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Three Cheers For Dear Old, Queer Old Santa Claus



Santa Claus on "The Limited"

By FRANK H. SWEET.

THE Chicago Limited was pulling out of the Grand Central station in New York as Dr. Henry Van Valkenberg submitted his ticket to the gateman. He dashed through, pushing that indignant official to one side, made a leap for the railing of the last car of the train and a friendly brakeman dragged him "on board."



"Where you hurt?" he asked, and he rubbed the aching surface of his hand. Then he pulled himself together, picked up the books and newspapers he had dropped and which the bystanders had enthusiastically buried after him and sought his haven in the sleeping car.

"Oh! Were you hurt?" said a voice behind him. "I was so afraid you were going to fall." Dr. Van Valkenberg, who was a tall man of sixty, turned and looked down from his great height. At his feet stood a baby. At least she seemed a baby to him, although she was very dignified and wholly self-possessed and fully four years old.

"I'm very glad," she said, with dignity. "I was afraid he hurt you." She turned as she spoke and toddled into the section opposite his, where a plain but kindly faced elderly woman sat. "Won't you come over and visit me?" he asked. "I am very lonely, and I have no one to take care of me."

"I'd like to," she said, "but I must ask Nana. I must always ask Nana now." "I'll take care of you," she said brightly. "I took care of mamma a great deal, and I gave her her medicine."



He grew up and became a young lady, and well, she went away from me, and I never had another little girl. "Did she go to heaven?" asked the little girl softly. "Oh, dear, no!" answered the doctor, with brisk cheerfulness. "Then why didn't she keep on being your little girl always?"

"The doctor hesitated a moment. He was making the discovery that after many years old wounds can reopen and throb. No one had ever been brave enough to broach to him the subject of this single love affair which he was now discussing.

"Why didn't you ask her to please stay with you?" she persisted-pitifully. "I did," he told her. "But you see, she liked the other man better."

"Oh-h-h!" The word came out long drawn and breathless. "I don't see how she possibly could."

"There were such sorrow for the victim and scorn for the offender in the tone that, combined with the none too subtle compliment, it was too much for Dr. Van Valkenberg's self control. He threw back his gray head and burst into an almost boyish shout of laughter, which effectively cleared the atmosphere of sentimental memories.



husband's death three years ago, and she kept at it day and night. She was so sweet, so brave, yet so desperately miserable over leaving her little girl alone in the world."

Dr. Van Valkenberg sat silent. It was true, then. This was Katharine's child. He had not known of the death of Armitage nor of the subsequent poverty of his widow, but he had known Katharine's baby, he now told himself, the moment he saw her.

"I'll be your own Santa Claus," he said cordially. "I want you and Hope to dine with me. You will, won't you?"

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VIGOROUS GENERAL GRANT. At Fifty-eight He is Good For a Ninety Mile Horseback Ride. Major General Frederick Dent Grant, commander of the department of the east, is receiving congratulations on all sides for the highly successful manner in which he recently went through the horseback riding test now made compulsory for United States army officers. In spite of his fifty-eight years



and bodily weight General Grant averaged ninety miles and experienced comparatively little fatigue, showing that at that moment he would be ready to undergo the rigors of a hard campaign.

General Grant is the eldest son of the late General Ulyses S. Grant, the hero of the civil war. During the Spanish war he fought in Porto Rico and later distinguished himself in the Philippines. He has been minister to Austria and more recently held the position of police commissioner of New York. General Grant was born at St. Louis in 1820, was graduated from West Point in 1843 and for a time was lieutenant colonel of the Fourth cavalry, U. S. A. He was only twelve years old when his father took him to the front, and he was close to him during the whole of the Vicksburg campaign. One of his experiences was running the batteries of Vicksburg at his father's side on a gunboat.

VIVACIOUS MISS ETHEL. The President's Charming Unmarried Daughter and Her Birthdays. Miss Ethel Roosevelt, the vivacious daughter of the president, is still having seventeenth birthdays, and as the year has a considerable time to run she



will probably materially increase the number before 1909 rolls around. Seventeen is by long odds Miss Ethel's favorite age, and she doesn't care how often it happens. Now at Manchester, Mass., visiting friends, Miss Ethel was announced by Secretary Loeb on July 16 to be giving a birthday party. Later this was denied. Then Mr. Loeb decided that Miss Ethel should be seventeen on July 18. The president impatiently and emphatically denied that this date was correct. Finally Loeb and Miss Ethel concluded that Aug. 10 would be as good a time as any to become seventeen. Now it is said at Oyster Bay that Miss Ethel will be seventeen in September.

It is thought strange that a man of Mr. Loeb's experience should indulge in any discussion over the age of any woman, young or old, for lives, fortunes and kingdoms have been lost by similar action. It is contended that he ought to allow Miss Ethel unrestricted control over the number of her birthdays, and if she now insists on having two or three a month let her do so, for the time will soon come, all too soon, when she will insist on having less than one birthday every three years. Thus on her whole life she will strike a pretty accurate average.