

# The Story the Starbeam Told

ONE COLD winter night the snow was gently falling on the pine trees of the forest. These tall, stately trees stood very straight and still on this cold night. By and by the tallest and the oldest of them said:

"How happy I shall be when at last I am strong enough and tall enough to be cut down by the wood cutters. I hope when they do cut me down that I may be good enough that they will want me for some great ship, and then I shall have a chance to sail the seas."

"What do you know about ships and the seas?" asked a little pine tree who stood at the foot of the tall one.

The stately tree bent his branches a very little and looked down at the small tree, at his feet.

"I have heard many stories of the seas, and the ships that sail on them, for the birds sit in my branches and sing to me all the time of the beauties and wonders of the world. Then, too, the starbeams, who are much older than the birds, have some truly wonderful tales to tell of things that they have seen in their trips around the world. There is the Starbeam of the Brightest Star, just peeping over the hilltop. He can tell some truly wonderful tales."

The little pine tree trembled for very joy. This was his first winter in the forest, and these things were all new to him, just as was the snow that was covering his roots, and making them all warm with its white blanket.

"Won't you please ask the Starbeam to tell us a story?" asked the little pine.

"Let us ask him to tell us again the Christmas story," said another of the older pines. "the one he told us last year."

So, when the Starbeam came over and rested gently on the tallest pine, he asked it to tell again the Story of the First Christmas.

"I love to tell this story best of all stories that I know," said the little Starbeam.

"Once upon a time a long time ago, long before even the oldest pine trees here began to grow, a beautiful woman, named Mary, and her husband, Joseph, went on a journey to a little city called Bethlehem. All the people in that country went to this same city, to pay their taxes, and when Mary and Joseph got there, they found so many people, that there was no room left for them at the inn. The only place where they could find shelter was in a stable, and here they went. That night a little babe was born, and its mother, Mary, laid him in a manger on some nice clean straw.

"Away off in the East, the Brightest Star appeared. He had never been seen before, and some wise men who knew that this was the time for the babe to be born, saw the Brightest Star as they started out to find the babe. All their long journey the Brightest Star kept just in front of them to show them the way to go, and when they rested at night, the Brightest Star would rest too, and wait for them. At last they reached the city of Bethlehem, and found the little babe in the manger with his mother by his side.

"These wise men had brought some very costly gifts to this babe, and it is the birthday of this babe that is celebrated every Christmas, and it is in his memory that gifts are given to the poor.

"That is all of the story, and it is time for me to be going," and the Starbeam went gayly on, dancing over the tops of the trees.



The Russian St. Nicholas. In Russia the children put their shoes filled with hay outside the door for the horses of St. Nicholas; and it is believed in most sections that St. Nicholas comes first on a preparatory visit ten days before Christmas to learn which children have been good. He leaves nuts and candy in the shoes of those who have been good, but nothing for those who have been bad, who thus know that they may expect no presents on the real Christmas day.



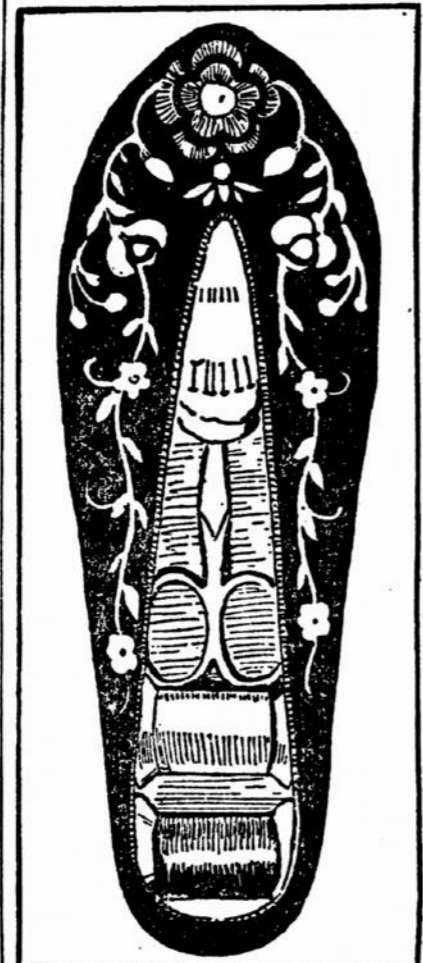
The Bran Pie. This is an English custom. The gifts are hidden in a large pan of bran. A string is tied to each package, and on the end of the string is the name of the one for whom the package is intended. When all have their strings they all pull. Then comes the fun of getting the bran off and opening the packages.

## CHINESE SHOE WORKBOX

Perhaps This May Provide Work for Some Small Child's Nimble Fingers.

The small girl who would like to make mother or elder sister a gift, but whose pocket money is limited, should try her hand at the little Chinese shoe workbox shown here. She will surely succeed if she can sew at all, and if she will be very careful about the cutting and sewing. The beauty of it is the piece bag will probably supply the materials for making, while 25 cents will buy the furnishings.

One must cut two pieces of cardboard, each seven inches long, then shape it into a sole and take off one-quarter inch from the toe of one piece. The larger piece is covered on one side with white muslin and the small-



Nice Present Any Girl Can Make. er with a bit of muslin is sewed all around the white covered sole and then to the smaller sole, silk upward. When this is sewed together you have a sole half an inch in thickness turning up at the toe as the Chinaman's shoe does. Fill this with cotton.

The one thing to remember is to take time in making this pretty box. It costs next to nothing, but it will not be a success if carelessly done.

The writer saw an exquisite model of this work case that is to be given to a bride. It is carried out in white satin embroidered in silk and silver thread in a wistaria design, the lining being of wistaria-colored silk to match.

This should be a hint to girls who have friends marrying during the holiday season. If embroidery is beyond the donor's skill, a tiny spray of orange blossom tied with silver cord might decorate the top, or the initial of the bride could be placed there.

## THE GIFTS FOR MOTHER

The gladdest hour of Christmas day. The time the hearts are lightest. An' every care is chased away. An' all the smiles are brightest, Is when the family, young an' old, From dad to little brother, With all the love that hearts can hold Come bringing gifts to mother.

We keep her presents till the last An' then when she sits rocking, An' all the other gifts are passed, We go an' get her stocking. We gather round her easy chair, First one an' then the other Steps up an' says: "Well, I declare! Here's something else for mother!"

An' with each present goes a kiss, An' all is still an' quiet When mother murmurs: "What is this?" An' hastens to untie it. Then everybody wildly cheers An' shouts for perfect gladness, An' mother's eyes are moist with tears, But not the tears of sadness.

Oh, here's a scene that gold can't buy. Or stage in imitation, The smiling face, the glistening eye Of love's own celebration. And with each jolly Christmas day We pray to know another When we shall meet the self-same way And bring our gifts to mother.

—Detroit Free Press.

## THE WISDOM OF WAITING.



"Your wife tells me you have given up smoking." "That's only until Christmas; I don't like her brand."

## Santa Claus in the Movies

By GENE MORGAN

Y OUR information is in part correct," said Santa Claus, receiving the interviewer in the library of his ice palace. "It is true that I have received several flattering offers to star in moving picture productions. But it is not true that I have accepted any one of these propositions. I am still in doubt as to whether it would be the proper thing.

"I have my duty to the children of this world, and I must not impair my health or my power of service to them by the strenuous work demanded in the movies. No doubt I would prove a very popular star at the children's matinees. But I wonder if the children who see me in their dreams do not get a better and more flattering idea of me than they would in the picture.

"You see, my dear sir, the camera does not lie. I am sure it would not lie for me when it will not tell falsehoods about the appearance of kings and potentates. Every child in the world thinks of me as a very handsome old gentleman. Some of them may have an idea that I am inclined to be a little stout—but a good many others imagine I have as graceful a form as that of a young soldier. They think I curl my whiskers and have a beautiful wave in my long, silky locks.



"Your Uncle Santa is Getting Fat."

"They are not aware that your uncle Santa is getting so fat that there isn't room in the sleigh for himself and the larger toys. Nor that my noble mane of hair isn't what it used to be. If people ever sent me presents—which,

## TRIMMING THE TREE



of course, does not occur to them—I should like to murmur a little wish for a bottle of hair tonic.

"One moving picture firm wants to put me into a play. The plot is something like this: I am driving my reindeer over the treetops, when I am set upon by a band of aeroplane pirates. The pirates make me hold up my hands and then divest me of my stock of toys. Just when the banditplane is about to fly away, leaving me in distress, the chief of the robbers makes a discovery.

"Amid the pack of toys he finds a rag doll. By the tag around its neck he sees that it has been addressed to his little daughter. My thoughtfulness in remembering his little girl, despite her father's profession, touches the bandit's heart. He weeps, and then to the astonishment of his pals, he orders them to lift me into the aeroplane.

"Now, Mr. Claus," he says, according to the subtitle, "we are going to deliver your toys for you all over the world tonight. Give us directions and we will fly wherever you command."

"So at my direction, the bandit's aeroplane starts delivering the toys, making much better time, let me tell you, than my poor reindeer who were left behind. Things are going along fine. Our aeroplane toy conveyance has covered Canada, the United States, Australia and South Africa, when suddenly, to our dismay, we find that we are being pursued.

"More pirates?" I ask in alarm.

"No, the aero-police!" shouts my pirate friend.

"The police had found my empty sleigh and motionless reindeer. They naturally concluded that I had been robbed and kidnaped. Now they are on the trail of my captors. The pirates are very much afraid that if arrested, they will be hanged at once. The police craft is gaining upon us. In order that the pirates may escape, they decide they must throw all of my toys overboard. The vicious crew demands that your old friend St. Nick be thrown overboard too, as I am pretty heavy, besides being the cause of all the trouble.

"The race continues through the sky.

"I want to raise the white flag as a token of surrender. I pledge myself to the captain of the pirate aeroplane that I will plead the cause of himself and his crew and secure their release from the police. I tell them that the police will do them no harm, after I have explained their kindness in carrying my toys all over the world.

"The police craft is now so close that escape seems impossible.

"Give me a white flag," I cry.

"There isn't a white flag on board—nothing but black flags," says the pirate. "Hurry up and do something. You have no time to lose. If you don't surrender they will shell us. And in that case, we will have to throw you overboard, St. Nick."

"My mind works quickly. I have no white flag. My handkerchief, like those of the pirate's is a red bandanna. What am I to do? Whiz! Another shell rips past our airship.

"Ah! I have it. It is the scheme that saves the day."

The interviewer at this point leaped to his feet and shouted in excitement:

"Well, what do you do to have your life?"

"I wave my white whiskers at 'em," replied Santa Claus, proudly. "It is the signal of truce. Our lives and our precious cargo of toys are spared. What do you think of that idea for a play? They want to name it, 'Santa Claus in High Life.' Do you think I would make a hit as the star? Well, I'm glad you think so."

## Christmas Time

CHRISTMAS TIME! That man must be a misanthrope indeed, in whose breast something like a jovial feeling is not roused—in whose mind some pleasant associations are not awakened—by the recurrence of Christmas. There are people who will tell you that Christmas is not to them what it used to be; that each succeeding Christmas has found some cherished hope or happy prospect of the year before, dimmed or passed away; that the present only serves to remind them of reduced circumstances and stunted incomes—of the festal days once bestowed on hollow friends, and of the cold looks that meet them now in adversity and misfortune.

Never heed such dismal reminiscences. There are few men who have lived long enough in the world who cannot call up such thoughts any day in the year. Then do not select the merriest of the three hundred and sixty-five for your doleful recollections, but draw your chair nearer the blazing fire—fill the glass and send round the song—and if your room be smaller than it was a dozen years ago, or if your glass be filled with reeking punch instead of sparkling wine, put a good face on the matter.

Look on the merry faces of your children (if you have any) as they sit round the fire. One little seat may be empty; one slight form that gladdened the father's heart, and roused the mother's pride to look upon, may not be there. Dwell not upon the past; think not that one short year ago, the fair child now resolving into dust, sat before you, with the bloom of health upon its cheek, and the gaiety of infancy in its joyous eye. Reflect upon your present blessings—of which every man has many—not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. Fill your glass again, with a merry face and contented heart. Our life on it, but your Christmas shall be merry and your New Year a happy one.

—Charles Dickens

## NOT A MISS.



As two little girls were hurrying to school, one of them saw a discarded Christmas tree in an ash barrel.

"Lizzie," said she, "do you think Santa Claus is a myth?"

"Certainly not," retorted her companion, glancing sharply at her. "Santa Claus is a mister. What makes you lip so?"



## WHOLE WEEK'S CELEBRATION

Descendants of Old Spanish Settlers Observed Christmas With Dinners and Parties.

Among the descendants of the old Spanish settlers we find that they observe a week in the celebration of Christmas. This begins one week before Christmas. In the daytime they have dinners at each other's homes, and in the evenings they give a series of parties at the different houses. In the evening the young folk go to the home of one of their number and knock, and then all begin to sing. Those within the house ask, "Who is there?" and the answer is, "The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph seek lodging in your house." To carry out the Bible story they are at first refused admittance, and then the door is opened wide and they are all given a hearty welcome.

On Christmas eve the old and young all join together and have a big celebration. In a large hall they fix up one side to represent the manger, and here they very solemnly give a little play in which many take part, the characters being Mary and Joseph, the wise men, the shepherds and the angels. This play is very real to them, and they all play their parts with a reverent spirit.



## A Christmas Prayer.

Give me the eyes to see my brother's woe; Grant me the vision that perceives his care, That I, amid my Christmas joys, may go And take some touch of mitigation there.

God point the way that I may quickly find His acre waiting for the glad relief, And ope my eyes that I may not be blind To tasks of love that ease the sting of grief.

—John Kendrick Bangs.



## Old Custom Still Prevails.

The Christmas feeding of the birds is still prevalent in many of the provinces of Norway and Sweden. Bunches of oats are placed on the roofs of houses, on trees and fences, to furnish them with their share of the Christmas bounty.

## Gratitude as the Real Key to Christmas Joy

By "BILLY" SUNDAY

SEVENTEEN hundred years ago a star poised above a lowly manger in Bethlehem, and above the moonlit hills of Judea the angels heralded the beginning of the life of Jesus Christ upon this earth. And once more the birthday of the Saviour approaches.

How fast these festal days follow one another! Only a few days ago I was penning a Thanksgiving day message. Now we are looking forward with happy hearts and bright anticipations to Christendom's great gift-giving day.

Gratitude inspires in us the grace of giving.

Gratitude is the great original source of noble living and service, just as sin is the original source and root of all selfishness. The great all-seeing eye of God, as it surveys this planet, with all its scenes of revelry and its riot of sin, beholds but one festering ulcer—selfishness—and gazes upon one thing of great beauty—gratitude—which recognizes in every need of man the voice of God.

The immortal Frances E. Willard said: "I regard ingratitude as one of the basest of sins."

The Psalmist said: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his goodness to me?" Then answers his own question by saying: "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord."

Never before have we so seriously faced the question of our obligation to Almighty God. There are thousands of heavy-hearted, world-worried men and women who will never find life worth living until their lives are linked with Jesus Christ.

There is no safety save in service. We must use or lose. The Dead sea gives nothing out, and that's why it is dead. Many lives are like the Dead sea. If you would have the joy of Christmas, you must find it in doing what Jesus did. He went about doing good. No one will ever find the Christian secret of a happy life save by trying to make it easier for others to do right and harder to do wrong.

There is joy in lifting any burdens of others, as the little girl found it who was carrying her baby brother across the street. He was almost as big as she was.

"Isn't he heavy?" asked a passer-by.

"Oh, no; he's my brother." "You cannot be a Christian without being a good fellow in the sense of trying to help others to be good, or, as someone has put it, 'Except you erect the cross in your own heart, Jesus will profit you nothing.'"

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend on us, we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in; Be born in us today.



## ALL READY FOR HIS WORK



## Spirit of Christmas.

The core of Christmas is the truth of unselfishness. This day of the new spirit that irradiates all the earth, is the day of lavish pouring out of self. "Somebody cares," is written large over every Christmas gift and Christmas plan. It is the day of taking thought for other persons. Christ in Christmas means unselfish love—the love of God for man, and of men for one another.



Met Every Christmas. Cromwell's long parliament made a point of meeting every Christmas day.