

The Long and the Short of It

By ROBERT DONNELL

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HER'N

HIS'N



THIS is the long and the short of it (Isn't it really shocking?): Santa Claus knows HE wears short hose, While SHE wears a full length stocking.

So when the day approaches Which once in a year is coming The sly old saint (it would make you faint!) Puts over this mental summing:

"She MUST have presents in plenty; He CAN have very few, For every one knows he wears a hose That's scarcely as high as his shoe."

Hello, Santa Claus!



"Hello! Hello! Is this Santa Claus? Well, this is Marjorie Brown. Oh, I just knew you'd remember me. Awfully nice of you to bring all those things last Christmas. What do I want this year? Ever and ever so many things. Four dolls with real wake up eyes, an' a set o' dishes, an' a sled, an' one—no, I want two, three story books, an' games, an', oo, ever so much candy, an' an'—"

There, you old eavesdropper! Been listening, have you? Well, perhaps you have a right to, for it just happens that in this case you are Santa Claus. Get all the order? This little girl trusts you to bring these things. Then there are the boys and the folks and your friends. Better go right out now and stock up while it is fresh on your mind and while the goods in the stores are fresh. Remember little Marjorie or Esther or Mary or Helen, as the case may be.

Also remember to shop early, relieve the tired shop-girl and get the best.



Christmas In the Navy



Christmas is a glad holiday aboard one of Uncle Sam's battleships. The jacksies deck the grim fighting machine in wreaths of evergreen and holly. Even the great guns wear chaplets. For one day in the year the emblems of peace on earth hide the frowning front of war. The Christmas dinner aboard one of these floating forts is fully as glad as at a private fireside.

The sailors miss a few of the chief delights of the season, however. The prattle of children is lacking, as are the cheer of home and the smile of loved ones. But the Jack tars can give and accept a few presents—that is, they can if in port where such things can be bought.

Do you know any of Uncle Sam's sailor boys? If so would it not be a beautiful thing to REMEMBER THEM THIS CHRISTMAS? Even a little thing would be appreciated. It would show them some one thought of them. SHOP EARLY, so that the gift can be sent in time. Indeed, for any gifts that are to be sent away shopping should be done early so that the presents may not reach their destination two or three days late. BETTER BE BEFOREHAND. One gift early is better than half a dozen late.

Shop early and then you can be sure of reaching your friends, be they sailors or otherwise, ON THE DOT. That immeasurably enhances the value of the gift.

Firecrackers at Christmas

By ROBERTUS LOVE

WHEN I was a boy—and that was some time ago, kind and considerate reader—I never popped firecrackers on the Fourth of July. I popped them on Christmas day. That was because I was a boy in a southern state only a few years after the close of the civil war. Still you don't understand? Well, let me do a little explaining.

I shall not venture to speak for other communities in the south, but in my neighborhood most of the people still were somewhat bitter against Uncle Sam for having come down there with armies for a four years' fight. The folks in and around my serene and sequestered little village, lying on the cedar clad hillsides of southeast Missouri, had known much of the war from actual observation and experience. Armies, Federal and Confederate, had marched and counter-marched through the village. A remarkable battle, that of Pilot Knob, was fought less than twenty miles away. Missouri, let it be remembered, was loyal to the Union, but in the southern part particularly the sentiment was mostly in favor of the "lost cause."

We small boys did not know that the reason for the firecrackerless Fourth and the firecrackery Christmas lay in the prejudices engendered by the war. All we knew or cared to know was that when Christmas came around it meant a few bunches of firecrackers and a lot of fun popping them out in the snow, for in those days we always had a white Christmas.

After the lapse of thirty years I can recall with vivid distinctness a certain Christmas in my town which began with high anticipation of fun and came very near ending in a tragedy. Our family doctor had three boys who were favorite chums of my brother and myself. Somehow we always managed to get together on Christmas day and pop the firecrackers which Santa Claus brought or which we bought with the paper quarter of a dollar allowed each of us out of the family exchequer for that purpose. A quarter bought three bunches of the little red firecrackers. There were five boys, and you can compute the number of bunches we had.

We all got up early on this Christmas morning, took the candies and oranges and other things from our stockings, inspected the "U. S. Mail" wagon left

at the fireside, pulled the trigger of the new toy pistol—and then went down to old man Bean's store and spent our quarters to best advantage.

Brother and I went over to the doctor's house and joined his boys in the front yard. The snow was about ankle deep, crinkly under the foot, and the air was crisp and clear. The eldest of the doctor's boys had been presented with a new derby hat for Christmas—the first derby that ever came to Irondale. There—I just had to let the name of the town slip out.

Claunie—that was what we called the biggest boy—was intensely proud of that new hat. He wore it at breakfast that morning, his brothers said. When we all gathered in the yard to pop the crackers his derby was on the back of his head. We pooled our property by putting the fifteen bunches of firecrackers in a heap on the snow. Near at hand lay a piece of punk, burning slowly.

Just to see if we had a hatful of firecrackers Claunie put his prized derby over the heap. Some of the crackers stuck out at one side. The littlest boy—dead many years now—picked off one of the crackers, touched it to the punk, and when it spluttered fire he dropped it. The cracker went under one side of the hat. That was the point where the frolic became a tragedy.

All of us were discussing the problem of firing a whole bunch of crackers at once when suddenly there was a ripping explosion which drew our attention to Claunie's derby. The hat was considerably divided against itself. One powdery piece of it struck me on the nose. The rim, a ragged ruin, flew over the fence into the street. The rest of it disappeared at various places in the snow.

To paraphrase the line from the poem of the boy who stood on the burning deck, "The hat—oh, where was it?"

Claunie's grief was twofold. He had lost his new hat, and all the firecrackers had gone up in one big explosion. All of us were disconsolate. But the dear old doctor—I think he is living yet and very old now—took pity on us and gave each of us a dime wherewith to purchase a bunch apiece.

Down there nowadays they pop firecrackers on the Fourth, but I dare say that some of the boys of this generation still find a bunch of the little red poppers in their stockings on Christmas morning.

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