

Why "Santa Claus"?



By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

CHRISTMAS would not be Christmas without Santa Claus. But who is Santa Claus and why his name? Whatever name he is called—Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, St. Nick, or Kris Kringle—he is the personification of the Christmas spirit and the symbol of childish faith.

Santa Claus, originally Sinterklass, the pet name of the Dutch children for their friend and gift-bringer, Bishop St. Nicholas, came to America by way of New Amsterdam, now New York. December 6 was St. Nicholas day, and on St. Nicholas eve he was believed to make his rounds on a fiery white charger, leaving gifts for good children and a birch rod for the bad ones in the wooden shoes or long blue stockings which they put in the chimney corner.

When the Dutch customs began to merge into the English in the colonial days, the observance of St. Nicholas day gradually merged into the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Soon after the Revolution Sinterklass began to change and to become Santa Claus, an American character. Instead of being a tall, solemn person with long robes, popular tradition made him a fat, jolly person wearing knee breeches and shoes with Dutch buckles. He also began making his rounds in a little wagon drawn by a fat pony, and his visits occurred on New Year's eve instead of December 5.

Washington Irving had something to do with the change in Santa Claus, for in his "Knickerbocker's History of New York" he wrote a description of this friend of the children which made him look much like the Santa of today. However, it remained for Rev. Clement Clarke Moore, professor of oriental literature in the General Theological seminary, to describe Santa Claus minutely and to give him eight reindeer and a sleigh for making his rounds on Christmas eve. In 1822 Professor Moore wrote the now-famous poem, which he called "A Visit from St. Nicholas," but which is better known as "The Night Before Christmas," as a Christmas present for his children.

A niece who was at the Moore home that Christmas copied the poem into her album. The next year it appeared anonymously in the Troy (N. Y.) Sentinel and was widely

The Night Before Christmas

THIS was the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash,
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a luster of midday to objects below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name:
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Comet! on, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As they leaped like before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So, up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas, too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face, and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
"He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf—
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread—
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

—Clement C. Moore.

copied. Soon it became known all over the country and had found its way into the school readers. Professor Moore was the author of the first Greek and Hebrew lexicon published in America and had hoped that his name would become famous because of it. As such, he did not want it known that he had composed what he called this "silly verse," but he

finally admitted its authorship and presented the autographed original to the New York Historical society. His lexicon is forgotten, as would his name probably have been, if he had not written the poem that Christmas in 1822 which is now looked upon as the "birthday" of the American Santa Claus, known and beloved by all American children.

mummies. Nature herself, many thousands of years earlier, was employing it in the extraordinary La Brea asphalt pits of southern California.

Fatal Experiment

Nine Alpinists, one of them a priest, were victims of an odd accident recently while mountaineering in the Pyrenees. The party was experimenting with a new type of rope containing a pliable steel strand. They had managed to reach the summit of Marmolade mountain, 10,000 feet above sea

Human Signal Tower

There's a traffic cop six feet ten inches tall in Minnesota. He may be a good cop but a guy as tall as that must be awful high handed.—Farm and Fireside.

THE HAT WAS SENT ON APPROVAL

(© by D. J. Walsh.)

LILLA BENNETT'S eyes danced as she read the invitation. A luncheon at Mrs. Wales' last she would have something interesting to write home. Her brother Tom's wife should see that she was making good socially in Bergmont.

The invitation informally requested an answer by telephone and Lilla ran out to the corner drug store and dropped a nickel into the slot for that purpose. Her acceptance was marked by restraint; she needn't let Mrs. Wales think she was not used to such things. But her voice bearing the carefully selected words fairly boomed over the wire. The rather emotionless woman who received this joyous voice in her ear smiled faintly, recognizing youth and spontaneity. The wife of her husband's young secretary was a dear, it seemed.

Home Lilla flew, taking peeps at her wrist watch along the way and computing time. The luncheon was today at 1 o'clock; it was now 9:30. Burt did not come home to lunch so she was entirely free in that respect.

She met Mrs. Potter who lived in the apartment above. Mrs. Potter had a market basket. She scribbled dreadfully, although her husband earned quite as good salary as did Burt. Lilla, pretty and chic, looked at the other young woman's morning shabbiness with amusement.

"I've got to hurry home and get ready to go to a luncheon at Mrs. Wales," she boasted.

"How nice!" Helen Potter looked wistful. Then she laughed. "And I've got to hurry and get my soup greens on or I won't have any lunch for my hubby."

"He comes home to lunch, doesn't he?" What a bore!

"It's better for him and then he's only out carfare, which is cheaper than paying for inferior food downtown," Helen replied and walked on with dignity.

"Always prating economy! I hate it," Lilla told herself as she unlocked her own door. "Let's see! I'll wear my dark blue velvet. But I ought to have a new hat. The styles are all in. I saw them yesterday at Marcy's. There was a love of a black lace thing—I wish I had it this minute. I wonder—I wonder if I could have them send it round in time for the luncheon! Oh, what a bother not to have a telephone! I've got to go back to the corner drug store."

It was only a step and she was there in five minutes. Another nickel deposited. She called the store and got Miss Serge whom she knew slightly through former purchases.

"Miss Serge, this is Mrs. Burt Bennett speaking—Oh, yes! Of course you do—Mrs. William Hudson Wales has asked me to her luncheon today at one and I'd like to see that hat I was looking at yesterday—the black lace one with the glycerined plume—could you send it up?—right away?—Oh, on approval of course!—Thank you, Miss Serge."

Triumphantly flushed her face was again as she arrived home.

The hat arrived within an hour. As she took it out of the box she received a shock of surprise. For this was not the modest reproduction at a reasonable price—this was the French model itself, a charming thing proportionately costly. The price tag was for sixty-five dollars.

Lilla struggled with temptation. It was too late to make a change now. Why shouldn't she wear it? It would only be for an hour, anyway. Women often did such things and no harm came of it. Oh, the hat was adorable! And she looked lovely in it!

The brim had just the right slant for her piquant face. She wished to make a good impression, indeed, it was necessary that she do so, and this hat could not fail her.

"I'll wear it!" Lilla decided. "It isn't wicked at all. Besides, it isn't as if I weren't perfectly responsible."

At 12:30 she came out of the house and began walking rapidly in the direction of Mrs. Wales' house. It was a brilliant day and many people were out. Glances of admiration were flashed at Lilla in her charming apparel. By the time she reached the heavily respectable Wales door she was quite in love with herself and assured of a good time.

The luncheon was informal and quite gay. Half a dozen women who gathered about the table were all older than Lilla with the exception of one—Mrs. Chambers, whose husband was also in Mr. Wales' employ. Lilla, stimulated by her appearance, was more than ordinarily pleasing and she could see that she won the approval of her hostess.

As they came out Mrs. Chambers linked arms in the friendliest fashion with Lilla.

"You are not going right home?" she said. "Let's step into the nite-tee. I've two tickets. The friend who was going with me backed out. Please come."

This was an added pleasure. Lilla, putting aside all thoughts of her hat, went.

When two hours later they emerged from the theater they found that the brilliant day had given place to a tearing gale with a heavy rainstorm accompaniment. And they had no umbrella. Neither was there a cab in sight.

"Let's stay here and wait till it stops," Lilla begged.

"No, I've got to go home," Mrs. Chambers answered. "There's a drug store a few doors up. We'll go there and I'll telephone for a cab. We shall keep dry by walking close to the buildings."

They had proceeded scarcely ten steps a wing of the gale brushed them in passing. Mrs. Chambers' small hat escaped, but Lilla's wide one was snatched from her head. It volplaned streetward and a passing truck put an end to it.

Lilla, white as ashes, saw the disaster with staring eyes.

"What a shame!" was all her companion said.

The taxi, which Lilla paid for, left her at her own door. As she entered Burt arose from the depths of theavenport.

"Where's your hat?" he exclaimed. Lilla burst into tears.

Of course she told him; she always told him ultimately, everything. He listened gravely.

"Sixty-five dollars, eh?" he said at last. "Well, that's quite a lot to pay for a hat. But—I guess I've got the money here."

Lilla's heart bled as she saw him counting out those precious bills one after the other. They came hard, but after all they cost him less than they did her. She resolved to save until she had that \$65 back, every penny of it. Helen Potter wasn't such a fool after all. Economy was a good thing to practice. And then, never again would she have anything sent home on approval.

"It served me right," she sobbed against Burt's shoulder. He patted her tenderly.

But he sighed.

Discovery of Butter
Credited to Accident

Credit for the origin of butter is given to the camel of Arabia in a romantic story of the cow—"The Fath of the Gopatis" (Lord of the Cows), issued by the National Dairy council.

"The Arabians first knew butter as an accident when carrying milk by camel," says this authority. "It was necessary for them to sour their milk to preserve it, as there were no refrigerators on the desert. The sour milk was stored in skin bags, which could be slung across the back of the camels. One day on opening a skin they found floating around in the liquid lumps of something soft, but solid. They tasted it and found it delicious. They rubbed it upon their faces and marveled at how beautiful it made them."

"Later they hit upon an idea of making this delicacy. They tied some of the skin sacks of milk to the backs of their fastest horses and rode them at top speed, back and forth, up and down the sands of the desert. That was the first butter ever made, more than 2,500 years before Christ. But it was an expensive and dangerous process to run the tribe's best horses at breakneck speed, and butter then was only used as a rare ornament and in the choicest foods for the most special occasions. Finally, they discovered a more prosaic, but less precarious means of attaining the same result. They laid the leathern sacks upon the ground or hung them on poles and beat them with sticks. Thus they had a supply of butter which was reasonably easy to prepare."

In the land pastures of central Asia the word for "king" and "warrior chief" was gopatis, but what gopatis really meant was "Lord of the Cows," who also must be king and warrior, since the possession and protection of cows were "the most weighty and honorable duties" of man in that region. The people of the Gopatis were the Aryans, the first masters of the cows. To them the possession of cattle meant health, happiness and wealth. It was considered a crime to kill a cow and the penalty was made to fit the crime. It was that "the killer of a cow must stay a month in penitence, sleeping in a stable, following the cows, and must purify himself by the gift of another cow."

Fly Is Some Traveler
The statement has often been made that the fly rarely managed to get more than a few hundred feet from the place of its birth unless it happened to be carried on the wings of a powerful wind, but recent experiments have shown that the fly will frequently travel six miles in the course of a single day. These experiments took place in Texas and 234,000 flies of different species were trapped and dusted for identification and then released. Temptingly baited traps were set for them at many points. The maximum distance traveled by the fly in these experiments was a trifle more than 13 miles. Carried by the winds they were found to travel much greater distances.

Precious English Relic
What is considered England's most precious relic is the Domesday book and its chest, kept in the Tudor house in Chancery lane, London. William the Conqueror ordered his aides to go through England and write down every lord, every peasant, every acre, every ox, every plow and every pig. Domesday book comes down to moderns as the western world's first thorough census. To England it gives basis for land deeds and, what is more important to Englishmen, it tells the Englishman whether his ancestors came over with the Conquerors. The Domesday book is to England what the Mayflower log is to America, and more.—Detroit News.



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His Position
Gap Johnson was trying to back away from the crossroads store with many yanks at the reins and numerous yells and oaths. His daughter sprang from the wagon and began beating the mules over the head with a club.

"Why don't you buy an automobile?" asked a salesman who had arrived during the operation. "It would save you a lot of trouble."

"I'm usen to the—p'tu!—trouble," was the reply. "I know how to handle these devilish mules and I wouldn't know how to manage a car."

"Well, it might save the young lady a lot of unnecessary exercise."

"Aw, she's going to get married pretty soon, and needs the experience in managing a husband. H-up, there, mules!"—Kansas City Star.

Canadian Forest Revenue
The direct revenue received by Dominion and provincial governments from the forest in the form of rentals, royalties, stumpage charges, etc. amounts to \$13,000,000 annually. In Europe it has been found that increased expenditure on modern protective methods has always been followed by a much more than proportionate increase in revenues.—Natural Resources Bulletin.

The Observer
"Did you see a stray canine pass here?"

"No, sah, boss, they ain't been no canines pass here. Ah's been sittin' here 'bout two hours and de only thing Ah sees pass was a black dawg."

One interesting escapade would be to wear the loveliest kind of clothes for a little while.

Spoiled!
Hobart—Yes, I'll admit I was raised in the sticks, but that's nothing against me, is it?
Ethel—No, but I do think your mother should have used one on you oftener.

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