

THE SIOUX COUNTY JOURNAL.

VOLUME VIII.

HARRISON, NEBRASKA, THURSDAY, DEC. 19, 1895.

NUMBER 15.



SANTA CLAUS is the children's friend. Who he was we have little means of knowing. Authentic history is almost silent on the subject, merely stating that he was the Bishop of Myra, in Lycia, and died about the year 320. Tradition has woven many a pretty tale about him, and one runs that he appeared in the night time and secretly made valuable presents to the children of the household. What manner of person St. Nicholas was, seems subject to variation, according to the time, place or manner of regarding him. Medieval pictures represent him as slender, and clad in full episcopal robes with mitre and crozier. Modern painters and storytellers in England, Germany and America, give us a jovial, rubicund type of a man, with none of the features of the cleric. Kris Kringle is regarded as an alternative name for Santa Claus, but he is a totally different being. Kris Kringle is simply a corruption of the German word "Christ Kindlein," or Christ Child.

Christmas is children's day; it is the day when, as Dickens says, we should remember the time when its great founder was a child himself. It is especially the day for the friendless young, the children in hospitals, the lame, the sick, the weary, the blind. No child should be left alone on Christmas day, for loneliness with children means brooding. A child growing up with no child friend is not a child at all, but a premature man or woman.

The best Christmas present to a boy is a box of tools, the best to a girl any number of dolls. When they get older and can write letters a postoffice is a delightful boon. These are to be bought, but they are far more amusing if made at home. Any good-sized cardboard box will do for this purpose. The lid should be fastened to it so that when it stands up it will open like a door. A slit must be cut out about an inch wide and from five to six inches long, so as to allow the postage of small parcels, yet not large enough even to admit the smallest hand. Children should learn to respect the inviolate character of the post from the earliest age.

Capital scrapbooks can be made by children. Old railway guides may be the foundation and every illustrated paper a magazine of art. A paste box, next to a paint box, is a most serviceable toy. Hobby horses are profitable steeds and can be made to go through any amount of paces. But mechanical toys are more amusing to the children than the child, who wishes to do his own mechanical work. A boy can be amused by turning him out of the house, giving him a ball or a kite, or letting him dig in the ground for the unhappy mole. Little girls, who must be kept in on a rainy day, or invalid children, are very hard to amuse, and recourse must be had to story telling, to the dear, delightful thousand and one books now written for children, of which "Alice in Wonderland" is the flower of perfection.



BEGINNING at Benton City, on the Union Pacific Road, the telephone line stretches to the north, leaps across the Laramie mountains, and at a point opposite the great mass of earth and rock and tree, called Red Butte, it comes to a sudden stop. From this point to the fort, a distance of twenty-five miles, is the roughest portion of the way, and the skulking bands of Indians make it the most dangerous. At the terminus of the line is a rude shanty and a soldier operator. Close by the shanty are tents of the soldiers, who are setting the poles and pushing the line along until the fort shall have electric communication with the outside world. It is December now—only two days to Christmas. There have been cold rains, snow storms, severe weather, and the soldiers are wondering why they have not been ordered back to the fort for the winter, when a mounted messenger arrives over the trail bearing the expected order. The Colonel's wife has gone East. The operator is to wire her to remain where she is until spring. When her answer is received the shanty is to be closed up, camp broken, and the party headed for the fort. The afternoon wears away, the night comes down, and some of the soldiers are asleep, when Benton City sends in its call, and follows it by a telegram reading: "The Colonel's wife started West four days ago, and ought to be there or at the fort now." Next morning there was no arrival

from the South. The Colonel's wife, riding a horse with a blanket for a saddle, dismounted at the front of the shanty, and opened the door with a cheery "Howdy do, boys!" to the operator and the Sergeant. As both men stood at "attention," she removed the hood and cloak which enveloped her, shook off the snow, and said to the Sergeant: "I came through with hardly an hour's rest, and I'm hungry as a wolf. Tell some of the men to cook something. I'll give the Colonel a surprise."

Everybody hustled and bustled, and an hour later camp was broken, and twelve people headed for the north, the strongest man breaking the way, and the Colonel's wife bringing up the rear, with a kind word and a smile for every soldier. The trail led up a narrow valley, and the wild gale had drifted the snow until the line had to move forward at a snail's pace. At nightfall they had made just half the distance to the fort. In a thicket all ate supper together. Said the Sergeant, as he looked in vain for the stars: "I saw Indian signs back by the creek. 'I see that you have revolvers as well as muskets,'" remarked the Colonel's wife.



"THEY WON'T TAKE ME PRISONER."

"Please give me one extra ammunition. I'll try and not be a burden to you, at least."

As the gale came sweeping down the valley and roaring around the mountain base, there were wild war whoops and the crack of rifles. In the darkness a score of Indians had crept close upon the camp. Both sentries were shot dead.

"It's only Indians, boys; only Indians!" shouted the Sergeant, and he fired his first shot. "Now, then, push on!"

They had not moved ten rods before a rifle cracked and one of the men pitched forward, shot through the heart. A minute later two more bullets whistled over the men's heads. Then the little

band was hidden from sight of the Indian sentries by the blinding whirl of snow.

"They're after us, ma'am," said the Sergeant.

"They won't take me prisoner," whispered the Colonel's wife, as she held out the revolver.

"That's right, ma'am. We are headed for the fort right enough, and maybe the red devils will haul off after a bit and let us go in peace. A merry Christmas to you, though I've seen merrier ones in my time."

For a mile or more the little party breasted the storm. Then came a sudden shot, and the rear guard went down. There were seven men and a woman at 8 o'clock. At 9 o'clock there were but five men, at 10 but four, at midnight only two. Two men and a woman—the Sergeant, the soldier-operator, and the Colonel's wife. The others had been picked off one by one, and the Indians still followed. Now and then the trio halted, knelt down, and peering into the snow-whirl, opened a fusillade which checked pursuit if it did not wound or kill.

Instinct must have guided them in that storm—Providence must have shielded them from the bullets, but the storm continued to rage and the vindictive foe to pursue, till the report of the firearms reached the ears of the sentinel at the fort. No one had yet learned what was happening, when three figures staggered up to the gate, and on into the fort, and up to the door of the Colonel's headquarters. Two of the figures held up a third between them. As he peered in the Sergeant saluted and said: "Col. Dawson, I report myself, and I bring you a Christmas present."

And as the Colonel uttered a shout of surprise and rushed forward with outstretched arms, the brave little woman fell into them, and the two men sank down in their tracks, and those who lifted them up wet their fingers with the blood of heroes.

A handsome merry-faced woman, who is five years older—a Sergeant of infantry who limps a bit—a lone grave in which sleeps the soldier-operator—nothing more to be seen. The Colonel's wife may tell you the story—the Sergeant couldn't be coaxed to, but he can't conceal the limp, and is proud of the extra stripes he has worn on his sleeves ever since that Christmas day.

A Financial Transaction.

"Say, mister," said a boy who had just overtaken a market wagon after purring it for four or five blocks, "do you want a kid who'll hit you in the neck with that hard snowball?"

"You bet I do," replied the man, slackening speed.

"Will ye gimme a quarter of I ketch him and bring him here?"

"Gimme 50 cents."

"Yes," said the driver, lifting his whip from the socket; "but I don't give you any more'n that."

"Well, git the money ready."

"You haven't got the boy that threw the snowball yet."

"Yes, I have. That boy is me. Dad's sick, and me mother can't get work. The twins is too little ter earn anything, an' if I don't hustle there won't be any Christmas tree at our house. I'll take a lickin' any day for 50 cents."

"Sonny," said the market man, in a voice that was remarkably husky, "here's yer 50 cents. I'm in a hurry now—you needn't bother about deliverin' the goods. We'll call it square."—Washington Star.

Johnny's Woe.

Curly-headed Johnny had a tear drop in his eye. Curly-headed Johnny couldn't speak without a sigh.

And the Christmas preparations that were round him every where.

Had not the least effect upon his melancholy air.

"Oh, what's the use of hanging up my stocking," he would say;

"There's nothing to look forward to for me on Christmas Day;

He'll scratch us off his program when he latches up his team.

For Sanny needs a fireplace, and they heat our flat by steam."—Washington Star.

A Christmas Entertainment.

A novel idea for a children's Christmas entertainment is a butterfly's ball, writes Elizabeth Robinson Scott, in the Ladies' Home Journal.

This need not mean late hours nor expensive dresses. The boys wear tight-fitting suits of black or dark-brown, the girls any pretty, fanciful dresses. The framework of the wings is deftly fashioned of wire and covered with paper or the cotton crepon that comes in such vivid colors; these are spangled with gold or painted to represent the tinting of the butterfly's wings.

A light yoke of wire is constructed to fit the shoulders, fastening under the arms, and to this the wings are attached. The effect is very brilliant and graceful. Another pretty fancy is an archery fete. The children carry small bows dressed

with flowers, and sheaths of arrows in flower-bedecked quivers.

"You haven't got \$5 about you, Jones?"

"No, ma'am. Wife borrowed the last to buy my Christmas present."—Atlanta Constitution.

Got a clipper-sled, an' when us boys goes out to slide

"Long comes the grocery cart an' we all hook a ride!

But, sometimes, when the grocery man is wretched and cross

He reaches at me with his whip and larrups up his hose;

An' then I laff and holler: "Oh, you never teched me!"

But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I get to be a man

I'll be a missionary like her olde'r brother Dan.

As wuz et up by the cannibals that lives in Ceylon's isle.

Where every prospect pleases an' only man is elite!

But gran'ma she had never been to see a Wild West show.



Father calls me William, sister calls me Will, Mother calls me Willie—but the fellows call me Bill!

Mighty glad I ain't a girl—ruther be a boy Without them ashes, curis and things that's worn by Faunterloxy!

Love to chawwak green apples an' go swimmin' in the lake—

Hate to take the castor-ile they give fr' belly-ache!

Most all the time the hull year roun' their ain't no flies on me.

But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yaller dog named Sport—sick 'im on the cat;

Fust thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!

Got a clipper-sled, an' when us boys goes out to slide

"Long comes the grocery cart an' we all hook a ride!

But, sometimes, when the grocery man is wretched and cross

He reaches at me with his whip and larrups up his hose;

An' then I laff and holler: "Oh, you never teched me!"

But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I get to be a man

I'll be a missionary like her olde'r brother Dan.

As wuz et up by the cannibals that lives in Ceylon's isle.

Where every prospect pleases an' only man is elite!

But gran'ma she had never been to see a Wild West show.

Or read the life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know

That Buffalo Bill an' cowboys is good enough fr' me—

Except jes' 'fore Christmas, when I'm good as I kin be!

Then 'f Sport he hangs around, so solum like and still!

His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What'er matter, little Bill!"

make things bum!

But I am so perlitte and stick so earnestlike to 'em.

That mother ax to father: "How improved our Willie is!"

But father, havin' been a boy himself, suspicious me!

When, jes' 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of can-

The cat she sneaks down off her perch, a-wonderin' what's become

Uv them two enemies uv hern that use ter die, cakes and toys.

Wuz made, they say, fr' proper kids, and not fr' naughty boys!

So wuz yer face, and bresh yer hair, an' m'n' yer p's and q's.

An' don't bust out yer pantsloons, an' don't wear your shoes;



Come, old year, 'tis time to go. Age, perhaps, has made you slow.

But your time of rule has flown 'And I come to claim my own.

You are popular no more.

All your triumphs here are gone. With what strength is left to you, Had you better listen on.

Learning from experience.

I have promised much, like you. When another year has flown People will condemn me, too.

But what matters that to us? Years, like men, must come and go. We are fast with promises.

With fulfillments we are slow.

INDOOR CHRISTMAS GAMES.

How the Young Folks May Find Pleasure if the Day Be Stormy.

Parlor games like chess, draughts, dominoes, etc., are too heavy for Christmas.

The boys and girls want more rollicking, hip-hip-burrah games. A committee appointed to provide desirable amusement for a well-known charity in New York selected the following program. Ten hours were spent in selecting appropriate

of devotence that belongs to a society like ours. It is the greatest—it ought to be the grandest—day in our calendar.

A petty spirit, a false extravagance, a lost temper, a worn-out body, a disappointed soul, have no more place at Christmas than at marriage time, or heaven time.

Yuletide Customs.

It is customary to give a quarter present and expect a \$5 one in return.

With the usual perverseness of nature, Christmas comes in the middle of a hard winter.

The modern highwayman doesn't say "money or your life!" he wishes you "a merry Christmas."

The small boy who tries to make too much noise is apt to blame Santa Claus for not giving him an extra head for his drum.

Some people wish you a merry Christmas instead of giving you a present, because it's easier to pay the compliment of the season than it is to settle with Santa Claus.

Your wife expects you to look pleased when she gives you a \$40 smoking jacket and tells you she has had it charged.—Truth.

He Was Surprised.

Mrs. Gazzam—I've got a box of cigars for my husband's Christmas present, which will surprise him.

Mrs. Maddox—Women don't know how to buy cigars for men.

Mrs. Gazzam—I know that, so I got Brother Jack to get them for me.—Judge.

Now comes the glad New Year; Though fate may do her worst, She cannot blot that legend clear: "All bills due on the 1st!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Mrs. Newlywed—How I love to hear the merry Christmas bells.

Mr. Newlywed—I'd like to hear them, too; if Christmas bells were not so com-fortably suggestive of Christmas bills.

A Christmas Church Idea.

If the platform of a church or Sunday school room be deep enough to admit of it an artistic Christmas arch can easily be made by an amateur carpenter, writes Florence Wilson, in the Ladies' Home Journal.

The upper part should have wires stretched across, to which may be

fastened small hemlock boughs, thus forming a solid mass of green. The framework should, of course, be wound with evergreen, the whole placed about two feet from the wall, so that behind it may be hung the Christmas bells of red and yellow immortelles at different lengths by ropes of evergreen. These bells may be made to hang at different angles by using fine picture wire. Let each bell be worded, so that they may seem to ring out their own song of "Glory to God in the highest."

For a Sunday school festival, a post-office where each child upon inquiring might find an envelop addressed and sealed, containing a pretty Christmas card, is a unique feature. Then there is the huge snowball made of cotton, besprinkled with diamond dust and filled with gifts for the infant class, which may be rolled through the window with an appropriate letter from Santa Claus.

Keeping Christmas Wisely.

Thoughtful people have discovered that we are in danger of losing our Christmas by doing it to death. It may die of surfeit, as well as of a pet, or a love. The madding crowd making itself maniac across the impassable streets, choking the writhing shops, stalling the railway trains, blocking the United States mails, and choking, stalling, blocking, and madding more madly every year than it did the year before, does not necessarily mean the growth of the Christmas sense, but is quite as likely to mean the growth of Christmas nonsense. It means a vast amount of folly, imitation, greed, ambition. It means an incalculable sum of envies, disappointments, jealousies. It means unmeasured aches. It means women literally "tired to death," and men in debt, and neighbors offended, and rich relativesajoiced, and a host of human blunders which we might call the Christmas waste. All the processes of action have their waste, and it does not condemn the action, but only appeals to the intelligence behind the action to regulate the proportion between profit and loss.

So, when we have a fine thing—an art, invention, feeling or custom—the first point is how not to lose it, and it may be found that we need a high spiritual economy to save our Christmas from the kind

of devotence that belongs to a society like ours. It is the greatest—it ought to be the grandest—day in our calendar. A petty spirit, a false extravagance, a lost temper, a worn-out body, a disappointed soul, have no more place at Christmas than at marriage time, or heaven time.