

Good Form

Etiquette of Christmas Giving.
 "In making Christmas gifts we should take many things into consideration. We must try to choose something that will give pleasure to the recipient and something of which she has not already more than enough. No one wants to send coals to Newcastle," says Florence Howe Hall.

"If, however, my friend is very fond of reading I may properly send her a book. Unless it is one recently published it is safer not to write the name on the flyleaf, as it may prove a duplicate.

"It is always more difficult to find a suitable gift for a rich than for a poor person, because the former usually has so many possessions of all kinds that a new object really becomes a burden. To a woman of this sort it is almost always safe to send flowers, since they give pleasure for a few days and can then be thrown away, or one can sometimes select a gift that pleases by its novelty or oddity.

"It is easier to find a present for a person who does not own a great many things, but the very fact that she has few possessions makes it important that these shall be good of their kind, so that here also pains must be taken to secure a suitable gift. We must be aware, however, of giving useful and prosaic tokens of our regard to a friend of modest means if her taste lie in another direction. Margaret DeLand has a delightful story of a woman to whom her friends gave a purse of money, hoping she would spend it on curing her smoking chimney. She did nothing of the sort, buying instead the blue silk dress for which she had longed all her life and inviting all her friends to a party. Few people enjoy receiving purely useful presents. Of course we have to make an exception in the case of good things to eat—turkeys and plum puddings—where we are dealing with those who are actually poor or whose position makes it proper to bestow on them things of this sort. Here again we must beware of making eleemosynary gifts to those who are on the border line between gentility and poverty. To your wash-woman you may safely give a pair of chickens or mittens for her children without risk of offense. Your music teacher, who "has seen better days," may be poorer than your laundress; yet you would need to proceed with great delicacy—to feel your way, so to speak—before asking her to accept what she might consider as thinly disguised alms. In a word, she may have a proper pride which you are bound to respect, while you wish in some way to help her.

"Something must depend on the degree of friendship existing between you. We must not make intimate presents, as they may be called. Thus a rich woman who has delicacy of feeling does not give articles of clothing to poor friends without first asking whether she may do so. This would not apply to small and dainty accessories of the toilet, such as handkerchiefs, gloves and neckwear."

When Paying a Call.
 Winter is the time of social formality, and as an expression of courtesy the call stands supreme. A formal call should be paid between the hours of 3 and 5:30 in the afternoon. You can readily see the reason for this, as a hostess must not be "caught napping," and the caller should give her time to finish any luncheon, nap or duties around the home, and at the same time a departure should be made that will enable the hostess to prepare for dinner.

It is permissible to make a morning call that is not entirely a social one. A call that has for its object a charitable task, the inquiry after the health of one in the household or the investigation of a servant's standing can be made at a convenient hour in the morning. Do not make a call of this character on the "at home" day, for this entertainment demands extra duties from the hostess, and she ought to be undisturbed. This type of call is not counted a social call and cannot be made to pay off any social debts.

If a friend has a special day on which she receives callers choose this by all means. The issuing of cards stating the day and the hour will make your calling list a very simple thing. Keep cards of this type and enter the facts in a little book.

If a bride is in her new home and has stated on her cards a social date it is discourteous to call before that time. She may not be prepared to receive visitors. Allow a reasonable length of time to elapse and make the first call. In a neighborhood where it is the custom to call on newly arrived residents there should be a comfortable time given to allow of a settling in the new home and an adjustment to one's surroundings.

An unmarried woman should call on a matron first, and a younger woman pays the first call on the older one without regard to the fact of the former's being married or single. The best thing to do is to acquaint yourself with the social customs of the city or country in which you reside.

Now, there are some calls that are obligatory. If you have been bridesmaid or an attendant at a wedding you should call on the true hostess of the wedding reception, the mother of the bride. This should be done shorty after the wedding.

Christmas Not a Humbug.
 "Christmas a humbug, uncle?" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I'm sure."
 "I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time for you but a time for paying bills without money, a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer, a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

It is many years since the conversion of old Scrooge from the error of his ways by the three ghosts of Christmas past, Christmas present and Christmas yet to come. It is many more years since the first Christmas anthem rang triumphant in the hush of an expectant midnight hour over the plains of Palestine. And yet, in spite of the years and their message to the world, there still exist those unfortunate souls who, like the wretched Ebenezer, call Christmas a humbug and lose sight of the real spirit and joy of the day.

"Christmas a humbug!" one is moved to exclaim with old Scrooge's indignant nephew. No, not a humbug, but a feast of good cheer, of kindly impulses, of generous giving, if hearts are opened and sympathies allowed free play, if cynicism is barred and pessimistic philosophy banished to the limbo of all unpleasantness. For the very essence of the spirit of Christmas is that of kindness, of affection.

When the fame of the real spirit of Christmas is dim or altogether dead there are a dozen ways of fanning it into renewed life. So many things combine to foster the Christmas atmosphere, to make it, as Scrooge's nephew said, "a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time, the only time in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

A REAL SANTA CLAUS.
 SANTA CLAUS, I hang for you
 By the mantel stockings two—
 One for me and one to go
 To another boy I know.

There's a chimney in the town
 You have never traveled down.
 Should you chance to enter there
 You would find a room all bare;
 Not a stocking could you spy,
 Matter not how you might try,
 And the shoes you'd find are such
 As no boy would care for much.

In a broken bed you'd see
 Some one just about like me
 Dreaming of the pretty toys
 Which you bring to other boys,
 And to him a Christmas seems
 Merry only in his dreams.

All he dreams, then, Santa Claus,
 Stuff the stockings with, because
 When it's filled up to the brim
 I'll be Santa Claus to him!
 —Frank Dempster Sherman.

A QUESTION.
 IF there isn't any Santa Claus, who is it turns your feet
 Toward the shop where gifts are smiling
 As you walk along the street?
 Who is it sets you thinking, though
 You're busy as can be,
 About the songs and laughter round
 The children's Christmas tree?
 Though you vow "this Christmas business
 Is a nuisance anyhow,"
 There's an influence at work that clears
 The frowning from your brow.
 The small tin trumpet sounds a blast
 That wakes your soul serene
 To homage for the doll who is a lady
 And a queen,
 And the once prosaic world where it has
 Been your lot to dwell
 Is a realm of fascinations 'neath some
 Mystic fairy spell.
 If there isn't any Santa Claus, who is it,
 Day by day,
 That turns our thoughts to Christmas,
 Strive to slun it as we may?
 Who comes at this bleak season armed
 With telepathic arts
 And by generous suggestion dominates our
 Minds and hearts?

CONSTANT CHRISTMAS.
 Oh, never failing splendor,
 Oh, never silent song,
 Still keep the green earth
 Tender,
 Still keep the gray earth
 Strong!
 Still keep the brave earth
 Dreaming
 Of deeds that shall be done
 While children's lives come
 Streaming
 Like sunbeams from the
 Sun!
 Oh, angels, sweet and splendid,
 Throne in our hearts and
 Sing
 The wonders which attended
 The coming of the King!
 —Phillips Brooks.

CHRISTMAS TIME.
 PEACE and good will toward men!
 Blest Christmas time
 That brings to furnished thousands
 A good meal,
 While even those, immured in cells,
 That steal
 From others—make their livelihood in
 Crime—
 Now sit at tables with the best of fare.
 Children, unused to luxuries and joys,
 Now have abundance, are e'en blessed
 With toys,
 For did not Christ take such unto his
 Care?
 The laborer sick, his family hungry, cold,
 Is now remembered; wood and coal and
 Rent
 And flour and meal and fowl to him are
 Sent
 By them that know the genuine use of
 Gold,
 Whose eyes have seen the shepherds watch
 By night,
 Who've read the sermon on the Mount
 Aright.
 —Edward S. Creamer in Brooklyn Eagle.

CHRISTMAS IN HOLLAND.

In Holland Santa Claus pays his annual visit to all good children twenty days before he comes to this country. Dec. 5 is the feast day of St. Nicholas, alias Santa Claus. He has nothing whatever to do with Christmas, and his visit there is an Anglo-Saxon anachronism. As their patron saint, children were taught to look to Nicholas for care and protection. In England the custom was abolished with the worship of saints at the reformation and was re-established in the American guise of Father Christmas in the middle of the last century.

But in Holland Santa Claus continues to make his visits on the right day, Dec. 5. The Dutch children do not hang up their stockings, but place their shoes, filled with hay or straw for the donkey on which St. Nicholas rides, in front of the fireplace.

The Christ Child.
 An Irish legend tells that on Christmas eve the Christ Child wanders out in the darkness and cold and the peasants still put lighted candles in their windows to guide the sacred little feet, that they may not stumble on the way to their homes. In Hungary the people go yet further in their tenderness for the Child. They spread feasts and leave their doors open that he may enter at his will. Throughout Christendom there is a belief that no evil can touch the child who is born on Christmas eve.

"KNECHT RUPERT" WAS GERMAN SANTA CLAUS

The Santa Claus idea has grown out of a variety of legends and customs. The festival of St. Nicholas, who was the especial friend of the children, was celebrated in Germany about the 6th of December. It was easy enough to make this coincide with the later and more general festival. The tangible Santa Claus was called "Knecht Rupert," and usually he was some member of the family dressed up to represent a beneficent gift giver. It was the custom to have a yew bough placed in the parlor of the German home, and on this all the packages containing gifts were placed. On Christmas morning the whole family assembled to claim the gifts, each having to guess the donor. "Knecht Rupert" distributed the gifts to the younger children, but he lectured them also on obedience and good behavior, and if any one had been bad, instead of a gift he or she was given a switch that they might be punished. So the little Germans try hard to be very good before Christmas.

Bad Day For Birds.
 The day after Christmas, St. Stephen's day (boxing day in England), is celebrated in a queer way by some of the Manx boys, and Ditchfield says they feel privileged to stone wrens at this time because of a story to the effect that in days gone by a most dangerous siren was finally compelled to assume the form of a wren once a year (on the 26th) and ultimately to be killed by mortal hands. Another tradition furnishes an excuse on the ground that it was a wren that wakened the guard of St. Stephen just as the latter was about to escape from prison.

Enemies of the Christmas Tree.
 Not every balsam nor every spruce is a Christmas tree. The expert cutter learns to tell at a glance if the branches grow in perfect rings, which give shape and symmetry to the tree. He must be sure, too, that the squirrels have not eaten the buds from the tips of the topmost branches, and that the cattle and deer have not sharpened their horns in passing.



Sallie Fearful — "I certainly would like to marry Charlie, but I'm scared of the hard work, and I have seen too many girls slave their lives away over washtubs and in hot kitchens and lose all their looks after they married."

Anty Drudge — "Well, you needn't tell me. Those girls didn't know about Fels-Naptha Soap. You go right ahead and marry Charlie and be happy. I will give you a box of Fels-Naptha to start with, and if you will always use it afterward your hard work will be cut in half and you needn't worry about losing your good looks and not having any time to yourself, either."

If you want to get through your washing in half the time next week, use Fels-Naptha Soap. All you need is cool or lukewarm water—Fels-Naptha will do the rest.

Clothes soaped with Fels-Naptha and put to soak are practically clean when you come to wash them. They don't need hard rubbing or boiling. It is just as good for all kinds of housework.

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