



## THE LOOKOUT MAN

Just six years ago the "Lookout Man" appeared originally in The Commoner. Regularly every year thereafter, at about this season, letters begin arriving, asking that it be re-printed. Therefore, in response to numerous requests received during the past two or three weeks, it is again published, with the very best wishes of the author for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all the boys and girls, everywhere.

Now listen, little children, and I'll tell a story true—  
And better you remember, for it means a lot to you—  
And all who act up naughty, and don't mind their ma's and pa's,  
You'll get a lot of presents, and a lot of Christmas cheer.  
The Lookout Man is walking when the stars begin to peep  
To see if little children are in bed and fast asleep;  
And all who act up naughty, and don't mind their ma's and pa's,  
The Lookout Man is watching and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

I knew a little fellow once who got real bad, and said  
He didn't care for Santa Claus, and wouldn't go to bed;  
And said he didn't have to mind—O, he was awful bad—  
And didn't care the leastest mite in making folks feel sad.  
But when it came to Christmas, he didn't get a thing,  
For Santa Claus had heard of him, and not a thing he'd bring,  
He knew that bad boy's record—better mind your ma's and pa's;  
The Lookout Man is watching, and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

I also knew a little girl who was just awful bad.  
She wouldn't learn her lessons, and she always got so mad  
If anybody told her to be still and hush her noise—  
Well, she was always wishing for a lot of Christmas toys,  
But when 'twas Christmas morning, to her wonder and surprise  
An empty stocking hanging in the corner met her eyes.  
You see, she acted naughty—better mind your ma's and pa's;  
The Lookout Man is watching, and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

The Lookout Man is peeping through the windows every night,  
And counting up the children who are always acting right  
And going off to bed at once when told it's time to go,  
And never pouting, not a bit, or taking clothes off slow.  
He puts them in the good book, but the bad ones in the bad—  
And when he writes a bad one, O, he looks just awful sad.  
For he knows they will get nothing—better mind your pa's and ma's;  
The Lookout Man is watching, and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

### A WINTER NIGHT'S THOUGHTS

Coming home from work this evening I saw a big automobile, carrying six or seven passengers, skidding around on the snow. I never owned an automobile, and I never had the pleasure of scooting around in one when the roads were covered with snow. It may be lots of fun, but I'm here to assert that automobiling in the snow, no matter what company you are in, isn't in it for a minute with the old-fashioned bob-sled rides we used to take, years before the automobile was invented. There was fun for you!

Just as soon as there was a good snowfall the word would be passed around that the "gang" would meet at Frank's, or May's, or Fred's, promptly at 7:30 p. m., Friday evening. We selected Friday evening because there would be no school next day. And then two or three of us would skirmish around and get the old bob-sled. Remember how we used to put a wagonbox on the bobs, fill the box full of fragrant hay and warm robes, and then attach the best team of horses we could scare up? When all was ready we'd draw cuts to see who would have to make a sacrifice and drive one way, with some other victim to drive back. Then we'd drive up to the meeting place and the whole bunch would pile in, nestling down into the hay and covering over with the warm robes.

Then away we'd go, the huge

strings of sleighbells making the air ring with their music, while we added to the music of our fresh young voices.

Gee, how we used to sing! Let's see—there was "Steamboat Coming Around the Bend; Goodby, my Lover, Goodby;" and "Gwine ter git a Home in Georgie;" and "Hear Dem Bells;" and "Jingle Bells;" and "Gwine Back ter Dixie;" and—and—O, we can't recall them all now, but we used to sing them.

And the merry jests, and the quips and jokes! Me, O my! Remember how She snuggled up close? And how fearful we were lest Her hands grew cold! And how solicitous we were that Her nubia, or muffler, or whatever you may call it, was properly found around Her neck!

Huh! We'll bet a cookie that the people who jimmy around in automobiles this kind of sleighing weather don't begin to have the fun we used to have in the old bob-sled. And we didn't leave a trail of foul-smelling gasoline behind us, either. The only trail we left was a trail of music, and good cheer, and youthful exuberance.

Saw a boy the other day whose mouth had an appearance that brought up some painful memories. I can't just describe it, but perhaps you'll be able to catch my meaning when I remind you of the days when your mouth had a similar appearance. Along about the first cold snap

your lips began to chap and burn, and in futile efforts to cool them you used to run your tongue out and around, moistening your lips as best you could. Then the chilly wind that would blow that moisture through the skin, and in a day or two your face would be sore just as far around as your tongue could reach. Gee, how it used to hurt! Remember you'd just make up your mind that you just wouldn't lick your lips again, and then you'd walk around until your face ached and your tongue got unruly—and biff! The first thing you knew you'd be licking your sore lips and making them sorer than ever.

We cheerfully admit that the furnace and the hard coal base burner add a whole lot to modern comfort, but after all they have their drawbacks. For instance, you can't very well pop corn in either a furnace or a base burner. It took those old-fashioned stoves in which we used to burn a two-foot length of hickory wood for that sort of thing. When the wood had burned down to glowing coals we'd open the front door, rake the coals down in front and proceed to pop corn. When we get rich we are going to have one of those old-fashioned stoves put up in our very own room, with a lot of two-foot seasoned hickory in the basement, and every now and then we are going to start a fire in that stove, get a good bed of coals, and then pop a dishpan full of corn, just as a reminder of the old days. Of course we'll eat the popcorn, not as a reminder of old days, but because we are awfully fond of popcorn.

If I just oodles had of gold,  
Like Andy or John D.,  
In ev'ry home where there's a child  
I'd plant a Christmas tree.

Twenty-four years ago, come Christmas eve, the Architect debarked from a passenger train at Council Grove, Kansas. There was no heat around that portion of the train on which the Architect rode; neither did the conductor appear there—for which the Architect was truly thankful. I've wondered many a time during the last few years how the boys manage it in these days when the railroad companies no longer build platforms on their baggage-cars. Anyhow we debarked at Council Grove, stepping off into snow that seemed waist-deep, and finding a raw frontier town that was as unhome-like as a town could be. Incidentally it might be remarked that the Architect debarked at that particular town for the simple reason he either had to or freeze; besides he was awfully hungry. It was long after the supper hour, and the Architect's assets consisted wholly of liabilities. As he chased up the street he wondered if it were possible that the print shop would be open at that late hour on that particular night. It was a mighty gloomy Christmas eve, if anybody should ask you. Finally the Architect arrived at a hotel, and while he was hesitating a man came out, and spying the shivering printer-man exclaimed: "Hello, Billy! When did you hit town?"

Thank goodness, it was an old printer pal who had worked with the Architect back in Missouri two or three years before. He was foreman of the newspaper shop in Council Grove. And instantly the Christmas lights grew brighter to the Architect; the Christmas stars twinkled more merrily, and there was more of the spirit of goodwill rampaging round that locality than the Architect had seen or felt for a long time.

Say, isn't it a bully good thing to run across a real friend now and

then? And that was one of the times for the Architect.

If I had J. P. Morgan's wealth  
I'd chase out with a whoop;  
Round up all hungry I could find  
And fill 'em full of soup.\*

\*And roast beef, and roast turkey, and cranberry sauce, and mashed potatoes smeared with gravy, and bread and butter and coffee.

But the hour grows late, the furnace needs attention, and there is a day's work to be done tomorrow. So the Architect is going to dismiss thoughts of other days, and if he don't get to thinking too hard about the days to come he'll hike into bed and go to sleep.

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