

Santa Claus in a Dilemma.

A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN.

WRITTEN FOR THE REGISTER.

LING A-LING A-LING, clink clink! the funny little reindeer sleigh bobbed up and down over the house tops and around the chimneys at a rate that would have made a nervous person shudder, if there had happened to be one among the motley crowd of passengers seated in it.

So away they rattled and clattered, the jolly old face crowned with the queer peaked cap, peering out from among the motley collection of toys; dolls, drums, trumpets, horses, donkeys, Noah's arks, story-books, puzzles, and hundreds of things, "too numerous to mention, as the reporters say. There was one lovely doll in particular, dressed as a bride, who occupied the place of honor in the sleigh.

Her husband a handsome young prince was seated beside her. These two had only just been married and this was their wedding trip, they were very great people in Toyland where Santa Claus comes from, in fact the prince was the son of the king of the toys, who is brother to Santa Claus, so it was his own nephew and niece whom Santa was taking as a present to some fortunate little girl.

"Dear me," said the princess, "what a very long way it seems, have we got much further to go?" "No, my dear," replied Santa, "only a few roofs further on, and there we are."

"I am nearly frozen," grumbled a big drum. "I'm sure my parchment will crack as soon as the boy I'm going to gives it a thump."

"Wrap the buffalo robes over you, then, and don't grumble like that or you will burst yourself," said Santa Claus. It was not surprising to anybody to hear the drum speak, for in Toyland all the toys can talk, it is only when they come down to earth that they lose the power of speech, and become as we see them in the stores. But every night, when everyone is sound asleep the toys come to life again and tell each other all their experiences.

"Here we are!" said Santa Claus, suddenly, as the reindeer stopped short just under a large chimney, "this is your destination prince and princess, and also that of the rocking horse, gun, Noah's ark and picture book; wait a minute," he continued, as all the toys mentioned tumbled out of the sleigh; "I must go down alone first, and see that all is ready for the prince, and then, what's all right, be ready to hand Gloria down, when I call."

"What is the matter?" asked Gloria anxiously. "I don't know, my love, I cannot make out what he says," replied her husband.

"Perhaps he's stuck," suggested the Noah's ark. "The noises and grunts became more audible every moment."

"He will wake people up if he makes that noise, whatever can be the matter?" said the princess, thoroughly alarmed. "Eh, I'll call him; uncle uncle!" shouted the prince down the chimney, "what's up, are you stuck?" "No-o-o," came a muffled voice in response, followed by another inarticulate grunt.

"I can't make out what he says, except that he isn't stuck, I cannot think—hark, no, yes—he's coming up!"

Sure enough, a moment afterwards the jolly old face as red as a poppy, bobbed up over the top of the chimney. Everybody stared at him and dragged him to safety, and then began a storm of questions, "what? why? where? who? what? &c." "O, do be quiet, children!" exclaimed Santa, at last, mopping his face with a large red handkerchief, "give me a minute's peace, and I'll tell you, I've nearly lost all the wind I ever possessed," where upon a brownie seized a pair of toy bellows and energetically puffed a current of air at him. "There, there, that will do; I'm very much afraid those children down there will find

their stockings empty in the morning!" "Why?" chorused everyone, in amazement, "are they naughty?" "Nangby," replied Santa Claus in a tone of disgust. "It would not be so bad if that was all, but instead, I think they are cracked, what do you think they have done?" "What?" came in a tone of agonized suspense.

"Why, they have actually left the damper in the kitchen stove pipe shut, and of course I can't open it from inside."

The silence of blank dismay followed this revelation, the toys looked at one another in speechless astonishment; however could the people have been so careless?

"Never knew such a thing to occur before in all my experience," continued Santa Claus, "they are usually so particular."

"Is there any other way of getting in?" inquired the prince. "I'm afraid not, the house is an old fashioned one and they have no open fire places at all," replied his uncle.

"There might be a window unfastened, somewhere," suggested the princess.

"Not very likely, my dear, the mistress has a horror of burglars and the windows are always carefully secured."

"Then what is to be done?" "Cannot you think a way out of the difficulty, princess?" asked Santa Claus.

Now the princess was a fairy in her own country, and a very clever one too, and besides she felt so sad to think her little mistress should be so bitterly disappointed that she began to think as hard as she could, and though she had not as much power on earth as she had in Toyland everyone felt certain she would hit upon some plan of getting them out of the dilemma, and they were not mistaken.

"Do you know where the pantry is, uncle?" she asked at length. "Yes, I think it is somewhere at the back," replied Santa Claus. "I, now, yes, I know! the pantry door opens right on to the garden, but why do you want to know?"

"You shall see, if you will drive us round to the back of the house. I will explain my plan."

"All right, tumble in everybody, come up, Beauty and Flash (to the reindeer), steady there we are," and he pulled up just on the margin of the roof overlooking the garden at the back.

The princess peeped over. "Is that the pantry door down there?" she asked, indicating a door in the wall just below them, down which a drain pipe led from the channel on the roof.

"Yes, my dear."

"That is all right then, it could not be better now, where is the little grey mouse?"

Instantly a tiny clockwork mouse ran from the bottom of the sleigh where he had been lying, snug and warm and sat up on his haunches at the princess' feet. She immediately sang in a very sweet voice:

"Little grey mouse with the sharp, sharp teeth, Run down the wall to the door beneath, Gnat as you never gnawed before, And gnaw a big hole in the pantry door."

Away scuttled the little fellow down the drain pipe, and presently they could hear the crunch, crunch of his teeth on the wood-work. Suddenly he rushed up the wall again, trembling in every limb and crouched down under the princess' gown.

"The cat!" exclaimed everybody. Sure enough when they looked over they saw a big tabby cat with great eyes as big as marbles and as bright as the wall at them.

"What is to be done now?" said Santa Claus almost in despair. "His nearly half past two, and it will never do for me to be caught out in day light, nobody would ever believe in me any more. Think again Gloria."

So Gloria began to think again; presently she asked: "Where is the little French poodle?"

Out popped a small French poodle with his hair cropped to make him look like a lion, and he too sat up on his hind legs in front of the princess, who began to sing:

"O poodle, O poodle, there's a pussy cat there, And she frightened my little mouse into the air. Look over and see where the pussy cat sits, Then jump down and frighten her out of her wits."

The poodle looked over cautiously till he could see where the wicked green eyes were looking up so hungrily, and when he had made sure where Miss Grimalkin was, he gathered himself up, and over he went, very nearly slipping on top of the seated cat. Spat—spit! lung! and over the fence she flew, never stopping to look behind her.

"Now you can go down again, mousey," said the princess, and the little mouse crept down again and began industriously gnawing at the pantry door.

"I will go down and see how he is getting on," said Santa Claus after a few minutes waiting. "I'll call up to you as soon as the hole is large enough, then you must come down as cautiously as possible."

So he went down, and presently he called out: "I can get my head in. A few minutes more and he exclaimed, 'I can get my shoulders in.' At length he called up, 'Come down, my dear, I can get right in.'"

So bidding farewell to the other toys, the prince and princess, the rocking horse, gun, Noah's ark and picture book climbed down the drain pipe and stood beside Santa Claus. The little mouse and the poodle would not leave the princess, so they all entered the dark and silent house together. They soon found the children's room, and there on the beds were three little curly heads dreaming blissfully of the full stockings which had had such a narrow escape of being empty ones.

"Good-bye, my dears," whispered Santa Claus, and the next moment he was gone, a faint tinkle on the roof was heard for a moment and then—silence, and sleep.

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Sarah Jane the next morning when she entered the pantry the next morning in search of edibles for breakfast.

"If those mice aint been and bored a hole right through the door, whatever can have come to that three cats? She must have eared em through, for they haven't touched a thing on the shelves."

Sarah Jane was English and had not been over very long, which perhaps accounted for the closed damper; the little grey mouse could have accounted for the hole, but of course, he could not speak.

When the children discovered that the damper had been shut all night their consternation and wonder were unbounded.

"Papa," said Gerty. "However do you suppose Santa Claus got in?" "With the damper shut," said Bobby.

"An' all de doors looked!" piped little Chris.

But papa was busy examining the little clockwork mouse and winding it up to run about, so perhaps he did not hear the question. At all events he did not answer it.

Some Live Weight.

How often do we hear it said of a man and woman who are wealthy, that they are of "great weight" in the community amongst which they reside. Without vouching for the wealth of the Havay family (should be called the Heavey family) of Annapolis, I will give the suggested avoirdupois weight of five of them: namely Thomas, Robert, Michael, his wife and sister, who any day, in morning costume, and without the aid of breakfast can toss the other end of the beam with 1100 pounds into the air. The Messrs Havay with their sister, are children of the late Mr. James Havay, whose sterling honesty placed him in possession of great "weight" amongst the first generation of settlers along the Ottawa Valley. SAND POINT.

MAGAZINES.

The December Donalson's is decidedly a Christmas number. Election topics and other subjects of general interest are discussed from varying standpoints, but the prevailing sentiment is, as it should be, that of the festival season.

Irish readers cannot fail to be interested in the Rev. Denis O'Callaghan's graphic description of the recent "Irish Race Convention," dealing with the members of the convention and the purpose of their assembly. "In Election Ethics Past and Present," John J. O'Shea presents a study of and in our own, Marie Donohue Walsh writes very interestingly of "A City on a Hill," the city of the "House of Loretto," and Mary E. Nixon, to her readers the "Last Sign of the Moor," an interesting tale well told.

"Christmas in Florida," by Wm. Manning Connell, is a bright sketch; a pen picture of Florida Catholics, white and colored, assembled for the reverent purpose of hearing midnight Mass. "Utterances of Campaign Leaders," sums up the opinions of the leaders in the different parties in the late campaign, a memorable contest, the result of which is vividly presented by Henry N. Cary in his interesting story on "Election Night in a Newspaper Office." The fiction of the number is contributed by Mary F. Nixon, Mrs. Francis Chadwick, Mary B. O. Sullivan and G. L. de Cidoncha.

Free and easy expectoration immediately relieves and frees the throat and lungs from viscid phlegm, and a medicine that promotes this is the best medicine to use for coughs, colds, inflammation of the lungs and all affections of the throat and chest. This is precisely what Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup is a specific for, and whoever used it has given unbounded satisfaction. Children like it because it is pleasant, adults like it because it relieves and cures the disease.

Professor Garner has failed in his efforts to phonograph the language of the apes in Africa. He went to the wrong place. If he had gone to Boston or Detroit he would have been able to get at least one phrase for record in any A. P. A. jungle. "Tollwidoppo!"—Boston Pilot.

Alms of Monsieur L'Abbe.

THE REVEREND FATHER FRANCIS

The Reverend Father Francis after three years of missionary labor in the lonely wilds of Alaska, had been bidden by his superior to return to civilization and exploit the needs of the Innuits, those untutored Eskimo for whose good he had been consuming his vital force.

Not infrequently does it befall those who migrate to the remote loneliness of this frozen North, with its icy sterility, and its godding desolation, to dissipate their reason there. The mind succumbs to the exhausting isolation of the Arctic.

Father Francis returned to more congenial conditions with his mental faculties unimpaired and his heart as hotly jealous to labor for the good of his rude Alaskans by lecturing in the East as he had been to toil for them in their own barren habitat.

One morning, after a very successful lecture the evening before, he was yet more heartened over the financial success of his venture by a postal money order from France, which he found in his mail. It had been forwarded from Washington, which he had visited some weeks before. It was from Marseilles, whence the good Abbe Francaux Navier Brunel sent to Father Francis the noble donation of thirty-nine hundred francs for the Alaska mission.

Seven hundred and eighty dollars was a pretty windfall. The accompanying letter from the beneficent abbe of the warm South was a most fitting concomitant of such holy prodigality.

"I have read with abundant edification, my reverend father," the letter ran, "of your labors in Alaska. I have been moved to send you my modest alms for the benefit of these helpless sons of the frozen North, esteeming it a privilege to co-operate in so noble a spiritual work, and, despite my unworthiness, to become thereby a participant in its rewards."

Certainly a very consoling letter, charming and thoroughly French in style. Gallic asceticism does not eschew academic elegance in its period. Father Francis smiled at the "modest alms," but this minimizing touch accorded with the magnanimity of a French priest who contributed so goodly a sum to a mission not in charge of French missionaries. Probably this generous abbe was even more open-handed to the missions cultivated by their priestly sons of France.

He sent the order to the postal authorities in Washington, asking, them to convert it into one payable at a New York office. He promptly received in reply an order for thirty-six cents, with a note that the transfer from a foreign to a domestic order involved an expenditure of three cents.

For a moment, Father Francis stared in blank amazement at this zealous sum. What could it mean? Of course, there was evidently a grotesque mistake somewhere. But how had they hit on thirty-six cents? Why cents? Why thirty-six? They said they had doctored three cents, so they must have read it thirty-nine. Suddenly the good priest burst into a long hearty laugh. It had dawned on him. The order from the abbe read "trente neuf cents." Thirty nine hundred (francs understood, of course) But these delightfully droll people in Washington had read it as "thirty-nine cents," had subtracted three cents and sent him thirty-six.

It was a most amusing misapprehension, but annoying, too. Father Francis looked at the order in this new light and acted as a "devil's advocate" against his own view of it, to see if there could be anything said for their side. A French abbe, especially one in the South of France, would not be likely to even know the English word "cents." But if he had used the word in English he would have put the "trente-neuf" in English, too. Again, had this good abbe intended to send such a feather-weight donation several thousand miles away to the scattered Eskimo of an enormous country like Alaska, he would at least have bought a two-franc money order, which would have been forty cents.

The more he reasoned it out, the more Father Francis felt convinced that the Washington postal authorities had made a comical blunder. But as it was a misunderstanding that deprived his Innuits of seven hundred and seventy-nine francs and sixty cents, it could hardly be termed slight.

He returned the order to the authorities, setting forth these reasons for declining to accept a version of the abbe's postal order in such accordance with the "modest alms" of that worthy's letter. The order was returned to him unchanged, the postal office people contending that they had read it correctly and adding that the difference in moneys between the two-franc piece, or forty cents, in France, shrink to thirty-nine cents in America.

Father Francis shook his head sadly over such perversity, but perceived that he had no choice except to write to the Abbe Brunel and tell him how tangled up his contribution was. He felt that the warm-hearted man would

have much simple merriment over the opera-bouffe complication and would promptly write, securing to the Innuits their imperiled hundreds.

In due course, a thin letter floated over the Atlantic. With a smile of anticipation the Alaskan missionary tore it open and read it. The elegant diction of the epistle did not prevent the clearest elucidation of the point at issue. This benefactor of foreign missions, with much fervor and rhetorical allusion, wrote that the worldly goods at his command were few, but that happily, the good God regarded very little the sum bestowed in His name, since the intention and spirit of the donor were the precious thing. Hence he (Monsieur L'Abbe), when there were a few francs in the Sunday collection more than usual, was wont to gratify his predilection for foreign missions by sending some measure of such surplus to help plant the cross in remote and unconverted regions of the earth, albeit that his offering, as in the case of Father Francis and Alaska, could be totted up in "sous."

There was not so much oily, sweet-hearted laughter in the air as the hardworking priest of Alaska mastered the Abbe Brunel's scholastic of charities. The theology of the French cleric's position was unassailable. One could not but accord his aims the outlay due to "the widow's mite." So Father Francis, after a light, valedictory sigh to his Innuits vanished hundreds, rallied quickly, thanks to a keen sense of humor of the most supporting quality, and proceeded to diagnose the abbe's alms.

The forty cents which that worthy had consecrated to Alaska in France, had shrunk to thirty-nine cents in the United States. The conversion of the foreign into a domestic money order had reduced it to thirty-six cents. Postage on two letters to Washington trimmed this to thirty-two cents. Five cents on the letter to the abbe brought it down to twenty-seven. To be retransmitted to New York from Jersey City, where Father Francis was, meant a five-cent fare to the ferry, a three-cent passage of the Hudson, and another five-cent fare to the post office. The return trip involved a like disbursement. Total, twenty-six cents, which, subtracted from the twenty-seven cents, left the abbe benefactor to the Alaska mission to the extent of one cent.

To have saved the cent, by walking, would have involved an expenditure of time, which, even at Father Francis' modest valuation, was too precious to justify its outlay for such a result.

How to expend the Abbe's cent so as to do the most good to the mission might prove matter for thought. One way to avoid any mental strain on the subject would be to consider it merged in the ten thousand dollars deriving to the Alaska mission from Father Francis' lectures. But since the alms of the Abbe had formed the subject of an international correspondence, it seemed fitting that one cent's worth of something definite should go to the frozen North as the result of this eleemosynary tribute from the tropical South. It preserved its dignity better.

When the time arrived for his return to a living death in the grim cheerlessness of his mission, Father Francis set his face courageously toward the Pole, albeit with the conviction that his next departure from Alaska would be not for the United States but for the kingdom of heaven.

Three months after his return, the distribution of prizes took place at the school of the Sisters of Saint Anne at Kozzyrevsky, on the bank of the Yukon, where was the Mission of the Holy Cross. Father Francis was to confer the awards.

The Innuits boys and girls of the school had so faithfully responded to the efforts of the Sisters in their behalf that among the foremost who were entitled to prizes, there was a difference of only a few marks, four or five having almost attained the absolute maximum of two thousand.

A small boy, Erakok, was the first winner, Ermionok, a little moon faced Eskimo maiden, was the second. Her man nature is the same the world over. This diminutive girl student of the Yukon felt as aggrieved at failing to win the first prize as an aspirant to "fauteuil" in the French Academy could do over his failure to be selected to the Forty Immortals. Ermionok was bashed in tears of mortified ambition that little Erakok should have outstripped her in the race.

It is Innuits etiquette in taking a present to turn the back on the donor, thrust out the hand behind and grasp the proffered gift. In more civilized centers the back is not turned on a benefactor till the offering is secured.

Another artless feature exhibited by the small fur-clad prize-winner was to retreat with their right hand, clutching the reward of merit, held straight out from the body.

Father Francis was glad that the primitive etiquette of the Innuits caused the winners to back up for their awards. For although his warm heart broken over her failure to win the first prize, he could not for the life of him prevent his benign lips from relaxing into a smile when he perceived that, with no provision on any one's part of its special fitness, the prize destined for the artlessly weeping little maid was a small red, cotton handkerchief!

The sweet smile on the priest's lips came intensified by the irresistibly comic appearance out by Ermionok's chunky little figure as she retreated, with its glaring hood made of skins of the wild geese.

Hardly had he recovered his normal gondo gravity, when Father Francis described on one of the back seats another child who proved a yet more potent tax on his sympathy. She was a smaller girl than Ermionok but was fathomless deeper in tearful anguish. He asked the sister the reason for this little one's tears.

"Poor little Mummyles!" replied the Sister regretfully. "She fell just one mark below the number necessary for a prize. I am afraid the disappointment may discourage her, for she really worked very hard."

Father Francis looked at the diminutive Nioba, watching her blasted hope with fruitless tears. It seemed to him a case where slightly tempered justice would be a wiser virtue than the Spartan rigor of exactly righteous compensation. A thought struck him that brought a twinkle to his soft blue eyes.

"How much does one of these handkerchiefs cost?" he asked softly. "Oh, not more than a cent, really. We buy the material and make them ourselves."

One cent! The unappalled alms of the Abbe Brunel came like a flash to Father Francis' mind.

"Get me one, Sister. I will give you the cent for it," he said with decision.

Then he told the children that, thanks to a kind benefactor of the mission, far, far away in a land where it was always sunshine, and by a sea that was blue and smiling, an extra prize was to be bestowed on this occasion, and that it would be awarded to Mummyles of her exceptionally good record in behavior and scholarship.

When it was brought home to Mummyles' shattered mind that after all she was to receive a prize, her disk of tear-washed countenance was brighter from beaming happiness than from its exotic ablation. With a thread as light as air, which approved her name of Mummyles, "Pretty Dancer," she tripped forward breathlessly, backed up for her prize and proudly retreated with the "Abbe Brunel Special Reward" fluttering from her tiny brown hand, like the banner of a triumphant procession of the Commune.

"I am not sure," Father Francis thought, still with the humorous twinkle in his clear eye and a pathetic smile playing on his lips, "that it would be good to have it known how long an arm so small an alms can have. There might be a depressing excess of meek contributions to the foreign missions."

A METHODIST PASTOR

He Tells About One of His Congregations Who Had Bright's Disease.

Ryckman's Kootenay Cure

Was the Medicine That Gave Her Complexion the Glow of Health and Removed the Puffed Appearance From Her Face.

50 Gore Street, Hamilton, Ont., Jan. 21, 1896.

Mr. Ryckman.

Dear Sir—I have been conversing this day with Mrs. E. Clarkson, 138 Hannah street east, this city, who claims to have received great benefit from the use of "Kootenay Cure," which is sold so generally by you at the present time. Her special trouble was Bright's Disease and was of nine years standing. It was so pronounced by two physicians. While she does not claim to be completely cured, having taken only four bottles of the remedy, yet she feels so much better that she does not hesitate to recommend its use to anyone afflicted as she has been. The pain in her head has entirely ceased, and almost from the back. The complexion wears the glow of health, and the puffed appearance is gone from the face. She has increased nine pounds in weight in two months, and is thoroughly encouraged to believe that what has improved her physical condition was ultimately accomplished a complete cure.

J. VAN WYCK, Pastor Gore street Methodist Church.

It is the glistering and softly spoken, the amiable fallacy, the patriotic lie of the politician, the prevalent lie of the merciful lie of the partisan, the careless lie of each man to himself that cast that black mystery over humanity through which any man who pierces who thank as we would thank any man who dug a well in a desert.—Ruskin.

UNEQUALLED—Mr. Thos. Bruat, Tyn-dinaga, Ont., writes—"I have to thank you for recommending Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil for bleeding piles. I was troubled with them for nearly fifteen years, and tried almost everything I could hear or think of. Some of them would give me temporary relief but now would effect a cure. I have now been free from the distressing complaint for nearly eighteen months. I hope you will continue to recommend it."

Clear writers, like clear fountains, do not seem so deep as they are; the turbid look most profound.—Lander.