

Most people get the idea that the way to economize is to have a surplus without cutting out any expenses.

The Top o' the Mornin'. By W. D. Nesbit.

What we should like to see is a cook book written by a man and consisting of recipes for things his mother used to make.

UNDER THE DROOPING MISTLETOE



Under the drooping mistletoe
The cunning damsel stands
In fluffly frock and furbelow,
With jewels on her hands
Which rise to pat in shape her hair
That coils in golden strands.
Her lips are ruddy as the rose,
Her waist an arm might span;
Her brow is puckered as in thought;
She cogitates a plan;
No deed of battle, though—fearsomely,
She fears not any man.

The servants passing through the hall
Look in at the open door;
They love to see her pretty dress
That trails upon the floor
(Each hopes to have it when the girl
WON'T wear it any more).

MEAN THING.
"I got the loveliest present," declared the young lady with the enthusiastic manner. "It was the finest Christmas present I ever knew."

"And what," asks the lady of the toy smith, "did you get?"

"On Christmas morning," narrates the first lady, "I awoke with the crisscrossing of the dawn and pattered downstairs in my bare feet to the parlor, where the Christmas tree had been arranged. As I am to be married the first of the year, and Jack and I will need lots of things for our house, what do you suppose I found in my stockings?"

"I believe my query covered that point," said a ton of coal.

Stung by the evidence of plutocratic paragon, the lady of the toy smith remarked: "Which naturally brings up the question of which is heavier, a ton of coal or a ton of feathers?"

"No. A ton of feathers."
"No. A ton of feet."

Too few Chances.
Full forty times was Myrtle kissed—
O, she was young and she was fair
And she was cunning! She had mistletoe planned in her glossy hair.

The Villainy of Titherington Botts.
It is Christmas eve. In the little village church are assembled the young people, who are to be charmed and delighted by the exercises of the evening. It is known that Titherington Botts, the local wag and wit, is to essay the role of Santa Claus, and it is expected that he will provoke no end of hilarity by his fetching and taking sallies.

But, whisper, underlying all this tide of gaiety and jollity there is a deep and dark plot. Titherington Botts and Puddiford Suggs have for two years been deadly rivals for the hand of Amelia Sugartrée. Now, what do you suppose is the reason Puddiford Suggs is not among those gathered together in the little village church? Whist! He has concealed himself in a large box, which is inscribed: "A Christmas Gift for Amelia Sugartrée."

But the box is never delivered. Titherington Botts bounces into the church, distributes all the other presents and a neat little box containing a diamond ring, from himself to Amelia—but Puddiford Suggs is conspicuous by his absence.

Listen. One week later Puddiford Suggs is sold to pay express charges on himself at a small town two hundred miles from the scene of this story. But Amelia is now engaged to Titherington Botts and will not listen to any attempt at explanations from Puddiford, saying she has no use for a man who will not keep his engagements.

Thus we see that even at the glad Yuletide there is a whole lot of tough luck for some people.

As a Favor.
The good woman had been profoundly touched by the story told by the tramp, and had invited him into her kitchen, where she has spread for him a plentiful Christmas dinner. While eating, he has continued his sad story, telling how he was thrown out upon the world, an orphan; how he lost his wife and all his children; how his business was shattered and he became a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and many more heartrending things.

"You poor, poor man," sighed the good woman. "Is there anything I can do for you to make this day, at least, brighter and happier?"
"Yes, dere's one ting I'd like to ask of ya."
"What is it?"
"Please move about a foot to der left. Youse been cryin' in de punkin pie."

A Just Rebuke.
With a flourish of his whip, Santa Claus stopped his sleigh at the entrance to the large apartment building.

"Ah," he smiled, "this is a good scheme. Here's a whole community under one roof. I'll save two or three hours of schedule time at this place and maybe I'll be able to get home in time for breakfast this year."

Shouldering his pack, he starts into the wide entrance hall, when he observes a sign posted on the wall. It reads:
"NO CHILDREN OR DOGS PERMITTED IN THIS BUILDING."
Santa starts back in surprise.

"Even," he sighs, "without the children there might be a chance for the dogs to chew the dolls and play with the rubber balls, but this—but this—Well, this beats me!"
Taking a black crayon from a box in his pack he scrawls a line on the placard, so that when he turns to leave it reads:
"No Children or Dogs or Christmas Permitted in this Building."

While we think of it, let us observe that a great many base drummers think they are called upon to play the cornet.

Now, if you got a bath robe as a present, don't object because it gets so wet and soppy when you take a bath in it. Accept it in the spirit in which it is presented, and be glad that somebody has thought of you.

It is more blessed to give than to receive, and don't you wish all your friends thought so, too?

Happy the man who sticks to his early convictions and steadfastly refuses to believe there is no Santa Claus.

The trouble about sending Christmas gifts anonymously is that the recipient usually asks you to help guess who sent them. And usually the recipient guesses everybody except yourself.

Well, the older we grow the more we notice that somebody else always breaks our toys showing us how to run them.

A diplomat is a man who buys gloves three sizes too small as a present for the young lady in the case.

You never hear a woman longing for an "old-fashioned Christmas." She wants no presents that are out of style.

We tried to get our friend, the insurance company president, to change the design of his calendar for 1906. We wanted him to show the angel of protection with its hands in its own pockets—and he threatened to cancel our policy.

This existence, brethren, contains many Christmas days wherein we discover the sawdust stuffing of our favorite dolls.

If any young man this year receives a copy of that helpful book, "Lives and Careers of Successful Men," will he kindly hold up his hand?

We are not opposed to the Christmas card. Ah, no! But we do object to the ones that blazon forth the suggestion that the sender came as near forgetting us as possible.

How many times have you said "It is just what I wanted?" with your fingers crossed?

Every man on earth hugs his inner self at the thought that he is the very essence of human sunshine that is needed to successfully play Santa Claus at a Sunday school Christmas tree.

SPITE.



"Miss Purty is going to sing some of the old Christmas wails," says the man in the background. "You know the wails are the songs that were so popular many years ago."

"Is she?" asks the woman in the background, who does not like the attention Miss Purty is receiving. "I see she is going to refer to the printed songs, too. I should think she could sing them from memory."

We have pleasure in announcing that our own horticultural genius is now laboring on a number of experiments which doubtless will be perfected in time to give to the world next summer. Among them are:

Blending the egg plant, the watermelon and the horseradish so that the product will be a perfect imitation of boiled, shirred, or fried eggs.

Grafting the breadfruit and cherry tree to produce a cherry tart.

Joining the cantaloupe vine, the rubber plant and the pokeweed so that each cantaloupe will bear an indelible stamp telling whether or not it is ripe.

Grafting the five-fingered ivy to the potato vine so that in the fall the potatoes may rub their own eyes off.

Blending the quaking aspen and the milkweed so that the result will be a plant which will churn butter of its own sap.

Miss Alfaretta Bingo, who made forty hand embroidered Christmas gifts, fifty hand painted ones, and sewed and otherwise concocted about a hundred more to give to her friends, is taking a week's rest after her year's work. Next week she will begin on the same lot of presents for Christmas of 1906.

Work of a Misanthrope.

"I hear that something east of a damper over the Christmas party at Mistletoe," says the man who has been away for the holidays.

"Yes," answers the girl who staid at home. "It was just too mean for anything. You know that Mr. Smith, whose engagement to Annie Treek was announced last Christmas after he kissed her under the mistletoe?"

"Well, he came to the party and hung a large sign reading 'DANGER' beneath the mistletoe they had attached to the chandelier."

Might Be Better.
"Now, Rastus," said the Sunday school teacher, after Rastus had failed to eat the Christmas dinner given to the class. "You have had turkey, mince pie, oysters, jelly, cake, ice cream, sweet potatoes, peas, corn, white potatoes, bread and butter, celery, olives, pickles, and I don't know how much else besides. Could you imagine anything else that would make Christmas pleasant?"

"Well, mum," breathed Rastus, trying to button his vest and giving up with a glad smile, "well, mum, I can't think of nothin', unless it 'ud be a watahmeion."

Our Own Luther Burbank.
We have pleasure in announcing that our own horticultural genius is now laboring on a number of experiments which doubtless will be perfected in time to give to the world next summer. Among them are:

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Today when me an' Willie Smith
An' Alfred Potts an' Spot McKay
An' some more boys we's playin' with
Got talkin' some 'bout Christmas day
An' how we must hubble real well,
'Cause all our pas an' mas they say
O' Santa Claus can always tell
What boy has mischief in his head,
Why, Alfred Potts he say to us
'It's nothin' but a lot o' fuss!
Don't you hubble your pas and mas—
There never was no Santa Claus!'

Now me an' Willie Smith an' all
Th' other boys, an' Spot McKay,
I tend we hear somebody call
Us to come home, an' slip away
An' we won't play with Alfred Potts
Hubble we know 'at he is bad
When we think of 't lets an' lots
O' Christmas 'at we have had,
I tell my pa what Alfred said,
An' he laugh some an' shake his head
An' say 'at Alfred's chance is slim,
'Cause Santa won't hubble in him!

That sled we saw at the store?
"Yes, if you are a good boy and go to sleep."
"But couldn't he have bought it by this time?"
"Yes."
"Then why doesn't he come with it?"
"Maybe he is only waiting until you go to sleep."
"I know. I'll bet he has to wait for his change."

MAYBE.
"Mamma," said the sleepy little boy, on Christmas eve, "will Santa come, sure?"
"Yes, dear, as soon as you are sound asleep."
"But it's awful late now, isn't it?"
"Very late, indeed. You must go to sleep."
"And do you really think he will buy me that sled we saw at the store?"
"Yes, if you are a good boy and go to sleep."
"But couldn't he have bought it by this time?"
"Yes."
"Then why doesn't he come with it?"
"Maybe he is only waiting until you go to sleep."
"I know. I'll bet he has to wait for his change."

CHRISTMAS AT
[Insert name of town or country as preferred. This enables the reader to lay the scene of the story in an ancestral estate or on the old farm, as he likes.]
I.
It was Christmas eve. The gray haired mother had hung the last of the evergreens, and turned with a sigh to her husband, who sat in a dreamy attitude before the wide fireplace or steam radiator, as you choose.
"Ah—," she sighed. "I wonder if—is to be here."
"Is she?" asked —, looking up with a soft smile. "And does she know that—is to be home?"
"No. I could not tell her. You know that she and — quarreled three Christmases ago."
"Yes, yes," sighed the old man, shaking his head sadly.

II.
"Up the wide — [drive or boulevard] sounded the jingle of bells as the sleigh swept to the doorway. [Leave this out if they arrive in an elevator.]
The gray haired mother ran and opened the door.
And — ran in and greeted her with glad shouts of "Merry Christmas!"
The gray haired father came next for the joyous greeting, but in the background stood — undecided, hesitating, cherishing in her heart the memory of the bitter words of three Christmases ago. Suddenly, while the others were merrily chattering she slipped into another room.

III.
The steaming turkey and the other viands are upon the table, about which is gathered the family. Under the impulse of the day of light-heartedness, — turns to — and says to her:
"Come, —, why shouldn't we forget the old quarrel?"
[For the best solution of this story, sent before Christmas of 1906, a handsome calendar from one of the insurance companies will be mailed. If it were not that we cannot decide whether —, with whom — quarreled three Christmases ago, was the cook or an old sweetheart, we should finish the story and fill in the blanks.]

IV.
Fate makes amends. The man who has been telling his wife about the things mother used to cook is now hearing from her about the presents father used to give.

The Inference.



"Mamma," said the little girl in the poor family, "this dollie Santa Claus left for me has but one leg."
"And, mamma," said the little boy, "the hobby horse Santa gave me has but one ear and three legs and no tail."
"Yes, children," explained the mother, trying to smooth things over, "Maybe Santa took those parts of the toys to pay him for the trouble of coming away down here to leave the presents for you."
"Mamma," asked the little boy, in awed tones, "do you suppose Santa Claus has become president of some insurance company?"

Conclusive Evidence.

"Mrs. Miggins told me this morning downtown that her husband was going to give her a pearl necklace for Christmas," says Mrs. Figgers.
"Nonsense," replies Figgers. "He isn't going to do anything of the kind."
"Well, he just is, for I was with her and helped her select it, and saw her order it sent home; and then she helped me pick out the set of furs you are going to give her."

Vain Regret.

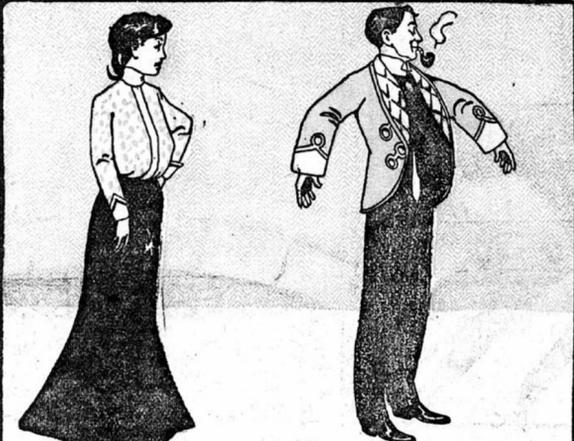
Yes, gentle reader, this is the week when you begin figuring up how much the presents will cost.
And you will stand amazed at the sum total.
Then you will begin to wish you hadn't blown in your money so foolishly last summer on soda water and boat rides and buggy rides and other pleasures.
And the worst of it is, that you will also think sadly of the fact that last summer you often thought that you would better hold on to it for Christmas uses.

Not Available.



"Ah, Miss Shoppin, I wish you would let me be your Christmas gift."
"You, Mr. Deddun? Why, really, I O, I never could exchange you for any thing!"

SAVED HER MONEY.



"But, my dear," says the delighted husband, inspecting the gorgeous house coat his wife had given him on Christmas, "I am afraid you spent too much money for this. Something cheaper would have done me just as well."
"Now," she pouts, "there you go, moralizing over my gift, as usual. But this time you are in the wrong. I didn't spend any money for it."
"You didn't? Then how did you get it?"
"I had it charged."

Lament of the Turkey.

There was a fat turkey, surviving Thanksgiving, which said: "I am thankful today I am living, I'm glad I escaped—though I thought sure I'd catch it—the shivery swing of the marketman's hatchet." It strutted about, making mock of the thinner—
And was captured and served at a big Christmas dinner.
Which teaches that oft, when we grow overjoyous, We find our delights are designed to destroy us.

An Instance.

"I like to see a man take pride in his own work," said the person with the old-fashioned nose. "There never was a man who was proud of his work that didn't find that everybody else shared his pride. You can't cite me an instance to the contrary."
"How about Bernard Shaw?" asked the man with the unobtrusive mustache.

Source of Joy.

The Christmas spirit thrills his soul
And he trills forth a carol—
Alas, his gait has such a roll,
On lamp posts he's inclined to lope,
That we suspect that he acquired
The "spirit" with which he is fired
From a Kentucky barrel.

Man and Woman.

"Anyway," says the woman, "scientists and—and all such people agree that a woman can endure far more pain than a man, and without complaining, too. So there!"
"Yes," says the man. "But it's this way. A woman can talk more about how she can endure pain without complaining than a man talks about how much he suffers from pain."

Knew It Already.

"And will you try the charms on New Year's Eve?
To learn what fate is yours in 1907?"
They asked; "Will you by dim enchantments weave
The charm that will disclose all fortune's tricks?"
"The charms! How silly!" said the fair young maid
In words that had a gay and happy tone.
A ring upon her finger she displayed—
"You see, I have some charms that are my own."

SPOILED IT ALL



"I've got a good joke on you, Miss Wisun. The mistletoe is hanging right over your head."
"That's just like you, Mr. Green. Of course you'd come up and warn me, just when I've managed to get an unsuspecting expression coaxed to my face."

An Alphabet of Mottoes

QUITTERS are men who back out before you can let them in.