

Christmas on the Stage



UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

Seeing Santa Claus

By LAURA FROST ARMITAGE.

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EARL (to Ruth)—Oh, I just wish we could see him.
 Fred—See whom?
 Ruth—Why, Santa Claus.
 Earl and I have just been talking about him, and we were wishing we could get a peep at him once.
 Gladys—Oh, I wouldn't like to!
 Dorothy—Harry and I tried it last year. We came down and hid in the front hall, but papa found us and sent us to bed.
 Fred (after thinking awhile)—I've thought of something. Santa Claus wouldn't come in if he should spy us, but if he thought we were not real children he might. Couldn't we fool



SANTA WOULDN'T COME IN IF HE SHOULD SPY US.

him by making believe we were Mother Goose children right out of the book?

Dorothy—How could we do that?
 Fred—We could dress like them and then stand perfectly still as if we were made of wax or something, just the way you do in a tableau, you know. We might think it was some kind of a show of wax figures.

Earl—Oh, my! I couldn't keep as still as that.
 Harry—You could if you really wanted to see Santa Claus.

Earl—Oh, I will! I will! See me!
 (Poses.)
 Gladys—Will we have to stand so very long?

Fred—Oh, not very, very long! We must all be ready before 12 o'clock. We must dress like Mother Goose children, and I'll fix you in your places. I'll be Boy Blue. We can find some dress-up clothes in the attic.

Harry—I think I'll be Jack Horner. I can have a pie.
 Dorothy—I want to be Bopeep. A game with a book handle will do for a crook.

Gladys—May I be Miss Muffet?
 Earl—What can Ruth and I be?
 Fred—You might be Jack and Jill and carry a pail of water. An empty pail will do. Now let's be off and see what we can find. Then we'll go to bed, and I'll be awake, and after papa

and mamma go upstairs I'll call you and we'll come down very softly.
 (Exeunt.)

II.

(Children come tiptoeing in in costume, stockings in hand.)

Fred—Now, we'll hang our stockings first. (All hang them.) Then we'll get into place. Bopeep, you stand here. Hold your crook so. Miss Muffet, you must sit on this footstool, and you must be eating. Put your spoon to your lips, so. Jack Horner, get into that corner and hold up your thumb with the plum on it. Jack and Jill, stand over here and take the pail between you. I will stand here and hold my horn to my mouth, so. Now, we mustn't move our eyes. It's getting late. Now, all ready! (All pose.)
 Ruth (after awhile)—Oh, dear! This pail is so heavy even if it is empty.
 All—Sh!
 Gladys (after awhile)—How my arm aches!

All—Sh!
 (Earl yawns aloud.)
 All—Sh!
 Harry—My thumb is tired of standing up.

Dorothy—I'm—so—sleepy (yawning)
 All—Sh!
 (Earl Horner's hand drops, then his head. Bopeep drops crook and leans against wall. Jill lets go of pail and slides to floor. Jack soon does the same. Miss Muffet's head drops forward. Boy Blue's eyes close and horn falls. This rouses him for a moment, but his eyes soon close again, and he leans against the wall.)

Enter Santa Claus. (All fast asleep.)
 Santa Claus—Ah! Well, well, well! Some of the children of my old friend, Mother Goose. But what are they doing here? (Walks about and looks at them closely.) Ah! I know these children. They're not Mother Goose's family. Ah! I see what they are up to. They're waiting to see me, and they don't want me to know them. But they can't fool this old fellow. Just as if he didn't know every child in the world. I've found children waiting for me many a time, but they always fall asleep and miss me. I'll fill the stockings, and won't they be surprised when they wake up and find they've been fed me after all. (Fills stockings.)

Earl puts toy or candy into Miss Muffet's bowl and into Jack and Jill's pail. Now I must be off. But I believe I'll try that horn of Boy Blue's first. (Blows and runs off, dropping pail near door. Children rouse up a little at sound, then fall back into former position.)

III.

Morning.—Fred (rousing)—Oh, I say! Wake up! What are you all asleep for?
 Harry—Who's been asleep?
 Dorothy (rubbing eyes)—Not I.
 Gladys—I—was—almost—awake.
 Earl (yawning)—Did—he—come?
 Ruth (almost crying)—I was so sleepy. Did you all see him?
 Others—Oh, no, no!

Fred—Well, I'm afraid we were all asleep. But I heard him. He blew on a big horn.

Harry and Dorothy—I heard him.
 Gladys—And there's your horn, Fred, over by the door. He blew on that.
 Ruth—See what's in our pail! (Holding it up.)

Gladys—And in my bowl!
 Harry—And see the stockings!
 All—Oh, oh, oh! (All run to get the stockings.)

Dorothy—Oh, why couldn't we have kept awake?
 Fred—Well, we've missed him this time sure. But next year we'll try it again, and we'll all keep awake.

All—Yes, indeed, we will.

Why Saint Nicholas?

By ROBERT DONNELL.

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WHY IS Santa Claus sometimes called St. Nicholas? For the most excellent reason that Nicholas is the real name of the saint. Until comparatively recent years there was no Santa Claus at Christmas time. When the old saint comes down the chimney Dec. 24, Christmas eve, and deposits gifts for the children in the suspended stockings he is just nineteen days behind time, for his true and proper time is Dec. 5, that being the eve of St. Nicholas day. Just how Nicholas got to be the Christmas eve saint is not altogether clear, but those iconoclasts who dig into ancient matters are probing this secret. They have discovered, or claim to have discovered, that the Christmas eve Santa Claus really originated in America, being transported to England from New York.

In the saints' calendar Dec. 6 is St. Nicholas day. Nicholas was bishop of Myra, in Lycia. He is believed to have lived under the Emperors Diocletian and Constantine and is the patron saint of poor maidens, sailors, travelers, merchants and children. Rich maidens, of course, are also quite willing to acknowledge him when he comes along with diamond dog collars, necklaces and tiaras.

Before the great religious reformation the custom of giving presents on St. Nicholas eve was general throughout Christian Europe. When the worship of the saints was abolished the practice died out in England, where for about three centuries St. Nicholas failed to visit households on the evening of Dec. 5 to leave presents for good children. By the way, it should be pointed out that Nicholas was noted even in infancy as a particularly good and pious child. Therefore his visits are not made to bad children—only to those whose parents can vouch for their good behavior during the previous year.

In Austria, Holland and Poland St. Nicholas eve is still observed. Good children get presents, secretly left in their shoes placed upon the hearthstone for the purpose or in their stockings hung from the mantel. When New York was settled by Hollanders the devout Dutchmen brought over to America their religious customs, not forgetting that of St. Nicholas eve. In old New Amsterdam the saint made his visits the night of Dec. 5, St. Nicholas day being celebrated by the settlers as a holiday. In time the Dutch were supplanted by the English. New Amsterdam became New York, and the old St. Nicholas eve gift giving custom was reintroduced into England from New York. But in England the custom of giftmaking on Christmas eve had grown up. There was, however, no Santa Claus ceremony. Gifts were made outright and without secrecy.

When St. Nicholas sailed back to England there was consternation among fond papas and mummies in the little isle.

"What! Shall we have two days of gift giving and less than three weeks apart?" they cried.

Thrifty English parents, it is supposed, determined that one day of giving was enough, and so they simply transferred St. Nicholas to Christmas eve.

A Christmas Warning.

"In giving Christmas presents to children," said Mrs. Frederick Schoff, the president of the National Mothers' Congress, "our first aim should be to transport, to overjoy, to enrapture."

"I once knew a little girl who, on fire with excitement, rushed in from her bedroom to see her presents on Christmas morning and after one look burst into loud sobs of disappointment and disgust."

"It was some such experience, I have no doubt, that had befallen a little girl friend of mine."

"Are you going to give me anything for Christmas?" she said one day to her aunt.

"Yes, if you're good," the aunt replied.

"The little girl gazed at her aunt with wistful earnestness. Then she said: "Please, auntie, then, nothing useful."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

A Christmas Hope.

We do not pretend to be prophets, but we can all dare to hope. And this is what we hope: That some day the strong will help and not exploit the weak; that some day fraternity will be more than a rhetorical flourish; that some day love will beget justice rather than charity. And Christmas is the one day in the year that such a venturesome hope seems more than a will-o'-the-wisp.—World Today.

A Christmas Hymn.

No tramp of marching armies,
 No banners flaming far;
 A lamp within a stable,
 And in the sky a star.

Their hymns of peace and gladness
 To earth the angels brought.
 Their "Gloria In Excelsis"
 To earth the angels taught.

When in the lowly manger
 The holy mother maid
 In tender adoration
 Her babe of heaven laid.

Born lowly in the darkness
 And none so poor as he,
 The little children of the poor
 His very own shall be.

No rush of hostile armies then,
 But just the huddling sheep,
 The angels singing of the Christ
 And all the world asleep.

No flame of conquering banners,
 No legion sent afar;
 A lamp within a stable,
 And in the sky a star.

—Margaret E. Sangster in Collier's Weekly.

Odd Christmas Cakes

A GERMAN NOVELTY.

GERMANY for many years has been the land of Christmas novelties, and each year the maker's ingenious toy, candy and cake makers devise some oddity which proves irresistible in luring small or great sums from the pockets of Yuletide shoppers. One of the latest novelties is for quaint and humorous Christmas cakes, which are literally cartoons in sugar and dough. The cakes are decorated with all sorts of funny figures made of colored sugar and in many instances are not the crude



GERMAN CHRISTMAS CAKE—A SOLDIER SALUTING.

products one would expect under the circumstances. The Bavarian peasant, for example, is a fair type of the living original as he is pictured in the German comic weeklies. A Munich waitress carrying a well grouped bunch of foam capped steins of the beverage for which Munich is celebrated at home and abroad, even if she does suggest Salome a trifle, is decidedly lifelike, while the saluting soldier by his very attitude suggests that foam capped steins and sentry duty do not assuilate very well.

The German authorities have done much to encourage the toy-making industry, particularly by collecting toys from all the world that the toy-makers might acquaint themselves with the wants and peculiarities of foreign markets. The wooden animals of the past have been eclipsed by the mechanical toys. A submarine boat which sinks into the water and rises again, all with one charge of soda

powder; a diver which goes to the bottom and bobs up serenely when air is blown into him through a little tube; a Santos-Dumont airship which



GERMAN CHRISTMAS CAKE—A MUNICH WAITRESS.

really flies, a real Gatling gun with stairs for the soldiers to go up, a railroad with full working equipment—



GERMAN CHRISTMAS CAKE—A BAVARIAN PEASANT.

these are among the mechanical toys of Sonnberg.

In short, Santa Claus in these times can find the means of gratifying the wishes of his most fastidious petitioner.

HENRY SNYDER.

Christmas Caution.
 "Is it customary to hang up one's stockings or de litch pair on Christmas eve?" said Mr. Erasmus Pinkley.

"Only jes' one," answered Miss Miami Brown. "If you hangs on to de mate you lan' takin' so many chances on somebody he'pin' hisse' to foot-wear 'stid o' leavin' presents."—Washington Star.

New Clubbing Proposition

WE have arranged to offer in connection with this paper, the new monthly farm magazine just started at Lincoln, Neb., by Prof. H. W. Campbell and devoted to the subject of how to farm in the dry country and how to get best results from soil tillage under normal conditions. This paper is "Campbell's Scientific Farmer" and we offer it clubbed with the Examiner both for \$2.50 per year cash. Prof. Campbell's new paper is a monthly, chock full of good things, the only paper of its kind in the world, and it embodies the results of the editor's many years of painstaking investigation of the soil tillage proposition.

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