

SURE THER'S A SANTA

Back in 1897 a queer letter came to the editorial desk of the old New York Sun. It was a simple query from a little girl who obviously had experienced the chill of disillusionment in her faith in Santa Claus, and wished the matter settled finally, positively.

The letter was turned over to Francis Pharcellus Church to answer. "And Church," says a contemporary, "bristled and pooh-poohed . . . but he took the letter and turned with an air of resignation to his desk."

He did not know that all the weighty words that he had written would be forgotten and that his claim to remembrance would rest on a simple message written in kindness to a troubled little girl.

Because we might think a long time without approaching the spirit of this simple editorial we are reproducing it here as a tribute to Christmas and to one man who caught its spirit fully.

"We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of THE SUN:

DEAR EDITOR—I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.' Please tell me the truth, is there a SANTA CLAUS? —Virginia O'Hanlon.

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a SANTA CLAUS. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no SANTA CLAUS? It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in SANTA CLAUS? You might as well not believe in fairies? You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch SANTA CLAUS, but even if they did not see SANTA CLAUS coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees SANTA CLAUS, but that is no sign that there is no SANTA CLAUS. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain, and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No SANTA CLAUS? Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND HEARTIEST GREETINGS
OF THE SEASON TO YOU!

This is the merriest, gayest and most joyful Christmas we've had in many years. And we've got a big Christmas package here for you—just bursting with good wishes and good cheer for the best of everything during this Yuletide season and for all of 1946. And tucked into the corners of this surprise package are "thank you" messages from us to you—for your appreciated co-operative spirit during the trying war years.

COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF
THE CITY OF LONDON

TO THE READERS OF THE DAWN OF TOMORROW
A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

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