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A Tramp Abroad on Exmas Eve.

Definitions: Tramp, an abstract noun: abroad, on the main streets of Toronto: Xmas Eve, Monday and Tuesday, the 23rd and 24th Dec.

Having, like the foolish virgins, neglected to fill my lamp with oil and being continually reminded that I was the unhappy possessor of a variety of connections a father, a mother, brothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, nieces, landlady and a host of attaches—I sallied forth on the afternoon of Monday, the 23rd day of December, after having carefully emptied the contents of the cash box into my breeches pocket. But what was I to buy? I had no idea. Something pretty and novel without being too expensive, for my dollars did not bear a very large ratio to the number of names on my list. Good idea! I would go to a wholesale house where I was well known. Finding the streets so over-crowded that I had constantly to take to the road to make any progress at all, I concluded that my idea was a brilliant one, for the shops were more than crowded. On entering the warehouse I was surprised to see the office almost deserted of clerks. They evidently had other work to do. A nod from the proprietor who was shewing a "friend" around, encouraged me and I looked about me for a salesman, but with what success need hardly be stated, for the whole building, flat upon flat, was crowded. Very few were being waited upon for want of more help, but the customers did not seem to mind that a great deal. Funny storekeepers, they, to take things so easily when business was so rushing! Nor had I any idea that so many stores had lady buyers, and stout ones at that, nor that they were usually escorted by two or three children when they were buying their stock. But what surprised me most was the careless indifference with which they handled fragile toys and the small stocks that those being served were laying in. But, of course, they did not want to carry anything over for next season. One thing, however, was pleasing everybody seemed to have forgotten all about the credit system and paid cash for their goods. Altogether the sight was so novel to an uncommercial man like myself that I became nervous and retired, fully impressed that even to one who had official claims upon the house, the proprietors would not like to sell to me, not being in the trade.

Up Yonge street I had to follow a "single file" of pedestrians, who were trying to squeeze between a row of street cars and a motley crowd, who shouted at and shoved by a policeman, were gazing at a dry goods window, where a boy Santa Claus was shooting at a target. "Toys at half price," if carried through such a crush seemed to me to be a poor investment, so I walked another twenty yards, where I was attracted by the melodious voice of an Israelitish auctioneer, who for the first time in three weeks had ob-

tained an audience and who had in consequence lowered his voice just seven and a half tones. As he was giving his goods away, I passed on feeling proud that I was not yet a pauper. A branch of a wholesale hardware store selling cutlery at cost, and big named crockery house, better known in the importing quarters, had a window full of bargains; but I was not in quest of either. Shoved on by the crowd, I soon found myself gazing in a sparsely filled window of nicknacs, and on further inspection noticed that there was a decided lack of permanency in the appearance of the interior fittings. "That's only a Christmas junk," I heard one man say to another. "Come along and I'll show you where you can get some presents." This was encouraging, so I also followed. In less than three minutes I found myself squeezing into the doorway of a large vacant millinery store, where I was surprised to hear the rattle of the glib tongue of a well known auctioneer, "Another, another, another, only five cents, do you want one?" "No," said a man in front of me. "I paid double that price for those I bought for my store in your wholesale establishment." "That shows you what bargains you're getting, ladies," said the gentleman on the table, and the sale went on more furiously than ever. But I have a particular aversion to forced sales, when everyone buys what they do not want simply because the price is low, so I left the din and crowd to join the moving throng outside, and concluded to return to my office, when I was attracted by a huge living stream coming from all directions and passing in at a single portal. My curiosity got the better of me, and I was surprised to find myself passing for the first time between the counters of Titus Drinkoff's "Everything at cost" establishment. Here were to be seen straining to the utmost their few remaining nerves in vain endeavors to serve nine persons at one time, wringing with one hand, showing goods with the other, and incessantly exercising what lung power they had left on the symphonious word "Cash." A notice that all toys were packed at the purchaser's risk brought forth from a friend whom I met the suggestion that a premium should be offered to any one reaching the street with an undamaged parcel. I purchased a nine-inch elephant with a swinging head for ten cents and tried the experiment. I did not, however, open the parcel before sending it away, but hope the head is still swinging.

But were I to narrate at length my many experiences of those two days, BOOKS AND NOTIONS would have to be enlarged. Chatterbox, fresh and bright, for twenty-five cents, seemed a very fair price for so large a book, and forty cents for a Japanese fire-place fan, spreading over four feet in breadth was the result of a visit to a Celestial store. This at least was a grate bargain. Three presents for seventy-five cents was very satisfactory, so I retired for the day feeling much richer and wiser than I expected to. Next day, fortunately for me, it rained constantly, and my progress was made in the inverse ratio of the quantity of rain. What more could a busy man desire! But rain storms must be very stingy in money matters, for I heard several storekeepers say the rain brought them no money. KEENE.—Books and No-