HUMAN NATURE VS. THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

We were full of the Christmas spirit. We were going to be more kindly, more charitable, more friendly with the whole world. The Christmas spirit had penetrated. We could feel its warm glow. And so—after a glorious Christmas in the old homestead—we were on our way back to the city where lately our work had taken us.

The travel was heavy, of course, and we found ourselves waiting at the end of a long line to get into the dining car. We waited for an hour by our watches. We were exhausted from having stood and from annoyance at the slowness of others and because we were very hungry.

Finally the line grew shorter. Soon our turns would come. But it seemed not. For those who had gone into the dining car at last to eat took time about it even though their absence made the waiting line a shorter one.

At last we were at the head of the line. It had been a long process to work up to this point and we smiled at one another.

"Only a moment now and we'll be eating," we fairly beamed the words.

But again it seemed not so. For those at the tables were eating and eating and eating. They would never finish, it appeared. When they approached the end of their meal and we almost bounded to the nearly-vacant table we discovered they were taking their time over their coffee.

"How selfish people are," we said to each other. "How much they lack the unselfish Christmas spirit. It means nothing to them! They know there is a great line waiting and they don't hurry in the least. Why, just think of the length of time we've waited and there are more to follow us. And yet those people can be as leisurely as though they were in their own homes. It's outrageous, simply outrageous, how utterly selfish people are. And you would think at this time of the year they'd be a little more thoughtful."

And to our exhaustion was added the sorrow we felt in the thoughtlessness of human nature.

And then—the head waiter summoned us to a table. Two persons had at last arisen and at last our turns had actually come!

We sat back and luxuriously perused the menu. Well, we were hungry. We'd have a good meal!

And we began to order.

"And I'm just going to take my time about it, too," I said. "Just because people stand there and glare at us, as though we almost had no right to be eating our meal, isn't going to make me hurry."

"I should say not," said my companion. "We'll take all the time in the world in spite of their ugly looks!"

It was some time later that we remembered the Christmas spirit we had been so full of before!

"Human nature vs. Christmas spirit," we said sadly to each other.

CHRISTMAS INCONSISTENCY

Two men were finishing their Christmas shopping late one Christmas eve.

"Let's call a taxicab," said one. "We have so many bundles and it is starting to rain."

A little boy offered to get them one. He only had to go a few steps before he found one. And he held the door open wide for the two men as he had seen carriage starters and automobile starters do.

He had been looking for odd jobs tha evening. His Christmas money was not very much, and he did want to get just a few Christmas presents to give away. He had already made some. If he could only get ten cents now he would have enough. That would buy his mother's present. He wanted to get her a pink carnation He had seen such beauties, and they were ten cents apiece.

One of the men paid no attention to him. The other fumbled at his pocket. "Here, don't be silly, you'll give the child bad ideas," said his friend. "He really didn't do anything. He will think he can beg for anything. That's a bad influence you're exerting," he muttered on, as the man who had fumbled at his pocket drew forth a shiny ten-cent piece and gave it to the boy, whose pale face and dark eyes lighted up in joy.

Later they stopped in at a restaurant to have something to eat. The man who had reproved the other for the ten-cent tip to the small boy handed the waiter a large tip in advance, which made the waiter fawning in his attentions.

"We'll get better service," he explained, "and then, too, it's Christmas time."

But the friend who had been reproved said: "You don't think you're exerting a bad influence by any chance, do you?"

And the boy bought the carnation and went home, successful and happy, but the waiter snubbed the next customer because he failed to get an exorbitant tip.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS RIFE; HUNGRY MEN OBEY LAW

There are 1,377,000 unemployed in Great Britain and the Manchester Guardian says:

"It is one of the most remarkable testimonies to the stability and essential orderliness of the working man that widespread unemployment should have continued for two years without civil disturbance. But tactless show of force by a reactionary cabinet seeing red in every demonstrating procession might easily cause a lapse into disorder. The sooner Premier Law and his government set to work on the question

YES, INDEED THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS

To the Editor of The Labor World:

I am a little girl and nine years old. I would like to know very much if there is a Santa Claus. Mama says there is one, and some girls I know laugh at me when I say there is one. Please tell me. HELEN ———.

P. S.—Excuse the blot.

All through life Helen, you will feel the conflict between the tender, sacred things your mother told you and those jeering folk who laugh at you for belief.

Don't mind them! Don't let them disturb your beliefs. Cling to the truths your mother gives you, and never let loose of a single tender faith that is light in your life. Shut your ears to the scorners, and lock up forever in your heart of hearts the truth your mother gave you out of her boundless store of love and faith. Your mother is right, your girl friends are monstrously wrong.

Your question has been asked before, and it was answered once so beautifully that instead of answering it ourselves, we shall give you that famous answer; saying only that we believe it with all our heart and soul, and that we hope that you, too, will believe it all your life long.

Twenty-five years ago a little girl of about your age, named Virginia, wrote a letter about like yours to the editor of the New York Sun. This is what he replied, and his reply is so everlastingly true that it is a tender memory to many to whose childhood it came like a beacon light of hope and faith:

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 Virginia. 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 all your 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 until seen and until seeable 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, 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 al lthis 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, now, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

TIME FOR FURS.

"Jim," he said as he settled down for a comfortable smoke. "I've got a lot of things I want to talk to you about."

"Good," said her husband. "I'm glad to hear it. Usually you want to talk to me about a lot of things you haven't got."

A PAIR OF STOCKINGS

Buddy Smith had three ideas about his stockings—they were full of feet, full of holes, and they could be full of presents. It was with regard to the third idea that he was paying attention to the second. Willing to go barefoot under the circumstances, he was tieing up the holes in his best stocking, with a view to the Christmas possibilities. His sister, Agnes, had already hung up a much longer stocking, with a note attached in which she informed all who might be concerned that this one was hers. But Agnes, like the monkey that used a rabbit for a muff and kept himself warm by hugging it, was a little selfish. Not only had she hung up one of her mother's stockings, but she had got an advantage over Buddy in the matter of the chocolate cake in the cupboard, for there were holes all round it the size of her little finger.

So it was that on Christmas morning the shorter stocking had the most in it.

Say "Merry Christmas" Practically

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