

The Children's Page



SANTA CLAUS IS COMING.

Santa Claus is coming, Hark! his sleigh bells ring; Merry, merry Christmas, Hear him gaily sing.

Down each sooty chimney Christmas night he'll go, Looking for the stockings, Hanging in a row.

Horses, dolls and candies Into each he'll drop, Till he's filled them to the brim He will never stop.

And on Christmas morning When boys and girls awake And open up wide, laughing eyes, They'll be for the stockings make.

And when the good things greet them They'll give a shout of joy, For Santa has forgotten No single girl or boy.

So give three cheers for Santa, And three cheers more, I say, For frosty, kind, old Santa Claus, Who comes each Christmas Day. —M. L. Hart.

DECEMBER.

December's come, and with her brought A world in whitest marble wrought, The trees and fence and all the posts Stand motionless and white as ghosts And all the paths we used to know Are hidden in the drifts of snow.

December brings the longest night, And cheats the day of half its light; No song-bird breaks the perfect hush; No meadow-brook with liquid gush Runs telling tales in babbling rhyme Of Liberty and summer time, But frozen in its icy cell Awaits the sun to break the spell.

Breathe once upon the window glass, And see the mimic mists that pass— Fantastic shapes that go and come Forever silvery and dumb.

December Santa Claus shall bring— Of happy children's happy King— Who with his sleigh and reindeer stops At all good people's chimney tops.

Then let the holly red be hung, And all the sweetest carols sung, While we with joy remember them— The journeyers to Bethlehem,

Who followed, trusting from afar The guidance of that happy star Which marked the spot where Christ was born Long years ago, one Christmas morn. —Current Literature.

FOR OTHER LITTLE GIRLS.

(By Alice Van Leer Carrick.) I've picked them up and packed them up and put them in a box, With what my grandma calls their "faldorols." All their dainty little nightgowns and their bonnets and their frocks, To give to girls who haven't any dolls.

There are Isabel's and Claribel's new dresses that I made, I hope they'll know that purple sash is Moll's, For, oh, I love her best of all! She'll miss me, I'm afraid, With the little girls who haven't any dolls.

I'm ten, you know, so I must grow to care for older plays, And have my grown-up gowns and parasols. But how I really wish I was the age that always stays Like little girls who haven't any dolls.

I've picked them up and packed them up and sent them off, you see, With all their pretty fluffy "faldorols." I'm sorry for myself, but, oh, I'm glad as I can be For the little girls who haven't any dolls!

—Youth's Companion.

HOW CHILDREN SPEND CHRISTMAS IN FOREIGN LANDS.

(Jane A. Stewart, in the Pilgrim.) In most of the civilized countries around the world, every boy and girl celebrates Christmas. The familiar and home-like customs are very similar in English-speaking lands, but in other countries there is much that is strange to those who are used to a New World Christmas.

Perhaps if an American boy were to spend Christmas away from the dear home festivities, he might best enjoy the Russian celebration. There is one feature of the Christmas observance in the Czar's domain which is apt to strike one very favorably, and that is the great length of the holiday season. Christmas covers two whole weeks; and for fourteen days, from December 24 until January 8, there is one long line of holidays. For a fortnight, books and pencils are laid aside and the school-room door is closed. Neither do people work. Everybody has a long memorable, happy holiday. The streets are very bright and gay, and the store windows are bewilderingly beautiful with holiday goods, though it is to be feared that this year if present conditions maintain, there will be little joy or celebration in the Little Father's empire and little cause for rejoicing on the part of his poor oppressed people.

In the large Russian cities, the Christmas sunshine glows radiantly on the snow-covered streets and buildings. The air is crisp, cold, and invigorating. The happy crowds pass along the thoroughfares dressed in fur coats and caps, snow boots and sheep skins, and in the national gala attire of the various races.—the Tartars, Circassians, Armenians and Russians. The streets present the appearance of a great international fair, for there are brilliant displays, side shows and booths.

The Gostinoi Door is the great bazaar of St. Petersburg. At Christmas time, it resembles the interior of a dense forest. Thousands of Christmas trees are brought here every year to go into the homes of the people. It is good to record that there is not a home so poor in Russia but that the children may have the happiness of a Christmas tree. If for some reason there is no tree at home for the children there is certain to be one at the school or association. The favorite decorations seen on the trees in the humbler homes are bright paper flowers, rainbow-hued glass beads, and goodies.

In Russia the pleasure of the Christmas tree is not limited to one or two evenings. The glowing tree shines out brilliantly every night during the two weeks, and each night there is a party for old or young. In the city the resplendent trees give great enjoyment to the eager Russian children. But the most wonderful sight is seen in the country on the large estates, when a tree is decorated and lighted just as it stands in the center of a bit of woods. The scene is very impressive. The village children are invited guests, gather about wild with delight, to get the presents and dainties from the wonderful, sparkling, outstretched branches of the tree.

In Germany, too, there is no holiday on the calendar so great as Christmas. And it is the children's festival, also. Christmas in Germany is very much like Christmas in America. Many of our Christmas customs came from there. Germany gave us the Christmas tree, and it is the center of all the Christmas doings for the German children.

It is the chief pleasure of the German fathers and mothers to prepare the Christmas tree. This is usually done in a room closed to the children. There is great mystery about all. Everyone in the house has his secrets for weeks before Christmas Eve. It is all very delightful, but finally Christmas Eve arrives. At six o'clock the climax of excitement is reached. The father rings the bell, the doors of the long-sealed-up Christmas room fly open and there stands the entrancing tree in all its majesty. The children are admitted into what seems to them like Paradise.

They find not only the wonderful tree resplendent with tinsel lights, candles and gifts, but also a table spread for each of them, and they hurry to see whether their hopes and wishes have been realized.

In some parts of Germany, Scandinavia, and Holland, the custom obtains for all the children to say a prayer to Kriss Kringle at the chimney corner on Christmas Eve, asking him to fill their stockings for Christmas morning. They confide in him as to what they would like. Kriss Kringle, Christ Kindlein, is the German Santa Claus who is supposed to come down the chimney with gifts for all good children.

The American boy would probably feel very much at home in either Russia, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway, or Sweden at Christmastide. In these north countries the customs are very like those of the homeland. But in the Southern European nations where Christmas is more a religious than a home festival, he would find the holiday very different from ours.

This is especially true of Italy. Italian children do not hang up their stockings at Christmas, or have a Christmas tree. On Christmas morning they are taken by their mothers to the churches. They are called on to recite hymns of praise to the Madonna and Child in the "Presepio," which is a representation of the stable of Bethlehem where Christ was born. Within the rocky cavern are wax images often as large as life, of the Madonna and Child, of Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men, and images of animals.

The children of the Sunday schools of the evangelical churches in Italy sometimes have trees, however, though there are not many of them as yet. The branches are laden with yellow oranges, with silvered balls, and with strings of gilt paper. The lighted candles are usually of the three national colors of Italy; red, white and green. The family festival of Christmas Eve is the chief delight of Italian children. There are fish, eels, ants, cakes, fruit, or vegetables for old and young. On the next day the Christmas dinner is enjoyed, the chief dishes being capon and pangallo, a sort of nut-and-fruit cake.

Very few American boys and girls would care to spend Christmas holidays in France where no one pays much attention to Christmas and where no presents are exchanged. The children who have no "home with a little" in France and who are being reared in the convents, often have some beautiful Christmas ceremonies, the spirit of which might well be introduced into other lands. For weeks before Christmas, the convent children begin to prepare for the convent celebration. The crib with the Christ Child is the chief center of attraction, and the reward of good behavior is the privilege of helping to make the crib. A gold straw is laid for each kink act and for each day well spent. The highest reward of merit is the privilege of laying the wax figure in the crib. The children of the poor are always kept in mind by the convent child. It is the custom to get ready presents of fruit, necessities, clothing, etc., for these "unfortunate children of God." When the children receive their Christmas boxes on Christmas Eve, the first gift taken from these, is placed in the basket for the poor. After the solemn midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, which all the children attend, they are given something to eat, and then they all return to bed to sleep till late on Christmas morning.

There is no tree and no hanging up of stockings for the native Cuban children on Christmas Day. Santa Claus would have a hard time looking for his real place to enter the houses, for in Cuba the houses are built without any chimneys. There is a midnight feast on Christmas Eve, but children have no part in it. The pleasures of Christmas gifts are reserved till "King's Day," January 6th. This day is celebrated in commemoration of the visit of the Wise Men of the East who brought their offerings to the infant Saviour. It is at "King's Day," and not at Christmas, that the Cuban children hang up their stockings and place their shoes when they go to bed the night before.

To discern and deal immediately with causes and overcome them, rather than to battle with effects after the disease has secured a lodgment, is the chief aim of the medical man, and Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup is the result of patient study along this particular line. At the first appearance of a cold the Syrup will be found a most efficient remedy, arresting development and speedily healing the affected parts, so that the ailment disappears.

WHAT CIGARETTES CAN DO. The evil effect of cigarette smoking upon the youth was again illustrated in the case of a Malden (Mass.) schoolboy, who, although 14 years and eight months old, is going backward in his mental development and who can hardly write his own name. The boy's case was called to the attention of the school board by his application for a certificate to enable him to go to work. He stayed away from school two weeks. Then the boy was sent back in the third grade of the Emerson primary school, where the average age of the other pupils is between eight and nine years. The boy is declared by the superintendent of Malden schools to be a ruined youth, a mental and physical wreck. He has a tobacco heart. His ambition is gone. He has smoked cigarettes since he was about eight years of age. He has not advanced beyond the lower grades since his entrance to school nearly ten years ago.

"How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?" he was asked. "O, sometimes a dozen," he replied, "sometimes about forty, I guess." "Why do you smoke?" "Can't help it; tried to stop it and can't." "Do you know it hurts you?" "Sure. Get a pain in my side when I run, and have to sit down and rest. Get out of breath."

"Where do you buy them?" "I can buy them lots of places." "What is your teacher's name?" Daniel thought a minute, then announced that he knew, but couldn't remember.

The boy's pulse was 100. According to his teachers he has not the slightest ambition to learn. He was given the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to add. He made the total 76.

The principal of the Emerson school said that she had taken an interest in the boy and tried to help him, but her efforts seemed to meet with no success.—New York World.

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TORTOISE 306 YEARS OLD.

The oldest of all living things in New York is the big tortoise of the Bronx Zoological Park, which is 306 years old. He was a "slider" when buffalo were grazing on what is now the White House lawn at Washington (Memoirs of Col. Samuel Argyll, Deputy Governor of Virginia, 1612). In the first 300 years of his life he attained a weight of 156 lbs. In the last six he has gained 81 lbs. And he keeps on getting fatter and bigger, greatly disconcerting scientists who have been accepting as a fact that the size of the big South Pacific tortoise was an indication of their worth of centuries of age.

Buster is the tortoise's name. His shell and his flesh are worthless, and he is too old to add to his ancient line, now practically extinct. He came from the Gallapagos group to the Bronx six years ago, but not directly. His race is forgotten on the islands, and only a few specimens are distributed in zoological gardens over the civilized world.

In spite of his years and the new environment into which he has been cast, Buster is healthy and promises to live to a hearty old age of a thousand years or so. He is very gentle and eats from the hands of his keepers.

GAMES AT A CHRISTMAS PARTY.

How many Pits? When the invitations are sent out for a young folks' party each guest is requested to bring a lemon. At a certain time during the evening of the party, each one is requested to squeeze into a glass the lemon he brought, and to save the pits. These are counted, later on, and the one who has most pits receives first prize, while the one with the fewest pits gets the booby.

What do you guess? The children are seated at a table, and each one is requested to write four riddles or conundrums, signing his name and using a separate piece of paper for each riddle. When all are turned in, the papers are passed around, and the one who answers most correctly wins the game. No one, however, is allowed to answer his own riddles in the guessing competition.

What did you see? A large table is covered with as many articles, large and small, as can be conveniently gathered about the house. Then the boys and girls are called into the room, and are told to look at the things on the table for about two minutes, and to remember as many as possible. Afterwards, they are requested to write from memory the names of as many articles as they can. The one who writes the most names wins the first prize. It will have two or three prizes.

THE QUEEN'S COMING.

For this game choose a letter and the termination "ing." Suppose that R is chosen.

The first player says to the second, "The Queen is coming." "How is she coming?" asks the second. "Ruling," answers the first. The second then asks the third the same question. "How says the third?" "Racing," and so the question and reply go on through all the words beginning with R and ending with "ing"—raining, rising, running, resting, roistering, etc. Those who cannot answer the question on the instant must pay a forfeit.

One who tries as a novice to play this game will be surprised to find how blank all of a sudden his mind will become. Words without sense will suggest themselves to you merely because they begin with R and end with "ing."

SLIGHTLY MIXED.

I heard a rare story the other day of a good bishop who was visiting an outlying portion of his diocese for the purpose of confirming some of the ringer generation. The pastor had rung the brave little band in a line and the bishop, after asking a few leading questions, requested a little girl to state the definition of matrimony. And with hapds folded, eyes half closed, and a generally modest mien, the little one rapidly recited of the startling announcement that "matrimony is a state of terrible torment which those who enter it are compelled to undergo as a partial punishment for their sins and in order to prepare them for a brighter and better world." The pastor who had taken great pains to prepare his class, was greatly annoyed at this blunder, and sharply said: "No, no, Katie; that is not marriage at all, that is purgatory." "Leave her alone, Father James," said the bishop, with a meaning smile; "leave little Katie alone. What do you or I know about it?"

JAPANESE ENGLISH.

At a recent exhibition of pictures in Tokio, Japan, the following notice was posted: "No person who is mad or intoxicated is allowed to enter in, if any person found in shall be claimed to retire. No person is allowed to carry in with himself any parcel, ambrella, stick and the like kind, except his purse, and is strictly forbidden to take within himself dog or the same kind of beasts. Visitor is requested to take care of himself from thievly."

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Why is a woman deformed when she is mending her stockings? Because her hands are where her feet should be. The first typewriter patent was taken out in 1714.

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