Deseret Evening News.

DESERET EVENING NEWS: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1898.

The Myth of Santa Claus.

The Beautiful Allegory Has Very Few Opponents in Utah's Chief City.

With a Voice that Is Almost Unanimous Salt Lake's Prominent Citizens Declare That the Pretty Fable Should Not be Discarded—No Necessity to Sacrifice Benevolent Old Santa Claus to Conform to Cold, Hard, Unfeeling Facts—Like the Myth of William Tell, Robinson Crusoe, Mother Goose, Alice in Wonderland, Æsop's Fables, Anderson's Fairy Tales, and Other Interesting Fiction, It Should Live Forever.

America cannot lay exclusive claim to the patron saint of good little boys and girls at Christmas time. Possibly, however, at the same time the domains of Dark Rose Turnabout as large a number of juvenile devotees to the shrine of the good old gentleman, who makes himself conspicuous about the family chimney on Christmas eve, as any country on the face of the globe.

Santa Claus undoubtedly originated in the shores of primitive America with the sturdy old phlegmatic Dutch patron where he bore the appellation of Santa Claus, being simply the abbreviation of Nicholas, a patron saint of unpassthinable Hollandic ancestry.

Santa Claus was so intimated with the morning American December almanac and the general good behavior of the average toddling son of Uncle Sam's family that every since that early date he has never failed to visit their dreams in the wee small hours of the morning of the twenty-fifth of the year with in the year. Despite the discomforts incepurable from late years of crawling down the modern stove pipe he never fails to make his appearance as expected for the usual quota of beautiful playthings for the good little boys' and girls' stockings, and a lump of coal for those naughty juveniles who thereby their kind and good parents. Even in the more modern times he is furnished with steam but he is known to creep through the keyhole without a word of complaint on the part of that kind old gentleman.

Every child from Maine to California as soon as he can lisp is well posted on the charming virtues of this urbane old gentleman with the retiring disposition.

No sooner upon the horizon of the children's elysium, a small cloud no bigger than a man's hand, but a cloud sufficient that the mission to spread and illumine the curiosity of their children, and to keep the good old Santa Claus in the background of their thoughts. An, although is spreading with the avowed intention of proving that this kind old man, to whom we need to bridle anything, besides of our senses, every thinking, it is a delusion and a snare, is true that the juvenile mind to this enlightened nineteenth century should be allowed to grow up in ignorance of the unspeakable school marms ever with thickness that give all those centuries old year old Santa Claus is a delusion and a snare, a mythical personage called up by doting parents to source the superabundance of diurnal spirits on the part of their offspring into the ways of truth, virtue and general good behavior and that Santa Claus is no more or less than a myth, and, that, when with stockinged feet to the beds of their darlings, at unseemly hours of the night, and proceed to stuff their dear little cranium with toys, nuts and candy galore.

Some wrinkled preachers in the East have commenced to wage more or less vigorous war on the Santa Claus myth. Would the "News" not only been able to discover the avowed opponents to the mythical in Salt Lake. They are George Reynolds and Julius F. Taylor, of the Broadway. "News" reporter also interviewed older and wiser men than themselves and who have had years of experience in permitting the Yuletide patron to bless their little ones with the dreams of their sweet little hearts, Christmas morning. With the end in view of obtaining the comments of representative men and women of Utah the following words of sense and comfort have been gleaned from the pages of the paper, memoirs and some of the old bachelors of the city:

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

"It is a beautiful subject to say with crowing that date back to the primeval days. The custom and observation of the Santa Claus myth brings joy to the hearts of millions of little children, and brightens their homes with love and gladness.

"I have not given the subject much thought, but I think I can say that I am with the majority, and think that the Santa Claus institution is an innocent deception, upon the happy little boys and girls, that is conducive to general happiness, never to be eradicated from the minds of the recipients, even when the storms and rebuffs that they may encounter on the stormy seas of maturity. A deception, perchance, that has the least of man and woman with tender memories of bygone days and happy and doting parents."

RIGHT REV. LAWRENCE T. SCANLAN.

"All legends have their foundation on facts. They may be distorted as time runs its course. Truth, in its purity, is rarely preserved. 'To err is human.' A superstition is the outgrowth of some religious truth, and is as great proof of the original truth, as a counterfeit note is of the genuine. The effect on youthful minds will be for good in proportion as the original truth is adhered to, and for evil if only the semblance of truth, or worse, error is implanted in the soul.

"Santa Claus, the patron and benefactor of children, is no myth. He has his place in history. It is the Dutch name for Saint Nicholas, who was born in Tyrus, and was made Bishop of Myra, a large province of Asia where Saint Paul planted the faith. He has been always honored by the Greek and Latin churches. His charity in relieving the poor, and comforting the distressed has been always proverbial. It is authentically stated that his youth was remarkable for its simplicity and innocence, qualities which will always endear children to the human heart. After his death, in 342, Christian parents placed his name as a model and guide for their children so that they might imitate his life of virtue. The plastic mind of youth so impressionable needs a guide, and if the object chosen placed before them be the right person, they will learn to be modeled after his spirit, and their future life will be molded by his example. The time honored custom of invoking the name of Santa Claus may lead to some extravagance, but the joyful anticipation of the child, and his happiness when receiving the old stocking are sufficient compensation, and what greater bonus could be instilled into the minds of children, and those of mature years who are spoiled, than to follow in the footsteps of the original Santa Claus by sharing their gifts with those who are unable to have any of their own? Let the children invoke Santa Claus, let parents follow his example, then Christmas will be what it always has been, a day of joyous greetings."

GOVERNOR HEBER M. WELLS.

"Why, I think the myth of Santa Claus the most delightful delusion known to juvenile humanity. Even most well-to-do people who have told our kid children of a never growth, find the fervent enjoyment in it. The holiday season would be the poorer by the loss of the myth. The world has enough much romance in it anyway and that which is not real, is to be cherished. There are more children, some once the struggles, adversities and sorrows incident to the human condition, who fain would have it that there is a Santa Claus, and that Santa Claus stands on every hearth and silently puts their gifts in their stockings. Even the struggles of life, they have had experience in life and some than one have learned from bitter experience, that there is reward for good and punishment for wrong doing. For rigid honest in power disposition.

"The fortitude of the age is instilled into much towards realism. As I have already said the cold, hard facts of life come quickly enough. Therefore let us continue to strew the paths of the children with flowers, romance and poetic fancies, and let us continue to have Santa Claus be the same mysterious, merry moments that makes him the most wonderful Christmas visitor in the home of Christendom. Let us continue to have our best jolliest mythical personage known to history. May he live forever."

EX-CONGRESSMAN ALLEN.

"I am opposed to the materialistic idea of the bottom of the opposition to the Santa Claus myth. Good men and women have been always in favor of it. I believe that all those pretty and quaint conceits which belong to childhood are worth cultivated within reasonable limits, and the myth under conditions this to my mind does not cannot those limits.

SON. CHARLES W. PENROSE.

"Christmas without Santa Claus would be like a story without romance, like pudding without plums, like a sermon without poetry, like ritualism without spirituality, like a flower without perfume. What nonsense it that Santa Claus is a myth? He represents the spirit of generosity, charity and good cheer. In the mystery that surrounds his personality and visitations there is a charm to child hood that is never replaced when the sober facts dispel the innocent illusion. The matured juvenile who exclaims, 'Ah! Santa Claus, ah! I know who he is! It's Pa!' does not feel half the joy experienced by the infantile soul whose pleasure is mingled with wonder and awe, when his stocking is filled by the jolly genius of Christmas-tide.

"Santa Claus is something more than a gift-bringer. He is the great patron of good boys and girls, and stands as the rewarder of merit and the encouraged of reformation. His influence is in the right direction. He promotes liberality and discourages stinginess. He brings sunshine and smiles in the midst of the sorrow and sadness. The anticipation of his advent is like a pleasant dream, and the tokens of his presence cause the air to rise with shouts of merriment and paroxysms of delight. Why should his jovial visage be banished from the picture gallery of the infant mind? What harm is there in that kind of deception of such a word may be used in this connection, which results so well, which makes so many, which rejoices a great truth, and which is really like a glimmer of light before the brass of day?

"They who would condemn every harmless fiction because it is not the exact truth, naked and unadorned, to be consistent, would have to disclose to the inquiring mind of childhood the secret of a baby's cradle, unshouldye with anything in the shape of evasion or excuse. No half truths, no nursery stories, no folk-lore, no poetic legends, no parables would be permissable; nothing but the cold, stern, hard facts of prosaic existence would enter into our literature. The world would be robbed of numerous innocent pleasures, and old heads would be put upon young shoulders. Even Deity, which is the center embodiment and expression of eternal truth, does not deal with poor, imperfect humanity in such a fashion. Nations are led by degrees upward to the heaven of unclouded truth. It is not unfolded to them in their undeveloped state. God so deals also with individuals. He permits much that some of His particular children would disapprove. There are many things in nature which are not what they seem, realities are often contrary to appearance. The mind unfolds like a flower.

"That which is eaten in the blossom is often unfit for the bud. When the myths that delighted childhood are explained or dispelled by the intelligence revealed to the adult, each in the season which is real is not logically, or naturally, destroyed or weakened because of the glamour and pleasure that surrounded the normal which been which, it is no element of evil. Thus let Santa Claus keep his place, and let the little ones rejoice at his expected coming in his reindeer chariot to the jingling of merry bells, white-headed, fur-clothed Eolus with gifts and beaming with smiles to shed merriment and joy around the Christmas hearth, and make glad the hearts of the old in witnessing the delight and hearing the laughter and happy shouts of new-born joy. Santa Claus will do no harm, his myth, unknown and somewhere are dead.

JUDGE O. W. POWERS.

"Childhood is fairyland; its glamor fade away from eyes grown old, but its vision linger as the exclusive of all memories. Childhood is the paradise of the world. It is the morning of life, ushered in sipping the dewdrops from the lapsing with which the flowers are gemmed, and the sunbeams which fill the earth with so many smiles, so many happy hearts and so many beings. Childhood is the

"Human life is full of myth and mystery and half its charm comes from what fade. I believe Christmas myth points to the inner mind the thought of Christmas which believes expressed with the end "I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Of all the days in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem to come nearest to the spirit of the Christ, it is Christmas. Those who are hearts fresh and to think of good-hearted deeds as if they were really fellow-pilgrims in the same world and another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

PROF WILLARD DONE.

"I have always been an ardent advocate of the Santa Claus myth. I think it very much doubtful if it is shocking, or even disturbing. Because, in the first place, I do not see that it is at all harmful. The myth is one of the very dearest memories of childhood. As in the mystery of the coming of Santa Claus to each individual child, there is the element of myth and fable. The period has come in which each child must find out for himself, and has been apparently a necessary part of his development. The history of the race is repeated in the history of each child. It is not in accordance with the law of development to force the knowledge of fact upon him through a Sunstroke. Mental as well as physical food must be adapted to the child's age. Too much intellectual food or the child is that which is good, is the inoculation. The story of the race is repeated, make this appeal. Hence the child's insatiable appetite for stories, Fairy or Fables, are all, as I believe, very wise and wisdom. The Santa Claus myth is one of cases.

"The story which embodies a national or a universal hope, and holds him up for admiration and love, is most capable of being a myth. I am not capable of saying that to the child George Washington is as much of a hero that Jack the giant-killer, or Santa Claus. Are more real than the mythical Chickadees? But for 100 good humor and the embodiment of all that is loving and generous, old St. Nicholas stands the greatest with the child's heroes. He is always serving, and is made happy and sacrificing, he was ever happy and sacrificing himself for others. He is the prince of good cheer, the giver of good gifts, the friend of the children. They greet him with delight at the sight of his person, and a "real live" Santa Claus, in Christmas baggy, is about the 9-years-wonder. Who would care to deprive the little ones of the joy and the unselfish devotion to others, which the myth of Santa Claus engenders?

"Our aspiration daily in childhood is to make it happy. The day of all days when this should be done, is Christmas. And to a little child what would Christmas be without Santa Claus? The poet of Hamlet with the tiny-eyed enlisted, as opera without music, spring without flowers. Whenever his name the wild and wondering delight with which the visits of Santa Claus are anticipated and his gifts regarded, would indeed show strange taste in wishing him abolished.

"Yet there are some Gradgrinds among us, who are continually demanding facts, who would turn all our Cupids into Cocoles, and eliminate flowers from carpet patterns, because "a fact," forsooth, they think it is. Let them continue to oppose Santa Claus, their opposition is one of the strongest arguments in his behalf. Besides, I believe that many parents who endeavor their children regarding Santa Claus, do so through fear. They are afraid that the old patron saint will get credit for gifts which their themselves have bought, such a motive is unworthy of consideration.

"Then, as Santa Claus grows over the children's minds, and with them with added wisdom, the older children learn to distinguish the spiritual from the material, and to see in all of these gifts, but tokens of love, they will be fully fact of "good Santa Nick" as welcome and dearest as heretofore to the younger members of the family. 'Let us keep Santa Claus, we need him'."

GEORGE HODGADS.

"Many a parent, and many of our aspirations and hopes, and many a day and night spent in their wife and children, and a successful way of amusing and interesting children, and the wishes are created to, and for more than a thousand years, coming therefrom. Children seem to be the most difficult portion of the community to follow, satisfy their craving wants. Though I do not see so much in the fact that in light with so much anticipation on the part of the child as Christmas, which comes but early in the year, and so to sleep, so as not to disturb him on his rounds, calling at every house and filling all their stockings with goodies. Millions of young hearts on this continent also will hail with joy and delight and delight to their beds next Saturday night. The Christmas tree, also, which forms another part of Santa Claus's paraphernalia, is no less attractive, amusing and gratifies the best of juvenile propensities, and is good.

"Now, whether the Santa Claus myth, be of Pagan invention or not, is a matter of very little consequence. Perhaps, the most successful methods of ministering solid joy and happiness to a greater amount of human beings than anything ever invented before. It also affords a double gratification, which the parents experience in observing the various good stockings and depositing what is most suitable for each according to age, and then to go them up, and to retire to their beds, while all are sound asleep. Long before daylight their mirry voices are heard, each stocking is ransacked, and their jubilant exploits, wake up their parents, who share in the general jubilee. Now, as to the good or ill effects produced on the mind of the children by the annual observance of this mythical treat, I will say that my observation tells to detect any wrong or improper impressions that children have, in consequence, among young from childhood. Neither have I heard from any quarter, from either parents or those who have to do with children, any complaint of evil resulting from it. We will now leave Santa Claus and consider this subject from another standpoint.

"It is the supposed anniversary of the birthday of the greatest personage that ever appeared on this planet, Jesus Christ, when on the dawn of that eventful day, a portion of the angelic host came chanting the glorious tidings of "Glory to God on high, peace on earth and good will to men." Shepherds and wise men catch the certain, and gold frankincense and myrrh, are soon poured into the lap of the new born Savior, and shall we forbear to make glad and merry the innocent boys and girls with a little candy, nuts, apples, oranges and toys? I say no. In the words of Jesus and Santa Claus, "Suffer little children to come unto me;" how could they come unless they could walk, and if old enough to walk, they are old enough to appreciate the little gifts so carefully packed away in their stockings. Let us continue to have Santa Claus, by a kind and loving mother. I see nothing to whether all children and parents can a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

MRS. E. R. WELLS.

"Having had my happy childhood in which Christmas played no part, the writer is prepared to say Christmas for children is not essential to the child's life or happiness. In New England in its early days no Puritan family kept Christmas. The Puritan never heard of it until they were old enough to read about it, and then the explanation given was that Christmas was a fallacy.

"In the early days in the valley, and in the pioneer days of Salt Lake City and there, Christmas was not observed so far as the writer knows. After some few years here in Utah, the children were treated to molasses candy, doughnuts and now rare dole, in their stockings; but thinking it over, I do not recall a single Christmas stockings from English homes, I am under the impression that the custom of hanging up stockings came on page through English and German influences, and from the fact that the observance of Christmas in their native countries.

"One Christmas and really the first one that I can remember, I was taken by my father to the Tabernacle (national) was in the Social Hall, that door of place, when one of the speakers said that he was so many pleasant gatherings of various kinds, that call up from the past such pleasant memories.

"This occasion at the Social Hall was the first time I had ever seen a Christmas tree, and I was then about thirty years old and had long my childhood for my own little one by the chimney corner for several years and had been in society and attended several of Christmas time before.

"This tree was a gift from President Brigham Young to the children of his own family and those of his counselor's families. The little girls who had their presents from that wonderful tree are now of their grandmother's age, but I listen to say they take never forgotten from that wonderful tree at evening in the Social Hall. President Young and his counselor, George A. Smith and Daniel H. Wells, called out a number of names I should say of President Young's family. There was no one and Santa Claus, the best bank of with presents for the children was the sole object of interest to us all. We saw everybody then to be happy, a custom which has given such pleasure even on a rare occasion, of course this was so long ago, I do not remember the names and gifts, and never have I known a happier evening for a party than that one was made by that Christmas tree, though I have seen many finer trees and parties since.

"It was my good fortune to spend one Christmas in New England about twelve years ago, in among the hills in the vicinity of Dartmouth College, and I noticed the change from the days of my own childhood. The household was very much and quiet, and the few presents were exchanged among the children (not at all elaborate, however,) the day and the evening was spent in quiet fashion, and I thought more of the poor neighbors, and otherwise one would not have known it was Christmas evening. I wondered if the best of Christmas was over, nowadays. 'Ye a little,' he answered, 'we have a turkey and plum pudding, and we are going to have a Christmas tree for the Sunday school children this evening, most of them are the factory people, and they would not get much extra if we didn't give them through the Sunday school. I could see Christmas was not much heart in it.

"Down in Boston I was informed by my city cousins that their kept Christmas now, and were getting to be tolerably English, which was quite a surprise to me, knowing how differently I had been trained.

"The origin of Christmas dates back to the festival known of Feast Saturnalia, which did on A. D. 50, in the seventh century, Pope Julius I ordered on the evening concerning the nativity of Christ, and the result was an agreement, then Dec. 25, which seems to have stuck, and the holiday. During the middle ages Christmas was celebrated by dramatic representation, and by performances of a religious character, and other carnival, what was termed "The feast of fools and carnival were unknown." In North Germany presents are distributed by one in Holiness known as Kindle Bieper.

"In the Scotch of parts in the eating time, a kind of minstrel was appointed where Christmas lasted from All Hallows eve, Oct. 31, Candlemas day, Feb. 2, when the future and condition in the church are concerned. History of the Christmas tree is lost in the mist of antiquity, and the origin of carols is also of antiquity. Christmas is a Holiday. Let us be thankful we have so much the quality in our city, I wish have seen a Christmas carol.

"The decking of houses in evergreens is said to have been derived from Druidical ceremonies, and the mistletoe. It was an old belief that evilen spirits might hide in the evergreens and remain there all the year round, in order to make them harmless. Another idea with them, the evergreen decorations are very tasteful and proper for winter time and festive occasions.

"The first introduction of Santa Claus or St. Nicholas into America is said to have been by the Dutch settlers of New York, and in the American representation of the Grosse Knicht Rupert.

"We are asked on this subject to give our opinion of keeping up the birthday of our Savior, and not only on the birthday of our Savior, but in the beautiful period, early April. Therefore we cannot tell what we think, but we do think it is fitting that Dec. 25 was the time of the birth of Jesus; on the contrary, much of the Christmas has been and is so Christmas is so generally kept now, and it really seems such an appropriate one to be kept as a day of joy and festivity, especially upon those in need, that perhaps it is as well to let it pass, and let it be a day of joy and festivity and charity to all mankind and the forgiveness of wrong. Not a time for riot and the wrong of gifts as some seem to make it, for one I do not believe in extreme, but even on Christmas, or any other holiday. Hiber C. Kimball used to say they were 'hollow days,' and in many respects they are, and a delusion and a snare. We have had enough of the delusion and a snare in this the nation, and when we think of the children of family gatherings, and the joy of the occasion, and so after all, Christmas or Santa Claus may be made a real blessing though it is a myth, and somewhat in the nature of a superstition. At any rate, it will be hard work to undeceive the children, and for the present the only way is to let them alone, and do the good we can to our own and those around us, and bring our families nearer by the time we world journey home, and kind human hearts and create happiness.

"If solid happiness we prize
Within our bosoms the jewel lies,
And they are fools who roam;
The world hath nothing to bestow
From our own selves our joys must flow
And that dear hut our home."

PHOMISCUOUS EXPRESSIONS.

C. H. Savage—The children love to be fooled and so do I when there is anything coming. Whatever will make a child happy soon, break my heart. Certainly the craze is getting worse and it is to be deplored to a certain

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