

The Children's Page

I SOON SHALL UNDERSTAND.

(By Mrs. Ellen M. Winter.) I do not ask my Lord to tell me all the "reason why" He suffers pain and loss to come, And clouds to veil my sky, For soon the clouds will roll away, The long night break in endless day, And in that glorious heavenly land, I know that I shall understand.

I do not ask that He must prove His Word is true to me, And that before I can believe, He first must let me see, It is enough for me to know "Tis true because he says 'tis so. On His unchanging Word I'll stand And trust 'till I can understand.

I do not ask to have my path Made smooth before my tired feet, If I may only lean on Him, His love will make all trials sweet, One look into His blessed face Will make me strong to run the race, Led onward by His own right hand, I'll go on if I can understand.

But can this be the "reason why" He calls our own best-loved ones to Him? They leave the door ajar that we may get a glimpse of joy within. It must be true, for it does seem More real than any earthly dream, The shining face—the beckoning hand—I think I almost understand.

And now He comes and shows to me The things unseen by mortal eyes, And says, "Tis but a little way To their bright mansions in the skies." I think I almost hear the tone Of Hallelujahs 'round the throne, By faith I clasp the beckoning hand And know I soon shall understand.

THE UNIVERSAL SAINT.

It is the world's misfortune to possess only an imperfect biography of its most popular saint. As everybody knows, St. Nicholas is the patron of children, who all regard him as the best and most liberal saint in the calendar. What else is known about him consists of a little legitimate history, mingled with a great deal of legendary lore. He is usually pictured as an old man with venerable white hair and beard, dressed in furs and riding in a sledge drawn by reindeer, while he carries on his back a basket filled with trinkets.

This is the Santa Claus of the story-books. And the bright-eyed children of America unite with those of every Christian land in the custom of hanging up their stockings on Christmas Eve before going to sleep, expecting them to be filled by this mysterious person.

But the patron saint seems to have a different appearance to different peoples. In some parts of Germany he makes his appearance dressed as a real Bishop, either riding a white horse or an ass, and carrying a large basket on his arm and a bundle of rods in his hands. In Bohemia he appears dressed in a sheet instead of surplice, with a crushed pillow on his head in lieu of a mitre.

On his calling out, "Whit thou pra?" all the children fall upon their knees, whereupon the benevolent visitor or lets fall some fruit upon the floor and disappears. In this manner he goes from house to house, sometimes ringing a bell to announce his arrival; visits all the nurseries, inquires into the conduct of the children, praises or admonishes them, as the case may be, distributing sweetmeats or rods accordingly.

His national nicknames are as multitudinous as his personal disguises. The name of Santa Claus is derived from the Dutch. In Switzerland he is the Sami Claus, and in Norway and Sweden Sonner Klas. The people of the Vocaberg know him as Zemmel Klas, and believe that he travels about with a big hay sack, into which he threatens to put naughty children.

He takes the name of Niklo in Austria, and is usually followed by a masked servant whom they call Krampus; and in the Tyrol he goes by the name of the "Holy Man."—The American Boy.

GERTRUDE'S INVITATION.

"A whole summer at the seashore! How lovely!" There was just a little wistfulness mingled with the congratulatory words, and the other girl noticed it and opened her eyes. Seasons at the seashore were an old story to her, her father's handsome summer home stood fronting the rolling breakers, and every summer since she could remember she had fallen asleep to the majestic music of the waves. She had wanted to go abroad this summer and had fretted a little when her father had decided that it would not be possible for him to leave his business for any length of time. "I get so tired of the same old things year after year," she complained.

But something in the tone of the girl who said "how lovely!" suggested to her that some people might consider her fortunate. She reflected, too, that when a girl's father is a book-keeper he is not likely to own a summer home and that when there are four or five younger children in the family, the oldest sister has considerable practice in self-denial. She was silent for a minute. Then she spoke out the pleasant idea that had suddenly occurred to her. "Gertrude, couldn't you spend a couple of weeks at the seashore with me?" "Oh, May!"

The exclamation came as if the heart of the speaker was too full for another word. Gertrude's face was aglow. She seemed to hear the lapping of the waves against the beach, to see the glitter of the white sand, and feel the sea breeze in her face. "I'd love to come!" she said when she could find her voice. "Well, then, I'll arrange with mamma about the best time for you to come. There's to be other company, of course, but the house is very large. I'll let you know later." The sight of happiness in her friend's face gave her a most comfortable feeling. She reflected that it was nice to be able to do things for people who had less than one's self.

As for Gertrude, her plans for two weeks at the seashore began that very evening. Her dimity must be laundered and put away. It has done duty for several seasons, and she knew that it was not good for many more encounters with the wash-tub. But skillfully mended, and carefully laundered, she trusted that it would carry her through the two important weeks. And of course she must have a bathing suit. After an examination of the materials in the house, she reluctantly decided that there was nothing she could use, and she took the money she had been saving for excursions and picnics, and other summer enjoyments, and brought some blue flannel.

July came, dry and hot, but Gertrude's spirit rose with the thermometer. Every morning she came down stairs asking expectantly, "Any letter for me?" By the time the month was three-quarters over, she dropped the question, but she met the postman at the door at each visit, almost before he had time to ring. The bathing suit was finished and folded, along with a number of other things. If the summons had come suddenly, she could have packed in fifteen minutes.

Along in August she received an invitation from an aunt to spend two weeks in the country. She read the letter and looked at her mother with a sudden tremulousness about her lips.

"I don't see how I can go," she said. "The season is so far gone now that May's invitation is likely to come at any minute. And I can't give that up after looking forward to it all summer." The mother remembered the proverb that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, but it seemed rather heartless to quote it. Moreover, she herself was hopeful that the delayed invitation would soon appear. And accordingly Aunt Caroline's invitation was declined. May came back early in September. Gertrude was hoping that she would have some very good excuse for her strange silence—illness in the family, an avalanche of visitors, trouble with the servants, anything that would help her conquer her sense of having been unfairly treated. May did not offer these excuses, nor any other. She had simply forgotten about the whole matter.

When she asked Gertrude if she had had a pleasant summer, Gertrude started and blushed. The question seemed to her a needless bit of cruelty. She could not rid herself of the impression that May must know the answer. She found voice to say at last: "Why there have been some pleasant things about it."

"That's more than I can say," remarked May. "I'm so tired of going to the same place every year. I tell papa that I really think it will be bad for me if I don't have a decided change next year."

In her selfishness she failed to see that the change she needed was making some one else happy, and forgetting about herself. If she had had Gertrude to plan for, and look after, the days would have fairly flown and she would have looked forward eagerly to the coming of each morning. One girl's blindness made a disappointing summer for two.

THE ROAD TO GRUMBLETOWN.

'Tis quite a straight and easy road That leads to Grumbletown, And those who wish can always find A chance to journey down.

'Tis customary for the trip To choose a rainy day— When weather's fine, one's not so apt To care to go that way.

Just keep down Fretful Lane until You come to Sulky Stile, Where travelers often like to rest In silence for a while.

And then cross over Pouting Bridge, Where Don't Care Brook flows down, And just a little way beyond You come to Grumbletown.

From what I learn, this Grumbletown Is not a pleasant place, One never hears a cheerful word, Or sees a smiling face.

The children there are badly spoiled And sure to fret and tease, And all the grown up people, too, Seem cross and hard to please.

The weather rarely is just right In this peculiar spot; 'Tis either raining all the time, Or else too cold or hot.

The books are stupid as can be; The games are dull and old, There's nothing new and nothing nice In Grumbletown, I'm told.

And so I've taken pains, my dears, The easiest road to show, That you may all be very sure You never, never go!

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"SAINT ANTHONY, GUIDE!"

Where do they abide, those priceless things that went away from me? Where is the ship with snowy sails that started out to sea? In some far harbor does she rest, her sailor men asleep? Or does she lie, becalmed and still, where tropic serpents creep? Or it may be she struggles on, by vexing breezes tossed— Oh, tell me, dear Saint Anthony, for you can find the lost!

Oh, does she dream, or does she sleep, or does she hear his say, "The snowy sails and sailor-men are coming home some day?"

Where is the youth—I loved it so!—the years have flitted from me? Where are the toys—they were so gay!—a little maid could see? Where are the old ambitions, and the hope of being wise, The wish to travel in your steps beneath Italian skies? The youth and toys and longing—oh, I will not mind the cost If you will bring them back to me—you who can find the lost!

Oh, does she sleep, or does she dream, or does she hear his say, "The youth you loved so fondly will be yours again some day?"

But when the kindly breezes and the good old sailor-men Have brought my errant vessel to the port of home again, When years have tried their pinions and 'tis always morn and spring, What shall I do if my new youth for gets my dead to bring? Where do they hide, those wandering ones? What waters have they crossed? Oh, tell me, sweet Saint Anthony, for you can find the lost!

Oh, does she dream, or does she sleep, or does she hear his say, "Another found them, daughter; they are folded safe to-day?" —Ave Maria.

CONUNDRUMS.

Why was Eve made? For Adam's Express Company.

What is that which, the more you take from it, the larger it grows? A hole!

If Dick's father is Tom's son, what relation is Dick to Tom? Tom is his grandfather.

What is the best day for making pancakes? Fri-day.

What is more foolish than sending coals to Newcastle? Sending milk to Coves!

Why is a schoolboy being flogged like your eye? Because he's a pupil under the lash!



SYNOPSIS OF CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

Homestead Regulations

Any even numbered section of Dominion Lands in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, excepting 8 and 26, not reserved, may be homesteaded by any person who is the sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years of age, to the extent of one-quarter section of 160 acres, more or less.

Application for entry must be made in person by the applicant at a Dominion Lands Agency or Sub-agency for the district in which the land is situated. Entry by proxy may, however, be made at an Agency on certain conditions by the father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of an intending homesteader.

The homesteader is required to perform the homestead duties under one of the following plans:

(1) At least six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year for three years.

(2) A homesteader may, if he so desires, perform the required residence duties by living on farming land owned solely by him, not less than eighty (80) acres in extent, in the vicinity of the homestead, or upon a homestead entered for by him in the vicinity, such homesteader may perform his own residence duties by living with the father (or mother).

(3) If the father (or mother, if the father is deceased) of a homesteader has permanent residence on farming land owned solely by him, not less than eighty (80) acres in extent, in the vicinity of the homestead, or upon a homestead entered for by him in the vicinity, such homesteader may perform his own residence duties by living with the father (or mother).

(4) The term "vicinity" in the two preceding paragraphs is defined as meaning not more than nine miles in a direct line, exclusive of the width of road allowances crossed in the measurement.

(5) A homesteader intending to perform his residence duties in accordance with the above while living with parents or on farming land owned by himself must notify the Agent for the district of such intention.

Six months' notice in writing must be given to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Ottawa, of intention to apply for patent.

W. W. CORY, Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.

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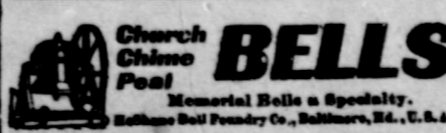
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