

but instead of lay figures representing the Holy Family, living persons play the parts of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, a real baby represents our Infant Saviour, and real cattle munch the hay in the mimic cattle shed. During the Mass priests, acolytes, and congregation proceed around the church, and, arriving at the crib, do homage to the figurants in the Nativity scene. Holy water is sprinkled by the priest on man, maid, and baby, and afterwards on the cattle; then, going to the church door, the priest asperges and blesses all the herds and flocks of the people, which are driven by him for that purpose. Standing on the topmost step of the porch with his choristers and white-surpliced acolytes beside and behind him, the priest dips the sprinkler into the silver ewer of holy water, and showers the latter upon the oxen and the sheep; and, amid the clang of the bells around their necks, their lowing and baaing, as well as the words and cries of their drivers, are heard ever and anon the solemn words of blessing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

DON'T 'GET EVEN'

If an acquaintance send you an unexpected gift, do not hurry to buy something to send in return. That is vulgar. That shows anything but a Christmas spirit. Perhaps in some way unknown to you she has been helped by you. Perhaps you have comforted her by a chance word or helped her by a small favor. Perhaps you have a cheery way which has lightened her burdens and made her life easier. Then if her heart prompts her to bestow a small gift on you, why should you rob her of the happiness of giving by your unwillingness to receive without a return? A pretty note of thanks will be prized by her far more than a gift, which she will know is the measure of your appreciation. Do not swamp yourself in debt for presents beyond your means. That is silly and wrong as well. No friend wants an expensive present unless the giver can afford it; no one would like to know that weeks and months after, way along in the spring, you cannot buy necessary garments because you must pay those Christmas bills. Give a small present, good of its kind, but not of too costly a nature. If you have time and deft fingers, make a gift—there is no greater compliment than to give your own handiwork.

THE FARMER'S METHOD

A teacher was giving a 'Lesson on the cow.' She was trying to impress on the young minds the various uses of milk. Butter, cheese, etc., had been disposed of, and she wanted some bright child to tell how the farmer gave the surplus milk to the pigs. Leading up to this she asked this question:

'Now, children, after the farmer has made all the butter and cheese he needs and uses what milk he wants for his family, what does he do with the milk that still remains?'

Dead silence followed for a moment, and then one little hand waived frantically.

The teacher smiled and said, 'Well, Tommy?'

'He puts it back into the cow,' piped Tommy.

FAMILY FUN

An Amusing Trick.—This is a trick in which a bottle and ribbons play a prominent part, and is an extremely popular one. The bottle is of tin with an enclosed space round the sides to contain wine, commencing about an inch and a half from the lower end, and terminating just within the mouth. The bottle has no bottom, and there is thus a passage, in the shape of an inverted funnel, extending through its whole length. A cylindrical base or stopper just fits into the space at the bottom of the bottle, and on this are fixed six or eight small reels or bobbins. On each of these is wound a yard or so of ribbon, each of a different color. An upright wire rod springs from the centre of this base, terminating just within the neck of the bottle in a little flat piece of metal, perforated with as many holes as there are ribbons, and one end of each of the ribbons is brought up through one of these holes, and a little knot made upon it to prevent its slipping back again. The ribbons being in position, and the space in the bottle duly filled with wine, the performer brings it forward, and, after pouring out a glass or two, asks some lady present which is her favorite color, and on receiving an answer, gently taps the bottle with his wand, and immediately draws out with the tips of his forefinger from the neck, and presents to her, a ribbon of the desired color. More wine is produced, alternately with fresh ribbons, until all are exhausted.

To those who may have become tired of the old-fashioned games usual at Christmas, the following may be found suitable: Hunt up a lot of poor people who have not got any Christmas dinner, and go and give them one. N.B.—This game may be played by any number of persons.

All Sorts

Love makes service a delight.

There is no stronger tonic than hope.

Joys are our wings; sorrows are our spurs.

To succeed one must be systematic and have a goal.

Hope is like the sun—it is the brightest after a dark day.

Idleness travels leisurely, and poverty soon overtakes her.

We do ourselves the most good when we do good to others.

Take things as they are, and proceed to make them better.

No man ever yet amounted to anything who preached and practised the gospel of grumbling.

Christmas is a time for giving and for getting. It should also be a forgiving and forgetting time.

To feel strongly that you are right, and to act on that feeling, is better than to seek the advice of a philosopher, even if you make a mistake.

She: 'Why are artists always so careful to sign their paintings?' He: 'To indicate which is the top and which is the bottom of the picture.'

Mr. Slowe: 'I tell you when I read about some of these wonderful inventions in electricity nowadays it makes me think a little.' Miss Pepper: 'Yes, isn't it remarkable what electricity can do?'

Mrs. Ferguson: 'George, what do you have to do when you want to draw some money out of a bank?' Mr. Ferguson: 'You have to put some money in the bank beforehand. That's always been my experience.'

Little Nell: 'You've got a good papa, Willie.'

Willie: 'Pa ain't so bad, but I wish he wasn't so much in love with mamma. Why, he believes everything she says about me.'

A little boy of eight years, attending school away from home, wrote a letter to his sister, from which the following extract is taken:—'We had a spelling-match in school today, and I spelled all the boys down and won the meddle.'

'I remember your wife as such a dainty and pretty girl, Tumly, and yet they tell me she has turned out a fine cook.' 'Turned out a fine cook!' exclaimed Tumly. 'She has turned out half a dozen of them within the last three months!'

Clara, aged six, did not know the meaning of an encore, and was very much disgusted with the audience at the children's Christmas concert, in which she took part.

'I just know we didn't make a single mistake,' she exclaimed; 'yet the people in front got cross and made such a fuss that we had to do it all over again.'

'Everything was fine,' said the farmer when he got back from his Christmas visit to Dunedin. 'Everything was fine except the light. They kept the light burning in my room all night long, a thing I ain't used to, and I couldn't sleep on account of it.'

'Why didn't you blow it out?' asked his wife. 'Blow it out? How could I? The blamed thing was inside a bottle!'

First Married Lady: 'I'm going to give my husband a hundred cigars as a Christmas present.'

Second Married Lady: 'What did you pay for them?'

First Married Lady: 'Oh, nothing. I've been taking one or two out of Tom's box each day for some time. He hasn't missed them, and will be so delighted with my little present and the quality of them that he'll give me something handsome in return.'

Most Christmas cards are manufactured in Germany. The great bulk of these are produced by chromo-lithography, of which Germany is the home. They can be produced much cheaper there than with us, wages being lower, and the atmospheric and other conditions more favorable. The atmosphere has a good deal to do with chromo-lithography; for on a damp, foggy morning the printer finds his paper stretches, and smudges and smears are the result. The manufacture, it may be mentioned, is going on all the year round; and while the cards are selling for Christmas, 1910, the publishers are busy selecting their designs for 1911.

Santa Claus is another name for Saint Nicholas—a good Catholic saint. To us the legend of Santa Claus is beautiful, but in this material age, and among people who do not know or care whether Santa Claus was a saint or a satyr, his generosity to the children has been wofully overdone. The good saint has been sadly vulgarised and commercialised in these latter days. Catholic children should know, above all, the true meaning of Christmas. No legend, no matter how beautiful, should be allowed to take the place of the eternal truth of the Babe of Bethlehem.