

December, 1905

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Ways to Distribute Christmas Gifts

After all, there are probably no better ways whatever to distribute Christmas gifts than the dear old familiar ones of putting them in stockings that have been hung at the fireplace, or arranging them on trees; but since children enjoy a change once in a while, and variety may add a little spice to the holiday fun the following suggestions are offered:

For those who do not like to forsake tradition completely, how will this plan do? Make an immense stocking of unbleached muslin, say about four feet long, fastening the top over a small barrel hoop. Cut slits in the stocking large enough to pull the presents through. Wrap the presents in tissue paper, tying them with ribbons, and leaving one end of the ribbon on each package large enough to come through a slit, in order that there may be attached to it a card bearing the name of the person for whom the article is intended. Then invite the children and grown-ups to pull their presents through the slits in the big stocking.

Somewhat along the same line is the family Christmas box, which should be a big box with a hinged lid. Cover it with turkey-red cotton, and about a week before Christmas decorate it handsomely with greens. Place it in a room to which all members of the household may have access, so that gifts may be deposited in the box whenever they are ready. It should, of course, be a matter of honor that no one shall peep into the box when leaving anything there. On Christmas Day, at an hour previously agreed upon, the box may be opened in the presence of the whole family.

A pyramid of snowballs gives a pretty effect on a platform. Roll up each present in cotton batting, tying all with white ribbons, thus obtaining a mass of "snowballs" of all sizes. After covering the floor with a white cloth pile up the balls in form of a pyramid and scatter diamond dust over them, in order to give the pile an attractive sparkle. Dress a little boy as the Frost King, and let him distribute the "snowballs." His costume should be of white wadding, sprinkled with diamond dust. Small bunches of holly leaves and berries should be sewed here and there upon his costume.

Here is another snowball idea: Arrange the tree as usual, and have Santa Claus crouch down beside it in as near the form of a big ball as he can assume. Cover him with cotton batting, making him look like a huge snowball. The director of the festivities should suggest that Santa Claus may have been lost in a snowstorm, and with a snow-shovel he should carefully dig a hole in the big snowball. Santa Claus may then appear, telling the children that he lives on a hilltop, and that since he was run away with by his reindeer last Christmas he had been a little afraid of automobiles, so he decided to roll down in a snowball this year.

A simple way to amuse the children on Christmas Day is to tell them that they may have their gifts only by going to the North Pole for them. At first they will be greatly mystified, but let their search be rewarded by their finding in one room a huge post, wrapped in cotton batting, with diamond dust sprinkled over it, hooks being driven into the post in order that gifts may be hung upon it.

It is not a bad idea to have Santa Claus appear from a big cake. The cake is a sham, of course, being built on a round wooden frame about six feet in diameter and four feet high. The frame is covered with white crepe paper to imitate frosting, and may be decorated with sprigs of holly. Within the frame Santa Claus sits hidden with all the gifts around him. At the proper moment the hostess cuts the cake, and presto! there is Santa Claus in the middle of it, smiling, and handing out the "plums" to the little folk.

A clothesline is a prosaic thing, but when it is stretched back and forth across a room and each clothespin used is decorated with a tiny sprig of holly and fastens to the line a little Christmas gift done up in white tissue paper, tied with red baby ribbon and decorated with sprigs of holly, it becomes a thing of beauty. The heavier gifts, properly packed, should be placed upon the floor directly beneath the line, and red baby linen, or colored strings, should extend from each one to the line, being fastened there by the holly-trimmed clothespins. Then have a pretty girl come in, dressed as a housemaid, and "take down the clothes," delivering each article to whomsoever it belongs.

When circumstances do not permit of a tree, an easy way to make little children happy is to heap all their Christmas gifts in front of an empty fireplace so as to give them the appearance of having been hastily dumped down the chimney. On top of all place a note of apology from Santa Claus, setting forth that he was so busy that he found it really impossible to leave his sleigh and come down into the house with the presents. The novelty of it all will be likely to delight the children.

In the centre of the room place a large round table covered with a green cloth scattered all over with small boughs of evergreen, frosted with tinsel. Suspended from the chandelier, and hanging just far enough apart to admit a little light from above, have garlands sparkling with frost, with the ends fastened to the sides of the table, three-quarters of the way around it. The effect will be that of a tent. The other quarter should be left open, so that one may look inside and see an immense cornucopia covered with silver paper, with its open end toward the front. As though emerging from it the Christmas Fairy (a wax doll), sparkling in robes of white and silver, should be poised. A frosted wreath should crown her golden curls, and in her hand she should hold a long silver wand. The cornucopia should seem to be emptying itself of bonbons and bright candies into the glittering train of the good Fairy. The gifts should be piled inside the tent and beneath the table. The room should be quite dark when the children are admitted.

Sentence Sermons.

Fault finders are seldom faithful.
Sanctification is salvation from self.
Love and pain are seldom far apart.
There is no pedagogy like that of love.
The long drawn frown only pulls men down.
The darkness awaits him who wastes the day.
The brother's burden is the Father's business.
The river of life has something in it besides gush.
A world without pain would be without power.
That which is irreverent must be irreligious.
The man who is on the cross needs no crosses on him.
The religious fan always thinks he is the whole field.
Occupation is inoculation against much temptation.
He cannot know success who does not delight in sacrifice.
Advertising our afflictions only increases their circulation.
The old man is never eradicated by becoming an old woman.
This is never a wrong world to him who is right with its heart.

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