even though the blue is equally becoming to Mary; yet your gift has lost its charm, through your not having tried to find out her preference.

If we are observant we can often learn just what our dear ones would like, months before, and making a note of it helps greatly when the time of selecting our gifts arrives.

I have found that it is not always the most expensive gifts that give the greatest amount of real pleasure. Often a letter, telling the little honey things of every-day life, that the absent one just loves to hear, gives more real pleasure than all the other things put together. I remember one, a lady I knew, received a very beautiful card from a relative in England. She looked it over, back and front, then threw it down with a disgusted air, saying, "Not a word or a line to let me know how they are or what they are doing." There was at least two dollars wasted, when a sheet of paper, an envelope and a postage stamp, with a half hour spent in writing—a giving a little bit of self, a little Xmas spirit—would have brought joy to a hungry soul, hungry for a word from an absent friend.

I would teach the children to believe in Santa Claus. They know him as a kindly old man. He visits nearly all the stores. Try and make them understand that he represents the great Spirit of Christmas just as mother's photograph represents mother. They will not understand it any more than they do electricity or any of the other great forces of nature. I cannot tell you how often I have been asked by little ones, "Nurse do you believe in Santa Claus?" and the great sigh of contentment when I have answered, "Yes I do." Because if nurse believes, it must be true.

Santa Claus is only a name for the great spirit of love, that came into the world when Christ was born, and it is that same spirit that taught our parents before us, that teaches us, and will teach our children after us. Santa Claus is no myth, but a very real force in this good old world of ours.

Here are a few gifts that are almost always acceptable. Handkerchiefs, one can hardly have too many of them, and they are more useful than cards. Subscription to ones favorite paper or magazine. Books

and flowers to those who love them, or household linen to the busy house wife. A half dozen duplicates in table linen does not matter as a rule.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.

Hospital for Sick Children COLLEGE ST., TORONTO.

Great Provincial Charity Makes Christmas Appeal to Friends of Childhood.

Dear Mr. Editor:

The most vital fact in public health service throughout the province is, as you know, the tremendous strides made in child welfare work. Modern science is harking back to the ancient proverb that "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It has been the privilege of the Hospital for Sick Children—the greatest institution of its kind upon the continent—to find that ounce of prevention.

In bygone days dependence was put more largely in medicines. Nowadays there is a closer partnership between the pediatrician and Dame Nature. Since the creation of our Baby's Ward and the establishment of well babies' clinics the infant mortality in Toronto alone has been reduced from 155 to 82 per thousand. Further statistics which might be given would merely corroborate the actual life-saving value of the Hospital's work. And it is unnecessary to explain to you that the information as to the researches which make such a record possible is at once communicated to the Health Officers and practising physicians throughout Ontario.

Consequently the Hospital has a claim upon the Christmas-time generosity of every friend of little children. An institution which is securing the new-born child twice the chance, not merely of good health, but of life itself, is entitled to the abundant support of the public.

During the past financial year, revenue from all sources fell one hundred dollars a day behind necessary expenditures.

It has always been the ambition of the Hospital for Sick Children to gain not only the support but the sympathy of the people of Toronto, and so today, with a debt exceeding \$150,000, it appeals to your readers to help along with some gift, whether it be great or small. A contribution of \$2,000 from an individual or a society gives the privilege of naming a cot for all time; a donation of 25 cents will rent the whole Hospital for half a minute. Between these two amounts there is surely some sum which can be sent by everybody to the secretary-treasurer at 69 College Street, Toronto, as a token of interest in a charity whose field is as large as this province. The Hospital for Sick Children is one of the largest and most highly regarded in the world. It is an institution in which the people of Ontario may take legitimate pride, for it is through their generosity that success has been possible.

Two hundred and fifty children, pale of cheek or with twisted limbs, will be the immediate beneficiaries of the Yuletide remembrances of your readers. Thousands more throughout the coming year will benefit by their kindness.

IRVING E. ROBERTSON,
Chairman of Appeal Committee.

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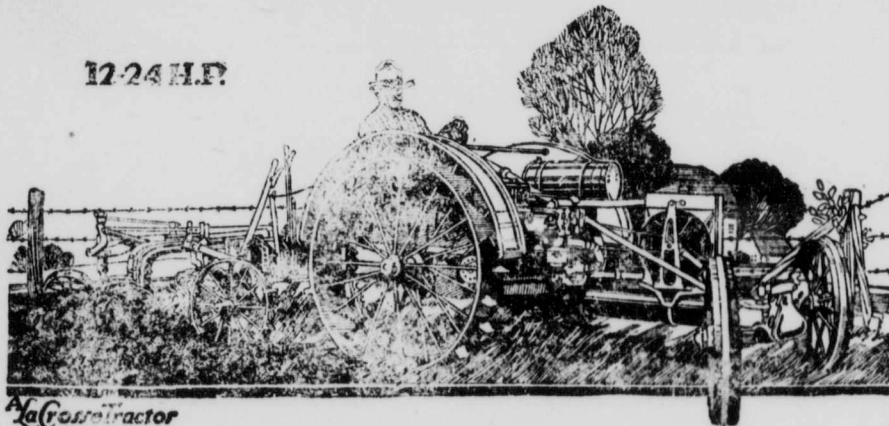
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