

—THE NEWS-RECORD—
The paper that tells what the people in the country as well as those in town are doing.

THE NEWS-RECORD

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IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS?

In 1897 the New York Sun received an inquiry from a little girl regarding the existence of Santa Claus. Her letter was referred to Francis P. Church, a member of the editorial staff of the Sun and the masterpiece which we are reproducing below was the result. On each Christmas since it first appeared, it has found its way back into print. If you have read it previously, still another reading will be worth your while, and if perchance it has escaped your notice until now, we commend it to you as a gem exemplifying the true "spirit of Christmas." Here it is:

"We take pleasure in answering at once, and thus prominently, the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratitude that its author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

Dear Editor—I am eight years old; some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says: "If you see it in The Sun it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

VIRGINIA O'HANLON.

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

"Not believe in Santa Claus? You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You may tear asunder the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man nor even the united strength of the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus? Thank God! He lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

This exposition testifying to the existence of Santa Claus is well-nigh flawless unless you are a forgotten child on Christmas morning or unless you happen to be included among the unfortunates who are compelled to spend the "glad season" behind prison bars or locked doors, away from the laughter and happy shouts of children who were not pained by. But in either of these events, you are due forgiveness if you pause to inquire, "Is there a Santa Claus?"

His Hearty Endorsement:

By Albert T. Reid



OF GOOD VISIBILITY

"Officer," said a 300-pound lady, "could you see me across the street?"
"Madam, I could see you three blocks away."—Ex.

CHEER UP!

There ain't no use of feeling blue or moaning with regret. If "Hoover times" are sent to you, why, "Hoover times" you'll get. Don't howl that Hoover is to blame, for that is just a myth; times would be rocky just the same if we'd elected Smith. You needn't whine and fume and fuss that you are out of luck, nor tear around and rave and cuss and try to pass the buck. You won't find many who will care what brand of luck you moan, for most of us are well aware of troubles of our own. Just tighten up your belt a bit and work a little more, and take a shade less time to sit or lie abed and snore. Mayhap the Master of our lot sees fit for you to stew; and if you like His ways or not, there's nothing you can do. It's very likely that He can see that the times we serve are still a whole sight better than the times that we deserve. So get down on your knees each day and, kneeling there, rehearse the best of thanks that you can say that times aren't any worse.
—GUY SWARINGEN.

HELLO ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

You can telephone that "sweetie" you met in Paris, London, or Berlin last summer now, but your voice is carried over the water by radio. However, it won't be long before you can actually telephone her by wire. Plans are rapidly going forward for the actual laying of the world's first transatlantic telephone cable. The landward end of the circuit on this side of the great pond is now being constructed. Part of the wire or cable has been placed from the Maine-New Brunswick border to the jumping off place near Trinity bay, Newfoundland. From there a new cable 1,800 miles long, which will be laid in 1932, will span the ocean bottom to Europe, and incidentally constitute the longest underwater telephone cable in the world. The reason we haven't had a telephone line to Europe heretofore is because we haven't had a cable capable of carrying the delicate voice impulses over such a great distance without loading coils or repeater at regular intervals to "step up" the fading currents. The Bell Laboratories have solved the problem by developing a new cable in which preminvar, a highly efficient magnetic alloy of iron, is wrapped like tape around the single copper conductor, and acts as a continuous "loading" agent throughout the length of the circuit.
—The Pathfinder.

Mayer—"Had a busy day, dear—opened two clubs, one memorial hall, and a new road."
His wife—"Well, I hope you are not too tired of opening things, because I've got a tin of sardines for you."—Exchange.

"What was the name of the last station where we stopped, mother?"
"I don't know. Don't bother me, I'm reading a story."
"Well, it's too bad you don't know the name, because little brother got off there."

CHARLIE SAWYER HURT

INJURIES NOT SERIOUS, BUT HAD NARROW ESCAPE

Charlie, the ten-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Claude Sawyer, was struck by a car on the streets of Marshall Tuesday afternoon, and suffered painful cuts and bruises about the head and forehead. In attempting to cross the street, where two cars were meeting, he was knocked down. He was treated by Dr. Roberts.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM AT LAUREL BRANCH

The B. Y. P. U. of the Laurel Branch church will present a Christmas program at that church Christmas night at 7:30. Quite a nice entertainment is looked forward to by the people in that community.

MEADOW FORK MAN SHOT BY HOT SPRINGS MERCHANT

ONE IN JAIL; OTHER IN HOSPITAL

W. C. Fowler of Hot Springs was lodged in the Madison County jail Monday night charged with the shooting of Bruce Holt, of the Meadow Fork section. The shooting is reported to have occurred at the home of a Mr. Russell on Meadow Fork, where a party was being held. Holt is said to have been shot through the stomach or bowels and was taken to a hospital in Asheville. Fowler, a merchant at Hot Springs, had some wounds about the head and is being treated by Dr. Roberts.

COMMUNITY CHEST LIBERAL

NEEDY FAMILIES SUPPLIED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER

The church committees who were to collect articles for some needy families about Marshall, were quite successful. A sufficient quantity of provisions, clothing, toys, for all the needy families, given the committee, were distributed from the office of the Shelton-Tweed Company, and money was given the committee to provide wool and coal.

3 ESCAPED PRISONERS CAUGHT

Lloyd Cutshall, Tony Claxton, and Joe Case, three of the six prisoners who escaped from the Marshall jail recently, have been recaptured and returned to jail.

THANKING THE JURY

In a recent big murder trial in Washington the accused man upon being pronounced "not guilty" by the jury went and shook hands with each juror and expressed his thanks for their verdict. That appears to be a regular procedure in our court in any big case, whether of murder or something less serious.

If a jury is to be thanked for bringing in a verdict of "not guilty" it naturally follows that it is to be condemned or criticized for bringing in a verdict of "guilty."

It is all wrong. The jury does not serve the accused. It serves the state. Its business is to find out the truth, without consideration of personalities before or after the verdict. Presumably if a man is found "not guilty" he owes that to the fact that he did not commit the crime with which he was charged—not to the 12 men who are paid by the state to sift the evidence. It would be just as logical to thank the Weather Bureau for rain, or a clear day, or to thank the judges of a horse race for the winner. Thanking implies favors, obligations, gratitude, and it is highly improper for a liberated man to owe any of these to a jury.—Pathfinder.

THE TERROR IN THE FOG

No news this year has been much more horrible than that from the Meuse valley, where more than 60 people have died mysteriously in a deadly "fog," the victims, apparently, of some sort of pestilence akin to the dreaded "black death" of the middle ages.

The stories describing the case have a gruesome fascination. One walks along the street and finds heavy, clammy fog lying in queer, streaky layers. One gets through it, returns home, and suddenly falls violently ill. Death, in many cases, comes a short time later. And no one seems able to say just what is the trouble.

Naturally, the trouble was first blamed on poison gas. The district where the tragedies occurred was the scene of bloody fighting in the World war, and it was thought that some dump of poison gas containers might be buried nearby, letting its fumes seep to the surface now, years after the armistice, to strike down innocent and unsuspecting people in peace time.

But investigation seems to have disproved this theory; and the alternative—a strange pestilence, striking in the fog and baffling physicians—is evidently even more terrifying. The villagers along the Meuse are panic-stricken, and it is small wonder. The whole thing has a sort of other-world taint; an atmosphere like that in some of Arthur Machen's stories, alarming because of its mystery.

It is hard to realize that all of this is happening in the twentieth century. It all reads like a page out of some medieval manuscript; the deadly fog, the terror that stalks the street, the people refusing to go out of their houses on any pretext, leaving their domestic animals untended and dying in pasture and stable—could not that be taken bodily from some tale of the plague in the middle ages?

The world, after all, is not quite such a safe and familiar place as we usually imagine. It has terror and mystery in it, now as of old; and now and then some strange, inexplicable phenomenon like this arises to strike a chill into our hearts and remind us that there are still things in it that are beyond our understanding.
Hendersonville Times-News.

Healthiest Boy and Girl



Marion E. Snydergaard, 15, of Grundy County, Iowa, and William Ross Bodenbamer, 20, of Johnson City, Mo., winners of the 4-H Clubs annual prize for the healthiest farm boy and healthiest farm girl.