

A MYSTERIOUS SANTA CLAUS

[WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS, BY
LAURENCE CLARKE.]

"What 'd you have?"

"Oh, I'd have lots an' lots, I'd have that rock'n horse, an' that Christmas tree, an' a soldier's hat, an' all them soldiers," said Patsy, making a dig at the damp window pane with his finger at each word.

If Santa Claus was to come to me an' say you can have everything whate in the shop; all the carriages, an' horses, an' elephants, an' dolls, an' No's arks, an' wild beasts, an' e-very thing, I wouldn't take any thing; I'd just take that big doll an' go home an' play all--all day.

"Oh, I wouldn't," said Patsy, who was about three feet six inches in perpendicular height, that is six inches taller than the blue eyed Katie, his sister. It was probably this superiority of stature that caused that young lady to look upon him as a prodigy of worldly wisdom and physical strength.

"Ef Santa Claws was to come to me I'd say, gimme that No's Ark, and he pointed briskly to a gaudy Noah's ark, 'cause a No's Ark," he continued "a No's Ark's got everyfing, elephants an' tigers an' lines an' oow's and crock'diles an' everyfing. A No's ark's like a m'nagerie.

"What's a m'nagerie? asked Katie, quickly.

"Oh, a m'nagerie, a m'nagerie is, um—a place where they catch beasts an' put 'em in cages an' peoples come in an' look at 'em 'cause they's a'ful fierce."

"Would they eat you up?" said Katie. "Yes, I's think they would, clean up," answered Patsy, "all sept crock'diles; crock'diles eats yer all up sept yer boots, then they crys."

"What's they cry for?"

"I dunno, that's what it says in the books."

During this instructive conversation a fashionably dressed gentleman with keen handsome aquiline features stood listening behind the children; there was about his dress the careless elegance that bespeaks the prosperous American, but his face was drawn and melancholy. "Let's go an' see the crib," said the boy, after all the eulogistic words their small tongues could compass had been applied to the dazzling attractions of the window.

"Can yer get in fer nuthin'?" queried Katie.

"Course you can, anybody can get in."

So they trotted cheerily hand in hand down the bleak wintry street. And despite their threadbare clothes; the boy's dirty face, and his tiny sister's dusty tangled locks, the gentleman looked wistfully after them as they ran. Then, as if suddenly awakened from a reverie he walked smartly in the same direction.

Patsy was kneeling primly with his hands placed palm to palm, the candles of the crib shone brightly on his face; his lips moved rapidly.

Nothing but Katie's small bonnet and her pretty grey eyes appeared above the hand-rail. She watched Patsy's every motion and her lips moved as rapidly as did his.

When he quickly made the sign of the cross, she did the same, and as he snatched up his cap, she thrust out to him her hand and trotted down the aisle by his side.

A gentleman who had been kneeling in the shadow rose and followed them from the church.

"You's lots better now ain't you, mother?" said Patsy?

"How, my child?"

"Why, 'cause we's been prayin' to the Infan' Jesus for you, an' we, Katie?"

"Yes," said Katie, "I was prayin' too."

"You are very like your father," she said sadly to the boy, taking his face fondly in her hands and kissing him.

One day she had received a letter in a strange hand from the gold fields of the far West; at sight of this unwelcome missive a great terror had seized her soul. She rent it wildly open.

"He was killed," it said, "by the premature explosion of a charge of blasting powder. I am his chum; he left no money."

Taking her children she had left the pretty Irish village and had struggled wear y for a living in the great city and none in the village ever heard from her.

Physical weakness had followed closely on the heels of poverty,—and together they had prepared the way for that vile spectre, skeleton despair, whose hard fleshless fingers were already clutching at her throat. Her cheeks, once so flushed and rounded, were now hollow and wan; her step, so gaily elastic then, was weak and tottering now. And it seemed that the fire of life's brightness was burned out in all her form except her eyes, where glistened, the last lingering embers, enhanced to double brightness by the paleness of her face.

In the chill room where she sat; on every inch of tattered matting, on every inch of worn out board, on every cracked and broken window pane, on the poor heap of coal reserved for a half day's warmth to celebrate the Christmas festivity, there was branded the air of hopeless poverty.

The night drew on, but still the woman sat and shivered in the chair. And at 12 o'clock the joyous Christmas bells boomed out in merry peal; then the woman shuddered and drew her garments closer round her, and still the bells rang on. She turned her eyes slowly, flooded with tears, on the infants in the bed. Then, throwing herself on her knees and raising aloft her arms, she prayed passionately to God. And the murmur of her voice rose up, and mingling with the clangour of the bells that filled the room, was wafted up heaven.

"Oh, God!" and still the bells rang on. "Oh, God!" give me back at least my strength, that I may work for them. Give me at least this, O, God! Thou who art so good to all the world this Christmastide."

The fire had been lighted and the children sat joyously gazing into it with ruddy-heated faces. They did not ask for food, but plied their careworn mother with questions: "When will Santa Claus come to bring our presents." But she tried to smile and had put them off with pretty stories of the fairies and magicians, who do wonderful things and make everybody round them happy. In the midst of the last story there was a thunderous rap, rap, at the door. The mother started and grew pale. To the very poor, every shade and difference of knock upon the door has a special meaning; this was an authoritative knock, such as none but a creditor would use.

She went timidly, with her children clinging at her skirts, and opened the door.

There was no one there.

Patsy gave a scream of joy and then rushed upon the larger of two parcels that rested on the door step.

On each parcel there was a plain card, neatly written. One bearing the words "For Patsy," and on the other "For Patsy's sister."

Nothing was heard but gurglings of happiness and expectation until there had been extricated from the parcels a large gaudy Noah's ark and a large flaxen haired, wide-eyed doll. The very toys the children had admired the previous day. Who could it be, murmured the mother, as she sat thinking, a little sorrowfully, too, for the money spent on these toys could have fed her family for many days.

"Let me see the cards again," she asked, and then as she scrutinised the writing she became very white; a flash of joy lit up her face, then suddenly died out.

"No, it cannot be," she said sorrowfully, "it would be too great a happiness."

Three hours later they sat at a meal that the charity of one of her old employers had provided. The mother was still pondering on the sender of the toys. "Perhaps I was too hasty," she said thoughtfully, "that letter was never confirmed. It may be that he li—"

There was a loud rap on the door?

She motioned her son to open it, she was too weak to do so, her face was drawn with mingled fear, excitement and expectancy.

The door was thrown open, and a tall gentleman attired with Western negligence stood on the threshold. When he saw the woman he clutched at the frame for support, his face was very white, then suddenly, with outstretched hands he rushed into the room.

"Kate!" he cried.

"Felix my hu—I she murmured and fell fainting in his arms.

Late in the afternoon little Kate slipped out to chat with Mamie Gallagher. "My Pa's come back," she said, "we ain't goin' to live here any more, Pa says we's

goin' back to Stornway to live he's a'ful rich pa is, he's got a gold watch an' shane, and a ring, an lots an lots of money; mor'n ten sovereigns.

The following is a recent clipping from the "Cork Examiner."

Mr. Felix Routh, who, three or four years ago, returned to Ireland after realizing a large competence in the gold fields of California, has been elected mayor of Stornway, his native place.

Mr. Routh and his handsome wife spend large portions of their wealth in deeds of charity, especially at Christmas time, when there is hardly a poor family in the town but feels the benefit of their generosity.

JES' 'FORE CHRISTMAS.

EUGENE FIELD.

Father calls me William and sister calls me Will.
Mother calls me Willie—but the fellers call me Bill!

Mighty glad I ain't a girl—rather be a boy
Without them sashes, curls an' things that's worn by Fauntleroy!

Love to chawnk green apples an' go swimming
In the lake—

Hate to take the castor-ile they give f'r belly-ache!

Most all the time the bull year roun' there
Ain't no flies on me,

But jes' fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yeller dog named Sport—sick 'im on a cat;
Fust thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!

Got a clipper-sled, an' when us boys go out to slide
'Long comes the grocery cart an' we all hook a ride!

But, sometimes, when the grocery man is worried and cross,
He reaches at me with his whip, and larrups up his boss;

An' then I laff and holler; "Oh, you never teched me!"

But jes' fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I git to be a man
I'll be a missionere like her-oldest brother Dan.

As wuz et up by the cannib'ls that lives in Ceylon's isle,
Where every prospect pleases an' only man is vile!

But gran'ma she had never been to see a Wild West show,
Or read the life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know

That Buffalo Bill an' cowboys is good enough f'r me—

Excep' jes' 'fore Christmas, when I'm good as I kin be!

Then ol' Sport he hangs around, so sullen like an' still—
His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What's er matter, little Bill?"

The cat she sneaks down off her perch, a-wonderin' what's become
Uv them two enemies uv hern that use ter make things hum!

But I am so perlitte and stick so earnestly to biz,
That mother says to father: "How improved our Willie is!"

But father, havin' been a boy hisself, suspicious me,
When 'jes' fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

For Christmas with its lots an' lots uv candles, cakes an' toys,
Wuz made, they say, f'r proper kids, and not f'r naughty boys!

So wash yer face and brush yer hair, an' mind yer p's an' q's,
An' don't burst out yer pantaloons, an' don't wear out your shoes;

Say yessum to the ladies, an' yessir to the men,
An' when they's company don't pass yer plate f'r pie again;

But thinkin' uv the things you'd like to see upon that tree,
Jes' fore Christmas be as good as you kin be.

—Ladies' Home Journal.

LOOK OUT

for breakers ahead when pimples, boils, carbuncles and like manifestations of impure blood appear. They wouldn't appear if your blood were pure and your system in the right condition. They show you what you need—a good blood-purifier; that's what you get when you take Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery.

It carries health with it. All Blood, Skin, and Scalp Diseases, from a common blotch or eruption to the worst Scrofula, are cured by it. It invigorates the liver, purifies and enriches the blood, and rouses every organ into healthful action. In the most stubborn forms of Skin Diseases, such as Salt-rheum, Eczema, Tetter, Erysipelas, Carbuncles, and kindred ailments, and with Scrofula in every shape, and all blood taints, if it fails to cure, you have your money back. And that makes it the cheapest blood-purifier sold.

"Why don't you take little Johnny to the circus? He's just crazy to see that balloon parachute-jumper," said Mrs. Suburb to her husband. "I can't afford it," he answered. "It won't cost over a couple of shillings to get him in." "No; but it will cost us about a couple of pounds for new umbrellas afterwards."



Nervous Prostration, Sleeplessness and Weakness. 6

WEST BROUGHTON, QUEBEC, Oct. 1, '90.
The Pastor Koenig's Nerve Tonic I ordered was for a young lady of my household who was almost useless to herself and others, owing to nervous prostration, sleeplessness, weakness, &c., &c. To-day there is quite a change. The young person is much better, stronger and less nervous. She will continue to use your medicine. I think it is very good. P. SARVIE, Catholic Priest.

FREEPORT, ILL., Oct. 26, 1890.

We used 12 bottles of Pastor Koenig's Nerve Tonic for nervousness and found it to have the desired effect in every case.
DOMINICAN SISTERS.

FREE A Valuable Book on Nervous Diseases and a sample bottle to any address. Poor patients also get the medicine free.
This remedy has been prepared by the Rev. Father Koenig, of Fort Wayne, Ind., since 1876, and is now under his direction by the

KOENIG MED. CO., Chicago, Ill.

49 S. Franklin Street.

Sold by Druggists at \$1 per Bottle. 6 for \$5.
Large Size, \$1.75. 6 Bottles for \$9.

In Montreal by E. J. LEONARD, 113 St. Lawrence street.



BEFORE GIVING YOUR ORDERS
GET PRICES FROM US.

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TELEPHONE 180.

RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE.

At a regular meeting of the Municipal Council of the County of Two Mountains, held in St. Scholastique, on the 12th of December instant, were present: Mr. Antoine Seguin, the warden, and Messrs. Felix Paquin, Joseph Langlois, Firmin Drouin, Joseph Marcotte, Jean Baptiste Damour, Moise Labrosse, Damase Rochon, Dolphis Anagnon, Michel Lalonde, James Murphy and Ferdinand Leveille, the councillors.

After the reading of the proceedings of the last session, Mr. Joseph Langlois communicated to the council the news of the death of Mr. James Murray, which occurred since the last meeting. Mr. Murray had been mayor of the parish of St. Columban during 35 years. He had worthily performed the duties of this charge and always accomplished all his duties with impartiality and justice.

He then moved, seconded by Mr. James Murphy, and it was unanimously resolved:

That the Council of this County expresses its regret at the loss it has sustained in the death of Mr. Murray;

That this Council desires to communicate to his widow and the other members of his family its deep feelings of sympathy;

That a copy of the present resolutions be forwarded to his family and be published in La Presse and TRUE WITNESS.

St. Scholastique, this 15th D c., 1894.

A. FORTIER, Secretary-Treasurer.

THAT PALE FACE.

For Nervous Prostration and Anaemia there is no medicine that will so promptly and infallibly restore vigor and strength as Scott's Emulsion.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood, December 27th, in Notre Dame.