

SANTA PLAYING WITH HIS TOYS



Ancestry of Santa

WHAT is Santa Claus' age? The jolly, roistering, pot-bellied, ever young old fellow that we know has made his appearance on earth in so many guises that the secret of his first coming threatens to remain forever veiled in the midst of antiquity. No one can say with any certainty just when he first made his appearance among prehistoric men, for merry old Santa in one form or another delighted children's hearts in many a pagan household centuries before the commencement of the Christian era and prior to any recorded history.

The name of Santa Claus, by which he is known in America, is the Dutch pet name for St. Nicholas. The name Kris Kringle, by which he is known in England, is a corruption of Christ Kindeln or the Christ Child. But the festivities that distinguish Christmas existed long before Christianity, and a jolly god of good cheer appears as the personification of the period from the earlier pagan times. Now the Santa Claus of today is simply that old jolly god sobered up, washed and purified.

The Dionysia of the Greeks, the Saturnalia of the Romans, the Twelve Nights of the old Norsemen and of the Teutons all celebrated the coming of the winter solstice. People then gave themselves up to all sorts of revelry and excess. In the Dionysia the representative figure was not the young Dionysus or Bacchus, but the aged, cheery and disreputable Silenus, the chief of the Satyrs and the god of drunkards. In the Saturnalia it was Saturn; in the Germanic feasts it was Thor, both long bearded and white haired gods like Silenus.

Now, although the central figure of the Christian festival is the child God, the Christ Kindeln, the influence of long pagan custom was too strong within the breasts of the early Christians to be easily superseded. The tradition of hoary age as the true representative of the dying year and its attendant jollifications still remained smoldering under the ashes of the past. It burst into new flame when the past was too far back to be looked upon with the fear and antagonism of the church and there seemed no longer any danger of a relapse into paganism.

At first, however, the more dignified representative was chosen as more in keeping with the occasion. Saturn was unconsciously rebaptized as St. Nicholas, the name of the saint whose festival occurs in December and who as the patron of young people is especially fitted for the patronage of the festival which has come to be looked upon as especially that of the young. At first St. Nicholas did not supersede the Christ Child, but accompanied him in his Christmas travels, as, indeed, he still does in certain rural neighborhoods of Europe where the modern spirit has been least felt.

St. Nicholas, according to the hagiologist, was a bishop of Myra, who flourished early in the fourth century. He is the patron of children and schoolboys.

It is strange that everywhere St. Nicholas is most honored and his feast day most observed the most pious and instructed among the common people know little of the legend of the saint. He is treated with that mixture of seriousness and frivolity which becomes a dying myth.

In southern Germany and Austria a youth garbed as St. Nicholas and accompanied by two angels and a whole troop of devils in hideous masquerade, with blackened faces and clanking chains, on Dec. 5 (St. Nicholas' festival day) makes a round of certain houses where the little ones of the village have been collected. To the good children he brings gifts of nuts and apples, while the naughty ones are left

to the devices of the satanic followers in his train. In many places the bugbear overshadows in importance both the Christ Child and St. Nicholas. He appears under different names and in different guises. In Lower Austria he is the frightful Krampus, with his clanking chains and horrible devil's mask, who, notwithstanding his gilded nuts and apples, gingerbread and toys, which he carries in his basket, is the terror of the nursery. In Hanover, Holstein and Mecklenburg he is known as Claas. In Silesia his name is Joseph.

Sometimes the bugbear was a female. In Lower Austria she was called the Budelfrau. In Suabia it was the Berchtel who chastised children, that did not spin diligently, with rods, but rewarded the industrious with dried pears, apples and nuts.

The female bogey survives especially in Russia and in Italy. In the former place she is known as the Babushka. In the latter as the Befana. Befana is a corruption of Epiphania or Epiphany, for it is on Epiphany, Jan. 6, that the Italians make presents to their children in commemoration of the gifts given by the three wise men to Christ on that date.

Where Christmas Things Come From

CHILDREN all enjoy the ever greens and ornaments that are seen each Christmas, but how many of them know what parts of the country are ransacked in order to furnish these things for their pleasure and delight?

Practically all of the evergreens appearing in American homes for the holiday season are grown in the United States. The Christmas trees come for the most part from northern New England, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. There are some growing farther south, but the bulk of the trees are from the far north. The black spruce grows in swamps, the white spruce, pine and fir on the higher land. Not only are the little trees cut, but tops of larger trees and limbs if they are of the proper shape.

The holly comes from the woods of New England and the Allegheny mountains. In the north it is a shrub, but in the south the holly grows into great trees, sometimes fifty feet high. With its red berries it is a most picturesque tree.

Mistletoe is a parasite that takes root in the bark of other trees, such as the maple and poplar. It is not found in the northern states, but mostly in the middle and southern states.

What are known as Christmas greens or ground pines are very like the ferns and mosses and grow in shady places on the forest floor.

IS YOUR BIRTHDAY ON CHRISTMAS?

There are many predictions concerning the luck of those born on Christmas day. It depends somewhat on the day of the week. An old belief was that those born on this day, when it fell on Sunday, would live to be great lords; on Monday, would be strong and keen; on Tuesday, strong and covetous; on Wednesday, wise, gay, doughty and crafty; on Thursday, wise of speech and reasonable; on Friday, long lived; on Saturday, wealthy and prosperous.

Why She is Waiting.
Ethel—If you are not going to accept Mr. Kelly why don't you tell him to stop calling on you?
Charles—I will right after Christmas.

ALVARADO NOTES

Ladies Aid of the Swedish Lutheran church in the village, will meet at the home of Mrs. Carl Olson, Thursday afternoon, December 11th. All are cordially invited.

Hilda Bergan returned from Warren Tuesday of last week.

Axel Pederson returned from Minneapolis, Monday morning.

Levina and Ruth Nordlund spent Sunday at their home here.

Mrs. Wahlberg and children have moved out on their farm in the country.

Maurice Peterson, Nels Ledoan and Walter Johnson enjoyed skating on Red River in Oslo Sunday.

Justina Anderson, Olive Wahlund, Waldemar Mattson and Walter Anderson autoed down from Warren Sunday, evening.

Sanfred Johnson was a Warren caller Monday of last week.

The Aug. Hagglund family entertained a number of their friends at their home. Those from the village were Henry Backstrom and family and Frank Dahlgren and family.

Hilmer Lindberg from Canada, spent a few days with his cousin, Mrs. H. Backstrom.

Alma Stairy was a Warren visitor Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bergan are visiting friends in Warren.

The Frank Dahlgren family spent Monday evening in Warren.

David Hill left Friday morning for Devils Lake, N. D., having a

O. H. TARALSETH, President.

H. L. MELGARD, Vice President.

I. N. LODOEN, Cashier.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS and a Happy New Year!

This wish comes from the warmest corner of our hearts as we fully realize that our efforts to please our rapidly increasing patrons has been fully appreciated. Who is there among us too old to remember the Christmas of his childhood? Is there one who does not look back upon it as the happiest day of his life? Probably the next happiest day, to many at least, is the day they make their first deposit in our Bank. Your increased prosperity begins at that time and at this happy Yuletide you have been enabled to make your family and friends presents of real value from the interest money your idle dollars have made for you at our Bank while you slept.

Beautiful and right it is that gifts and good wishes should fill the air like snowflakes at Christmas tide. What better wish could you have for your friends and neighbors than that they do as you have done—Deposit Their Idle Money in Our Bank—so that next Christmas they too can make presents from the interest their deposits have made for them. One of our Savings Passbooks with a credit of one dollar or more would make a fine Christmas present.



With Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas, We are, yours truly,

Farmers State Bank,

Alvarado, Minnesota.

prospective position in view with the depot there. He returned Saturday evening, however, as satisfactory arrangements could not be made there. We were glad to see you back, David!

If in need of work apply to Upper Department, Village School.

David Hill left Tuesday morning to visit friends in Grand Forks.

Elling Bergan and Mary Nordstrom were married at Warren last Friday. Their numerous friends extend congratulations.

Aug. Hagglund was a Warren passenger, Monday evening.

Ella Edman and Marie Sylvander attended the teachers' meeting at Argyle Saturday.

Clara and Edith Dagoberg were Warren callers last week.

Gust Edman was in Warren Saturday evening.

Farrell, the jeweler, can supply you with some very nice things suitable for Christmas gifts.

The Man Who Neglects Himself

When this condition points a kidney trouble takes an unwise risk. Backache, pain and soreness over the kidneys, nervous or dizzy spells, poor sleep, are all symptoms that will disappear with the regular use of Foley Kidney Pills. They put the kidneys and bladder in a clean, strong and healthy condition, and rheumatic pains, stiff joints, lumbago and irregular bladder action are all relieved promptly when Foley Kidney Pills are taken.—Warren Pharmacy, Ed Quistgaard, Prop.



Santa Claus Headquarters, 1913

A
Line of
the Most Complete and Up-to-date
Notions that can be found, I
also handle Jewelry, Postcards, Hot
Drinks, Soft Drinks, Cigars,
Tobaccos, also a big
line of goods on my
10c Counter.

D. DAHLSTROM,

Alvarado, Minnesota.