Donaldsonville Chief

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1919.

A CHRISTMAS for SANTA

By De Lysle Ferree Cass

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DAN MORRIS had run away from his home on the farm and none of the family had heard a word concerning him in the three years that followed. Dan was the youngest of three children — "her baby," as old Mrs. Morris always said—and hated farm work.

"If brother Jim likes it, let him do it," he had told the family defiantly. "I'm going to some big city where a fellow has some chance to see life and make his fortune. I'm through with haying all day long in the scorching sun, milking cows and feeding hogs, and then having to sit in the dark on the porch listening to nothing but frogs and katydids until you have to go to bed if you want to get up in time to do it all over again next day. I'm through, I tell you!"

The family had tried to reason with Dan, but it was of no use. One morning they found him gone, leaving only the briefest note of good-by to his mother. And now the third Christmas since his going had come and the family itself was going in to the big city to spend holidays with Julia, who had married and lived there.

Ordinarily Julia and her husband, with little Bobbie, came out to the farm visiting the old folks and brother Jim at Christmas, but this year Julia had a new baby, scarce four months old, and hadn't felt equal to the trip. So father and sweet-faced mother Morris—their hair already white and with the years' anxiety for their missing Dan reflected in wrinkled faces—packed up all sorts of home-made eatables in baskets and had sun-burned brother Jim take them for the first time to the big city.

It was a bewildering adventure to those simple souls; each incident of the journey and novel sight after arrival was a never-to-be forgotten experience. Fred, Julia's brisk and

"I'm Bobbie Wallace."

hearty husband, welcomed them at the station and thrilled them with a ride out to their daughter's apartment on the elevated railway. It was a joyous reunion, but—as mother said, with a sudden break in her voice—"it can't be as if my baby, our Dan, were here with us too."

"There, there, mother," said father Morris, patting her quivering shoulder consolingly. "You mustn't think about Dan just now. He'll return to us some day when he's become rich and famous. Just look here, Julia—and you too, Fred!—all the mouth-watering stuff that Ma's brought you from the farm. Home-churned, uncolored butter rolls those are! And here's three stuffed six-pound turkeys that were gobble-gobbling around the barns not many days ago. Hey, little Bob! D'you see those pots of jam, and spiced watermelon pickles? And here are the Christmas presents all wrapped and tied ready for the tree, but not to be opened by anybody until Christmas morning. Here's—why, mother! You've got one parcel here marked wrong! It has Dan's name on it!"

Mother Morris dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief.

"Please, don't laugh at me, children," she said sadly, "It's my Dan's Christmas as much as it is that for any the rest of us, and I—— I was hoping that maybe we'd find him here in the city now that we've come here ourselves."

It was pathetically absurd, that barren little hope of the bereaved old mother, but none of them even let her see them smile at it.

The afternoon before Christmas Julia persuaded her husband to take little Bobbie downtown so that he could not surprise her trimming the tree. Brother Jim and the old folks went along.

Little Bobbie naturally was most of all interested in the toy departments and hardly could be made leave hold some of the playthings he most fancied.

"Oh see, daddie! A horsie that rocks, with a mane and bridle and ever'thing!.... And oh, grandma! lookit! lookit! There's a real live Santa Claus talking to those other little boys and girls!"

It was indeed. The big store had hired a rather shabby-looking young man that week, who for $15 was supposed to sit at the door of an imitation snow house and solemnly encourage visiting youngsters to tell him their fondest wants in the line of presents. Little Bobbie was impatiently waiting in line, holding fast with one chubby fist to his father's hand, in no time. Mother and father Morris, and big brother Jim watched and waited smilingly for them on the edge of the crowd.

"Well, my little man, what is your name?" asked the scarlet-coated and long white-whiskered Santa Claus in a tired, husky voice when Bobbie's turn finally came.

"I'm Bobbie Wallace, dear Mr. Santa Claus, and I live at 5601 Byrne street," the boy chirruped at him, round-eyed and devoutly believing in the identity of Santa. "My mamma's name is Julia Wallace and I've got a little baby sister now, too."

The long-whiskered Santa patted his head in perfunctory weariness.

"And what do you most want me to put in your stocking this Christmas Eve, Bobbie?" he asked with a side-long glance at the tolerantly smiling father.

"We—ell," drawled Bobbie uncertainly, "there are lots and lots of things I want awful, awful much, Mister Santa Claus, but I heard my mamma say this morning that it's ever so much nicer to wish for things for those that love you than for yourself. So I... I guess, I ought to ask you to keep my poor old grandma Morris, who's got white hair now, from worrying and crying any more over her boy Dan. You see, Mister Santa, my uncle Dan ran away from home a long, long time ago, before I was born, and my grandma keeps saying she can't rest until she sees him again. She's visiting my papa and mamma at home now, and I saw a present she has all wrapped up and labeled for uncle Dan if you'll be good enough to find him and bring him out to our house tonight. Won't you do that, please, mister Santa?"

With a choking cry the white-whiskered one stumbled to his feet, nearly upsetting his little snow house and searching Bobbie's wonder-rounded eyes in hungry disbelief.

"You are Julia Morris' little boy?" he muttered dazedly. "And you say that.... that your grandmother really wants her worthless runaway Dan to come back to her? ....is waiting here in the city for him now? Oh, my God!"

Fred, Bobbie's father, caught at the Santa's arm as he reeled unsteadily sidewise as if about to faint, and in so doing knocked off the bushy white whiskers.

"Aw!" wailed Bobbie, facing his first childish disillusionment, "he isn't a real Santa after all!"

Back through the amazed and rather indignant crowd of shoppers old mother Morris was coming as fast as her trembling legs would permit, and above the noise and calls of clerks at the counters, could be heard her thrilling, quavering outcry:

"Danny! Oh, Danny! Danny! I've found my lost boy at last!"

Kidnaped By Santa Claus

BY GOODLOE H. THOMAS

My dad sez once they lived a boy
'Us bound that he would see
Old Santa Claus—an' had no joy
Fer thinkin' how 't'ud be
To hide behind a screen an' wait
Till Santa come around,
Then watch him waitin' to uncrate—
Without a word or sound.

Well, Christmas Eve, this boy leton
'At he was sound asleep,
An' when he knowed the rest had gone
To bed, he went a-creep
Down stairs—an' gracious!—watcha think!
He run against him—smack!
Old Santa, yes-sir—'n quick as wink
That boy 'uz in his pack.

An' ever since that boy has been
Strapped up an' has to go
With Santa, fer just that one sin,
Through miles of ice an' snow;
An' you bet I ain't gonna take
No chanct like that—not quite!
You'll find 'at I won't be awake
When Santa comes to-night.

A Gift From Santa

When God's Revelations Come.

It was while they were watching their flocks—the common duty of their common days—that the word of Christ's coming was brought to the shepherds. It is when we are faithfully busy with common duties that God's revelations usually come to us.

For a Good Little Girl

A Few Don'ts for Christmas

Don't court indigestion.

Don't grumble, whatever you do.

Don't half fill the kiddies' stockings.

Don't give presents which will be useless.

Don't forget the mistletoe. Romance still lives.

Don't forget that it ought to be a merry Christmas.

Don't deny the little ones' ideas about Santa Claus.

Don't worry about unpaid bills—at any rate until tomorrow.

Don't scoff at the lingering superstitions of the good old days.

Don't for the show of things, buy presents which you can't afford.

Don't expect too many presents. Take what you get and be thankful.

Don't, if you get up on your wrong side, make everybody else miserable.

Don't forget to think at least once during the day what Christmas really means.

Don't give a present unless you want to. Better not give at all than give insincerely.

Don't forget that the giving of Christmas boxes, like charity, should begin at home.

Don't, if you are a girl, stand under the mistletoe until you see the right chap approaching.

Don't kiss somebody else's best girl, even though she is under the mistletoe. There might be a row.

Don't work on Christmas day if you can avoid it. If you have to, however, don't make a song about it.

Don't give Johnnie a trumpet and Peter a whistle and expect to have a quiet time. It's unreasonable.

Don't put off buying presents until the last minute. You'll get better value and avoid the crush if you shop early.

Don't send an electric runabout to a freezing widow with five starving children. This is like throwing a rope of pearls to a drowning man.

Don't look pained when somebody tells a fifty-year-old Christmas story. That's one of the unavoidable circumstances of the festive season.

Don't give a new song to some one who doesn't sing; but be still more certain that you don't give a new song to some one who imagines he can sing.

Don't refrain from giving because you can't afford to give much. The intrinsic value of a gift counts for nothing. It is the thought which prompts it that matters.

Don't let the wife give you a Christmas present in the form of cigars. If she persists in doing so, don't smoke them—give them away again, without letting her know about it, of course.

Tasted Suspicious.

"My dear, did you make this Christmas pudding out of the cook book?"

"Yes, love."

"I thought I tasted one of the errors."

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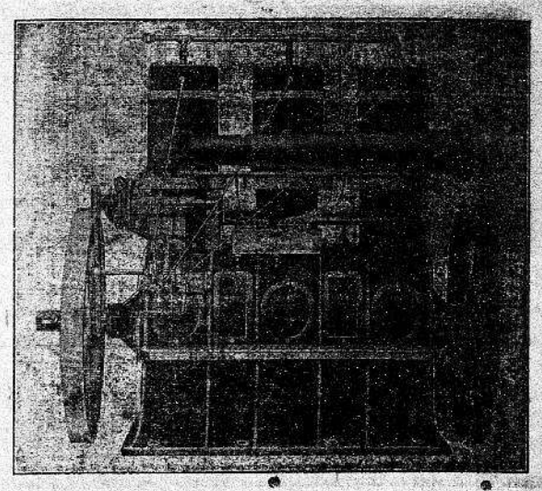

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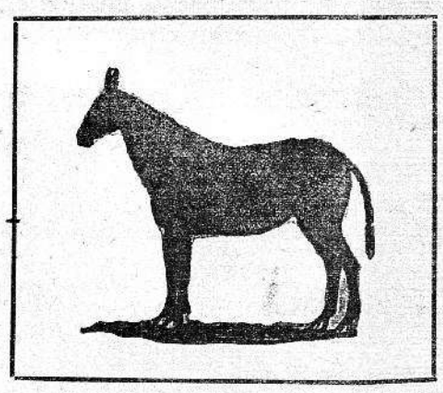

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