

ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTMAS CARD

Woman Suggested it First Back in 1873 at Time of Vienna Exposition

(N. Y. Post.)

When you go this week to the Christmas-card counter and select a dozen or two of these decorative bits suggestive of the holiday season, perhaps it will not occur to you to wonder how the Christmas card came into being. It doubtless will be just your busy notion that there were always Christmas cards, or at least for the last nineteen hundred and twelve years. Of course, some one must have thought of the idea at some time, and others must have devoted thought and ingenuity to the preparation of the thousands which lie there on the counter for your choosing. But as for how long the Christmas card has been an institution—why, perhaps you are not sure that Robert Herrick, who did not write some of the little verses originally for a holiday greeting on a Christmas card. Oh, yes, surely the idea is as old as that. Didn't the old Italian painters paint Christmas subjects in the Middle Ages?—and so on.

Neither Herrick nor the Italian painters had the idea of a Christmas card. The idea is virtually a new-comer, and is altogether American in its inception and development. American artists of the highest standing contributed to its growth—John L. Farge and others. The story of the beginning of the card is an interesting one and has not a little to do with the story of the better appreciation of art which has come in this country in the last three decades. The Christmas card as we know it now was not originated until 1873, when it had its beginning in the simply decorated business card of a Boston art dealer.

It was in 1873 that the Vienna exposition was held. To this the art dealer sent a small exhibition, and with it a number of his business cards, embellished with a conventional floral design in colors about the name. Even so obvious a thing as this, as it seems now, was much commented on and admired. To one woman, Mrs. O. E. Whitney, the notion came that a design of the same sort, with "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year," would be a pretty remembrance to send to friends at the holiday time. So new was the idea that it did not occur to Mrs. Whitney for some years that the appropriate designs of holly or mistletoe might be employed with good effect. It was only after she made her suggestion to the art dealer, Mrs. Whitney saw that the tokens were placed on sale here. They were merely conventional floral decorations, for the most part unseasonable, done on small tinted boards. Immediate popularity came to them, and within a year the cards were issued for Elster, St. Valentine's Day, New Year, and Thanksgiving, all with the same conventional quality of execution.

From the first indication of favor, however, the development of the innovation was more than the ordinary story of ingenuity. The art dealer saw great possibilities offered by the cards, and he conceived the thought of making them a real expression of the best that could be had in artistic design; it is much to his credit that he was able to discern what was really worth while. For it was done in those decades just after the Civil War that taste was at such a low level in the United States. Perhaps forty years from now the people will be astonished at what passed muster for beautiful with us today; but it is fair to say that the difference in standards between then and now will not be so great as between the year of 1873 and 1912. Mr. Dooley put it this way: "Those were the years 'when the iron dogs howled on the lawn and people came five miles to see a grove built in Illinois by the Chicago fire.' Besides those open-air adornments, the interior boasted tasseled lambrequins, pictures 'execrable in sentiment and execution resting on easels with 'throw' draped about; wax fruit under glass jars, and such

beholdments. Education in art was badly needed. The Christmas card had some part in changing the level of public taste for the better. The art dealer who began the design of such cards possessed the idea of the Christmas card, and it was his duty to make these tokens aid in public education. From the first the decorations, if simple, were well done and colored, and were truly pretty in their simplicity. In the spring of 1880, however, a new inspiration for the development of the idea came, and when the first competition for the designs of Christmas cards was instituted, and the leading artists in the country were invited to enter the lists. The prizes were considerable in amount, well worth the attention of the most aspiring. Three prizes were offered for the best three efforts in oils or water colors, aggregating \$2,000. The names of the men selected as judges were enough to insure the standards which would be observed in making the awards. On the board were Richard M. Hunt, the architect; Moore, the head of the silver department of a famous jeweler's establishment, and Samuel Colman. Hundreds of designs were sent in, and an exhibition of the best was held for some time in one of the art galleries in this city. The winners were Rosina Emmet, first; Alexander Sander, second, and Anna G. Morse, third. The publicity given to this competition helped to increase the popularity of the cards greatly. It might be going too far to say that the Christmas card had done its work of education already, but it is a fact that the same entry, by Dora Wheeler, was adjudged winner by both the people and artists.

In 1883 the conditions were different, but the high standards were maintained. From among the leading artists in this country twenty-two were chosen to submit designs for Christmas cards, and the prizes were sufficient as before, to make the effort attractive. A competent jury of judges was named. The artists invited were: J. Carroll Beckwith, E. H. Blawie, Albert Frederick, L. M. Gausman, W. St. John Harper, Liebeth B. Humphrey, Will H. Low, Leon Moran, Percy Moran, Thomas Moran, H. Winsor, J. Allen Weir, C. D. Weldon, and Dora Wheeler. First prize this time went to Weldon, and the second to Will H. Low. Exhibitions of the designs submitted were held in several art galleries in this city, and afterwards were sent to Boston, Buffalo, and many other cities. This ended the competitions. Before 1883, the illustrations had been virtually in the hands of the one firm, but now they were taken up very generally by all publishers. The idea had established itself firmly in public favor.

But even then, the designs were most restrained in their conception. At its farthest, a card showed nothing more than a plain flower panel, or a border, in which mottoes appropriate to the season were intertwined. The symbolism of the holiday season was limited to the figures of angels or lambs, and none was deemed enough to show, for instance, jolly Englishmen, or a bowl of punch. Nowadays the symbolism is invoked from afar. This year, as an example, the Egyptian card had a very popular scene last year for the first time, as seen again. It is explained that as far back as four thousand years ago on the banks of the Nile some Ramesses sent a scarab to his friend at a certain time of the year, to wish good luck and health, with the river overflowed again. You can buy a scarab, or the head of Isis embossed on a shield, also a falcon; but these seem to be health interlopers. Fun-fair scenes are mostly sought for this season—some designs of scarier-coated hunters, a pack of hounds on a snowy landscape. Quotations from authors in poetry and prose, while always to be had, are not chosen so often. In fact, the scene of the contemporary Dickens, Thackeray, and Browning, and these were favorites. It is perfectly fair to say that some of the sentiments which find their way to being used on the cards are not and sentimental, but one need have scruple in choosing a card at the present price of 25 cents, and even 10 cents. From this the prices run as low as 10 cents the dozen.

One idea, which is restored to favor

now by the Christmas card is the sending of a bayberry candle as a holiday token. This restoration of an old custom is particularly popular this season. According to the ancient legend, the girl was supposed to go out and gather the bayberries herself with which to make the dips, but, in consequence of environmental conditions in New York, a special dispensation from the lord of the holiday sets aside this requirement. Two candles are made, one for the maid and one for her lover, and the two are burned together. If the smoke wreaths bend toward each other, it augurs happiness; if they bend away from each other—well, we will not think about that possibility at Christmas time. Besides, this magic power of divination, the bayberry has such heavenly and substantial qualities as to insure a well-filled larder, health, and happiness. The bayberry candles come in small decorated boxes suitable for mailing.

SLICK THIEF LOOTS EAST SIDE BOARDING HOUSE

Renting a room for which he pays in advance, depositing his satchel, rain-coat and other personal effects, and under one pretext or another returning to rob from any available section of the house, a slick thief is today being sought by the police after he had successfully victimized one East Side boarding-house keeper of \$60 in currency, a bank containing a considerable sum in coin, two bank-books containing large deposits and valuable insurance papers.

It is believed that similar reports will be made to the authorities, as it has been ascertained he arrived in town but day before yesterday, and is still thought to be awaiting further opportunity of burglarizing before making his escape from the city. His haul yesterday is said to have amounted to more than \$200 if he manages to negotiate the bank-books and papers.

SPECIAL ADVENT SERVICES.

Special services are held in Trinity church, corner Fairfield avenue and Broad street, on Friday evenings during Advent. At these services the rector, Rev. C. L. Gompf, gives instructions on the church's customs and services. All who are interested will be welcomed.

THIS STORY IS ALWAYS GOOD.

The young man was convalescing from typhoid fever, and was very hungry. The doctor promised him that he should have something to eat on the following day. The patient knew he would like to, but hoped for a plate of good, steaming food.

The next day when the nurse brought in a spoonful of tapioca pudding, she said: "Here is your dinner. The doctor says that everything else you do must be in the same proportion." "Nurse," he said, "I want something to eat. Won't you please bring me a postage stamp?"—Harper's Bazaar.

POINTS OF INTEREST.

Excellent suggestions for Christmas gifts in trimmed hats, shirt waists, petticoats, marabout boas, and muffs, raincoats, long cloth coats, pony skin coats, fur scarves and fur muffs, at E. H. Dillon & Co., 1103 Main street.

Thing & Co.'s Good News Sale is now in full swing. Never has there been such a large variety of footwear as so popular prices as this year. Footwear makes an appropriate and useful gift for Christmas. If you don't know the size guess at it, exchange is easily made after Christmas. If you are interested at all in saving money on footwear this is surely the store to trade at. Our store today while assortments are large. This Good News Sale enables you to buy good dependant footwear for the whole family at prices that means a saving to you. Come in today. S. B. Thing & Co., 1153 Main street.

EVENING GOWNS

Just received, a new lot of very pretty Evening Gowns in all the dainty colors. Pink, light blue and white, trimmed with all the newest effects.

\$6.95, \$12.95, \$15.00

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'Money Cheerfully Refunded'

XMAS WAISTS

We are showing a very fine line of Silk and Chiffon Waists at

\$1.95

JUST THE THING FOR A PRETTY XMAS GIFT



Astrakhan Coats

Silk lined, sold in other stores for \$22.50. Our price

\$15.00

These coats are lined throughout with guaranteed satin in a large variety of colors, collar and cuffs trimmed with Salt's Seal-ette. These coats are positively worth \$22.50. We specialize on \$15.00 garments, therefore we can not ask any more than

\$15.00

LADIES' AND MISSES' SUITS

We are selling a large variety of Ladies' and Misses' Suits worth \$18.00 to \$20.00 at

\$10.00

Made in fine fancy and mannish effects, satin lined, hand turned edges, weights and shields, superbly tailored, elegantly finished.

Trimmed Hats

ALL TRIMMED HATS ARE BEING CLOSED OUT AT LESS THAN COST

FURS

A fine showing of Furs for Xmas. PRICES ARE RIGHT

\$4.50 to \$15.00

Ladies' Bath Robes

What is more acceptable than a nice Bath Robe? We have them for

\$2.98 to \$4.95

SPECIAL SALE

Of Useful Christmas Gifts

REILLY MUST SAY THE WORD

DEMOCRATS IN SENATE WILL HOLD UP CONNECTICUT APPOINTMENTS BY TAFT OTHERWISE.

MERIDON CONGRESSMAN IS SPONSOR FOR THIS STATE TILL AFTER MARCH 4.

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Saturday will be a big day at our Cloak and Suit Department. We have made Special Prices on Ladies' Misses' and Children's Coats, Suits, Skirts, Dresses, Waists, etc.

Ladies' Long Plush Coats..... \$14.75, \$19.75, \$22.50

Ladies' and Misses' Long Coats and Johnny Coats..... \$6.98, \$7.98, \$9.95, \$12.95

Ladies' and Misses' Tailored Suits..... \$7.95, \$9.95, \$12.95

Ladies' and Misses' One Piece Serge Dresses..... \$3.95, \$4.95, \$6.95

Children's Chincheris and Plush Coats..... \$4.95, \$5.95, \$6.95

Children's Long Cloth Coats..... \$2.95, \$3.95, \$4.95

Children's \$1.25 and \$1.50 School Dresses..... 95c

Children's 79c Wash Dresses..... 49c

\$1.00 Kid Gloves..... 79c

Some great bargains will also be found in Hosiery, Gloves, Muffin, Underwear, Waists, Men's Furnishings, Umbrellas, Handkerchiefs and Fancy Articles.

Keller Bros.

1116-1118 MAN STREET

Next to Riker's.

SPECIAL COTTON REPORT

Washington, Dec. 13—A special report by the department of agriculture estimates that the total production of cotton in the United States for the last season will amount to 6,612,335,000 pounds (not including lint), equivalent to 13,224,670 bales of 500 pounds gross weight. Last year the total was 15,992,701 bales. The five year average is 11,847,270.

SUES MOTHER OF HER AFFIANCED FOR CLOTHES

Pittsburgh, Dec. 12—Charging that the mother of her affianced husband refused to give up her clothing, Elizabeth Adams has entered suit against Miss Adams, alleged that when she broke her ankle her fiancé took her to his home. After she recovered and left the Hyatt home the mother refused to return her clothes, she said.

Can You Think

of a more acceptable gift in the home than a beautiful portable light? A present that will "live" indefinitely, a constant reminder of the giver—a real ornament in the room, and serviceable throughout the year.

PORTABLE ELECTRIC LIGHTS

may be found here in a large variety of designs in Plain Brass, Pounded Brass, Cut Glass, "Ivory," and with various other metal standards, containing plain and art glass shades which produce very pleasing effects.

PRICED VERY REASONABLY

WE INVITE YOUR INSPECTION

BRYAN'S POSITION ON SUBJECTS NOW BEFORE CONGRESS

Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 13—William J. Bryan uses black type in the latest issue of his Commonwealth to outline his position on various subjects now engaging the attention of Congress. The Commonwealth said: "Mr. Bryan's position. "First, Mr. Bryan does not advocate the retirement of the outstanding national bank currency but he opposes

BRYAN'S POSITION ON SUBJECTS NOW BEFORE CONGRESS

any enlargement of the privileges now enjoyed by national banks and he believes that such emergency currency as may be necessary should be issued by the government and not by the banks. "Second, the conferring upon existing banks of the right to participate in debate in the Senate and House need not be accompanied by compensation. In other words, the privilege may be conferred as an honor rather than an office. "Third, the Democrats in the Senate are right in insisting that important appointments should be reserved for the President-elect. This is especially true when the appointments are to hold office for life. "Fourth, the Democrats at Washington are justified in condemning the partisanship which leads the President to extend the civil service when that party had no higher purpose than the retention of Republican appointees."

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SOMEWHAT AT RANDOM, THESE ARE FOR WOMEN

Felt Juliets, ribbon and fur trim, in browns, black, grey, red and blue 85c, \$1, \$1.25

Felt Ribbon Trimmed Slippers, all colors, at \$1.00

Crocheted Slippers, all colors, at 75c and 85c

Plain Felt Slippers, felt and leather sole..... 50c and up

THE MEN ARE LIKEWISE BOUNTIFULLY PROVIDED FOR

Men's Tan and Black Romeos..... \$1.00, \$1.25, \$1.50, \$2.00

Men's Tan and Black Opera and Everett Slippers..... 50c to \$2.00

Men's Felt Slippers, felt sole..... 60c to \$1.00

Men's Felt Slippers, leather sole..... \$1.00

NOR ARE THE LITTLE FOLKS OVERLOOKED

Little Girls and Boys Red and Tan Romeo and Juliets..... 85c up

Tan and Red Opera and Everett Slippers..... 85c and \$1.00

Red Felt Juliets, red and black fur trimmed..... 65c up

Felt "Comfy" Slippers, red and blue, at..... 80c and \$1.00

Big and Little Boys' Velvet Embroidered Slippers..... 50c

NEVER MIND THE SIZE, GUESS AT IT, WE'LL MAKE IT RIGHT LATER

Men's and Boys' High Cut Waterproof Shoes, tan and black..... \$2.00 and up

Little Boys'..... \$1.50

Girls' Tan and Black, Button and Lace Shoes, from..... \$1.00 up

Rubber Boots for all, Storm King, and short bright tops for the Little Ones.

Best grades at lowest prices.

WE SHOE THE ENTIRE FAMILY