

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY

There was nothing wanting. The beautiful big library was a festive air, as indeed it should. Was it not Christmas Eve and was there not a child in the house? In the bow window stood the tree. Surely no expense had been spared to make it beautiful, and instead of being lighted in the old-fashioned way with little baby candles which drip on things and have to be watched, it was gorgeously illuminated with true electric lights. A special man had been there that morning to fix the wires, and another had come to decorate the tree so that it would be



"THERE ISN'T ANY SANTA CLAUS."

correct and artistic. And all for one little girl only ten years old. She felt very small and queer as she sat, curled up in a great leather chair, watching the man put the finishing touches to her Christmas tree.

"Well, miss, I suppose Santa Claus will be along after a while with his bag of presents. You should run away and give him a chance?" said he, coming down from the ladder.

"There isn't any Santa Claus, I'm too big to believe in him, and my presents are all piled up on the hall seat. You may have seen them—there are quite a lot." The forlorn little voice caused the man to pause again as he was hurrying away.

"No Santa Claus? Well, that is just as little people believe. You know people, little or big, can't all think alike, but my little ones say that every one has a Santa Claus who gives a gift, or does a kind deed at Christmas time. Good night, and a Merry Christmas to you, miss."

"Does a kind deed," thought the child, hugging her dear Fritz closer. "Mother said she gave \$25 to the orphan asylum for me—and I saw it in the list in the paper—Mrs. James Marcus-Crewes, for her daughter, Rowena, \$25. I wonder if the man wouldn't think that a kind deed?"

Fritz was a sympathetic, tiny brown dog, and he knew that when his little mistress squeezed him like that around the neck she needed him badly, so he snuggled up closer and put his cold nose on her cheek. Sure enough, the tears did come, and this poor little girlie sobbed and sobbed, and Fritz could do nothing more to comfort her. She drew in her breath suddenly and stopped when she heard some one enter the room, and looking up, saw Sally come to light the lamps.

"Well, and cryin' are ye, ye poor little lamb? What is troublin' ye now? The same old story, sure; no one to play with."

Just then there was a rustle in the



EATING THE GOOD THINGS.

hall and a perfect vision burst from the doorway.

"Mother!" cried Rowena, rushing forward, "I never saw you so beautiful!"

"Why, what flattery from one's own little girl!" said the vision, stooping and placing a kiss somewhere about Rowena's forehead. "Well, good-night, little one, we are late, for this is to be an early dinner so that we shall be in time for the opera afterwards."

She turned with a smile to the man behind her holding her beautiful wrap.

I don't think we neglected anything, do you, dear, for the child's Christmas?"

"No, my dearest, and if she is not a happy little puss, it is her own fault."

"Oh, I don't know—I sometimes think she seems like such a forlorn child sometimes," answered the mother as they drove away.

Rowena was indeed forlorn, sitting there alone, though with her dog and a great lighted Christmas tree one would think she might be very happy.

"I will bring your dinner in here to you, miss, and you can have it on this little table," said Sally.

"Sally, did you ever see any of those little orphans?"

"That I did, Miss. There's little Katie Shannon, an orphan, and it's often I look in on the inn."

Rowena sat thinking. "Ye ain't eatin' fit for a bird, Miss," remonstrated the girl.

"No, I'm thinking about them, Sally. Do you think they have a Christmas tree?"

"I dunno, Miss, they may have, but they mostly needs close. That money, the 'Christmas fund,' they're callin' it, is to buy each wan something to wear, an' each of them poor lams wan pristin' apiece. That's what the matron-ly old told me."

"Oh, do you know the matron?"

"Yes, an' a fine young person she is, then," answered the maid.

"Sally, oh, my dear Sally, why

couldn't we have some of them here to-night to see my tree?" exclaimed Rowena excitedly.

"'Twould niver do, Miss. What'iver would ye're mither say?"

"Now, Sally, you know she would not care. She never cares what I do, and we could telephone now and have them come right off," and she was half way up the stairs with Fritz barking at her heels.

"It's not a stroke of the blame I'll take, Miss, sich an' idee!"

"May I speak to the matron?" Rowena was saying over the telephone a minute later.

"Oh, this is Rowena Marcus-Crewes, of Fifty-first street, and we, I would like some of your or, children, to come and see my tree. It is very pretty, and I have lots of presents, too."

The matron recognized the name of one of the fashionable women of the "board," and, not understanding that it was only the invitation of a child, said she would, with pleasure, send some of the children who were not in bed.

"She asked if twenty would be enough, and I said that would do," said Rowena, dancing about with delight, while Sally just stood and looked at her.

"Will, there's wan thing I do know, an' that's they must eat!" and away she went to prepare for this queer party.

They came. Twenty of them, with bright, expectant faces, and not one of them was as embarrassed or shy as was Rowena Marcus-Crewes. But the delight of having all those children there for her to make happy overcame everything, and it would be hard to say which had the best time, all those laughing children, Rowena, or the dog.

The fun was at its height when Sally came in, bearing a tray heaped with good things. She had found some difficulty in getting away from the kitchen this last time. Her young man was getting impatient.

"Pat, now, ye niver would hinder me if ye could see that child. I niver say the lumb that happy, an' I don't care if I leave me place for it, I'll help this party along."

And with that Pat had to be content, though this was not his idea of spending Christmas Eve.

"I never had such a good time," said Rowena, "and I shall do that every Christmas."



NOT ONE WENT EMPTY-HANDED.

"Oh, Miss, whatever will your mither say about all your foine presents? I dare to think, not at all."

"I haven't one left, and I'm so glad, so glad! Mother won't care—at least I hope she won't. Sally, do you think my beautiful mother will care?"

"Perhaps not, my darlin', if you ask her pretty like that."

This was the beginning of Rowena's charity work, and though she is now a grown-up young woman, there has never passed a Christmas Eve that she has not gathered together a little group of poor children whom she makes happy.—Detroit Free Press.

Christmas Tree Made Safe.
The fatalities and accidents that attend the decoration of Christmas trees with lighted candles can now be in a large measure avoided by the use of the convenient handle-holder just patented. This little device is so designed that the candle is always maintained in an upright position no matter what the position or movement of the limb



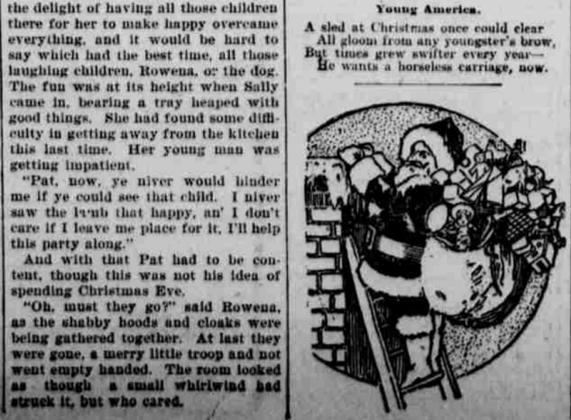
A MIDNIGHT ALARM.

to which it is attached. This is accomplished by means of a candle holder and accompanying drip cup, provided with a weight suspended on a universal joint. As will be readily observed by an inspection of the illustration, when the candle-holder is placed on the limb of a tree by means of the hook, the weight falls free, and, being heavier than the candle-holder and candle, it keeps the latter in an upright position. Any one who has had

experience with the disagreeable melted candle grease all over the floor covering and tree hangings will appreciate the value of this little device, which though effective, is simplicity itself.



Young America.
A sled at Christmas once could clear All gloom from any youngster's brow— But times grew swifter every year— He wants a horseless carriage, now.



Christmas Gests

The Way of a Man.
Mrs. Crawford—"What does your husband regard as a useful Christmas present?"

Mrs. Crabshaw—"Something he would have to buy me anyway."—Puck.

His Theory.
Papa—"There were no such toys as those when I was a boy."

Jolany—"Maybe Santa Claus was only learning his trade then."—Puck.

Too Public.
Sarah—"I think this custom of hanging mistletoe on the chandelier is simply idiotic!"

Sally—"So do I. Why can't they hang it in the conservatory or in a window-seat or some place like that?"—Puck.

A Sure Sign.
Dr. Probe—"I guess that Petercy doesn't intend to pay his bill this year."

Mrs. Probe—"What makes you think so?"

Dr. Probe—"I just got a Christmas present from him this morning."—Brooklyn Life.

Solicitude.
"I am very much afraid Willie isn't enjoying his Christmas."

"Why not?"

"It's almost 5 o'clock in the afternoon and he hasn't yet complained of stomach ache."—Washington Star.

In Boston.
Little Waldo—"I have come to the conclusion that there is no such person as Santa Claus."

Little Emerson—"Indeed?"

Little Waldo—"Yes, it is hardly possible that one producer should be able to supply the wants of so many consumers."—Puck.

His Peculiar Way.
Little Bob (musingly)—"There's one funny thing about old Santa Claus."

Little Willy—"What's that?"

Little Bob—"Why, you ask him for whatever you want, but you'll never get anything but just what your folks think is good for you."—Puck.

Explicit Directions.
Small Boy—"Do you see that big drum in the window?"

Storekeeper—"Yes, my lad."

Small Boy—"Well, you keep it under the counter for a few days. Santa Claus will be around here to get it for me."—Puck.

Lighting the Yuletide Log.
A custom at one time prevalent in England, and still observed in some of the northern districts of the old country, is that of placing an immense log of wood—sometimes the root of a great tree—in the wide chimney place. This is often called the Yule log, and it was on Christmas Eve that it was put on the wide hearth. Around it would gather the entire family, and its entrance was the occasion of a great deal of ceremony. There were music and rejoicing, while the one authorized to light it was obliged to have clean hands.

It was always lighted with a brand left over from the log of the previous year, which had been carefully preserved for the purpose. A poet sings of it in this way:

"With the last year's brand
Light the new block and
For good success in his spending
On you, psaltries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-tending."

The Yule log was supposed to be a protection against evil spirits, and it was considered a bad omen if the fire went out before the evening was over. The family and guests used to seat themselves in front of the brightly burning fire, and many a story and merry jest went round the happy group.

Decorations For the Dining Room.
Decorations for the dining room on Christmas Day may consist of the evergreen garland, festooned on the wall from the picture molding, each loop caught with a cluster of holly. Over doors and window casings the festoons drop low, to mingle with bouquets and bunches of mistletoe and holly. In the centre of the table may be placed a low cut-glass bowl filled with scarlet and white pinks, and sprays of holly may be laid here and there on the cloth as well as at each plate.

Christmas Morning.
Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Oh, such a rush down the stair!
Joey and Jimmie and golden-haired Minnie
—And mamma and baby are there.
Now what have they come down to see
So early in the morning?
What, but the splendid Christmas tree
With all its gay adorning!
On every branch hangs something nice,
Fine dollies by the dozens,
And toys and sweet stuff, cats and mice
For brothers, sisters, cousins,
Then ho, and hey, for Christmas Day,
When Christmas bells are ringing,
And dance in glee around the tree
And join your hands while singing!

CATS AND COLORS.

What Happened When Milk-White Pass Upset the Bluing Bottle.

"I never knew until recently that cats knew so much about colors," said a bright little woman who lives in the upper part of the city, "but I have no doubt whatever of the matter now. The fact was brought to my attention in a rather singular way."

"We have a nest of cats at our home, and we have always been very much attached to the feline tribe. They are all pets. But there is one cat in the group that we have been unusually kind to. She was the particular pet of the family."

"Her body was covered with the prettiest white fur I ever saw. It was without a blemish, and we came to look upon her as the prettiest cat on the face of the earth. But something happened to her one day while she was rummaging around in an old pantry, and it changed the course of her life completely. She got mixed up with a lot of bluing bottles, and when she scrambled out of the pantry she was as blue as she could be."

"She was fearfully distressed about the matter and seemed to be somewhat alarmed over the sudden change in her appearance. But the surprise she felt was nothing compared to the surprise shown by her relatives and associates. In the moment of her alarm she turned to the mother cat of the tribe, and there is where the interesting point comes in. The old cat would have nothing to do with her. She resented her approaches by spitting at her, and manifested her dislike of it in all other ways equally as unmistakable."

"From that time on she became an outcast; her relatives and associates would slink away from her, and she continued to live in isolation, and all on account of the change which had taken place in the color of her hair."

—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Kansas Torn Apart.
The attention of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture has been called to occurrences which are mystifying the alfalfa farmers of Jewell and Republic counties. It is reported that great cracks and sink holes are appearing in the alfalfa fields there.

The cracks are sometimes rods in length, from two to six feet in depth, and from one to ten feet wide. They appear only in alfalfa fields, and the farmers have never before seen anything like them.

They do not come gradually, but suddenly. It is becoming dangerous to drive a team across alfalfa fields because the ground may suddenly sink beneath it.

Some section hands were working on a railroad track a few days ago near an alfalfa field on the farm of Edward Randall, not far from Jewell City. They heard a cow low but there was no cow in sight. The sound seemed to come from under the ground.

They made a search and discovered the cow in an alfalfa sink hole, several feet below the surface. The cow was so weak that she could not stand after she had been dug out.

The alfalfa plants have very long roots. One theory is that these roots loosen the ground so that it is washed away by an underflow.—New York Sun.

American Soldiers Great Gum Chewers.
The American soldiers are, perhaps, the chewing gum manufacturers' best customers, and during the war with Cuba the sales of gum were enormous. Manila is now becoming a good gum market. Honolulu is another. Australians chew a great deal of gum. Samoa calls for a large supply.

The older countries are more conservative; and in them chewing gum makes headway very slowly, although a trade has sprung up in China, Japan and India, and considerable consignments go to France and Scandinavia. Western Canada, beyond Winnipeg, is a great chewing gum district, and it is rather interesting to note that the new country points at which nervous energy is booming progress, are identical with the points where chewing gum finds its ready sale. The man on a nervous strain seems to find a relief in the mechanical action of his jaws. It may be added that, after soldiers and bicyclists, the habitual visitors to racetracks are said to be the most confirmed gum chewers in the world.

Democracy in Switzerland.
The Swiss girl is taught to be humble and practical from the moment, when at four, she enters the infants' class, until at eighteen, when she returns finished from pension. There is absolutely no difference between the treatment of the masses and the classes. They sit together at school, are taught the same subjects by the same masters, receive the same punishments and the same praise. Little cares the daughter of the millionaire if her bosom friend is the daughter of her own father's coachman; they have been brought up together, and remain together without let or hindrance. The Swiss girl is never ashamed of being seen at her work, be that work of the most humble description.—Newcastle (Eng.) Chronicle.

A Botanical Curiosity.
One of the strangest botanical curiosities in the world is the "Wonder-Wonder" flower, found in the Malay peninsula. It is simply a blossom, without leaves, vine or stem, and grows as a parasite on decayed wood.

Europe's Blind Population.
Norway, Ireland and Spain have more blind people in proportion to population than any other European countries. Spain has 216 per 1000; Norway 208 and Ireland 111.

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