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"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

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Nearly in Despair,

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of time. In the Germanic feasts, it was Thor, a long-bearded and white-haired god. Although the central figure in the Christian festival was the Child God, the Christ-Kindlein, the influence of long-established pagan customs could not readily be suppressed. The tradition of hoary age as the true representative of that festive period, was set aside for a time but soon reappeared and has remained to the present time. At first St. Nicholas did not supersede but simply accompanied Christ in his Christmas travels, and he does so still in some rural districts in Europe. But before very long, the religious character of the festival was forgotten in the excesses to which worldly amusements were carried. St. Nicholas became more and more important and less and less venerable, with the Christ-Child changed to Kris Kringle that his name to the other. Santa Claus is then no other than the pagan god Silenus, of unknown antiquity, but a Silenus with every offensive feature removed, as through the change of manners and morals everywhere, has been purified the whole grand festival of Christmas. Santa Claus does not however, rule the whole Christian world. The St. Nicholas of Southern France and Germany is a very different person. He is more like Saturn than Silenus. He distributes gifts to good little boys and girls, but he also carries a birch rod for the naughty ones. In Bohemia, parts of Lorraine, and the Tyrol, he is attended by an evil spirit who punishes the bad boys and girls. He is almost unknown in the Latin countries and in Russia. In Italy and in Spain, the Epiphany, instead of Christmas, is the day for giving presents, on account of the legend of the Wise Men. When on their way to Bethlehem, they saw an old woman cleaning the house. She asked them where they were going, and when told about the new-born King, she begged them to wait until she could go with them. But they said they could not tarry and bade her follow. She did so when she had finished, but the Wise Men had gone, and to this day she is seeking over the earth for the child Jesus. On the eve of Epiphany, she comes down the chimney with gifts to the children, hoping she may still find Him. In Italy she is called the Befana, and in Russia, the Baboushka.

In Spain, it is Balthasar himself who brings the gifts and the children leave their shoes near the chimney for him to fill them. In Belgium, several other countries in Europe, and all over America, the 25th of December is the blessed day which sees

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS EVE.

Stir up Thy might, O Lord, and come!
Or receive us sick for thee,
Sorrow and sin have reached their sum,
Thy night goes wearily.
For every Caesar at his wine
No myriad slaves undone;
Light of the World, arise and shine
From the eyes of Mary's Son!

Stir up Thy might, O Lord, and come!
O Lord, make no delay!
For Faith is faint, and hope is dumb,
And love hath lost his way.
Oh, Earth, but forth the Saviour meek!
Clouds, rain the Holy One!
Hope of the World arise and speak,
With the lips of Mary's Son!

Come, and lift up the lowly, Lord,
For whom no joy remains!
On ropes of death in chains,
Or done to death in chains,
The childing mother piteous,
The sad child-life begun—
O, God-love, Man-love, feel for us
In the Heart of Mary's Son!

Come, Just One, come, and with Thee bring
Or receive us sick for thee,
Lo, mountains in the desert spring.
The wilderness bloom:
Thy foot stonch down with banners furled—
Put down the night is done,
Light of this world, and every world,
T. e Maiden Mary's Son!

SANTA CLAUS.

(By Sarah T. Hauley, in Catholic School and Home Magazine.)

Who is Santa Claus? Ask a "dear little dimpled darling" of four or five years old, and she will quickly tell you about the wonderful old man that comes down the chimney on Christmas eve and fills the stockings of every good child in the world with all sorts of good things. Ask her a few years later and she will tell you that Santa Claus "don't come any more," and you know that, for her, Christmas will never be the same again.

The name Santa Claus is a Dutch corruption of Saint Nicholas. History tells us very little about him. He was born in Myra, Asia Minor, during the latter part of the third century. He entered a monastery near Myra, and was in due time made Abbot. He was also Bishop of Myra, and was noted for charity, benevolence and piety. He was imprisoned for his faith, under Diocletian, but was released and died about the year 326. His relics were preserved at Myra until the eleventh century, when they were removed to Bari. On the day of their translation thirty persons were cured of diseases through his intercession, and his tomb at Bari became famous for pilgrimages. St. Nicholas has always enjoyed a wide popularity. He is the patron of Russia, and there are three hundred and seventy-two churches in England dedicated to him. He is the special patron of virgins, children, scholars, and mariners, reasons for which are given in the many legends and traditions which throw a kindly light on the character of this good man.

So much for the Santa Claus of modern times. But the white-haired, white-bearded, merry-hearted old Christmas visitor can trace his pedigree to unnumbered centuries before St. Nicholas, and before the Christian era. The festival of Christmas, though commemorating the mightiest fact in the history of the world, when

"At last, earth's hope was granted,
And God was a child of earth,
And a thousand angels chanted
The lowly midnight birth."

is nevertheless a refined and modified blending together of three pagan festivals. The very date is pagan. From a very ancient period every tribe and nation of Europe held their greatest festival during December, at the winter solstice. The Greeks celebrated their "Bacchanalian" for days. The Teutonic tribes kept the old feast of Twelve Nights from December 25 to January 6. The Roman Saturnalia lasted for seven days. Our Christmas gifts are a relic of an old Roman custom, while the shouts of "Bona Saturnalia" were the precursors of "Merry Christmas." The decoration and illumination of our churches recall the temples of Saturn, radiant with burning tapers, and resplendent with garlands. Nearly all the legends, superstitions, and ceremonials, which are associated with Christmas in Europe and America, are the more or less original ones of the ancient Germanic "Twelve Nights."

But what has this to do with our question about Santa Claus? In every one of these pagan festivals, the leading figure was an old man of patriarchal aspect. With the Greeks, it was the aged, cheery, and decidedly disreputable Silenus, the chief of Satyrs and god of drunkards. In the Saturnalia, it was Saturn, the dignified and venerable god

My father's at home, sir.

Did you ever hear anything about Christ?

"I don't know him sir."
A Liverpool organ adds to this the following comment: "It might well be supposed that there could not be a more terrible object lesson as to the dangers of a secular educational system, but Archbishop Carr, of Melbourne, declares that his experience of the working of the Educational Act in his diocese has made him acquainted with not one but many cases of children of much more mature years fully as ignorant as this child of the fundamental truths of religion."

"NOT AFRAID."

The following communication, by Mr. John R. Clements, appears in a recent issue of the Presbyterian, which is published in Philadelphia, Pa. It carries the above quoted head line. Although the writer errs in saying the "shrines of the saints were worshipped" and makes a slight mistake relative to "oblations," he gives generous testimony as to the earnestness and sincerity of Catholic devotion.

"I was much impressed, on a recent visit to Notre Dame Cathedral, Montreal—my first entrance to a Roman Catholic church—to note the resolute determination displayed by the worshippers. There were a large number of sight-seers and not a few curiosity-seekers in the Cathedral on this morning, and yet this did not seem to interfere, in the least, with those who were doing their devotions. It was not a season of stated worship, but persons were constantly entering, praying for a time, doing other acts and leaving. The prayers were uttered heedless of all that was going on around. The shrines of the various saints were worshipped, and the oblations made with the same degree of earnestness they would have been made no eyes of curiosity turned on those thus engaged." "Well," said a good old Christian lady, turning to me as the doors of the great Cathedral closed behind us and left us standing on its massive steps, "there's one lesson for Christians anyway. These worshippers are not disturbed, no matter who comes, nor however critically they watch them." "I thought of the many times professed followers of Christ refrained from duty because strange eyes were upon them, or the ear of the world was listening and said," "Yes, there's one more lesson. Let us profit by it, and "pass it on."

WORKING THE WRONG WAY.

A gentleman residing at Drummondville informed a Toronto News reporter last week that some of the Protestant business men of Niagara Falls are complaining that they have recently suffered greatly in their business owing to the fact that Catholics have withdrawn their patronage from them. The complainants, it appears, have the reputation of being P. P. A. men, and one of them even went so far as to call upon the parish priest of the place to inform him that he is not a member of that anti-Catholic society. The priest, it is said, informed him that he could do nothing in the matter. The Catholics are free to deal where they will, and if a certain class among Protestants combine to injure Catholics, they cannot be much surprised, nor have they much reason for complaint if their conduct proves to be a boomerang which recoils upon themselves.

"We cannot vouch for the truth of this story, but we would not be much surprised to learn that it is about what has happened. The merchant who complained would not have been treated so if he had not been considered a P. P. A. man, sworn to injure Catholics in every way possible. It appears that at least the P. P. A. meets over his store, as he rents it to them.

Windsor too has been a hotbed of Apaisin, the Mayor of that city having been elected last January on the A. P. A. ticket, as the members of that society have openly claimed. There is also a candidate for the mayoralty for next year out on the same ticket, who loudly proclaims that he will be elected through the influence of that "powerful association." It is a little amusing to learn that a business man recently failed even there, and that the failure is attributed to his having been a P. P. A. man; yet the Windsor "Review," is our authority to the effect that this is the case.

A LESSON FROM AUSTRALIA.

At a recent Anglican diocesan festival held in the Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia, Mr. Justice Hodges assured a large audience that the following dialogue was perfectly true, and that it had taken place in his own presence in a court of justice. A little girl was being examined, and she replied thus to the questions:

"How old are you?"
"Ten years and seven months, sir."
"Do you go to school?"
"Yes, sir; the State school in—"
"Been going there long?"
"A little over a year, sir."
"Were you at school before that?"
"Yes, sir; at the State school in—"
"street three or four years."
"Can you read?"
"Yes, sir."
"And write?"
"Yes."
"Well, my little woman, did you ever hear of God?"
"Beg pardon, sir."
"Did you ever hear of God?"
"Of God, sir?"
"Did you ever hear anything about your Heavenly Father?"

Audubon's Tame Turkey.

Audubon, the great American naturalist, succeeded in rearing a wild turkey that became very tame. Still, love of freedom was inborn, and it had to be allowed to roam at its own sweet will in the woods near its owner's house. It spent the whole day in the forest, returning home only at night. At last it forgot to come back. Some time afterwards Audubon went hunting, and saw in the distance a splendid wild turkey, on which he set his dog. To his surprise, the bird did not fly away, nor did the dog seize it when he drew up to it, but instead turned his head towards his master. When Audubon approached he at once identified his missing pet. The turkey and the dog, too, had recognized each other as old friends. So they all went home together.