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Christmas Once Again!

"At Christmas play and make good cheer, For Christmas comes but once a year"

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The Rediscovery of Santa Claus

By Harold L. Cook
For years Mrs. Pendleton had not believed in Santa Claus herself, but she taught her little girl to believe in him. "It's a beautiful myth," she said to herself, "and I don't see any harm in it. In fact, it's really too bad there isn't a Santa Claus. Since I was a child I have never enjoyed Christmas so much as I used to when I believed in him."

Just at that moment Betty Pendleton returned from Sunday school. She was a pretty little girl with blue eyes and long blonde curls, but today the eyes were brimming with tears and as soon as she came into the house she ran to her room.

"What's the matter?" Mrs. Pendleton called from the foot of the stairs. "What is it, Betty?"

"Smothered souls were the only answer, so Mrs. Pendleton ran to the stairs and into her daughter's room. She took Betty in her arms and tried to calm her, but the sobs continued uncontrolled for some minutes longer. Finally she was able to tell her mother what the trouble was. Her Sunday school teacher had just told the class that there was no Santa Claus, that he was only a myth, and that it was wicked for parents to teach their little children such a lie."

More sobs followed the broken explanation which Betty had given, and her body trembled with convulsions of emotion. Mrs. Pendleton had to think quickly and clearly. What was to be done? This child was heartbroken, and was still so young it seemed a pity that her teacher had disillusioned childhood's fancies. Her mother could not very truthfully deny what the Sunday school teacher had said, and she did not want to teach her child to question the wisdom of her teachers. It all seemed a terrible predicament for Mrs. Pendleton.

But suddenly her mother instinct solved the problem, and pressing her daughter more closely in her arms she said, "Your Sunday school teacher isn't married, Betty. I guess she doesn't know all about such things. It's mostly fathers and mothers who really know about Santa Claus. Santa Claus is the personification of the Christmas spirit. He does not live at the North pole, as some people think, or if he does live there, he journeys each December throughout the world touching the hearts of people to awaken in them the Christ spirit of unselfishness and generosity. It is usually mothers and fathers who know most about him, because they love their children unselfishly, as Christ loved little children, but people who do not have any children themselves are often permissive with this particular Christmas spirit of giving. Jesus said, 'Let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth,' and only those who understand His words

can know the real Santa Claus, and as such, he is just as real as anything that exists in this world. Your Sunday school teacher knows that just as well as I do, only she did not know exactly how to explain it to you."

Betty had ceased crying and had listened attentively to her mother. "So there is a real Santa," she said. And Mrs. Pendleton replied, "Yes, my dear, there is a real Santa, and when you came to live with us, your thoughts went back to us after he had been away for many years."

That Christmas was a lovely one for all the Pendletons, because at twelve o'clock on Christmas eve, Santa Claus came down their chimney and filled all their stockings full. Before he left, he drank the glass of milk and ate the apple which had been left for him.

ple to know who is giving something to them. But Jesus wanted giving to be done in secret, and Santa Claus is that secret joy of giving which animates all mothers and lovers of children at Christmas. Some people exchange gifts at Christmas, and for them Christmas has merely come to be a barter of presents. They like people



Christmas Is Coming

By James E. Jensen.
Christmas is coming,
And so is Santa Claus.
You then fill your tummies
Without even a pause.
Christmas is coming,
Oh, how we do cheer;
That Santa is not coming,
We have not a fear.
Christmas is coming,
And so are the toys;
Dolls for the girls,
And sleds for the boys.
Christmas is coming,
For it we do wait;
We have no fear that Santa
Shall ever be late.

Christmas After Christ

By John Thomas Stewart
IT OUGHT to be possible for the Christian to observe Christmas. Possible, but not easy. What he is more likely to do is to pay his social debts, lubricate his friendships and remind his relations that he is still in the land of the living. Christmas—the time of the commemoration of the birth of our Saviour in a manger—has come to be the day when those Christians who have, display to those who have not, the Lord hath prospered them.

I suppose the situation is worse in large cities, where wealth tends to accumulate and deposit, but the plague is spreading. In small towns where there is, or ought to be, more of the give and take of community life, the authentic Christmas spirit gets its best chance. Now we may continue to give and receive presents at Christmas and still keep Christmas, after the manner and spirit of Christ. It will depend upon the range of our affections and the quality of our unselfishness. For plainly, what we need is not to stop giving gifts at Christmas—the poorest among us is able to give away some things and to be the better for it—but a different spirit in the business, for a business it has become.

What would it be like to keep Christmas after Christ? There are two simple, practical considerations which, if we will abide by them, will guarantee the proper spirit and redeem the hallowed season from an orgy of selfishness. That wise slogan, Do Your Christmas Shopping Early, should be matched by another, Get Your Christmas Spirit Early. Don't wait till the hectic hours of Christmas Eve to be jolly, thoughtful, neighborly, and friendly.

You probably will meet more people during the days between now and Christmas than at any similar period in the year. In stores, in restaurants, at church school, or at your own door. What an opportunity to buy back from the heedless markets of the world a small portion of the Christmas spirit! What an opportunity to display—no, not to display, for a virtue displayed ceases to be a virtue and becomes a vanity—to offer, let us say, this perfect, our only, compounded equally of kindness and thoughtfulness, which makes no embarrassment and gives no offense, but which is likely to be overlooked in Christmas shopping because it costs so little. Good cheer and good will—let them control your disposition, your likes and dislikes, as you meet other people during this holiday season.

The second thing to remember is just that word: Remember. It means to get and to hold others in mind. None of us is so poor but he can find some one whom he may cheer with the exquisite pleasure of utter surprise. Which is really beyond comparison. Children and grownups alike should each give at least one gift without the slightest prospect of ever receiving a present in return. Why, even looking for somebody like that is a part of the joy of Christmas.

Needless to say, Helen is an only child and has been spoiled and suffered with overindulgence. If a child is selfish, the very best way to cure the hateful trait is to pick out at Christmas time some specific case that you know needs a bit of Christmas cheer. Select some little boy or girl to whom Santa Claus would be unlikely to pay a visit and then let your little girl feel that it is entirely "up to her" to make this child happy on Christmas day.

Not much enthusiasm can be awakened in a child's heart when you merely say: "Give me all your old toys, Helen. I want to send them to the Salvation Army," or, "Here is a check I am sending in your name to the Associated Charities."

The child, if coerced into giving up some old but beloved toy, may even come to hate the word "charity," feeling that she is being deprived against her wishes of that which is her own. No good feelings can be aroused in a child by that method. The giving must be of her own free will and heartily enthusiastic and spontaneous.

The Christmas season offers more opportunity to teach lessons of unselfishness to a child than any other time of the year. The whole atmosphere is filled with the spirit of gifts and gift-making, and in the contagion of enthusiasm a child generally inclined to be selfish may with patience be taught to overcome this most disagreeable characteristic.

Of course, you cannot expect a child to be unselfish and generous if he has nothing to give—that is why an allowance for children is one of the greatest character-building powers one can possibly give a child. It teaches him to save and deny himself in order to be able to do for others.

Some Things I Heard at Christmas

By Blanche Gardner Spinney

Ten little boys and girls, between the ages of seven and twelve, resolved to give up their usual Christmas gifts this year in order to help others who were less fortunate. They had read in their local newspapers, the pathetic story of an aged grandmother of seventy-five years, who was trying to support four little grandchildren, left orphans by the death of both parents with "flu."

She had obtained employment and struggled bravely for over a year to keep them together in their neat, well kept home, when a serious illness made an operation necessary. It seemed as though the children must be taken from her and placed in an orphan's home. The unselfish act of these ten little boys and girls made such a tragedy unnecessary. They asked their parents exactly how much money they planned to spend at Christmas on their sleds and dolls and toys, and found the amount totaled fifty dollars.

So these children asked that a check for that amount be given them; instead, the parents readily agreed and the beautiful lessons of the "brotherhood of man" these little children demonstrated, "started the ball rolling" that will be far-reaching in its help to the poor grandmother.

To plan to entertain so many guests Christmas Eve or at dinner on Christmas day that we are tired to the point of bad temper is to spoil the beautiful spirit of the day entirely for our own.

To work feverishly until the night before Christmas embroidering "guest towels" and centerpieces, to shop madly until the last moment with belated Christmas lists as to devote our children of joy that are their real due at this holiday time.

For, after all, Christmas rightly belongs to the children, and to make the day for them by thinking more of what other people will think and expect of us is very poor policy.

I have a neighbor who invariably invites half a dozen forlorn and lonely ones to share the Christmas dinner with her family. A fine, generous spirit, but it reacts unfavorably on the children of the household, who have come to think of the Christmas dinner table as something to be got through with as quickly as possible. Betty, the fourteen-year-old daughter, excuses herself from the boring company of dear old Mr. Smith at her right and hurries away to the "movies" with a boy friend. Tom bolts his turkey and cranberries, glaring stolidly at the silly remarks of little Miss Jones that mother always insists on putting beside him, and is off to spend the rest of the day with some pals (where, his mother does not know).

Her mother says she is anxious to impress her children with the joys of sharing their home with others at Christmas, that she does not want them to grow up selfish, etc. But she is driving her own children out of the house and ruining the precious day for them, making it only a memory of boredom and restraint for them.

Children have the first right to peace and joy and happiness in their home at Christmas. Charities and social "pay-offs" should be entertained at some other time less sacred to the family circle.—Woman's World.

child to be unselfish and generous if he has nothing to give—that is why an allowance for children is one of the greatest character-building powers one can possibly give a child. It teaches him to save and deny himself in order to be able to do for others.

Be sure that you do not spoil the atmosphere of the true Christmas spirit for your children by any unnecessary remarks on the value of the gifts you receive or the value of those you send. Children are quick to absorb the spirit of their elders. Luther Burbank says: "All animal life is sensitive to environment, but of all living things, a child is most sensitive. A child literally absorbs environment. It is the most susceptible thing in the world to influence; the life of a child can be practically molded by the influence with which it comes in contact."

So it behooves us mothers to see that the child is given the true meaning and interpretation of Christmas.

How many of us mothers make the same mistake every year at the Christmas holiday season of working ourselves into a perfect frenzy of exhaustion and "nerves" until we bring no peace or joy or happiness to the dear ones in our own family circle?

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Special Recipes For Christmas

At Christmas time, we turn our thoughts to many holiday activities of which one of the most pleasant is always that of planning the Christmas dinner; and special effort is put forth to make everything fitting to this most important occasion.

One thing we shall be sure to serve is fruit cake. It is not always convenient to make it far in advance so that it will become moist and improve in flavor and texture. Here is a recipe for a fruit cake that is a bit different and does not need to be made far in advance.

White Fruit Cake

Three-fourth cup butter, 1 1/2 cup white sugar, 2 cups cake flour, 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, 1/2 teaspoon almond flavoring, 6 egg whites, 1/2 pound blanched almonds, shredded, 1/2 pound bleached seedless raisins, 1/4 pound shredded citron, 1/4 pound candied pineapple, finely chopped, 1 large freshly grated coconut.

Add one or two tablespoons coconut milk if needed. Mix like any butter cake. Bake one and one-half hours in pan lined with double thickness of well oiled paper in slow oven 350 to 360 degrees Fahrenheit.

Spiced nuts are a chance from the usual salted nuts and seem particularly appropriate for Christmas. You can use either almonds or walnuts. Ingredients: 1 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar, 2 tablespoons corn starch, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ginger, 1 egg white, 2 tablespoons cold water.

Sift dry ingredients. Beat together egg whites and water just enough to mix. Dip nuts in this and drain.

Roll in the special sugar, spread on a tin so they will not touch one another and bake in a moderate oven until crisp and a light brown.

Spiced raisins are also very unusual and delicious. Ingredients: One cup raisins, seeded or seedless; 2 cups sugar, 1 1/2 cup water, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg, 3-4 teaspoon cloves, 1/2 teaspoon ginger, powdered sugar.

Put the sugar, water and spices together in a saucepan, mix thoroughly. Place over flame and stir only until dissolved. Cook to a temperature of 238 degrees Fahrenheit or until the soft ball test in cold water is secured. Add raisins and continue cooking with low flame for five minutes, stirring as little as possible. (Care must be taken at this stage to avoid scorching). Remove saucepan from fire and drop raisins into powdered sugar. Roll each raisin separately and cool before serving.—Mabel C. Mack, home demonstration agent.

A CHRISTMAS POEM

In a manger Christ was born,
On a cold and frosty morn.
A pile of hay was his only bed,
And there he rested his baby head.
All the cattle standing by
Would have made our baby cry.
But there the Baby Savior lay,
Pillowed soft upon the hay.
As he lay upon his bed,
A heavenly light shone o'er
His head.
His mother, Mary, sitting by,
Sang to him a lullaby.
"From the East three Wise-
men came
Some from Asia, Egypt,
Spain."
Thus the Baby Savior lay,
Pillowed soft upon the hay.
His mother, Mary, sitting by,
Sang to him a lullaby.
—Helena Bloch, Buffalo, N. Y.

Getting Ready for Christmas

By Viretta Van Dorn

Jane and Jerry were twins. They loved Christmas more than any other time of the year. This year Uncle Jim was coming to spend the holidays with them and they were very much excited. Mother was busy in the kitchen making all sorts of good things to eat. They had been allowed to keep in, and they had seen a big Christmas pudding, and some pies with fancy tops; and they had smelled such good, spicy smells that they wished more than ever that Christmas day would hurry. When it came time to make the Christmas cookies, Mother told Jane that she might cut out some of them. She chose some animal cookie cutters, and she cut little rabbits, and tiny kittens first. Then Mother found some other fancy cutters, and she made some cookies that looked like stars, and others that looked like hearts and diamonds.

Jerry had helped Father get the boxes of Christmas-tree trimmings out of the attic, and he had helped him put an extra leaf in the dining room table.

Besides helping Mother and Father, Jane and Jerry were also busy with some Christmas plans of their own. They worked in their

"Every single present is ready. They are all surprises." "I like surprises," said Father. "and now come with me; for I like them so well that I have planned one for you, too."

"Oh, goody," cried Jerry. "I like surprises, too. What can this one be? Please tell us, Daddy! Won't you?"

"This is a surprise," said Father, "and of course, I mustn't tell what it is. If I did tell, then it wouldn't be a surprise at all. You must put on your coats and hats and jump into my car if you want to find out my secret."

The children were ready in a minute and off they went with Father in the car.

"I know what the surprise is," said Jerry. "We are going to visit Uncle Bob."

But away past Uncle Bob's house they went.

"Perhaps we are going to visit Mary," said Jane.

But away past Mary's house they went, too.

They went past all their friends' houses. Then they came to some stores.

"Oh, I know," said Jerry. "we are going to buy some Christmas presents."

Father did not say a word. He just drove past the stores. They suddenly he turned a corner and stopped his car. He called out, "Here is the surprise, children. Now pick out the nicest one you can find."

Jerry and Jane jumped out of the car and there in front of them they saw Christmas trees everywhere. They had never seen so many trees before. There were little ones, and big ones, and middle-sized ones. They were so surprised that they just stood and looked.

Then a man came up to them and said, "Would you like to buy one of my trees?" "Yes," said the children, and they followed the man around; and he showed them all the trees. Finally they chose a middle-sized tree with lovely tapering branches. Father gave them the money to pay the man; and then they started back.

When they reached home Father whispered to the children to be very quiet and they would surprise Mother. They tiptoed into the house with the tree, and Father helped the children set it up in a corner of the living room. Then they went to call Mother. When she opened the door into the living-room, she could scarcely believe her eyes. "What a good Christmas surprise," she said. "There must be fairies around here."

Most girls have a candied opinion of Christmas.



A Christmas Carol

Christ used to be like you and me,
When just a lad in Galilee.—
So when we pray, on Christmas Day,
He favors first the prayers we say;
Then waste no tear, but pray with cheer,
This gladdest day of all the year.
O, Brother Mine of birth Divine,
Upon this natal day of Thine
Bear with our stress of happiness
Nor count our reverence the less
Because with glee and jubilee
Our hearts go singing up to Thee.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

The Joy of This Day

OF ALL THE DAYS we celebrate, Christmas is the one that inspires the most universal joy. Bells ring when princes are born, and toll their mournful dirge when great men pass away. Nations have their festive days, their carnivals and holidays; but once in the year, and just once, comes that happy day of world-wide observance. You cannot cut Christmas out of the calendar—nor out of the hearts of men.

Santa on Duty

It is Christmas again, a time of surmises,
Ribbons united and thrill of surprises.
Christmas again, with its worry and cost
In follies we bought and in hours we lost.
Christmas again with its hoisterous childhood,
Latter and glitter and green from the wildwood.
Dulled heart remembers old tenderness then,
And who is not glad it is Christmas again?

By Julia M. Martin,
In Idaho Farmer