



Dreaming of Santa

AUNT LIZZIE ANN'S CHRISTMAS LETTER

NOW, if Aunt Lizzie Ann had only written for Christmas, the family agreed as they sat around the big fire that blazed upon the open hearth, everything would have been just perfect. As it was, things were awfully nice and everyone was having such a good time, but Aunt Lizzie Ann's Christmas letter had failed to come—the first miss since they all remembered—and its absence cast a little cloud over them, try as they would to hide it.

Aunt Lizzie Ann had always written the dearest Christmas letter—gifts she had none to send since Uncle Ed died several years ago—but always there had been that wonderful letter, that breathed so deep the very spirit of Christmas that it had almost become a part of the very time itself for the Dermott family. And although none of the family had yet framed the thought that Aunt Lizzie Ann must be ill, or something dreadful must have happened, it lay heavy upon them all. So when George announced that he was going down to the telegraph office to wire they all agreed that it was the best thing to do.

A soft, powdery snow was falling as he opened the door to step without. He had been gone only a short time when a shout from him brought them all to the doorway. And there, with the snowflakes falling around her, was the dearest little old lady, laden with bundles, which George tried in vain to help her with.

"It's Aunt Lizzie Ann!" they all cried in unison. And sure enough it was Aunt Lizzie Ann, coming this year herself instead of sending her usual letter, and she had the dearest and loveliest gifts for them all.

And when the excitement of her coming had died down and they all sat around the blazing logs again, Aunt Lizzie Ann explained how she had been able to come. Uncle Ed had taken out an endowment policy for her several years ago; it had now matured and she was free to do the things she had wanted to for so long. "You have been giving to me for so many years," she said, "it makes me feel real good to be able to make some return at last."

But the family assured her in all sincerity that it was she who had given the most to them always—for her wonderful Christmas letter had helped them more than they could ever tell her.—Katherine Edelman.
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Test

"He has proposed, but does he really love me?"
"Wait and see what he sends you for Christmas, girle. Then give him your answer."

PLAYING SAFE IN CHRISTMAS GIVING

BANKER CHISHOLM refused accommodation to persons who seemed the most successful merchants in town, and to some of the wealthiest citizens. An account over-checked by even a dollar received quick notice. It was as if Banker Chisholm had a finger on the pulse of the town, and whenever a pulse faltered he withdrew. He was not running a hospital.

So he became known as "Stony Face," "Frost," "Bloodless," and the like. Even the many solicitors of charity went to him without expectation.

Each Christmas mysterious turkeys were left at doors whose owners were not expecting to have any. Loads of wood and tons of coal appeared in the same way. Banker Chisholm could have told something about them.

Only one person in town really understood, and that was Andy Searles, an old seatmate at school. Andy was a failure, and indifferent about it, but he was a close-mouthed participant in his friend's secrets.

One day the banker called him into his back room.

"Here is a thousand dollars, Andy," he began, nodding at a roll on the table. "I want you to slip it into your pocket and distribute it where you feel it will make the most Christmas."

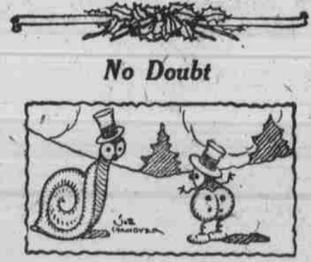
"In your name this time, Bill. I don't like what they call you."

Banker Chisholm reached for the money.

"Then I won't give anything," he said. "You remember how my predecessor, Mr. Wade, almost ruined himself and the bank by his reckless generosity and accommodation to unsafe borrowers. If I became known as an easy giver, I would be attacked by a horde of friends, and—I'm afraid I'm too soft-hearted to play safe. The only way is to keep up my reputation of 'Stony Face.' It is my salvation. I'm sorry you—"

"Oh, all right," interrupted Andy gruffly. "Give me the money. I'll distribute it where I see need, and want of a Merry Christmas."—Frank Herbert Sweet.
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No Doubt



Bug—What kind of a Christmas do you expect to have, Mr. Snail?
Snail—Very slow!

Carol of the Angels

By Rev. W. J. Rutledge,
In Montreal Family Herald

"WHILE shepherds watched their flocks by night,
The angel basted in his flight
From Heaven's omniscient throne,
With tidings of transcendent grace
For men of every time and place,
Best tidings ever known!

"Fear not; to you is born this day
In David's town, as Scriptures say,
A Saviour, Christ the Lord;
In stable where the kine repose,
The Babe ye'll find in swaddling clothes,"
The wondering shepherds heard.

Then suddenly a multitude
Of heaven's host, which understood
The motions of God's love,
Caroled His praise in song sublime
Whose cadence swells with passing time
All other songs above:

"Glory to God in highest place,"
Before whom angels veil their face
In deep humility;
"And peace on earth to men good-willed!"—
Prophetic praise that shepherds filled
With Faith's tranquillity!

O angels! sing again to men
At common tasks, your glad refrain,
Till glory shines around!
We would, amid life's troubles, hear
Of Him whose advent quiet fear
And maketh joy abound!

Not now of manger-cradle He,
But of the throne of sovereignty,
Earth's great redemptive King!—
Come Thou, O Christ!—create good will
In men and nations, and fulfill
The Hope of Peace we sing!

THE ROAD TO CHRISTMAS

By MARGARET E. SANGSTER
in Forum Magazine

DEAR, tell me where the road to Christmas lies.
And we will take that pathway, hand in hand;
And, where the flaming gold of sunset dies,
We two will find, again, our promised land—
The world will seem a silver drift of snow,
And we, upon the horizon's far rim,
Will see red holly bushes, row on row,
And proud young hemlocks—green limb touching limb,
And, dearest, while the whole earth seems to sleep,
A star will rise triumphant as a flame—
And, in a silence that is warmly deep,
Your voice will falter as it speaks my name,
And where the mistletoe is still and white
Your lips will turn the darkness into light.

CHRISTMAS GIVING AND ITS MEANING

"GIVE me six," the woman said as she crowded her way rudely up to the handkerchief counter. "One has to buy something, I suppose, and I guess handkerchiefs take the least thought and consideration."

"Any particular pattern?" the clerk inquired.

"No, just so they cost no more than fifty cents each. What an awful bore Christmas is, and what a burden it throws on us. I wonder sometimes what it's all for."

"It's a very sweet, happy time to me," the girl answered.

There is too much that is conventional and artificial, perhaps, in our Christmas giving. We burden ourselves with obligations which we should never assume. We give too often because we feel that we should do so, because we wonder what people will say if we do not, because we hope to receive something in return. We keep up the practice because we have not the courage or the diplomacy to break it, and we put little thought or personality into it.

"Please do not send me anything at Christmas time," a friend wrote me, "for by so doing you would embarrass me and put me under obligations which I can ill afford to meet." It was a sensible letter which few would have had the courage to write.

It is not what we give that really counts, but the spirit in which the giving is done. The friendly, personal letter, the trifle which we have ourselves made, even the card which we pick up at the book store, often brings more joy than the costliest present chosen without love or thought. Christmas is a time of kindly thoughts, of forgiveness, of charity, and of good will to all men. There is no other day on the calendar on which it would be so dreary to be away from home as Christmas day. The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of self-sacrifice and of love.

The Wise Men bringing gifts to the Christ child came a long way over a rough and weary road full of dangers and full of discomforts; but the gifts they brought were gifts of sacrifice and unselfishness and of love, and the impulse to bring them came from the heart. They are the wise men today who can give thankfully, gratefully, lovingly, with joy in their hearts and without thought of what they are to receive.—Thomas A. Clark, Dean of Men, University of Illinois.
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Maple Popcorn Balls

Pop three quarts of corn and discard hard kernels. Melt one tablespoonful of butter in a saucepan, add one cupful of maple sirup and one-half cupful of sugar. Bring to boiling point and let boil until mixture will become brittle when tried in cold water. Pour mixture gradually, stirring all the while, over corn which has been sprinkled with salt. Shape into balls, using very little pressure.

THE "SANTA SACK" GAME FOR KIDDIES

SANTA CLAUS is a real problem to some mothers. Shall their children be told the truth about Santa Claus, or shall they think of him as sliding down the chimney with reindeer and sleigh? This idea may help some mother who is puzzled over this question:

Before our little folks were old enough to understand about the existence of Santa Claus, whenever we saw a picture of the jolly old man, we called him Sunny, or Smiling Santa, because he looked happy. And he looked happy because he was good and kind to everyone. So when the children quarreled or pouted we would try to have them smile and look jolly, like Santa, whose picture we had among others we referred to, as moral or myth pictures.

As the children grew to understand more fully the meaning of the Christmas game, "Santa sack," which meant that if they allowed each other or their playmates to play with their toys or gave them of their apples or cookies, they were playing Santa Claus, because Santa Claus was unselfish and divided whatever he had from his sack.

Sometimes when their playmates came, we would say, "You'll want to play 'Santa Sack,' and away they would skip to distribute their toys like Santa. They delighted to play and be called Santa when they ran errands, smiled or did something kind.

Santa was a make-believe creature, as characters in poems which we read to them, such as "The Raggedy Man," "Children's Hour," "Jack Sprat," "Hiawatha." Anyone who gave a gift at any time of year was a Santa. And whenever Santa Claus distributed gifts at school or at any public place, they were delighted that someone was playing Santa as they played "bear," "doctor" or "teacher" in the home with their little friends. For anyone who is unselfish, kind and cheerful is to them a Santa Claus to someone else.

As they grew older the Santa sack was woven into a lesson story with the thought that each of us has something in smiles, kind words and deeds to give to another all the time. For the real Santa gave much—all he had—from his sack of treasures in Bethlehem long ago! So Santa Claus means unselfishness, cheerfulness, kindness—many things that are worth while to our children.—Gertrude Walton.
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At Christmas Time

Mr. Smiles—But why do you expect a Christmas box from me? Surely I have had no dealings with you?
Boy—Yes, sir—please, sir, you tripped over my 'oop last week.

Origin of Carols

Few, if any, Christmas carols were ever sung in Scotland, while from earliest times the custom has been universally prevalent in England, France, Italy and other countries of the European continent.

Ford

Christmas Suggests This Judicious Purchase

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