

A Search for Santa Claus

By Victor Rousseau



THE mind of a child is a kaleidoscope of men and curiously unstable; a patchwork of things heard and seen and only half understood. Eunice was six; too young to grasp the meaning of much that she heard, but old enough to remember. All day she played happily with her dolls in the shabby furnished room which was her mother's bedroom. The door was locked, and Mrs. Holmes, the landlady, was under instructions to look in from time to time to see what Eunice was doing; but since Eunice was never doing anything except playing with her dolls the good woman's visits became less and less frequent.

"She's the most contented little body in the world, ma'am," said the old Scotch woman to Hilda Groves, Eunice's mother. Mrs. Groves was also called Marian Fay, but that was when she stood behind the footlights and engaged her audience with her girlish charm and ingenue manner. By day she was Hilda Groves, wife of John Groves, an unsuccessful writer, and the charming ingenue was a very tired woman with a discontented droop to her mouth.

"I'm glad she's keeping out of mischief," answered Eunice's mother coldly.

"It's a wonder," soliloquized Mrs. Holmes, pausing in the act of taking a pair of sheets out of a closet and looking at the closed door. "It's a wonder that sort of parents has them kind of children."

The good woman disapproved of Mrs. Groves, whom she thought hard and unmaternal. As for John Groves, Eunice's father, who worked all day, slumping upon his typewriter in the little half empty back room, two stories up, whenever he met Eunice he experienced a curious sense of embarrassment and shame.

When her mother entered the room Eunice would experience much the same feeling of embarrassment that she occasioned her father. Though she had never been told that mothers ought to love and caress their children, Eunice wondered dimly at the cold formality of her mother's kiss, and felt chilled and repressed.

One snowy night in late December John Groves came slowly downstairs and dismissed Mrs. Holmes, who was making Eunice ready for bed.

"Congratulations, my daughter," he said. "I have an offer of a position on the staff of the Manhattanite."

Eunice looked up vaguely.

"How would you like to celebrate the occasion with me, child?" inquired her father, addressing Eunice banteringly, because he did not quite know what to say to her.

"Yes," said Eunice, slipping her chubby hand into his own.

"The motion is carried," said John Groves. "We are to go, then, to see Mamma transformed into a beneficent fairy. As you are doubtless aware, she takes the part of the Fairy Godmother in the Christmas play now running at the Hudsonian."

That was the first time John Groves and Eunice had ever been out together, except for an occasional stroll round the block to the newspaper man or the corner grocery. To Groves the sensation was as astonishing as it was unexpected. Here he had been creating his dream men and women all his life, while there was a live child, his own, waiting to be discovered, and full of the most amazing touches of what he would have called, in his jargon, "human interest."

But as for Eunice, she was in wonderland, and it far transcended doll-land. She had never imagined anything so heavenly as the lights, the people, and then the mystery of the tunnel-like approach to the theater, the gloomy aisle, and the wall behind the row of little lamps that went up into the roof and disclosed—Mother!

"Ooh!" cried Eunice, leaping up out of her chair. And nobody scolded or even frowned, because this was a Christmas play and the spirit of Christmas was upon everyone.

There was her Mamma, all colors and shining things, standing in the fairy garden, while her god-children grouped themselves around her. And such a transformed Mother! How happy they all were! She was laughing as Eunice had never heard her laugh in Mrs. Holmes' boarding house, and she kissed the children and gave them the most wonderful toys.

"Do you know who that old fellow is, Eunice?" inquired her father, indicating a Christmas character.

"That's Santa Claus."

"That's Santa Claus," repeated Eunice happily.

"Yes. He's the spirit of Christmas. He gives everybody everything they want on Christmas eve."

"Does he live here?" asked Eunice.

"Well, for the present, yes," her father answered. Eunice was very



silent. But when the curtain fell at last her little form was trembling with fearful joy, and she clung ecstatically to her father.

"Now we are going round to Mamma's dressing room," said her father, and before Eunice knew where she was she had passed through the tunnel again, and through a second tunnel, longer and gloomier, into a queer little room, in which her mother sat before a mirror. Her shining dress lay over a chair, and she was deadly tired, and her face was all red and white and streaky. Eunice looked at her and her heart was full of helpless misery. She burst into sudden sobs.

"The child's tired to death, Jack," said Hilda Groves petulantly. "She ought to have been in bed long ago. What made you bring her here?"

Eunice behaved uncommonly badly. She cried and cried, and the more her mother scolded her the more uncontrollable became her sobs. So that at last she had to be carried out in the arms of the dressing woman and put into a taxicab, with a very cross mother and a very subdued father, and after that she found herself in bed.

It must have been all a dream! Eunice was old enough to be able to distinguish dreams from reality. Dreams were things that happened to you when you were asleep, and she had been asleep; but she was wide awake now, wondering why it was so dark in the room, and looking through the crack of the door at the streak of light that came from the room adjoining.

Her parents were talking; she heard her mother's petulant voice.

"I'm sure I don't know what we will do with that child when she gets older, John," Hilda Groves was saying. "Of course the profession is not to be thought of for her."

"But if I take that position on the Manhattanite we can have a home of our own," answered her father.

"And have me give up my work just when I am beginning to attract the attention of the managers," answered his wife sarcastically. "After ten years of drudgery, to be robbed of the reward of it all! No, thank you, my dear."

"But I, too, will have to make the sacrifice," answered her husband. "Frankly, Hilda, I am not thinking of you in this matter, nor of myself. I am thinking of Eunice."

"Eunice!" repeated his wife bitterly. "The child is quite happy with her dolls, and Mrs. Holmes will take all the care of her that may be necessary. It is only when you take her away from them and try to amuse her that she becomes troublesome. I sometimes wish we had no child to be a burden to us."

Eunice understood, and all her world seemed to tumble into a fathomless abyss. Her mother did not want her, then.

John Groves accepted the offer, but Hilda went on with her work. Between them they could live comfortably and save money, but there could be no home for Eunice. If Hilda left the stage their means would be straitened. The disagreement between them on this subject bred rancor which brought suffering to the child. Eunice's mother could hardly bear to look at her, and Mrs. Holmes became more and more indignant.

"I'll wager there'll be no Santa Claus for you, my lamb," she said despondently, as she put the child to bed two days before Christmas. "But you'll hang up your stockings," she continued angrily, giving the pillow a shake. "I'll fill 'em. I mean, I'll tell Santa to do so. Tell me, dearie, what would you like Santa Claus to bring you?"

"Thanta Clauth," repeated Eunice, and her eyes brightened. "Gives everybody everything they want."

"Yes," said Mrs. Holmes. "Good little boys and girls like you can get most anything. What would you like most in the world, dearie?"

"I want my Mamma to love me like the fairy children," Eunice answered.

Mrs. Holmes understood and hurried out of the room to give vent to her tears. She approached Hilda Groves that evening on the matter.

"Won't you be telling Eunice to hang up her stockings tomorrow night, ma'am?" she inquired.

"I certainly will not teach her that



nonsense," Hilda answered. "If you knew the trouble I have with her, Mrs. Holmes, you wouldn't be asking me to put any new ideas into her head. She is contented with her dolls and is satisfied, and my work takes up every minute of my time."

"And you don't do your work," cried the Scotch woman. "There's better and more natural work at your hand for you to do, and you leave it to others."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean Eunice," said Mrs. Holmes defiantly, and wiped her hands on her apron and stalked away, leaving Hilda Groves indignant and resentful.

Mrs. Holmes had put her little charge to bed on Christmas eve and later stole on tiptoe to the door. Eunice was lying with her face to the wall, her head resting upon her arm. The good woman looked wistfully at her, and at the little stockings which hung from the head of the bed. She had never had a child of her own.

She was going to fill them to overflowing with a certain store of good things that she had purchased and hidden away in the linen closet among the sheets and pillow-cases. She had candies and oranges, and firecrackers that snapped disconcertingly, containing foolscaps and mottoes and paper ornaments within their fat and crinkling bodies; a jack-in-the-box, too, and a doll, just large enough to be cunningly concealed inside a stocking. Mrs. Holmes watched the child. Her sleep did not seem sound, for once or twice she stirred, and the good landlady had that morbid terror of discovery which a real Santa always feels.

"I'll wait till Mr. Cunningham has come in and then I'll do it," she resolved. Mr. Cunningham, the last of her boarders to come home, was always punctual upon the stroke of eleven. Eunice would then be sound asleep, no doubt.

But Eunice had not slept at all. With a child's deliberate craft she had deceived the good-natured landlady. She waited till she heard Mrs. Holmes go into her room, and then she rose up ever so softly and pulled on the empty stockings, dressed herself, and crept into the hall. She listened in terror at Mrs. Holmes' door. She was reading aloud, as she did of an evening, and the solitary voice was terrifying. Not much less so was the regular breathing of Mrs. Bennett next door, the middle-aged woman who always insisted on stopping and speaking, no matter how busy Eunice might happen to be. The floor creaked, and once Mrs. Holmes stopped reading and sat up in her chair. Eunice shrank into the recess behind the hall curtain and the umbrella stand. Then all was right again and Mrs. Holmes' voice droned on. The child opened the hall door and fled out into the December blasts.

She had gone to find Santa Claus, for she knew that he would not come to her.

The theater was only three blocks away, and Eunice could see the distant glitter of lights as soon as she was in the street. The road was full of vehicles, and pedestrians went hurrying along the sidewalks, but nobody molested her or was curious about the little, thin child girl that slipped among the crowds, dodging here and there until she reached the corner of the third block. Then Eunice halted before the rush of automobiles that whizzed past her in never ending line, and a big policeman took her by the arm.

"Where are you going, little girl?" he asked gruffly.

"Thanta Clauth," said Eunice, pointing toward the theater lights.

"Do you belong to the theater?" asked the policeman dubiously.

"Where is your Mamma?"

"Over there," said Eunice, and the policeman carried her across the street, while the automobiles parked upon either hand on a wave of his lordly fingers. He set her down at the stage entrance.

"Anybody lost a baby?" he asked

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
(Copyright, 1919, Western Newspaper Union)

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 21

THE KINGDOM OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

LESSON TEXT—Isaiah 11.
GOLDEN TEXT—Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins—Mat. 1:21.
PRIMARY TOPIC—The Wise Men Visit the Baby Jesus.
JUNIOR TOPIC—Bringing Gifts to Jesus.
INTERMEDIATE TOPIC—The Reign of the Prince of Peace.
SENIOR AND ADULT TOPIC—Permanent World Peace When the Prince of Peace Shall Reign.

On this Christmas occasion let us take a forward look into the golden age which is ahead of us. It is the time of which the wise of all ages have spoken and the poets have sung. It will not be brought about through improved social conditions or even a League of Nations, but by the personal coming and reign of the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the kingdom which Daniel said the God of heaven should set up (Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:13, 14).

I. The Lineage of the King (v. 1).

He is of royal stock, the seed of David. His birth took place nearly 2000 years ago. This Christmas season is a memorial of it.

II. The Gifts and Power of the King (v. 2).

These result from the resting upon him of the Spirit of the Lord. Because of this endowment he is equipped to administer the affairs of the kingdom. A sixfold characterization of the Spirit's gifts shows the completeness of the equipment.

1. The Spirit of the Lord. This title shows that he is to be qualified for his work by divine inspiration.
2. The spirit of wisdom. He is omniscient. Only a king of such wisdom can rule over the whole earth.
3. The spirit of understanding. This understanding, coupled with wisdom, gives discernment and discrimination.
4. The spirit of counsel. This means, doubtless, the gift of making decisions.
5. The spirit of might. This means the ability to execute his decisions. Decisions would be of little value without the ability to execute them.
6. The spirit of knowledge. This refers to his reverent attitude toward God.

III. The Nature or Character of the King's Rule (vv. 3-5).

1. A quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He will have ability quickly to discern Godly fear in the human heart.
2. An unerring judgment. He will not judge after appearances.
3. Ability to render decisions according to the merits of the case. His decisions will not be based on hearsay, nor on plausibility, but on first-hand knowledge.
4. Impartial judgment of the poor. The time is coming when the poor will get justice.
5. Reproof with equity for the meek. Jesus said that the meek shall inherit the earth.
6. He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. When he comes the earth will be utterly wicked. Apostasy will be manifest on every hand. His blessed reign will be ushered in by the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46).

IV. The Harmony and Peace of the Kingdom (vv. 6-9).

This harmony will prevail in the relationship of men and will be extended to the animal kingdom. War will be no more. The cow and the bear will feed together; the lion will eat straw, not flesh. The sucking child will sport with the most deadly serpent. Paradise will indeed be restored. This will be made possible through the personal reign of the Messiah in Jerusalem, (v. 9).

V. How the Kingdom Will Be Set Up (vv. 10-13).

1. The elevation of the King (v. 10). His elevation will be a sign to the nations; to this sign they will respond. The only way to bring unity among the nations is to exalt Jesus Christ.
2. The regathering of Israel (vv. 11, 12). Out from the nations of the earth Israel will be gathered. Israel and Judah will unite under the one king in the city of Jerusalem.
3. Envy will disappear from Ephraim and Judah (v. 13). When they see him and are joined to him the tribal animosity will disappear.
4. There will be physical changes which will alter the surface of the earth (vv. 15, 16). When redemption will have been completed not only the spirits of men will be in accord, but there will be harmony in the animal world, and changes will be brought about in the earth itself which will make it fit for the conditions under which men will then live.

Blessings.

No man can get a blessing and keep it all to himself without having it like stagnant water in his soul; but if it overflows to others it shall become a perennial spring to himself and to the world.—Wilton Merle Smith.

Opportunities.

Opportunities approach only those who use them.—Emerson.

The Broad Hat.
A broad hat does not always cover a venerable head.

DOUBLE BEAUTY OF YOUR HAIR

"Danderine" creates mass of thick, gleamy waves

In a few moments you can transform your plain, dull, flat hair. You can have it abundant, soft, glossy and full of life. Just get at any drug or toilet counter a small bottle of "Danderine" for a few cents. Then moisten a soft cloth with the "Danderine" and draw this through your hair, taking one small strand at a time. Instantly, yes, immediately, you have doubled the beauty of your hair. It will be a mass, so soft, lustrous and so easy to do up. All dust, dirt and excessive oil is removed.

Let Danderine put more life, color, vigor and brightness in your hair. This stimulating tonic will freshen your scalp, check dandruff and falling hair and help your hair to grow long, thick, strong and beautiful.—Adv.

Some women who see things just as they are drive men to seeing double.

No ugly, grimy streaks on the clothes when Red Cross Ball Blue is used. Good bluing gets good results. All grocers carry it—5c.

Every man is capable of doing his best and it's up to him to do it.

What Neighbors Say

Walden, Colo.—"I am glad to add my testimony in regard to what Dr. Pierce's Anuric Tablets have done for me. I am sure they saved my life, and if I can be instrumental in helping others I will feel well repaid. My kidneys and bladder were in very bad condition for a long time and got worse every day. I used one bottle of a well-known kidney medicine without any relief, then I took two bottles of another remedy and used them but got worse every day. I was in terrible shape, was disturbed eight to twelve times in a night and suffered excruciating pain and there would be a thick brownish sediment. I was despondent. At last I saw 'Anuric' advertised in a Kansas City paper and I thought it just suited my case so I sent to Dr. Pierce's Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., for a trial package, which was ten cents. I took two tablets at night and felt much better in the morning and by the second morning I didn't feel any pain at all when voiding the kidney secretion. In a week there was no sediment in the water, and it has been normal ever since. That was eighteen months ago, therefore it would be hard to make the claim for 'Anuric' too strong." —G. L. BUNDY.

When Run-down and in Need of a Tonic

Kansas City, Kans.—"About the only medicine I have ever given my little boy is Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. He never was very strong, and being delicate would become run-down very quickly; would suffer loss of appetite. I would give him the 'Golden Medical Discovery' and it always built him up in good health. I have also given this medicine as a spring tonic for such 'Golden Medical Discovery' has no equal. I do recommend its use." —MRS. GEO. MAUL, 1942 N. 13th St.

Acid-Stomach Makes 9 Out of 10 People Suffer

Doctors declare that more than 75 per cent of all diseases can be traced to acid-stomach. Starting with indigestion, heartburn, belching, food-repeating, bloating, gassy stomach, the entire system eventually becomes affected, every vital organ suffering in some degree or other. You see these victims of Acid-Stomach everywhere—people who are subject to nervousness, headache, insomnia, biliousness—people who suffer from rheumatism, lumbago, neuritis and aches and pains all over the body. It is safe to say that about 9 people out of 10 suffer to some extent from Acid-Stomach.

If you suffer from stomach trouble, even if you do not feel any stomach distress, yet are weak and slings, feel tired and dragged out, lack "pep" and enthusiasm and know that something is wrong although you cannot locate the exact cause of your trouble—you naturally want to get back your grip on health as quickly as possible. Then take EATONIC, the wonderful modern remedy that brings quick relief from pains of indigestion, belching, gassy bloating, etc. Keep your stomach strong, clean and sweet. See how your general health improves—how quickly the old-time vim, vigor and vitality comes back!

Get a big 50c box of EATONIC from your druggist today. It is guaranteed to please you. If you are not satisfied your druggist will refund you money.

EATONIC (FOR YOUR ACID-STOMACH)

Cuticura Heals Itching Burning Skin Troubles

All druggists; Soap 25, Ointment 25 and 50, Talcum 25. Sample each free of "Cuticura," Dept. E, Boston.

Irritating Coughs

Promptly treat coughs, colds, hoarseness, bronchitis and similar inflamed and irritated conditions of the throat with a tested remedy

PISO'S