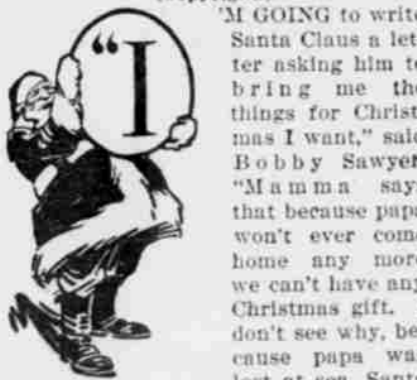


The Best Gift of All



Bobby's Christmas Gift

By Winifred Barton



Christmas won't come as he used to. I hear of children writing to Santa for what they want and I'm going to write to him, too."

So Bobby sat down and wrote his letter. He spelled bugle, bugel, and Christmas, Crisnus, and some of the words were so bungled that the old fellow must have had a hard time deciphering them; but all the things Bob wanted were named in the letter and he did not doubt for a moment that Santa Claus would respond generously.

One morning shortly before Christmas, Peter the postman left a letter at the door addressed to Robert Sawyer. Peter who had long delivered the letters of the Sawyer family would not give it to anybody but Bobby, saying that Santa Claus required him to give any letters marked "from Kris Kri-



Wrote His Letter.

gle" to the child to whom it was addressed and to no one else. Bobby opened it and read:

"Dear Bobby:
I have received your letter and will bring you the finest Christmas present you ever received in your life.
"SANTA CLAUDE."

Bob of course was delighted with this, and he noticed that from the time of its receipt everything about the house seemed to take on a certain cheeriness. Bobby laid in wait for Peter when he came again and asked him a lot of questions as to how and where Santa Claus gave him the letter. Peter said that he was not permitted to tell children anything about Santa Claus. They must hang up their stockings and wait for him to fill them.

This was three days before Christmas. Bobby who was very watchful detected his mother smuggling in certain packages. This puzzled him, for his mamma had told him there would be no gifts this year and he did not expect any except what Santa Claus would bring. Bobby asked his mother if what she brought in was intended for Christmas, but she gave him no satisfaction, though she took him in her arms and gave him a bear hug and a dozen kisses. She seemed as happy as if she expected Santa Claus to bring everything she wanted for Christmas.

The day before Christmas a messenger boy came with a telegram for Mrs. Sawyer. She tore off the envelope and read it, and looked very happy, giving the messenger a half dollar. Bobby asked what the telegram was about. She told him it was about a Christmas gift she and all the rest of the family were to receive, and when Bobby kept asking again and again "What is it mamma?" she gave him another bear hug and smothered him with kisses.

Bobby had a sister, Edith, twelve years old, and a brother Jim, ten. Both of them were too old to sympathize with Bobby in his faith in Santa Claus bringing him the gift he had promised him in his letter. Indeed they didn't believe Santa Claus really wrote letters to children. Bobby tried his best to get out of Edith or Jim what made their mother so happy, but they would not tell. Indeed they seemed almost as happy as she. Having failed with them Bobby tried Peter the postman. Peter said he suspected Santa Claus had something to do with the family happiness, but he was not sure. So poor Bobby was obliged to swallow his curiosity and wait for Christmas morning.

Bobby went to bed on Christmas eve determined to resist the sandman and keep his eyes open all night, so that he might get a glimpse of Santa Claus and see what his remarkable gift was. But the sandman soon began to drop sand in Bobby's lids, and he was asleep in ten minutes after his head struck the pillow.

When Bobby awoke the sun was quite high in the heavens. He heard the word "Bobby!" shouted in his ears



"Why, Papa!" He Exclaimed.

and at the same time felt himself gently shaken. He did not awaken by degrees, but all at once. And there standing before him and looking down upon him, smiling, was his papa.

"Why, papa!" he exclaimed, "I thought you were never going to come home any more."

"Santa Claus told me that he was to bring me home to my little boy for a Christmas gift."

Bobby threw his arms around his father's neck and hugged and hugged, and it seemed that he would never let go. Mamma, and Edith and Jim came in and so great was the excitement that Bobby forgot to look for what was in his stocking.

That was certainly the happiest Christmas the Sawyer family ever spent or ever would spend. Bobby was too young to have it all explained to him, but when he is older his mother intends to tell him that his father was on a vessel that was torpedoed and sunk. Mr. Sawyer was reported missing, but he was picked up out of the water by an American cruiser and in time managed to get home. After word came that he was saved the letter was written to Bobby by his sister as from Santa Claus, and afterwards a telegram came saying that his father would be home on Christmas morning.



CHRISTMAS OF LONG AGO

Poignant Pangs Come Instead of Peace, as Season Causes Thoughts of the Past.

Christmas, singularly enough for a festival that is supposed to celebrate joy, is characterized by sadness. The time of year, which is supposed to be fraught with good cheer, is laden with pain. Instead of peace, there are experienced poignant pangs.

Nor is it cynicism which says so; the average man in the street will tell you the same. Neither is crabbed age sponsor for the crotchets of the time; unless, indeed, crabbed age begins in this hurried era when a man passes his majority. Nor is the tragic contrast between the cloud, which now for the fifth Christmas darkens Europe and the world, and the bright star of Bethlehem the reason for the somber tone that sounds beneath the gay notes of the season, as the deep diapason of the organ rolls beneath the rippling melody. No; it is none of these things which imparts to Christmas the somberness which is apparent to everybody who has passed into years of maturity.

It's memory that does it. Memory plays tricks with us on these days. Perhaps more than on any other holiday our minds revert to Christmases that used to be. We like to think about it; we like to read the Christmas Carol, because it puts in everlasting words the emotion of gladness which used to dominate that day. No matter how humble the home, memory paints it in wonderful colors on this one day, from the time we jumped from the warm bed long before dawn and scampered across the cold floor to get the stocking which somehow had been stuffed during the night, to the end of the plethoric home festival, when, candy-smeared and filled to the point of repletion we were rescued from the wreck of toys and packed wearily off to sleep, more or less troubled with painful suggestions of turkey and mince pie.

There is only one thing that can make Christmas real to a grown-up, and that is to do something for somebody who cannot pay it back. That otherism is, we begin to suspect, the thing which dominated the Christmases that used to be and made them so real that they remain warm in memory. Unless you would have memory become a dry specter, you yourself must make real for little children of the now the pictures which memory conjures up for you of the Christmases that used to be.—Saturday Globe.



HIS CHRISTMAS RESOLUTION



"I s'pose you'll hang yer stockin' up?"
"Said Jones some preday in jest"
"Oh yes," said B., "the grocer"
"too"
"And butcher, woman, and the rest!"

URGE NAVY SECOND TO NONE

U. S. General Board Plans for Maximum Fleet by 1925.

Washington, D. C.—Neither the end of hostilities nor proposals for a league of nations has altered the policy of the general board of the navy in regard to making the navy second to none in the world.

Rear-Admiral Charles J. Badger, chairman of the executive committee of the board, Saturday told the house naval affairs committee that the navy should be equal to that of any other nation by 1925, and urged that sufficient appropriations to make this possible be made by congress.

"The general board believes that under the present world conditions and the conditions likely to obtain in the future," Admiral Badger said, "the United States navy should steadily continue to increase. Ultimately it should be equal to the most powerful maintained by any other nation of the world. Year by year development should be made as consistent with the facilities of the country, but the limit above defined should be attained not later than 1925.

"Navies must be the principal support of a league of nations, and the United States, from its wealth, influence and power, will be called upon to contribute a large share of the international police force to render such a league effective."

The duty of the navy, the admiral said, will be not only to guard the country against invasion, but to protect as well the great merchant marine now being built.

Completion of the three-year building programme authorized in 1916 and which was halted to build anti-submarine craft, was recommended by Admiral Badger. Work has not yet been started on six battleships, six battle cruisers, two scout cruisers, nine fleet submarines, two destroyer tenders, and one fleet submarine tender, he said. Lack of ships of this type, he declared, would have been fatal to the United States if it had been fighting the war alone.

PRESIDENT ACTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACE

Washington, D. C.—Acting Secretary Polk made public at the State department Saturday the text of the note handed by the United States ambassadors recently to the presidents of Chile and Peru, urging that the two South American nations owe it to the rest of the world to compose their differences and informing them that the United States "stands ready to tender, alone or in conjunction with other countries of this hemisphere, all possible assistance to bring about an equitable solution."

The note said the United States viewed the severance of consular relations between the two governments with the gravest apprehension, particularly on the eve of the Paris peace conference, "in which it is confidently expected that steps will be taken to provide for an era of lasting peace among all peoples."

U. S. FLYER COVERS 1365 MILES ON TRIP

Mather Field, Sacramento, Cal.—A summary of his flight from Mather Field to Seattle and return, prepared by Lieutenant A. F. Hogland, army flying officer, and made public Saturday, showed the aviator traveled a total of 1365 miles and flew on an average of 59 miles an hour.

He made the trip on 217 gallons of gasoline, burning one gallon to every 6.3 miles flown. He covered 675 miles in the flight to Seattle and 690 miles in returning.

"I cleared many mountain peaks by less than 100 feet and found it necessary to go around several because I was unable to gain sufficient altitude to cross them directly," Lieutenant Hogland's report said. Numerous thick clouds encountered over the mountains made flying very dangerous on the return trip, he added.

Ex-Kaiser Food Hoarder.

Copenhagen.—According to Berlin advices, enormous stores of foodstuffs were found in the castle of the ex-German emperor in Berlin. A member of the Soldiers' and Workmen's Council is authority for the statement that the value of the food normally would be several hundred thousand marks.

WORLD HAPPENINGS OF CURRENT WEEK

Brief Resume Most Important Daily News Items.

COMPILED FOR YOU

Events of Noted People, Governments and Pacific Northwest and Other Things Worth Knowing.

It is officially estimated that there are a million cases of influenza in the Dutch East Indies.

Government supervision over the steel industry and steel price fixing will end December 31.

The sugar grinding season in Porto Rico opened this week. The prospect is good for small quantities of new sugars to reach the refiners before the new year.

The Hessian Workmen's, Peasants' and Soldiers' council has been dissolved and will be replaced by the "Peoples' Council for the Republic of Hesse."

The value of the German mark has fallen below 42 to the British pound. Before the war the mark was worth approximately one shilling, or 20 marks to the pound.

The First Church of Christ Scientists of Pasadena, Cal., Friday obtained an injunction in the superior court forbidding the health officer and chief of police from interfering with the holding of church services.

Holding that the war may be over, but has not been fully paid for, Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo has sent an appeal to the twelfth district federal reserve bank to urge all owners to retain their liberty bonds.

Abandonment of 19 war construction projects, including a number of nitrate and other chemical plants, was announced Thursday by the War department. Projects abandoned included the T. N. T. plant at Giant, Cal.

According to reports from Berlin the entente governments intend to refuse to send foodstuffs to Germany until a demand they are said to have made for the dissolution of the Soldiers' and Workmen's councils is carried out.

Representatives of the troops which are to guard Berlin took an oath in the town hall at Steglitz, swearing absolute loyalty to the German people's republic. Independent socialists exhorted the soldiers to disarm, but they refused.

Charles Piez, vice-president and general manager of the Emergency Fleet corporation, is to succeed Charles M. Schwab as director general of the corporation. This announcement was made at headquarters of the Shipping board.

Heads of industrial bureaus of the War Industries board have been asked by Secretary of Commerce Redfield to form a board of industrial advisers to act as "informal ambassadors" of industry in its relations with the department. It is intended they be summoned or consulted when advisable.

John H. von Hegermann Lindencrone, former Danish Minister to Paris and Berlin, is dead.

During the ceremony in the city hall Sunday in connection with the official entry of President Poincare, Premier Clemenceau handed to the Mayor of Metz the keys of the city, which the Germans failed to get when they captured Metz in 1870.

Notes were sent to Berlin and Vienna by the State department Tuesday, advising the German and Austrian governments that the United States desires to receive no further communications from them which should properly be addressed to the allied nations.

The navy's excellent health and low mortality rate during the war is attributed by Rear-Admiral Braisted, surgeon-general of the navy, in his annual report, largely to the increasing appreciation by commanding officers of the rules of hygiene and sanitation.