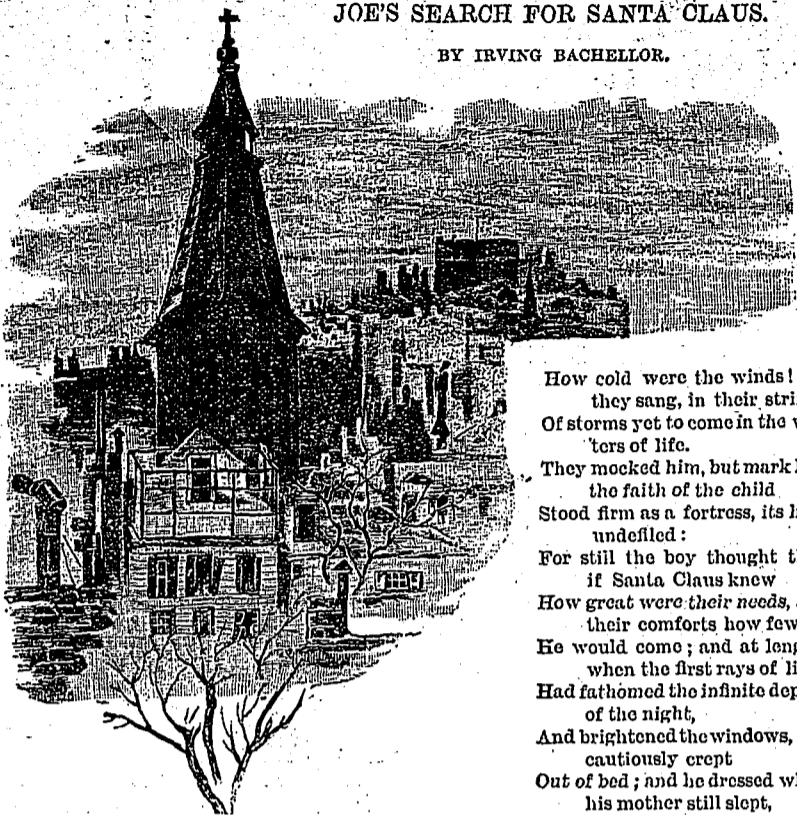


JOE'S SEARCH FOR SANTA CLAUS.

BY IRVING BACHELOR.



A story, my child? Well, there's none that I know
As good as the story about little Joe.
He lived with his mother, just under the eaves
Of a tenement high, where the telegraph weaves
Its highway of wire, that everywhere goes,
And makes the night musical when the wind
blows.
Their home had no father—the two were bereft
Of all but their appetites; those never left!
Joe's grew with his body—a day never passed
He spent not in hunger to make the food last;
And days when the mother so silently went
And stood by the windows—Joe knew what it
meant.
They'd nothing for supper! The words were so
sad
That somehow they drowned all the hunger he
had.
And surely God's miracles never have ceased:
Joe's hunger grew less when his sorrows in-
creased;
And often the poor have been nourished and fed
By the sorrows that live when desire is dead.
When the coal ran out in winter's worst storm,
The fire burnt the harder that kept their hearts
warm.
Their windows revealed many wonderful sights;
Long acres of roofing and high-flying kites.
At sunset, the great vault of heaven aglow,
The lining of gold on the clouds hanging low,
The cross on the top of St. Mary's high tower
Ablaze with the light of that magical hour;
And still, as the arrows of light slanted higher,
The last thing in sight was the great cross of fire,
Each day, as it vanished, the history old
Of Christ's crucifixion was reverently told;
To him the boy learned to confide all his woes,
But oftener prayed for a new suit of clothes,
Since those that he wore didn't fit him at all—
The coat was too large and the trousers too small,
And Joe looked so queer, from his head to his
feet
It grieved his proud soul to be seen in the street,
And sometimes he cherished a secret desire
To own a hand-sled, or to build a bonfire;
But reached one conclusion by various routes—
He could have better fun with a new pair of boots.
He thought how the old pair, when shiny and
whole,
Had squeaked in a way that delighted his soul,
And remembrance grew sad as he strutted
around
And tried hard, but vainly, to waken that sound.
The day before Christmas brought trouble to
Joe.
A thousand times worse! 'Twas a terrible blow
To hear that old Santa Claus, god of his dreams,
Would not come that year with his fleet-footed
teams.
He'd seen them! Why, once, of a night's witch-
ing hour
He saw them jump over the cross on the tower,
And scamper away o'er the snow-covered roofs
His heart beating time to the sound of their
hoofs.
Not coming this year? Santa Claus must be dead,
He thought, as with sad tears he crept into bed.
And, as he lay thinking, the long strings of wire
Sang low in the wind like a deep sounding lyre,
And Joe caught the notes of this solemn refrain—
"He'll not come again! no, he'll not come again!"
And oh, how the depths of his spirit were stirred
By thoughts that were born of the music he
heard;

How cold were the winds! and they sang, in their strife,
Of storms yet to come in the win-
ters of life.
They mocked him, but mark how
the faith of the child
Stood firm as a fortress, its hope
undefiled:
For still the boy thought that,
if Santa Claus knew
How great were their needs, and
their comforts how few,
He would come; and at length,
when the first rays of light
Had fathomed the infinite depths
of the night,
And brightened the windows, Joe
cautiously crept
Out of bed; and he dressed while
his mother still slept,
And down the long stair ways on

tiptoe he ran:
Then out in the snow with the will of a man,
He went, looking hither and thither, because.
Poor boy! he was trying to find Santa Claus,
He hurried along, through the snow-burdened
street
As if the good angels were guiding his feet;
And as the sun rose in the heavens apace,
A radiance fell on his uplifted face
That came from the cross gleaming far over-
head—
A symbol of hope for the living and dead.
A moment he looked at the great house of prayer,
Then shyly peeped in to
see what was there;
And entering softly he
wandered at will
Through pathways of
velvet, deserted
and still,
And saw the light glow
on a wonderful
scene
Of ivy-twined columns
and arches of
green,
And back of the rail
where the clergy-
man knelt,
He sat on the cushions
to see how they felt.
How soft was that vel-
vet hestroke with
his hand!
But when he lay down,
oh, the feeling wa-
grand!
And while he was mus-
ing the walls
seemed to sway,
And slowly the windows went moving away.
What, ho! there he comes! with his big pack
and all,
Down the sunbeams that slope from the high-
windowed wall;
And Joe tried to speak, but could not, if he died,
When Santa Claus came and sat down by his side.
"A tenement boy! humph! he probably swears."
(Joe trembled, and tried hard to think of his
prayers.)
He lifted Joe's eyelids, he patted his brow,
And said, "He is not a bad boy, anyhow."
But hark! there is music; a deep swelling
sound
Is sweeping on high as if heavenward bound.
And suddenly waking, Joe saw kneeling there
The rector, long-robed, who was reading a prayer,
"Provide for the fatherless children," said he,
"The widowed, the helpless, the bond and the
free."
The rector stops praying—his face wears a
frown:
A ragged young gamin is pulling his gown.
"I knowed you would come," said the boy, half
in fright—
"I knowed you would come—I was watchin' all
night.
Say? what are ye goin' to give ma an' me?
Let me see what 'tis, Santa Claus—please let me
see!"
The rector looked down into Joe's honest face,
And a great wave of feeling swept over the
place;
And tenderly laying his hand on Joe's head,

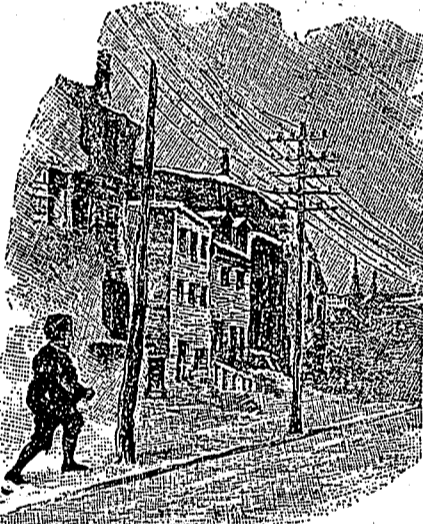
He turned to the people and solemnly said:
"We pray that the poor may be sheltered and fed,
And we leave it to Heaven to furnish the bread,
Ye know, while he feedeth the fowls of the air,
The children of mankind he leaves to man's care;"
And kissing Joe's face the preacher said then,
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven—amen!"
That day Santa Claus came to many a door
He'd forgotten to call at the evening before.
Was little Joe happy? Well, now, you are right,
And the wires sang merrily all the next night.
—Cosmopolitan.

PAYING THE PREACHER.

A colored church with 200 members held
a society meeting to consider the question
of finances, which greatly troubled them.
They had the free use of the church build-
ing, and some white friends paid for fuel
and light; so all they had to raise was
enough to pay the preacher.

The meeting was under charge of a
thoughtful white brother, who let them get
just as happy as they could from 8 o'clock
until 10, and they had a Hallelujah time.
Feeling ran high, shouts of glory rang out,
and everything was heavenly. By and by
he called them to order, and organized
for business. The first thing after the
opening prayers and other preliminaries,
was the preacher's report. He reported
\$300 for the year's work. Everything was
very quiet. The leader asked why they
did not shout now? One old saint an-
swered that he didn't see anything to
shout about. For his part, he was as-
hamed to think they had shouted so well
and paid so poorly. "But then," he said,
"we're all poor, you know." "Yes," an-
swered the leader, "I know you are all
poor. But you could do better than you
have done, if you will go about it right.
Do you want to do better?" Every one
responded "Yes!" "Well," said he, "I'm
going to show you how you can raise \$2,-
500 this year."

The look of surprise and consternation
on the faces of his audience was too much
for the good brother's gravity, and he had
to laugh. It was well
that he did, for the
congregation laughed
too at his huge joke
as they thought.



"But," he resumed,
when they had re-
covered from the
shock his statement
had given them, "al-
though I laughed, I
am in dead earnest
about it. You can
raise \$2,500, and you
must raise \$1,000 or
quit professing reli-
gion when I am
around." Then point-
ing with his fore-
finger to the leading
brother, who could
sing the longest shout
the loudest, stamp
the hardest, and
jump the highest of
any of them, he asked:

"Brother John, how much do you spend
a week for tobacco?" Brother John's jaw
fell. But he pulled himself together, and
managed to stammer, "I'll have to reckon."
"All right," answered the leader, "I'll
help you a little. Don't you think you
average fifty cents a week?" Yes, he
thought he did. The sisters liked the on-
slaught on tobacco; but he turned to their
side of the house, and pleasantly inquired:
"Sister Susan, how much do you spend a
week for candy and sweet things, peanuts
and other trifling notions?" Sister Susan
was helped to say as much as fifty cents.
"Now," said he, "I must show you that
there is wasted in needless self-indulgence
as much as twenty-five cents for each
member, for you are all grown folks,
and that makes just \$60 a week, or
more than \$2,500 a year. You have
only to deny yourself a paltry ten cents a
week, each of you, to have \$20 every week,
or over \$1,000 a year, and here you have
been getting happy, and starving your
preacher on \$300 a year. Now what are
you going to do? Keep on spending your
money on foolishness, or bring it into God's
treasury? It was a new thought to them,
but, as the light shone, they consented to
walk in it and begin that hour. So Brother
John started and laid down his quarter,
and Sister Susan laid down hers, and the

rest followed, and so, paying and praising,
the meeting went on gloriously, and that
church learned a lesson that it never for-
got. They found out how to do good.
When they saw that they could, they
gladly said that they would, and they did,
and had plenty of money in the treasury
after that memorable meeting.

Let young Christians settle the matter
with God and their own hearts how much
they owe to Christ and their poorer breth-
ren, and then let them appoint a treasurer
who shall receive the money saved from
needless self-indulgence. This money will
soon accumulate, and form a fund of such
dimensions that buildings for Christian
work can be erected in the crowded parts
of the city, and great good would come to
many. Let some such system be adopted
at once. So shall God be glorified and
your souls abundantly blessed.

Twenty-five dollars will start a Sunday-
school in the West. Ten children, giving
one cent per day for one year, amounts to
\$36.50, thereby being able to start a school
with a surplus for extra books of \$11.50.
—Buds and Blossoms.

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh, they brought the
new-born Christ—
The wise men from the East—and in the ox's
stall,
The far-brought precious gifts they heaped, with
love unpriced;
And Christ the babe looked on and wondered
not at all.
Gold, frankincense and myrrh, I, too, would
offer Thee
O, King of faithful hearts, upon thy Christmas
Day;
And, poor and little worth although the offering
be,
Because Thou art so kind, I dare to think I
may.

I bring the Gold of Faith, which, through the
centuries long,
Still seeks the Holy Child and worships at his
feet,
And owns him for its Lord, with gladness deep
and strong,
And joins the angel choir, singing in chorus
sweet.

The frankincense I bear is worship which can
rise,
Like perfume floating up higher and higher
still,
Till on the wings of prayer it finds the far blue
skies
And falls, as falls the dew, to freshen heart and
will.

And last I bring the myrrh, half-bitter and half-
sweet,
Of my own selfish heart, through sacrifice made
clean,
And break the vase and spill the oil upon Thy
feet,
O, Lord of Christmas Day, as did the Magda-
lene.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh—'tis all I have to
bring
To thee, O Holy Child, now throned in heaven's
mid!
Because Thou art so kind, take the poor offer-
ing,
And let me go forth blessed, as once the Wise
Men did.

It is the greatest possible praise to be
praised by a man who is himself deserving
of praise.—From the Latin

