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PEOPLE who decide to give
only useful Christmas gifts
often have a bunch of sur-
prises waiting for them
around the corner.

"Look before you leap," is a useful
thing to remember.

Useful presents should be accepted
in the spirit in which they are given.
Keep the Christmas spirit green.
When you get a useful present, do not
take it back and exchange it for some-
thing you can use.

Keep it; hang on to it. Do not give
it away to the poor, for they have
troubles enough of their own.

One of the most useful useful gifts
—for some people—is a smoking
jacket. Once we gave our old Uncle
Peters one of those costly nicotine
reefers. It had blue satin cuffs and a
braided collar. The coat was held to-
gether not by buttons but by gold-
braided knots. The garment made a hit
with Uncle Peters, but not the knots.

For years his smoking jacket had
been a fannel undershirt, gracefully
decorated with suspenders. Every eve-
ning he sat by the stove, smoking a
pipe which would have suffocated a
steamship stoker. He never told us
what he burned in the pipe, and we

never went close enough to investi-
gate.

Christmas day they made him put
on the smoking jacket. Life was not
the same after that. They told him he
mustn't smoke that vulgar, shocking
old pipe while wearing the lovely
jacket. Everybody thought he was
cured of the deadly corn-cob. He quit
smoking the pipe and instead brought
home a bale of cigars.

He made a handsome figure, wear-
ing the braided smoking jacket, and
puffing a cigar with a gilt band around
it. We left him, smoking happily by
the stove. In one hour we returned.
Uncle Peters was still consuming
cigars. On the floor lay the family
cat. It did not raise its head at our
footsteps. It would never look up
again. The picture frames on the
walls had turned green.

Uncle Peters denied that his Flor de
Mule Ear segars had killed the cat.
He insisted she had rolled over after
taking one squirt at the smoking
jacket.

Useful gifts often have a way of
making themselves useful when you
least expect it. For instance, we
buried the cat in Uncle Peters' smok-
ing jacket!



HERE are Christmas bells
and bells.

The real Christmas bells
ring out only in the morn-
ing of the sacred day. The
other bells ring from morning until
night. After which they jangle through
one's dreams.

The Christmas doorbell is a great
institution. It is the busiest bell of
the lot. All day long the doorbell has
pressing engagements. When the
doorbell rings on Christmas day, every-
body gives heed to its sweet sounds.
And everybody rushes to the front
door as if the house had caught on
fire, and that was the nearest exit.
The doorbell has everyone in the fam-
ily hopping as if they were so many
trained ducks.

There are two reasons why the
Christmas doorbell is a welcome vis-
itor when it jars upon the ear. In the
first place, you know that no bills
are going to be presented by the caller
at the door. In the second place the
doorbell may announce the arrival of
a package.

A sawed-off express wagon driver,
with a chunky, holly-bound package
under his arm, can get more attention
on Christmas day than the governor of
the state, surrounded by his military
staff and preceded by a Chinese or
chestra, playing "Tippelally."

The package the expressman or
mail carrier brings, is seized by a

dozen eager hands. It is strange how
ready everybody is to help in relieving
the deliveryman of his 12-ounce
burden. Then the package is conveyed
in state to the inspecting department.
It is opened with nervous anticipation,
and there is great rejoicing when it
proves to be a knitted muffler for fa-
ther from Aunt Jessica. The muffler
is as large as a young hammock, and
is pinker than pa's cheeks when we
all insist that he try it on.

If there is a grown-up daughter in
the family, she beats all records get-
ting to the door when the bell rings on
Christmas day. If anybody beats her
to the knob, it is not her fault, as she
slid down the banister and took a fly-
ing leap, which was the best she could
do without breaking bones. Sis ex-
pects the kind of presents which are
not found in fireplaces after Santa
Claus' visit. She's looking for bou-
quets of flowers, huge boxes of candy
and other tokens of regard. Some-
times, though not very often the bell
ring announces a neatly wrapped wed-
ding ring.

The Christmas telephone bell is an
important feature of the Yuletide. It
rings Christmas tidings which former-
ly were sent on decorative cards,
which, with their imitation snow, made
handy match scratchers.

The Christmas dinner bell—one at a
time, please. Don't all rush in at
once!



THE Late Shopper is a prom-
inent member of the Genus
Procrastinatus.

He has his own peculiar
way of celebrating Christ-
mas. Often he celebrates it in bed,
with a water bag on his chest and the
grip of an anxious physician around
his wrist. His eyes are closed and
his poor, warped brain is worn in a
sling.

On the floor beside his bed, torn to
shreds and bitten in numerous places
lies his Christmas list. The day be-
fore Christmas he sallied forth with
this list in his hand and a look of
desperate determination on his fea-
tures.

The Late Shopper is a cheerful giv-
er, withal. He loves giving for its
own sake, but he loves it better for
the sake of putting it off. Decidedly
he is no believer in the "Do-it-now"
movement. Nor is he selfish. It is
just a habit. It is to be feared that
if he were dying of thirst he would
put off giving himself a drink.

Philanthropists should find rest san-
itariums for Late Christmas Shoppers

—th kind that are incurable. Here
they could retire and nurse their
wounds, incurred in the last toy coun-
ter rush.

How fortunate it is that Santa Claus
was not born a late shopper. He is
always on the job, and gets ready for
the holiday season months ahead.
We are reliably informed by the "nur-
ery books. However, Santa Claus is
in constant danger of losing his repu-
tation. There are hundreds of fond
fathers who pose as Santa Claus to
their little broods. Papas who sail
forth to collect a bagful of toys just
when the stores are closing on Christ-
mas eve, and the holly garlands are
being taken down, and the manager
of the dress goods department is get-
ting ready to announce, "Spring and
Summer Styles."

The Late Shoppers we have always
with us. As eleventh hour athletes
they take all the running, jumping
and line-plunging honors. But often
the Late Shopper has one good mark
to his credit. He puts off giving at
all times, and therefore puts off giv-
ing a piece of his mind to his wife.

A Christmas Carol.

Christmas Prayer

COME Thou, dear Prince Oh
come to us this now Christmas
and come to us by marts
of earth the queer houses and noisy
streets the humble huts. Come to
us all and with Thy love, ever
human heart that we may know the
and the blessed peace bear
charity to all mankind

—Eugene Field.

Twiddle—de—dum,
Twiddle—dum—de,
Playing the game of Expectancy,
Under the glare of the Christmas tree,
Blending of craft and philanthropy,
Marvelous game of humanity,
Twiddle—de—dum,
Twiddle—dum—dee.

Twiddle—de—dum,
Twiddle—dum—dee,
The rules are as simple—just listen and
see:
The gift you receive should be worth
about three
Of the one you bestow upon possibly me.
Annually tempting the powers that be;
Twiddle—de—dum,
Twiddle—dum—dee.

—Life.



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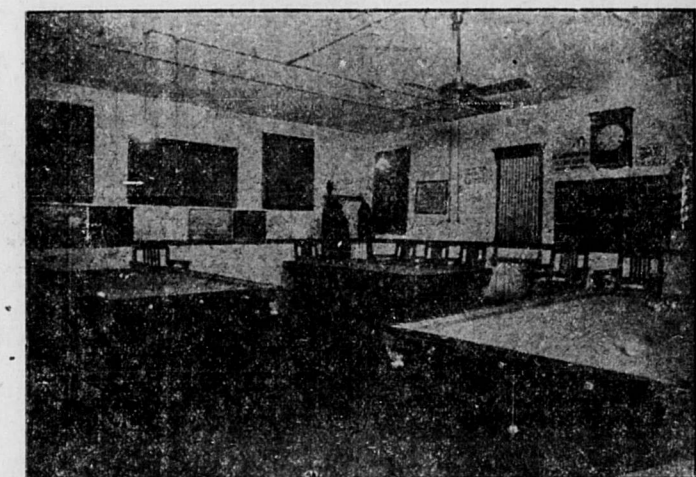
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