The Christmas Saint

Christmas eve. Streets white with swirling snow flakes.

Marionetta, behind the counters of the five-and-ten, peered into one of the little ten-cent mirrors it was her business to sell.

Marionetta was crying because there was no Santa Claus. More than anything she hated to go back to the tiny basement flat that she and mother and Jim called home, and tell Jim the truth.

Jim, or Jimmy, as Marionetta always called him, was crippled. Marionetta insisted that he was too little yet to know about Santa Claus. She had gone without her lunch for days and days and saved her nickels and dimes to buy the things Jimmy wanted.

That very morning she had started out to work, her precious savings tucked away in her purse, her heart all but singing outloud.

Then, when she got off the car, someone in the motley crowd bumped her elbow and her purse was knocked from her hand. Marionetta dived for it, but another dived at the same time and when she straightened up a small, flying figure was crossing the street. That was why her feet lagged on her homeward way.

Her hand on the door of the basement flat, at the dirty tenement house where she lived, she noticed a big automobile drawing up at the curb, and an elegantly dressed lady slumming. Showing off! She turned her back on the picture, flung open the door and stepped inside.

"Hello, Sis." Jimmy looked up brightly. "Tonight's the night!"

Marionetta looked dully at her mother.

"I lost my purse," she said tonelessly. "Some kid snatched it this morning. It looked just like that McCarty kid that comes to play with Jimmy so much but he ran so fast I couldn't be sure."

"Don't cry, honey," her mother said. "We'll make out, somehow."

There was a knock. Mrs. Clancy went to the door and opened it. There stood the lady of the big automobile, her arms piled high with packages.

"Is this where Jimmy Clancy lives?"

"Yes ma'am." Mrs. Clancy stepped back. "Won't you come in?"

The lady stepped inside. She kept smiling at Jimmy whose eyes were wide and bright.

"I met Santa Claus down the street this afternoon, Jimmy," she said, "and he asked if I would bring these things to you. He said he was going to be very busy tonight.'

Jimmy was feverishly tearing at the packages, which the lady had dropped into a big chair beside him. As his heart's desires emerged from their tinsel wrappings Jimmy shouted with delight.

Under cover of the excitement Marionetta drew near the pretty lady and whispered:

"Tell me how you knew about Jimmy?"

"Why, my dear, it's such a strange story! This morning I saw a little boy snatch a purse that someone dropped, and when he ran away I had my chauffeur follow him and bring him back to me. He told me he wanted to keep the money to buy some toys for a little crippled friend whose folks were too poor to buy things for him. I promised him I'd play Santa Claus to Jimmy if he'd promise me to wait on that corner for the girl who dropped the purse, every morning at the same hour, until he found her and gave it back to her."

"Why," cried Marionetta. "Did you ever hear anything so like a fairy tale? That was my purse, and it really was Jerry McCarty, mother! There was such a crowd he couldn't see who dropped it. He'd never have stolen—but it wasn't stealing. And just to think that a moment ago I was doubting the Christmas saint!"

The lady laughed. Then in that clear voice she said:

"Well just to make you even more sure of him, I'm going to bring a famous doctor to see Jimmy the day after tomorrow, and I'm going to have him take Jimmy to a hospital and cure that bad leg of his. The good Christmas saint doesn't want to find him crippled when he comes back next year."

The Cock Crowed

Why does the cock seem to crow with unusual persistence during December? Our ancestors believed it was to scare away evil spirits from the holy season. They cherished many legends which made a hero of Chanticleer at Christmas time, although they continued to eat him with zest.

The most widely-circulated story concerned the bird's behaviour in Herod's palace on the first Christmas morning.

The king had observed the lonely star of Bethlehem in the sky, and asked his steward to interpret its meaning. "It is a sign," said the steward, "that a greater than Herod is born."

"Nonsense," commented the king. "I would sooner believe that the cock on my platter could crow." Whereupon the well-dressed fowl, lying on the royal plate, stretched forth a bony neck and crowed lustily.

Simple Games For New Year's Party

New Year's parties are always fun, but they will achieve new life and interest if several new games are included with the old favorites. Spelling bees and guessing contests have been played for many years, but a few modern variations of these games can make them more popular than ever.

Spell sdrawkcaB

Little enthusiasm will probably be noticed when a good old-fashioned spelling bee is announced. Before the game is over, however, the guests will probably be wondering if they ever knew how to spell, because the words in this contest must be spelled backwards

A little competition will enliven the game, so arrange the guests into two or three teams, then tell them that to save embarrassment the words will all be simple ones. Each contestant will be eliminated from the game when he makes his second miss, and the first team to be spelled down loses the game. After casually announcing that the words must be spelled backwards and with no "second chance" if a wrong start is made, start the game going with simple words such as dog, cat, boy and so on.

When the players have caught on, make the words increasingly difficult. To keep the game moving and to dispel any possible suspicion of favoritism it is best to read the words from a list prepared in advance.

Guessing Time

Anybody can estimate the length of a second, but few people know how long two or three minutes will last.

Have the guests sit in a circle around the room and announce that you are going to ask them to estimate the amount of time it takes for four minutes to pass.

Clap your hands when the four minutes is to start. To prevent the guests from counting out the time to themselves pass around some more refreshments, or if someone can play the piano, sing a song they all know. This will not last more than a minute or two, and it will throw the players completely off count. Then sit in silence, waiting for the time to pass. Soon the guests will begin calling off "four minutes" and from there on the game will take care of itself.

The "secret of success" at a party of this kind is to play each game only a short time before changing to a new game. No matter how much the guests are enjoying a game, it is advisable to stop the game after a few minutes and change to something else.

The Nativity

(St. Luke II)

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Mothers' Night

The oldest English name for Christmas is Moddra Night, or Mothers' Night. In the early days, when our Saxon forefathers had just settled down in the country that was to be England, the day of December 25th was given over to feasting, but the night was dedicated to the special honour of mothers. They occupied the seats of honour, and everyone brought them gifts. Sons and daughters who had gone out into the world strove to be at home on that one night in the year.

A little later the name Yule was given to Christmas, and the rejoicings of the day were prolonged into night, when men sang and told stories sitting round the cheerful blaze of the Yule log.

The old customs of Mothers' Night gradually died out, though they still survive in a few parts of the country. Its place has been taken to some extent by Mothering Sunday in the North of England. On that day everyone who can do so still makes a pilgrimage homewards, and the mother receives the homage of her family.

Add Gay Colors To Yule Candles

Christmas candles for gifts or table decorations can be made at home from bits of discarded candles, and the whole family may have fun doing it.

There is no limit to the shape and size of mold to be used. Cardboard boxes such as salt packages or ice cream cartons are very satisfactory. The cartons in which buttermilk is sometimes sold are good for the tapered candles. Good results have even been reported with fancy gelatin molds of certain types and with jelly glasses.

The wick may be fastened through a hole in the bottom of the cardboard containers, but in smooth-bottomed molds, it must be kept in place by pouring in a little wax at a time around it, and then allowing it to harden.

Arrange two small sticks at right angles at the top of the mold and tie the wick in the centre so that it will be held securely in place during the whole process.

Common string, the wick from an old candle, or commercial candle wicking sold at variety stores or in needlework departments may all be used for the homemade candles.

Dipped Candles

All wax to be used in a single candle should be melted in the same container, as it is difficult to match colors. Wax crayons are good coloring matter, and some women have used lipstick with success. As the wax cools in the mold, a hole will be formed down the centre. Enough wax of the same color should be saved to fill this hole.

Lacking enough old candles to make the large ones now so popular, tallow candles can be made from these proportions: 10 ounces of tallow, ½ ounce of camphor, 4 ounces of beeswax and 2 ounces of alum. Melted paraffin, which is sometimes used, is hard to dye and breaks easily.

To make dipped candles, one end of the wick is fastened to a stick or pencil, and the wick dipped into the melted wax for a short time. As many candles as can be fully immersed at each dipping may be made at one time. If the surrounding air is cool, it is not necessary to dip the candles in cold water.

For a clear bright red candle, it is best not to use such dark colors as blue and green candles in the melting down process. However, very often the layer of color is just on the outside, and it can be scraped off and the rest of the candle used.

Christmas Carols

The singing of Christmas carols originated in England. According to tradition, this is the chorus of the very first: "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace, Good will toward Men."

A Real Christmas

Wrapping Small Gifts

An unusual way to wrap a number of small gifts that are to be given in a good-sized Christmas box is to tuck each one in an envelope made of either plain red, holly, silver or gold paper. Wrap each gift first in plain white tissue paper, folded in envelope style, and seal the flaps of both the inner and outer envelopes with contrasting seals. Patterns for the envelopes can be cut from ordinary envelopes by tearing one apart and either enlarging on it or trimming it down.

Christmas Special

A lattice crust sets off a colorful fruit pie. It's made with strips of dough twisted or laid flat across the pie at right angles. Each strip should be moistened where it meets the rim of pastry. Another trick to show off the filling, and at the same time make the pie a Christmas special, is to cut out little trees and stars from the pie dough, prick with a fork, dust with nutmeg and granulated sugar, and bake in a hot oven a few minutes until lightly browned. Then arrange the pastry cut-outs on the cooked pie.

First Christmas Tree

In Strassburg, Germany, in 1604, the first Christmas tree appears in literature. It is thought that the custom of using Christmas trees in Germany spread from Strassburg.

When Queen Victoria married Prince Albert, he introduced the Christmas tree custom into England.

From the early emigrants of Germany and England was derived the custom of the Christmas tree in America.

Accidents Offer Threat To Gaiety

Nothing can spoil the festive gaiety of a Christmas celebration more completely than a fire or accident in the home. There are several essential precautions which will help to assure a truly Merry Christmas.

Don't risk using frayed cords and broken plugs.

Don't handle electrical appliances with wet hands.

Don't yank at cords or run them under rugs.

Don't forget to have insulated staples on hand for stringing cords around.

Don't overload your house circuit. Usually 1,000 watts is as much as any one circuit will stand.

Don't neglect providing plenty of extra lamp bulbs of the various sizes and colors you're using for Christmas cheer, so you can replace burned out ones.

Don't put pennies in a blown-out fuse. A blown fuse is a warning!

Don't have high-wattage lamp bulbs near fancy inflammable ornaments, synthetic materials, paper or cotton. Watch out about using candles too near draperies, wall paper or woodwork.

Don't plan to have a row of candles too close to a mirror or the heat may crack it.

And above all, don't burn real candles on your Christmas tree unless it has first been thoroughly fireproofed.

"Oh, lookit, lookit, Jimmie. Doesn't it look like a real baby? Just 'magine it's for me!" And little Sally's face was radiant with the imagined joy.

"Ah, that's nothing but a doll! You girls!" and Johnnie's nose turned up with disgust. "If you're lookin', just lookit that!" and he pointed to a scooter that leaned proudly against the wall in the show window. "That's what Santa Claus has picked out for me." And Johnnie's eyes shone.

A well-dressed man standing near them heard the words, and looked curiously at the ragged children. As he saw his wife approaching, the children started on, but not before he heard the boy say to his sister, "It's no use 'magining anything this year. Aunt Meg doesn't even have a chimbley for Santa to crawl down, and he probably doesn't even know that daddy and mother aren't here any more," and his brave little lip quivered.

The man turned to his wife, who had just reached him. "Madge, look at that window."

But her voice was shrill with a hysterical grief, as she exclaimed: "Oh, Phil, I can't look at those toys. You know I can't. When little Elsie is dead, and we have no one to make Christmas for."

"But, Madge, that is what I mean. We have someone to make a Christmas for. See those kids there, just going round the corner? They are the Mayne children, whose father and mother were killed in that factory fire last month. They're living with their aunt, who already has four children of her own, and her husband is only working part time since the fire." He said no more but watched his wife anxiously.

Her look of grief turned slowly to one of questioning and then pleasure.

"We'll do it!" she exclaimed in glad tones.

"I heard them tell each other what they wanted," Phil said joyously.

So on Christmas moring Sally and Johnnie were surprised to have an auto drive up in front of their Aunt Meg's house, and have a fine big man ask them to go home with him to dinner. And there, when they had taken off their coats and hats, they found a lovely Christmas tree with a beautiful doll and a perfectly grand scooter, and a new suit for Johnnie and a dress for Sally which made her eyes sparkle with joy.

"We don't want you to go home," Mrs. Vigars said when the children began to talk about having to go, after the dinner of turkey and cranberry sauce and all the fixings. "We want you to stay, don't we, Phil?"

"Indeed we do, for we need a little boy and girl in our house," Phil Vigars replied, with a happy smile on his face. And he added, under his breath, as he gave his wife a mighty hug. "This is a real Christmas, Madge. I'm glad there was plenty of room at this inn."

Candles

These candles are such lovely things
All copper-tipped and bright.
They give the mellow radiance
I like on Christmas night.

So I have lighted small red ones
Upon the waiting tree;
Tall green ones on the mantel shelf
To show the room to me.

But this so slender, silver one—
Much beauty, cheaply priced—
I bought to mark my window sill
With the halo of the Christ.

And shepherd-like, all through the night,
Watching across the hill,
It will remind some traveler
Of peace—and of good will.

Poinsettia Lacks Yule Tradition

The poinsettia has no Christmas tradition. Possessing beautiful red and green leaves (the flowers themselves being the small yellow centres), and being available at this season, the brilliance and color of this plant add much to Christmas decorations. The plant is native to Central America and Mexico and was adapted some years ago to cultivation by Dr. Poinsett of Charleston, S. C. It is distinctly modern and American.