

Off Santa Claus' Beat

I SPOSE there is a Santa Claus That brings them pretty toys An' candy an' mince pies an' things To lots o' little boys.

He goes around to all the stores An' fills 'em full o' things Like sleds an' skates an' railroad cars, The kind he always brings, An' then he seems to lose the way To our house. Ain't it queer That all the times he's come to town He's never been down here?



HE GOES AROUND TO ALL THE STORES AN' FILLS 'EM FULL O' THINGS.

I asked my mother if I might Go wait for him uptown An' tell him that the boys I know Invites him to come down, But she just sort o' chokes an' coughs, An' then she looks away An' says, 'He'll find us out, I guess, An' visit us some day.'

An' yet I've been a-waitin' here So long that I don't b'lieve I'll ever see him come at all On any Christmas eve. An' goin' to ask a policeman if Santa he should meet He'll just go up an' speak to him An' point him out our street. —New York American.

Christmas Cakes. Little cakes that will please the children either at the table or on the Christmas tree are made as follows: Bake the cakes in little patty or muffin pans and frost the tops with a white icing. Dip a small new paint brush in melted chocolate and draw a face on each. Make some crying and others laughing, the different expressions being made by the curve of the mouth line. The neatest outline will be sufficient. Cut a circle of tissue paper of white or any other color liked two inches larger than the cake, pink the edge with scissors and run a thread round one inch from the edge. Put a cake in the paper, draw up the thread, and a cunning little cap is formed. The pleasure of small children will well repay the trouble of making these little cake babies.—Pittsburg Press.

First Aid to Santa Claus. A clever idea for a Christmas night party is to have the gifts come in on a sled piled high and strapped on and the sled drawn by two lads dubbed Santa Claus' assistants. The place cards at the supper which follows the distribution of the gifts should be tiny sleds made from cardboard and dipped in muclilage, then in diamond dust, the rope to be of silver cord and each sled drawn by a miniature Santa Claus about three inches high.

The Children's Festival. "And a little child shall lead them." The entire meaning of the festival of Christmas is contained in these words. It is the festival of the children because on this day God, the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, took upon him human nature in the shape of a helpless and beautiful child.—Rev. John Talbot Smith, LL. D., President Catholic Summer School of America.

No More Wanted. "Merry Christmas, old man! And many more like it." The man addressed turns a baleful, sleepless eye upon the speaker and replies: "Many more like it! Say, you hadn't heard that twins came to our house last night, had you?"—Judge.

"Jessie Christmas!" Little Jessie woke up on Christmas morning and called to her four-year-old sister Mary: "Merry Christmas!" "Jessie Christmas!" promptly answered the baby.

Are There Others? Christmas is coming And Santa Claus, too, And, being dead broke, Lord, what shall I do? The children will cry, Their mother will pout, I'll have to go try Put my watch up the spout. —Florida Times-Union.

ON NEW YORK'S EAST SIDE.

How New Year's Day is Celebrated in the Italian Colony.

The little boys and girls of Mulberry street, on New York's queer east side, keep their pockets, purses and savings banks ready for New Year's. This is their great day. Whether or not the American Santa Claus put anything in their stockings on Christmas, their own uncles and aunts cannot get off without strenna de capo d'anno (New Year's gift). The strenna is confined to the children and to cash. It is to be distributed by the relatives and friends of the household on New Year's day, when calls and congratulations are in order. "Buon capo d'anno!" ("A good head of the year!")

"Lo stesso a voi per cento anni!" ("The same to you for a hundred years!")

When the greetings are over the guests will be treated to vermicelli served with a special sort of sauce and salad and "meruzzo" prepared with oil and lemon juice. The thought of the New Year's viands makes the black-eyed children smack their red lips, and their time is taken up with discussing it as well as with making forecasts as to how much of a strenna Uncle So-and-so and Cousin So-and-so will put in his or her little hand before leaving.

The old folks in Italy, too, are thinking gratefully of the great land beyond the seas over the wine and vermicelli which they have bought with American money. If strenna is here only given to children an exception is made for the old people at home, to whom a New Year's gift is sent three or four weeks in advance so as to reach its destination in time for the great religious and civil holiday. The Mulberry street bankers do a rushing business in capo d'anno remittances.—New York Herald.

THE NEW YEAR IN JAPAN.

The Day When the Mikado Has to Get Up at 5 o'Clock.

Quaint and curious New Year customs exist in Japan, where the 1st of January commences with a religious festival celebrated at 5 in the morning. At this time the mikado, dressed in Japanese costume, proceeds from the palace, followed by his deputies arrayed in ancient style and the foreign diplomats in regalia dress. He enters a small building or temple, prostrates himself to the east, west, north and south, and all present pray for the prosperity of the nation.

Later at a ceremonial breakfast the emperor and empress receive their family and court for three hours, the rooms being thronged. At the expiration of that time the real year begins, and a formal luncheon is served from which each guest is expected to take a cup and saucer as a souvenir.

Among the people the earth and heaven are propitiated by offerings of rice and vegetables, and strips of red paper are pasted on the doors as a sign of good luck. This color is used exclusively save in cases where a death has occurred within a year, when blue paper is used instead of red. The day ends with people still saluting each other and attending the plays at the theaters, where gorgeous robes and monotonous voices are the distinguishing features.—New York World.

New Year's on the Ganges.

To know whether one will outlive the year is almost universally regarded as a very desirable piece of knowledge, and to acquire it the men and women of different nations resort to various stratagems to compel fate to stand and deliver. The dweller by the Ganges lights a tiny rush candle and fixes it upright on a bit of board, which he launches on the waters of the sacred stream. If it remains afloat until he can count 777, the perfect number, he regards his prospects as good for the year. If it goes out the omen is unfavorable. He gives himself the benefit of expedition, too, for instead of counting in prosaic fashion—one, two, three, four—in the old slow style, he counts by leaps and bounds—five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty—and thus takes advantage of the flickering candle and fluctuating wave and increases his length of days by the glibness of his tongue.—Pittsburg Press.

Watching the Old Year Out.

Watching the old year out has been a common custom in many lands. In most countries it assumes with the serious minded the phase of devotion. In many countries where Roman Catholicism is the prevalent form of faith the year is begun with midnight masses. Among the Greek Catholics the same usage prevails. It declined in the Church of England, but was revived by several of the dissenting bodies, the watch night of the Methodists being merely a modification of the once general practice. Among the convivially inclined, however, watch night is taken anything but seriously, and the new year is welcomed with such signs of rejoicing as to one who did not understand the customs would seem to indicate that all men were heartily tired of existence and glad to see their years go by as speedily as possible.

The First January New Year's Day.

Caesar selected the feast of Janus, the two faced god of war, as the year's great mile stone, because the statue of this god seemed to look back into the past and forward into the future; hence on New Year's day we are still paying tribute to a heathen god. Prior to the reform of the calendar the Romans observed the 21st day of December, the winter solstice, as the beginning of the year. This date and the summer solstice, the 21st of June, as well as the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, changes in March and September, have come in for first place in the year at various times in the history of the world.

Mr. Arfur's Christmas Gift

By INA WRIGHT HANSON

[Copyright, 1906, by McClure, Phillips & Co.]

HENRIETTA, on the rug by the fireplace, was absorbed in her occupation, which was putting off all of Ariminta Eudella's articles of wearing apparel and putting them on again. When the last tiny garment had been adjusted to her satisfaction she found time to look at Mr. Arfur, who sat by the window, a picture of doldrums. With a regretful glance at Evangeline Bell, who was yet to be attended to, the small mother arose and went over to Mr. Arfur. Resting one hand on his knee, she gazed anxiously into his face.

"The young man roused himself and smiled down at the squarely cut locks, the great brown eyes and dimples. "Have you been bad, Mr. Arfur?" she inquired solicitously.

"I don't think I have been so bad as—the bad man, Henrietta," he answered, squeezing her small hand.

"I've been good as an angel," she remarked modestly, "so Santa Claus is going to bring me an ever dolly in a tooting cab."

"In a what, Henrietta?" "A tooting cab," she repeated; then, as Arthur failed to grasp her meaning, she exemplified patiently, "like Sister Wose's what she takes you widing in."

"Oh, I see! A touring car, you aristocratic baby. No more doll wagons and go-carts for you, eh?" he chuckled, then grew gloomy again.

"What do you want for Kwismas?" "Something I am afraid I can never have in all this wide world, Henrietta." He drew a long breath.

"If you are good, Santa Claus"— "It's entirely out of the old fellow's jurisdiction, my pet."

The child gazed at him curiously. "It's a heart of fine gold that I want, Henrietta, and only one person can give it to me, and if she won't, girlie!"

"Is she a fairy?" Henrietta's tone was reverential, her eyes full of excitement.

"The queen of them all!" "And has a crown on?"

"Yes, a crown of her own golden hair, and her eyes are like brown velvet pansies, and she has the sweetest



"LISTEN!" HE WHISPERED.

red lips, Henrietta. But yesterday I met her, and she hurried by, scarcely speaking, and this morning on the street she pretended not to see me, though I know she did, and all because—you wouldn't have believed such a queen of a girl would care so much because she didn't get the prize at the masquerade, would you, now?"

"My!" ejaculated Henrietta. But her next eager question was cut short by Mr. Arfur's springing to his feet. "Sister Wose" had entered the room, and Henrietta, knowing from much experience that she was decidedly de trop when they two were together, went reluctantly back to Evangeline Bell and the fireplace.

"Good morning," said Sister Rose, her tone suggestive of a glare of ice and a flurry of snow. "I have an engagement." But she sat down.

"Oh, I am sorry. Then I will go," he said gently, but he also sat down.

In his eyes, honest and gray, was a complexity of expressions as he watched her trying desperately to appear very much at her ease. Love looked from his eyes—there was no doubt of that—and admiration and approval, and yet a growing wonder that, after all, his idol could be so human.

"I am sorry that you are angry," he began when the silence was getting tense. "Try to realize my position, Rose. I sat there, an unwilling judge—my duty awarding prizes to the best sustained characters in the masquerade. Among the maskers was one to whom my heart went out—a slender little figure whose white satin gown, caught loosely around the waist with a silken girdle, fell in straight folds to her tiny feet. Crowning her small head were chrysanthemums, maroon and gold, and a line of the royal fowers reached from one sweet, bare shoulder to the hem of her gown. The chrysanthemum girl was the loveliest sight in the room, but she was not the best sustained character, so."

only disappointed in you." Her voice quivered a little.

"I have suspected the chrysanthemum girl of having moods," Arthur observed, looking at her reflectively. "A fellow I know has different names for her—Moonlight, White Rose, Laughing Water, Gentleness, Beauty, Wisdom. The fellow has admired her when she was gay and when she was serious, but never before has he seen her when she was unreasonable."

"The chrysanthemum girl sniffed. "Will you kindly explain?" added Arthur.

"I had always been so proud of your strength of character," she began. "The first time I ever saw you was in a trolley car. You sat opposite me, and when the car turned the sun shone into your eyes. There was plenty of room on my side, where the sun wouldn't have annoyed you, but instead of changing your seat you got up and pulled down the curtain. I thought to myself, 'There is a man who will be master of circumstances, no matter what they are, and'—"

Rose stopped in confusion as she remembered other things she had thought about this finely formed, handsome young man.

"Go on," he said, leaning forward with great interest. "What else did you think?"

"And now to find out that you are nothing but a chameleon after all," she wailed.

"A what?" Arthur exclaimed in amazement.

"A chameleon," she repeated fearfully. "If you are on a brown leaf you're brown; if on a green tree, then you're green."

"Well, green I acknowledge I am, for bless me if I can see what you are driving at!"

"The other day when auntie was talking about the sin of wasting your time in dancing you said that you agreed with her that when there was work to do folks ought to do it. You said you were not going to the masquerade for that very reason."

"Well, I didn't intend!"

"You said you had several hours' work at the office that night. Then Grace Hereford came along and asked you to go, and you went!"

There was a flicker of amusement on Arthur's face which Rose did not see, being too busy winking back unwelcome tears.

"Miss Hereford had nothing to do with it, Rose," he said gently. "I went to work, as I said. About 9 o'clock Mr. Jones, the president, came in and said that if I could find Hanson and get his signature to a certain paper and get back by 11 o'clock he would make it worth my while. I had an idea that Hanson was managing that masquerade, and that's where I found him. He buttonholed me at once to be judge of the concern and wouldn't sign the paper unless I agreed. I saw I could get back by 11, so I stayed."

"And had plenty of time to dance with Miss Hereford," supplemented Rose sweetly, but unjudicially.

"This time Arthur's smile was certain. "I looked for the chrysanthemum girl first and couldn't find her," he said truthfully. "I danced only once. But what made you think Miss Hereford asked me to go?"

"She said she would wager she could get you to go and that you would dance with her first, so I went to see if I didn't think you would when you said you wouldn't, but—"

"I see," said the young man quietly. An inborn loyalty to womankind kept him from telling Rose that just as he had started away Miss Hereford had run to him, exclaiming that as he was so kind to award her the prize she certainly must reward him with the first dance, etc. With a sudden impulse he took Rose's little hand in his.

She sprang up and started for the fireplace, but he held her gently back. "Listen," he whispered.

On the glowing coals smoked Evangeline Bell, and on the rug, with eyes turned to the ceiling, knelt Henrietta.

"O God," she was saying, "now I lay me down to sleep. I give my precious dolly, so you will make the fairy queen wiv the crown of her golden hair to bring Mr. Arfur the little heart he wants for Kwismas. That's all, God, only please let me see her when she comes. Amen."

"Amen!" echoed Arthur fervently.

"Grace Hereford has black hair," observed Rose inconsequently.

"She may have green hair for all it matters to me," said Arthur, with impoliteness. "Rose, darling!"

"I wonder if God will," Henrietta was murmuring, with sad eyes fixed on the mound of ashes which was once Evangeline Bell.

Rose went over to the fireplace and kissed her small sister. "I think God will," she said reverently; then she went back to radiant Mr. Arfur.

Christmas For the Birds. A traveler in Sweden tells of a beautiful Christmas custom in that land which may well be imitated in many lands. He says: "One wintry afternoon at Christmastide I had been skating on a pretty lake three miles from Gothenburg. On my way home I noticed that at every farmer's house there was erected in the middle of the dooryard a pole, to the top of which was bound a large full sheaf of grain. In answer to my question as to the meaning of it my companion replied: 'Oh, that is for the birds—for the little wild birds. They must have a merry Christmas, too, you know.'"—Selected.

Kind Old Man.

Ascum—What did that rich old uncle of yours give you for Christmas? Something useful, I'll bet.

Hauskeep—Yes, a little device for saving coal bills.

Ascum—Ah, an arrangement to attach to the heater?

Hauskeep—No, to keep on my desk. It's a bill file.

ASK Your Grocer FOR BEAVER BRAND Hams AND Bacon and Millar's Royal Paragon CHEESE Manufactured by the Ingersoll Packing Co. Ingersoll, Ont.

More Milk Wanted For the remainder of the winter we will pay as follows:- December \$1.40 per 100 lbs January \$1.40 per 100 lbs February \$1.35 per 100 lbs March \$1.35 per 100 lbs Special arrangements can be made for sending by train by writing to the ST. CHARLES Condensing Co. INGERSOLL.