

### Christmas as It Should Be

When Christmas is made an occasion for sending expensive presents of all sorts and to all sorts of people simply as a compliance with the fashion of the hour, the most beautiful of festivals is made cheap and tawdry by gross misse. The value of the present lies in the sincerity of the feeling which it represents, says Hamilton Wright Mable, and the expression, not only of regard, but also of respect for the recipient. When persons of moderate means make gifts entirely out of relation to their incomes and their usual way of living there is no real honor either in the sending or in the acceptance of the remembrance. The day which commemorates the birth of a little child in a manger ought to be kept holy by simplicity, sincerity, absence of pretension and the joy of the heart.

### SANTA CLAUS? SURELY!

How Could Any One Doubt His Existence Who Knows the Facts?

[Many years ago the New York Sun published the following editorial in answer to this question. It was written by Frank P. Church and has become one of the classics of modern Christmas literature.]

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 eight 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.  
115 West Ninety-fifth Street.

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.

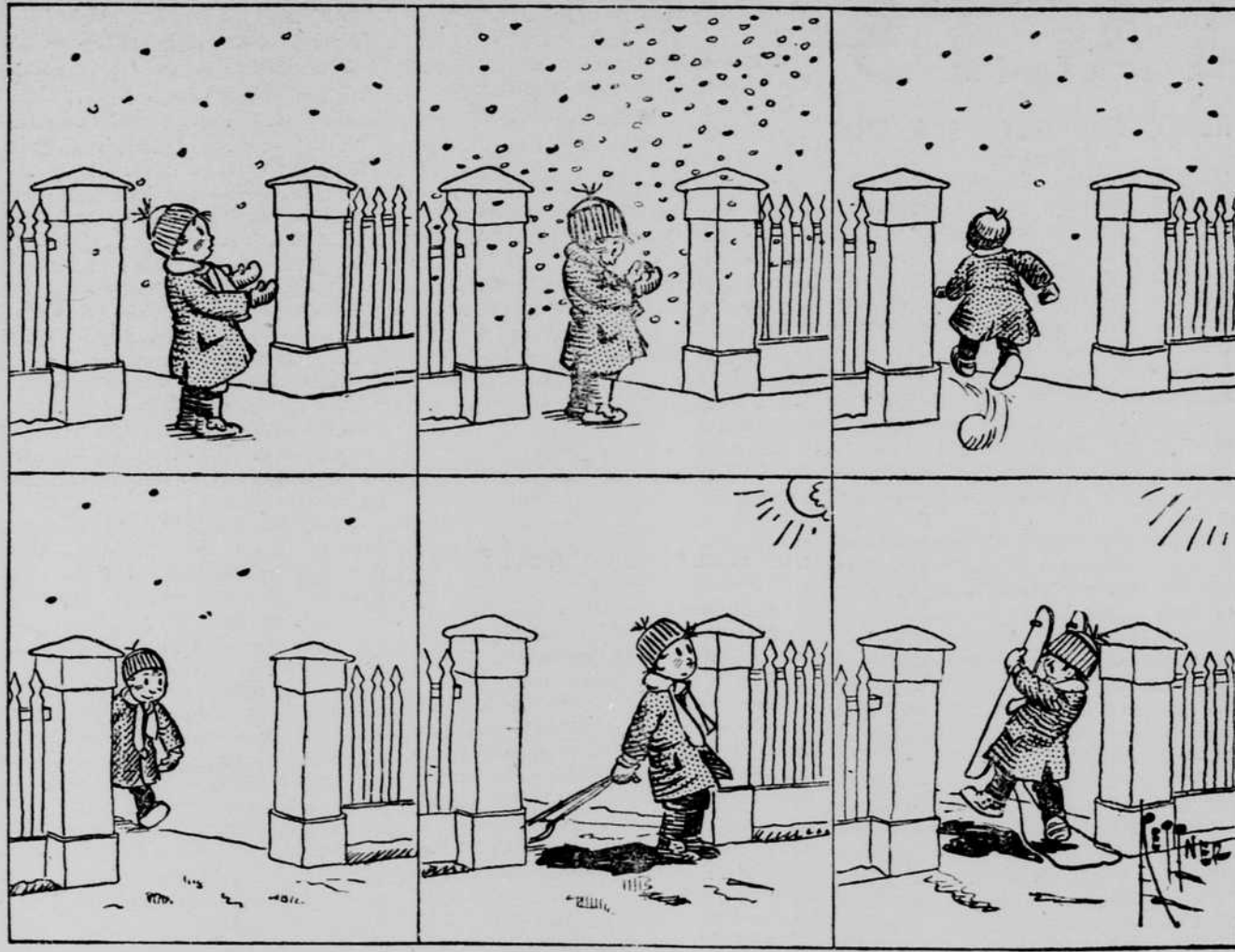
Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. 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 that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may 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 or 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, may, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

### TODAY'S MOVIE



Little Bobby and a Snow Flurry.

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### THE "PRESEPIO."

Latin Countries Honor Christ's Manger at Christmas Time.

St. Francis, born in the quaint little town of Assisi among the brown Umbrian hills in 1182, invented the presepio, the reproduction of the manger known in the Christmas story, to make the Christmas story plain to the simple, illiterate common people. Since then it has remained a favorite devotion in Latin Europe. The Italian and Spanish call it the presepio, the manger; the French the crèche, the cradle, and the Hungarians and Belgians, Bethlehem, or Bethlehem.

Only a few years since not a carpenter could be hired in Rome or Naples for weeks before Christmas. They were all busy erecting presepios in the homes of the quality, while the poorer folk were constructing their own. As the mainland grows more sophisticated the quaint old devotion is fading away, but in conservative Sicily people still make the presepio every year. All over the island families are busy from Dec. 1 to 15 putting their old presepios in order or making new ones, and there is much calling to and fro to compare results and admire new and elaborate specimens of the art. The presepio may be a little thing on a stand in one corner or it may occupy the whole side of a room, according to circumstances.

It may represent a whole mountain side, made of the rough, flexible bark of the cork tree. Peaks, crags and precipices abound, with winding trails,

houses and castles of colored cardboard, forests of twigs and sometimes tiny pipes to furnish brooks and lakes. In the center is the grotto, with the holy family within. A sky of blue paper is stretched above, with the star of Bethlehem conspicuous, and over the hills come shepherds bearing gifts.

Spain, like Sicily, has never lost the presepio, and in both Spanish and Sicilian cities there are booths for the sale of miniature shepherds, magi and all the accessories of the art. In France the crèche is not made at home, as in the southern countries, but it used to be a part of the Christmas decorations of every French church and is still so in the rural districts.

Not only in costly gifts or rich rare food lies Christmas joy or blessing. It lies—no one can tell another where it lies. The finding must be for one's self alone. I can only say to all little children, to all grownup children, to all who are looking back as well as to those who are looking forward, to them I can say with Tiny Tim, "God bless you each this happy Christmas time," and if you would be very sure to get its meaning best make a real Christmas for somebody who might not have it but for you.—Kate Langley Boshier.

### "CHRIST'S POOR" AT CHRISTMAS.

One of the sweetest of all the Christmas superstitions is prevalent in parts of Germany.

Long ago a poor little clockmaker who loved above all things to go to church received a Christmas gift of a large red apple.

He was supremely happy because he had something to give to the dear Christ Child. Hastening to the altar of the church, he placed the precious apple on the marble hands of the Babe in Mary's arms.

Instantly the tiny fingers closed over it and a smile of heavenly joy swept over the chubby face.

This happened long, long ago, but the people in the vicinity still give to Christ through his poor at Christmas time, believing that the gift bestowed upon "one of the least of these" is received by the Christ Child himself, and rewarded by the same blessed smile which brought joy and comfort to the little clockmaker.

**Delicate Hint.**  
Borroughs—"I knew a man who looks so much like you that one could hardly tell you apart." Lenders—"You haven't paid him that five I lent you three months ago have you?"—Boston Transcript.

### Christmas In The Farmhouse

When as a child you read stories of Christmas celebrations where the houses were decorated with holly and mistletoe and the people had such jolly times putting them up, didn't you look around your own house and wonder how that would look if trimmed with those same greens? And didn't you long to smell their spicy fragrance and to have a hand in putting them up where you thought they would look the best? And didn't you long to feel that peculiar Christmas spirit that is in the very air in cities and villages for more than a week before Christmas day itself? And then did you just settle back and say to yourself: "Well, it's no use."

"As long as I live on a farm Christmas must be just the same as it always has been—an exchange of gifts and afterward an unusually big dinner?"

I want to tell you that you are mistaken—that you can have just those very same things, even to bringing in the old time Yule log, if you are so fortunate as to have an open fireplace in the farmhouse.

City people pay from 35 cents to \$1 for a small house Christmas tree, and every one who can afford it buys a tree every year for his children. How often do farmers' children have trees? And why not? Because the parents say, "We haven't gifts enough to make a pretty tree." Many people never put a gift on—simply make it a tree of beauty for the children. Strings of popcorn, wishbones and canes gilded, gold stars—anything bright and shiny hung on a tree delights a child—a bag of popcorn with a few candles in it tastes five times as good if it has only once hung on a tree. Even if the gift must be underwear, shoes and things actually needed to wear, have them come as surprises and in as "Christmas" looking packages as possible. It is well to keep the Christmas spirit in the home.

It seems a pity for us country people, surrounded by these beautiful things deemed luxuries by our city friends, to make no use whatever of them and to let our lives become so commonplace. Christmas is not solely a day for gift giving and receiving and eating. It is a day for doing everything in your power to add to the joy of the children—a day to remember the feeble and lonely old people—a day to think of the strangers and the poor. If you haven't money to spend for gifts for them you can give some of yourself and of your own home Christmas cheer. There are homes that it is an inspiration to enter, because of the Christmas spirit they breathe forth. I trust the farm homes will not be lacking in Christmas beauty or Christmas cheer—that all of them will truly "keep Christmas."—Bertha G. Markham in Country Gentleman.

The man who exercises his jawbone and not his backbone will soon have nothing but jawbone left.

Before classing another as a fool just remember that he may have the same opinion of you.

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The confirmed prejudices of a thoughtful life are as hard to change as the confirmed habits of an indolent life; and as some must trifle away age, because they trifled away youth, others must labor on in a maze of error, because they have wandered there too long to find their way out.—Bolingbroke.

No work. No happiness. Go to it.

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**R. L. ARTHUR**