

IN RUSSIA'S CAPITAL.

Marketing at the Opening of the Winter Season.

Of all the fairy tales and stories in which childhood implicitly believes, none is more pleasant than that of Santa Claus. The origin of the custom is as little known as the mystery, how he so fat and big with his bulky bag of presents, could enter through the narrow chimney, was incomprehensible to our childish minds.

Speaking historically, Santa Claus has no connection with Christmas, though his visits are almost as old as the festival itself. Santa Claus is the corruption of St. Nicholas, a bishop of Myra, in Lycia, who flourished in the fourth century, and died on December 6, 343 A. D. He was widely famed for his piety and charity, and on his death became the patron saint of many classes—of children and more particularly of school boys and girls, parish clerks, sailors, travelers, merchants and Muscovites in general. Of all these classes, St. Nicholas is best known as the guardian of children. According to one legend, his piety when still a child—even as a babe at his mother's breast, he fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays—was regarded as especially fitting him for the protectorship for children. The fame of his piety spread far and wide, and an eastern lord, on sending his two sons to be educated at Athens, bade them call at Myra to receive a blessing from St. Nicholas. Arriving there late one night the youths put up at an inn, intending to visit the bishop the following morning. But, attracted by the wealth of his guests, the landlord murdered them during the night, and cutting their bodies into small pieces, threw them into his pork-pickling tub intending to dispose of the whole of its contents as pork. By this means he thought to kill two birds with one stone, not only getting rid of his victims, but also increasing his stock of bacon.

But the cruel deed was revealed to St. Nicholas, and the next morning he visited the inn and accused the landlord of the murder. Perceiving that his deed had been miraculously known to the bishop, the landlord fell on his knees, confessed to the murder, and besought the saint's intercession on his behalf. Moved by the sincere repentance of the man, Nicholas not only assured him of divine forgiveness but to prove it commanded the dead bodies of the murdered youths to come to life again. Immediately he had made the sign of the cross on the brine, the mangled fragments of their bodies reunited and the lads emerged from the tub alive and none the worse for their temporary decease and pickling. In the remembrance of this deed St. Nicholas is usually depicted as standing, arrayed in his episcopal robes, beside a tub in which kneel two naked youths.

Another story proves the love and protecting power of St. Nicholas for young maidens, and it is from this that the custom of Santa Claus arose. That saint heard that a poor gentleman with three portionless daughters, was about to commit a crime in order to provide his daughters with dowries.

Seized with pity for the three unhappy maidens, Nicholas visited their house by night, and threw a well-filled purse into the father's room through the open window, thus enabling him to portion his eldest daughter. On the next night he threw a second purse for the second daughter, and on the third night he repeated the action. But, watching to discover the donor of the two purses, the father saw St. Nicholas throw the third and burst forth into loud praises of the bishop's generosity. Finding that his secret had been discovered, Nicholas commanded the man on no account to tell anyone from whom the purses had come.

These and other instances of St. Nicholas's care and affection for children, parents used to relate to their boys and girls in order to induce them to rely upon him for guidance and protection. On the eve of St. Nicholas day, December 6, parents used to secretly give presents to their children as St. Nicholas had given the purses. The parents denied that they gave the presents, and said they had been left by the saint, who on this night traveled up and down the earth, and entering unseen and unheard through the windows, used to give presents to all good children.

In convent schools the love and care that St. Nicholas bore to all maidens was proved in the same manner. On Nicholas eve, the pupils were ordered to hang up their stockings outside the doors of their rooms, and in the hope to place a written request for the saint's patronage and protection. The nuns took upon themselves the duty of acting as his deputies and filled the expectant stockings with sweetmeats and other trifes, and in this manner taught the reality of the saint's care.

In this is clearly seen the origin of the tale and of the custom of Santa Claus, filling children's stockings on Christmas eve. How the custom was transferred from St. Nicholas day (December 6) to Christmas day is not known, but that the custom is one and the same there is no doubt whatever. Probably it arose about the time of the Reformation when the worship of saints was forbidden; but this is not a wholly satisfactory reason, as in Roman Catholic France the custom is observed on New Year's eve. Perhaps the true reason is that of economy. Giving presents on St. Nicholas day and again only three weeks after at Christmas would be a heavy expense to parents, and so the custom was observed on Christmas eve, and the presents took the double form of St. Nicholas gifts and Christmas boxes.

The Reformation put an end to St. Nicholas in England and Santa Claus was only introduced there within the present century from America. Whether Dutch immigrants had carried it, like most Christmas customs the mysterious gifts of Santa Claus have no connection with the festival of Christ's birth.

The appearance of Santa Claus with his stout figure warmly clad in fur and wearing his cherry old face with white hair and hair, his large bag of presents slung over his back, is familiar to every one. In America, he is depicted as traveling in a sleigh drawn by reindeer—from his home in the snowy north. In England, children hang their stockings at the foot of their beds. In America, the whole family

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suspend their stockings from the mantelpiece of the sitting room, to save Santa Claus the trouble of ascending the stairs and entering each room to distribute his gifts.

In Holland on Christmas eve, the children, while indulging in various games, keep casting anxious glances at the door, as if expecting a visitor. At length their play is hushed by a loud knock at the door, and St. Nicholas, clad in his episcopal robes, enters. He examines a wonderful knowledge of the fallings and virtues of each child, scolding and praising each according to the merits of their family behavior. Finally, however, he bestows his blessings on them all, and promising to give each a present on the next morning, he disappears. Before retiring to rest that night each member of the family places one of his or her shoes on the table in the parlor. The door is then locked, but the next morning before the truth of Santa Claus' promise for in each shoe is found a present for its owner—New York World and Express.

BY THE PROPHET'S BEARD.

"He does not mind that oath," exclaimed Alex and Josef Aboud, who are Arabians, when another of their race, Ali Akmat, had been sworn on a Bible in Special Sessions court yesterday. They were charged with assault, and he was a witness against them.

"I will swear as Arabians swear," said the witness, and he placed his hat on his head, faced to the east and then removed his hat. "I swear by the beard of the Prophet," he said, and this, as all the rest of the conversation, was translated for the judges. "and by the Kaaba, by the sacred black stone." "Is that all?" asked a lawyer. "And by virtue of my harem," went on Ali, disdaining to notice the interruption, "that I will tell only the truth and all the truth."

"We're content," said the defendant. "He will tell the truth now." "Their pretension may not have been in vain for the witness' testimony helped to acquit them."—New York Herald.

LATE LOCALS.

During the absence of Dr. Beatty in the south, the general supervision of the operations of the state board of health will be exercised by Dr. F. S. Bascom, president of the board.

A general meeting of the Commercial club is called for 8 o'clock tomorrow evening, at the request of 10 members of the entire club as to the merits of the City Council's plan for the improvement of the water supply.

Christmas weather came Saturday night, and yesterday, the ground was covered with three inches of snow, the first approximation to a snow storm that has occurred this winter. The soil was not frozen, so the snow melted considerably during the day, but today opened very cold, warning slightly up.

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PERSONALS.

E. J. Barry of Saratoga, Wyo., is registered at the Callen.

Aaron Leavitt left last night, for New York on a business trip.

Walter Ellington of this city is visiting with friends in Phoenix, Ariz.

John K. Hardy, secretary to Gov. Morrison of Idaho, is visiting in this city with relatives.

Henry Eisenmann of St. Louis, well known in this city, is a guest at the Knutsford.

Will Dyer has recovered from a siege with appendicitis at the Sister's hospital, and has been removed to his home.

James W. Leischmann, formerly holding a prominent position with P. T. Barnum, the great showman, is in town after an absence of nine years. He seems lots of changes and improvements since that time.

HEADACHES FROM COLDS

Laxative Bromo Quinine removes the cause. To get the genuine call for the full name and look for signature of E. W. GROVE, Inc.

COURT NOTES.

In the damage suit of John Paedio against the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad company, Judge Morse has rendered judgment by consent in favor of plaintiff for \$150. The action was brought to recover \$1,000 damages for injuries received by plaintiff while working for defendant near Caliente, Nev.

HOW SHE MIXED IT.

Last week I had a call from a colored woman, an old woman who has loved me all my life, and who now, at nearly eighty, fights a battle for me whenever the need arises. The time she brought me an old-fashioned sweet potato pudding. "Aunt Creecy," I said, as I dished up a plateful of the rich, brown, delicious mixture, "what is in this pudding?" "Sweet potatoes, grated." "What else?" "A little sugar." "What else?" "A few eggs." "How do you mix it?" "Mix it! Now des list'n at dat! Why I des gits de things together an mixes em. Dat's how."—Exchange.

A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE.

The Van Sant-Chamberlain music parlors at 21 south Main street were the scene of a very cordial reception Christmas eve at the close of the holiday rush.

The employees of the well known establishment got together during the week and decided not to let the time of "peace and good will" pass without showing their appreciation to Mr. John M. Chamberlain for his kind treatment as manager of the firm during the past year.

Prof. R. B. Quay, on behalf of the employees, with a few well selected words, presented Mr. Chamberlain with a beautiful silk umbrella as a token of the esteem in which he is held by those who are associated with him in business.

During Mr. Van Sant's absence from the city on account of sickness, Mr. Chamberlain has been at the helm and has guided the firm very successfully. In thanking the employees for their Christmas remembrance, Mr. Chamberlain shifted the cause of the success the firm had made to the united efforts of his assistants and to the merits of the well known Conover piano, which the firm handles.

The following are those associated with Messrs. Van Sant and Chamberlain, who were responsible for the pretty and cordial surprise above mentioned: A. M. Nelson, Prof. R. B. Quay, Ethel Wilkerson, Garfield Olin, R. T. Killingsworth, W. E. Pugh, Beale Brooks, Burt Carrington.

TEACHERS.

Dr. Talmage's new book, "The Great Salt Lake (Present and Past)," should be in the hands of every educator. The amount of information it contains relating to the great saline sea, makes it an invaluable work for reference or study. Deseret News Book Store, Salt Lake City, Utah.

DIED.

NEWMAN.—At Riverton, Dec. 25, 1904, of heart failure, Mrs. Maria Hunt Newman, aged 61, a native of Worcester-shire, Eng. Funeral from the Riverton meeting-house tomorrow, at 11 a. m. Friends invited to attend.

STAGEMAN.—In this city, Dec. 25, 1904, of old age, Sarah Stageman, aged 79 years. Funeral services Tuesday at 11 a. m. from the funeral chapel of Undertaker Jos. Wm. Taylor, 21 south West Temple street. Friends are invited to attend.

JACKSON.—In this city, Dec. 24, 1904, of pneumonia, James F. Jackson, son of William and Martha M. Jackson; born Oct. 18, 1876, in Bountiful, Utah. The funeral services were held today at 12:30 p. m. from Centerville meeting-house.

WILKINSON.—In this city, Dec. 24, 1904, of pneumonia, William Wilkinson; born April 2, 1850, in Marysville, Ohio. He was married to Mary E. First Nebraska volunteers, in the Civil war, and at the time of his death was a member of the American post, G. A. R., of this city. Funeral services will be held Tuesday at 2 p. m. from the residence of Mr. J. B. Bowring, 2107 East First North street. Friends are invited to attend. Interment in Mt. Olivet cemetery, Evanston, Wyo., and Omaha, Neb. papers, please copy.

CHARLES.—At Provo, Utah, Dec. 24, 1904, of general debility, Robert Charles, aged 46 years; native of South Wales, Europe.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday at 11 a. m. from the funeral chapel of Undertaker Joseph Wm. Taylor, 21 south West Temple street. Friends are invited to attend.

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Store Open Evenings Till Xmas.

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90 PER CENT

American, \$2.50 to \$4.00. Hotel. The Canyon. European, \$1.00 to \$3.00.

of the readers of the Semi-Weekly News are Farmers, Stockmen and Ranchers. Advertisers desiring to reach this class of buyers, can find no paper in the West that will serve their needs so well.

How the Japanese Worked Their Way Up to Port Arthur

It was only recently, after an uninterrupted series of offensive operations extending over a period of about four months, that the unprecedentedly rigid censorship maintained by the Japanese was relaxed sufficiently to permit the story of the investment and steps of Port Arthur to be made public. It is true that details of the preliminary naval operations were suffered to pass through this arbitrary and exceedingly fine meshed literary sieve, but the reduction of the atmosphere of such secrecy as had never before surrounded a military venture of such magnitude.

The siege proper began when the Japanese land force drove the Russians from their strong position on the last range of hills in front of the fortresses, compelling them to retire to the outer system of forts. This preliminary maneuver was effected by a surprise movement on the last day of July. This brought the Japanese advance up to the line of forts constructed in a semicircle and extending twelve miles from coast to coast. The besiegers occupied the captured hills and at once proceeded to make them a vantage ground against the enemy. The main attacking force thus found a much needed protection against the continuous and heavy fire which was coming from the line of fortifications and the numerous forts above and within.

Between the Japanese position and the Russian line of fortified ridges there was a valley containing several dried up watercourses and many fields of growing Chinese corn. This would have furnished excellent cover for the Japanese movements if it had not been for the fact that from two strongly fortified mountains at the eastern end of the ridge works the Russians could look down and make themselves wise concerning what was going on in the enemy's camp. The mikado's experts realized at once that nothing could be accomplished until those lofty points of observation and attack had been captured. It was promptly decided to reduce those strongholds, beginning with Taku, which was an isolated peak with precipitous sides.

A division was ordered to advance and take the towering menace. It was early in the afternoon of Aug. 7 that the Japanese began the attack on Taku. They were met by a terrific fire from all the Russian artillery in the fortified line. To add to the difficulty, a heavy rain set in, and the steep ascent became so slippery that it was almost impossible to secure a foothold. At nightfall little had been gained, and the slaughter had been terrible. During the night the Japanese attacking force was largely augmented, and when day broke the fighting was resumed with such ferocity on the part of the assailants that the Russians were driven from their position, and the victorious enemy took possession of the captured works and planted some of Nogai's most effective artillery in positions which would contribute to the success of the coming bombardment of the line of forts. The remaining mountain, Shaku, soon afterward shared the fate of Taku.

There is no doubt that these prelimi-

nary successes turned the heads of the Japanese commander and his staff. About this time it was announced that headquarters that the general bombardment had begun in a few days. General Nogai was especially gracious to the newspaper correspondents and invited all newcomers to re-

sult in failure. The situation was so extreme that General Nogai summoned the generals of the other divisions to consult with him.

During the consultation, and acting on its own responsibility, a regiment of the center emerged from its trenches and under cover of a brisk shrapnel fire from the field batteries in the valley charged up the ridge in groups of tens and twenties. Twelve the intrepid Japanese were forced back, and the slope was covered with the little brown bodies of the fierce assailants. Finally a fresh group of these daredevil heroes managed to reach a broken spot in the wall, from which they were speedily dislodged. At that critical moment a

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