



PEOPLE who decide to give only useful Christmas gifts often have a bunch of surprises 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 something else.

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 gifts for some people is a smoking jacket. Once we gave our old Uncle Peters one of those costly nicotines. It had blue satin cuffs and a braided collar. The coat was held together not by buttons but by gold embroidery.

The gift was much too big with Uncle Peters, but the烟 jacket.

For years his smoking jacket had been a fanny undershirt, gracefully decorated with suspenders. Every evening 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 investigate.

Christmas day they made him put on the smoking jacket. Life was 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 nicotine. He quit smoking the pipe, and instead brought home a pile of cheap cigarette.

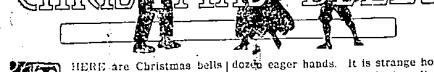
He made a smoking figure, wearing a braided smoking jacket, and puffing a cigar with a gilt band around the stem. We left him, smoking happily by the stove. In one hour we returned. Uncle Peters was still consuming cigar. On the floor lay the family cat. It did not raise its head at our footsteps. It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

Uncle Peters declared that his Flor de Mole cigar had killed the cat.

He insisted she had rolled over after taking one squat 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' smoking jacket!

CHRISTMAS BELLS



IT is time for Christmas bells and bells. The small Christmas bells ring out only in the morning of the sacred day. The other bells ring from morning until night. After which they jingle 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 thanks to it for saving the day.

As the day approaches to the front door as if the house had caught on fire, and that was the nearest exit.

The doorbell has everyone in the family hopping as if they were so many trained ducks.

There are two reasons why the Christmas doorbell is a welcome visitor when it jars upon the ear. In the first place, you know that no bells are going to be presented by the callers 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-handled 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 Chinese orchestra, playing "Tippeely."

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 to state to the inspection department. It is opened with nervous anticipation, and there is great rejoicing when it proves to be a knitted muffler for mother from Aunt Jessie. It is as large as a young hammock, and is plusher than any when we last visited them, try it on.

If it is a grown-up daughter within the family, she beats hell records getting to the door when the bell rings on Christmas day. If anybody beats her to the knob, it is not her fault, as she did down the banister and took a flying leap, which was the best she could do without breaking bones. She expects the kind of presents which are not found in fireplace mantles, such as Christmas stockings, handkerchiefs, tokens of regard. Sometimes, though not very often, the bell announces a neatly wrapped wed-ring.

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

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

THE LATE SHOPPER

IT late. Shopper is a prominent member of the Genius of Progress. He has his own peculiar way of celebrating Christmas. 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 Good beside his bed, torn to shreds and bitten innumerable places, lies his heartbroken life." The day before Christmas he saulted forth with this list in his hand and a look of desperate determination on his features.

The Late Shopper is a cheerful giver, 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 "Doubtless" movement. Nor is he delirious. It is just that he is dying of thirst, he would not give himself a drink.

"Philanthropists should find rest, sanatoriums for Late Christmas Shoppers

A Christmas Carol.

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