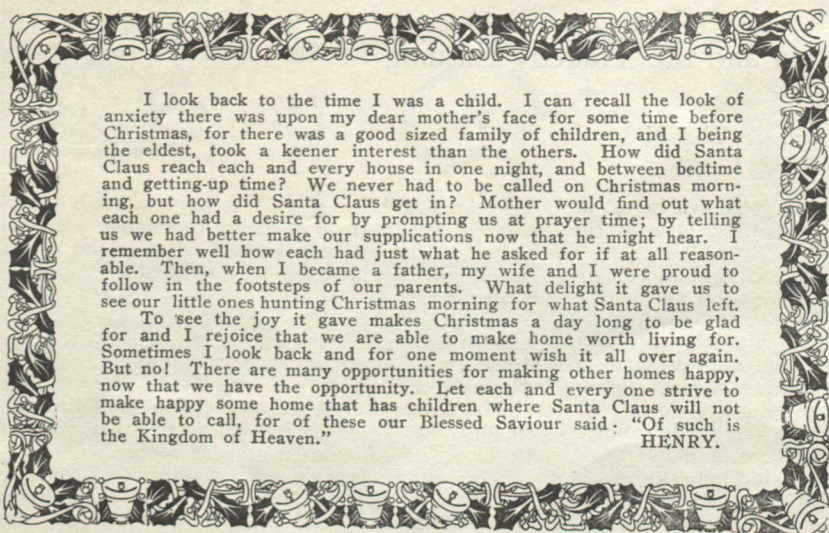


## THE MONTH BEFORE CHRISTMAS



AN air of mystery is beginning to pervade the domestic circle. Small persons are seen in anxious converse with elder brothers and sisters, while "Just what you would like for Christmas" is being artlessly inquired about in a careless discussion. A great industry, in the matter of fancy needle-work, is manifested by the girls of the household, while the tiny folk are awaking to the fact that Santa Claus is making

Do not buy a cup and saucer of gaudy or splashy design, which proclaims its commonness. It would be better to invest in a pin-tray or tiny collar-button holder in white and gold. Cut glass is desired by almost every woman, and there are many small pieces of this attractive ware which will be within reach of the purchaser of moderate income.

Then, in the brass department, one meets with a bewildering array of gleaming objects, from the tiny kettle to the fern jar. In the hammered brass there are many charming articles of use and adornment. The fashion for pierced candle shades in various designs, from acorns to butterflies affords a ready suggestion for a small and pretty gift.

EVERY year, there arises a wail from womankind: "What is a nice present for a man?" For some reason or other, it is ever so much harder to buy a suitable present for the masculine members of the household than for the feminine—perhaps because women are so delighted with a variety of trivialities, and have so many small wants to be gratified with comparative ease. However, a woman need not despair of suiting the masculine taste, though ties or any article of personal adornment may be avoided in most cases, for the remarks which man makes concerning such purchases are far from flattering to womanly judgment. Most men desire to select their own ties and resent the sisterly or cousinly choice of color or fabric.

One girl, however, declares that she found just what appealed to her brother last year, when she invested on his behalf in some superfine hose. A box of stationery—not "fancy"—is appreciated by many men, and a cushion for a "den" is often welcome. However, be sure to avoid anything which is too elaborate or over-trimmed, for the masculine heart abhors anything of a "sissy" nature. A good picture or bronze or a blotter of substantial design would be considered desirable—or even such a trifle as a desk calendar might not be despised. A silver-topped ink-bottle makes a pretty gift and adorns a library table. A paperweight is also a useful article.

In the matter of books, it is rather difficult to be sure one is making an acceptable gift, whether the recipient be man or woman. This is a case in which



JAPANESE STENCILLED SCREEN

ing ready for his pilgrimage from the land of the reindeer. What to buy or make is perplexing many of us—and the question is of absorbing interest to the feminine world especially.

"Something for the house" is always welcome to the mother of the family. A pretty pillow or cushion seldom comes amiss, and fortunate is the maiden who is skilful in drawn-work, embroidery or stenciling. In the case of a present of this nature, care should be taken to consult individual preferences in color and style, so that the gift may harmonize with the general furnishing or environment of the home. To give a handsome blue cushion to a housewife, whose living-room or parlor is furnished in brown and green means confusion and disappointment. A dainty screen or a chair is also a welcome acquisition, and here also the general tone of equipment already provided needs to be taken into consideration.

In small articles, there is infinite variety from which to choose—and the cost is not necessarily in proportion to the beauty or desirability of the article. In the matter of silver, alone, there are so many dainty trifles, from the vanity box or salve jar to the pencil or penholder, that it ought to be easy to select suitable gifts from a trayful of trinkets. In china and cut glass, also, it is not necessary to soar into luxurious prices before finding something which will be acceptable to any woman of good taste. Remember that it is better to buy a good article, however small, than to invest in an imposing bit of cheapness.



A DRAWN-WORK PILLOW

the individual preference should be most carefully considered. To send Matthew Arnold's poems to a man who is a baseball enthusiast is almost as pathetic a blunder as to send George Ade's "Fables In Slang" to a university girl, who has high ideals and admires Pater and Browning.

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