

## “Christmas Suggestions”

(By Emily Wright).

What a good thing it is that Christmas comes at the end of the year! Had it been a month later all our good resolutions would too soon have gone for nought. Perhaps that does not apply to you, nor even to me, for probably neither you nor I ever make any resolutions good or otherwise. But think of the Prohibitionists and the Moderationists. These two great bodies of thinking people are the two most guilty of making resolutions, consequently they are the biggest breakers of them. What good Prohibitionist cannot be inveigled at Christmas time into partaking of a glass of his hostess' rhubarb wine, which is a highly "headyfying" drink, to say the least of it? The Moderationist is, of course, entitled to one drink—stronger, if that is possible, than rhubarb—else what would be the good of being a Moderationist? If he be tempted to have two, then he becomes equally as bad as his friend of the rhubarb.

But why do they want to have a drink? If they don't want to, why do they? Why does the hostess insist? Simply because they are all glad and happy, and want everybody to have a good time.

Christmas is the period of relaxation, of forgetfulness of the hard knocks of the world; it is the great time of rejoicing because it commemorates the greatest event that ever took place in the world. No one can be happy unto themselves; they must give out, give out, give out. Hence the spirit of "giving" is so large and fine at this season of the year that it becomes contagious and infects Jew and Atheist, and even John Chinaman as well.

Fun and frivolity may be the order of the Great Day, but what ordeals harass our very existence in preparing for it. To the schoolboy there is always the bogey of the Christmas exams, the horrible feeling of uncertainty about them, but no one knows, whether consciously or unconsciously, how to treat the result of them more philosophically than he himself. Then, to be sure, there is always the blessed relief of the holidays to follow which makes up for all other discomforts. The delightful hints he can give about Christmas presents are decidedly illuminating. He shines in the innocent pastime. The number of things he has been content to do without during the past year is appalling. When you have just got to the pitch of wondering whether to buy him a set of Mark Twain or a set of boxing gloves, he upsets your ideas again by the brilliant remark that his best friend has just received a Ford runabout, to keep him from borrowing the family Hudson Super Six. Parents are the most credulous and most easily imposed upon people in the world at Christmas time. But we, you and I, like to lend ourselves to the pleasant deception, do we not?

The lot of the sales clerk is not an enviable one at all. Indeed, she is greatly to be sympathized with, as she endeavors to advise you what to buy for little Jimmy away over in England. Not having seen Jimmy yourself, you strain your brain to the fever point, as you try to recall through the long decades of years just what Jimmy's father was like at that age, and the kind of things for which he cared. Poor Jimmy! Personally, I have always found that method a mistaken one, especially as I invariably find that Jimmy's father was long past that age before I was born. That the sales clerk is not bored to extinction is no fault of her customers. But Christmas day comes and she is happy. She lies in bed half the day to recuperate, and then rises and works like a slave helping to cook the Christmas dinner and prepare for the evening party. The day passes only too quickly. The mistletoe has not witnessed half enough fun. The girl is not satiated with happiness but hungry for more. Ah, well!

Who can tell? Perhaps she will not be a sales clerk next Christmastide.

The theatres, particularly in the large cities, greatly contribute to the happiness of their patrons. Speaking about theatres, I might here digress to say how differently they are viewed in British Columbia compared with England. In the latter country there are numbers of people who regard them as vile places for which his Satanic majesty is directly responsible, and believe that the frequenters of such either are already his satellites or soon will be. Now, I am not saying a word against those people. I number and value too many of them amongst my friends to do that. But this is the funny part about it. Certain of these people have come out here, and they have immediately fallen into line and have gone "with the crowd" to the theatres. Their excuse is that things are different here. Everybody goes. There's no harm in it at all in Vancouver. I cannot for the life of me follow their reasoning. Surely, if it be wrong in England, it is wrong in Vancouver. I remember, shortly after my arrival here, being at a party at a minister's house. One of the games was that each gentleman should choose a lady for a partner. Then the whole party was to form a procession and parade, arm in arm, through the rooms on the ground floor and tell each other "fish" stories or "fishy" ones, I forget which. I fell to the lot of an elder of the church. It was just my luck. A kind of timidity fell upon me, too. I couldn't think of any suitable story to tell to a wiry, hard-headed, strict, Scotch Elder of the Presbyterian Church. I don't think he could think of one, either, suitable for so insignificant and shrinking a thing as myself. He looked down upon me, at last, from his great height and said: "Have you been to theatre this week, yet?" Ye gods! I was amazed, but was forced to answer, "No." "You should go, it's great," he said. There was a twinkle in his eye. I did my best to answer with one in mine. Doesn't a "twinkle" make a difference? Previously to this evening I had had the painful experience of listening to this man making speeches on the public platform, when he so wiggled and wriggled himself about that he reminded me of nothing on earth so much as an animated corkscrew. He might well have been the originator of the "shimmy." Had he been in kilts the effect would have been perfect. He was not in his element at all. But tonight, he was different. After a moment I impulsively said, "I didn't think Elders of the church went to theatres." He smiled a real superior smile and told me he made it a practice to go once every week. "This is a big country," he added, with a wave of his other arm, "we are a broad-minded people." So if any of you want an excuse for going to the theatre, I should think that of the Scotch Elder is as good as you could get. But don't look into it too closely.

Now, I have digressed so far from what I really set out to say about theatres that I am afraid I shall have to let it go altogether. I think, however, I ought to tell you of a letter written by a Frenchman some time ago in the Daily Mail. Not that it has any relation to my primary object, it hasn't. In it—the letter, that is—he said that he had been to England on business frequently, and had come to the conclusion that all Englishmen were fit for was business. They did not seem to have any fun nor want it, and were quite devoid of any sense of humor. They were stolid men and lead a dull, drab existence. But this particular time he was in England during Christmas week, and one evening he turned into Drury Lane Theatre to see the pantomime. The performance had not been started for more than five minutes when he changed his mind. He said he saw staid Englishmen rocking with