



GRANDPA SQUELCHES A CANARD

By Wilbur D. Nesbit

Now Alferd Potts, he say he know
 There isn't any Santy Claus!
 He say his pa he tell him so
 An' that he tell him so buhcause
 He say that Alferd's old enough
 Not to buhlieve that kind o' stuff.
 But grampa say that Alferd's wrong,
 And grampa has lived awful long.

My grampa he just laugh when I
 Tell him what Alferd Potts he said.
 Grampa say: "Ain't a Santy? My!
 I hadn't heard that he was dead.
 W'y, Santy's whole lots older 'n me—
 He came to my first Christmas tree."
 So Alferd Potts tell what ain't so,
 Buhcause my grampa ought to know.

My grampa take me on his lap
 An' say: "I mind as plain as day
 When I was just a little chap
 About your size, how some one say
 There ain't a Santy Claus, an' how
 It make me feel like you do now.
 An' for a while I purty near
 Buhlieved it, too, but it seemed queer."

My grampa say 'at Santy Claus
 He's fond o' little girls an' boys
 That always minds their pas an' mas
 An' never makes un-seem-ly noise.
 An' he say he has seen him—Yes!
 O, most a thousand times, I guess.
 "How does he look?" he say. "Let's see.
 Well, what if he looks some like me?"

I ast my grampa after while
 If Santy Claus is rully so.
 An' then he look at me, an' smile,
 An' say: "When you're my age, you'll know
 That what is good is always true."
 So now, then! Alferd never knew
 So much; him nor that pa o' his
 Is half as old as grampa is!



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A SANTA CLAUS GIFT

ROSY HAGGERTY pulled the worn coat more closely about her frail form as she hurried out into the cheerless dawn of the raw December day. The little lame sister—Maggie—crippled but always merry, the one bit of sunshine in the older sister's life, still lay asleep, blissfully unconscious of the pitiful struggle necessary in order to procure the wherewithal to make life possible. The little sister had never walked, but the small room where she lived was kept as sunny-bright as was possible, even when it meant that the older sister went oftentimes hungry to bed.

As she climbed wearily to the office, grim and unbecomingly in the early morning light, and prepared for the rough work ahead, her mind reverted again and again to the question asked in such a pleading voice. "Sister Rosy, don't you think Kris will bring me a gold locket—a heart-shaped one like Miss Millie had on the day she called?"

A gold locket! Rosy's care and sacrifice, resulting in the magnificent purchase of a few candy toys, a new dress and a gingerbread man, suddenly sank into nothingness beside the startling significance of this childish question.

Other years she had gleaned several dollars from generous employers at Christmas time. Perhaps she might manage to get one that was not really, truly gold all the way through. She searched away vigorously. The dust flew before her persistent onslaught. And all through the hours only one thing came to those blue eyes.

The hour came that saw the finish of her labor—two crisp dollar bills and some loose change represented her gifts for the day—money was not as plentiful this year. The Christmas eve shoppers pushed and jostled her as she made her way along the crowded thoroughfare, where bright stores displayed their wares in tempting array. Carefully separating one of the new bills and putting it aside for the rent, she entered a store that promised the trinket she was looking for. The tired saleslady answered the question that was put to her politely, undoubtedly reading a pathetic story in the pale face before her. No, she did not think it would be possible to get a gold locket, nor even an imitation one, for the amount mentioned. Why did the lady not try to purchase a pretty string of beads? Muttering a low thanks for the suggestion, the disappointed woman turned once more to the street, depressed and forlorn, and decided to return home and make the best of what she had.

Suddenly her foot kicked something on the snowy pavement; it was a little square, rubber-bound package. Picking it up she flew down the street toward the spot she called home. Hiding it in her dress, she prepared the simple evening meal and after a few games coaxed the little sister off to sleep.

Nimbly and quickly the work-hardened and unbecomingly fingers decorated a small chair beside the child's bed; one by one the little dress, the candy animals and the gingerbread man took their places of honor to await a pair of blue eyes in the early dawn.

All this while the little square package lay like a bit of lead against the eager woman's breast. At last with

trembling fingers she removed the rubber bands and tissue wrappings. A loud exclamation of joy made the sleeping child turn on her pillow, but she did not waken. On a dainty bed of blue cotton, swung on a chain as delicate as a thread hung a tiny gold heart. A queer half-sick feeling suddenly swept over the little woman, as she realized that this did not belong to her; a white card fell from the wrapping and fluttered to the floor. Picking it up she read:

"Merry Christmas to Maggie."
 She laughed with the joy of possession. It was for Maggie, and taking it over to the little chair, she hung it lovingly around the neck of the gingerbread man.

FLORA DELL.

The Real Spirit of Christmas.
 How often have I heard the word: "I wish I were rich at Christmas-time, for then I could do so much for others," writes Margaret Woodward in an article on the problem of Christmas giving, in *Suburban Life*. "How strange it is that we never seem to learn the lesson that it is not the giving of things, but the giving of self, that counts! It is the spirit of Christmas which we must strive after—not the multiplication of gifts."

Christmas Athletics.
 "Perley—Halloo, Jinx! Going to take Christmas quietly?
 Jinx—No. Going to devote it to athletics.
 Perley—Good. What kind? Golf or football?
 Jinx—Neither. I am going to carve a turkey I bred myself for ten people. There's exercise for you!

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