It'n "over the bills and for away," You can't get there though you walk

And I'm tired of these sawdust things

I want a doll that is nice and warm, And soft to hog/ and is sweet to kiss. That goes and goos when it lies on Your arm, And la not a stupld head like this!

I'll write to-day to my Grandma Wade For fear she goes to the big basaar Where all the levely toys are made, And millions and millions of dollles

And tell her that now her Marjorie Is far too bly with a doll to play, So who input a highly bring for me From "ovor the hills and far away!

Kate Halpin's Santa Claus

N one end of Main Street were Shelbyville's big houses, with fountains and iron dogs on the lawns. On the other end. the street ran through a colony of cottages where the mill workers lived. Finally the street lost its identity out in the open country where it became

the road to Taylortown. Everyone in Shelbyville knew Miss Kate Halpin. She lived about halfway down Main Street. Her little cottage was the only place in town where one could still see an old-fushioned well-sweep. People always went to to beg some hollyhock seeds or to find out the latest Government advice on out the latest Government advice on canning and preserving. It was also accepted as a matter of course that she was the one to be told when some poor family needed help. People sent her things they had no use for, know-ing that she would find some place for them. She was one of Shelbyville's institutions, just like the brick-front

store or the courthouse on the hill. Miss Halpin wasn't comidered charitable. To some Shelbyville folks, charity meant belonging to some guild or club with officers and meetings and a chance to wear your best clothes and see your name printed on a subscription list in the Shelbyville Clarion.

Miss Halpin just took her little basket and did what she could all alone, and she had a lot of enjoyment out of it. When she heard a sermon in see your name printed on a subscripchurch about sounding brass and tink-ling cymbals, she would find herself thinking of some woman down by the river whose husband had his leg brokshe would take them mutton broth,

and warm underwear for the children. Christmas was coming. You could cell that, because Webster & Page took tell that, because Webster & Page took the canned goods and spraying machines out of their windows, and filled them up with sweaters and candy and white-backed 'tollet sets in blue and red silk-lined boxes. Later they would cut some cedar trees on the side hill back of the store and tack them up on the porch posts. Miss Halpin always fretted a lot around Christmas, time, because with her scanty purse, she could do so little to make people happy and she wanted to do so much. The Christmas spirit with her was not an impulse. It was an instinct. This year, she falt that the horrible war had cast such a cloud over everyone that there was danger of almost forgetting Christmas altogether. The children weren't to blame for the war, and children without Christman was almost

unthinkable, Miss Halpin was paying a visit to who was just getting over pneumonia. another generation. The Roberts boy his cousin, Kate Halpin. had given up hobby-horses and tin soldiers. He was a real soldier now. had ceased to cry for all the beautiful alighted, carrying an old-fashloned over the ground before with Kate; and dolls she saw, and had many times carpet bug in his hand. He went up he knew where every basket was to und glanced furtively toward the back dressed dells for little far-away Bolglans, and French girls, since the com-

ing of the war. While Mrs. Roberts was poking around in the attic, Kate Halpin had an inspiration that almost took her she happened to glance over in the corner and saw an old hobbyhorse with a missing tail. She suddenly thought of a lot of youngsters who wanted that horse, and it seemed as though a hundred horses would not be too many to supply the demand. Why not beg all these put away toys from the ple who had stored them in their mill workers lived. Christmas morning, and give them to the children to gone away. whom Christmas was more of a promise than a reality.

The plan rapidly developed in her mind, as she walked toward home. tor. There must be a big bobaled, and but his bousin Kute did not propose white whiskers dumfied an armful of someone would be Santa Claus. She to respect his whim. As soon as they backages on the table with a "Merry would make a red coat for him out were settled at the supper table, she Christman." of calloo with white flannel trimming wanted to have the whole story. It | One house Silas found closed. The and little black dabs to make it look was soon told, and the telling of it man next door, who wasn't on the the boy standing white-faced in front like ermine. He must have a big, seemed to lighten Silas' heart. black beard. She was sure someone | Kate Halpin began on her wonder- | Hilus that the family had moved away

choatic heap gradually took form. In the midst of the hurried proparations Kate received a letter from her part reluctantly, would look more nac road lined with post and rail fences cousin. He was her only relative, turn in cotton whiskers or something and last your's cornfields. A sign-His wife had died, and his daughter, made of twine or horsehalr, when courd saying, "Taylorville three miles." World, for that matter, was anyone Julia, had kept house for him until "here is Santa Claus arriving on time," greeted his eyes, and just here he saw the day when she ran away and got she told her cousin. "You'll make a a house ahead of him. As he drew as Banta Cluas himself.—The Young pleasantly, as two eager hands take married. Then she came back and perfect Banta Claus." asked his forgiveness, and he told her Blus shook his head reluctantly at dows, and as a man came out of the never to darken his door again. Hhe first. Ten years of bereavement and door, he caught a glimpse of a tree all took him at his word. She felt that self-effacement had made him shrink spangles, through the open door. He he would gladly cut out his tongue for from publicity. But when was there began to lose heart. Clearly this those words. But that is often the one to resist Kute Halpin, when her wasn't the house he was looking for. case with proud people with quick mind was settled? That was why she The man told him a short cut back to the school-bell, releasing the fifty can you do with two? cries Lil. But tempers. He did all be could to find had brought more sunshine into Shel- Shelbyville, and he turned the team little scholars from their tasks, leav- Johnnie is looking at the slip of paper Julia. He soon came to the end of byville homes than anyone else in sround. The old team came to life ing them, free for the day; heatily soulded in the barcel, and reads with the trail. She had gone out into the town. And now this was to be her when they headed toward home. The copy-books, pens und pendils are stow- shining eyes: "For the brave boy who see of faces somewhere in the world, crowning achievement, The reporter sled slipped along down the hill. A. ed away, and desk-lids not too gently sacrificed his gift for the sake of his From that day, life lost its sweetness for the Shelbyville Weekly Clarion small house stood by the road at the closed, when "Hush," the mistress little sister, A happy Christmas to



Christmas 1919

And friends may scatter far and

But loving hearts keep memories

However great space may divide Our tender greetings warm and and add the olden time refrain,

A Happy Christmastide to you.

Sincere Greetings and **Every Good Wish for Christmas** and the Coming Year

The Acton Free Press



A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE

an "iron dog on the lawn" house to try would be blinking at him before he the families to be visited dream a Through the window he could see a rather wistful. "Oh, dolls mostly." to beg an overcoat for a man she knew trudged back down the lane. Every Santa Claus is to visit them." morning he watched for the Rural Christmas Day, oame bright and stove. That settled the fate of the toy blue and-Mrs. Roberts had taken her up to the Free Delivery postman, but the letter clear. It was just the kind of a day dog and the soldier in his basket. speck it resembled most attics. In was so hungry that he decided to pay wanted. A light fall of snow the night as he opened the door. The boy look-

lowing the directions given by that walking up the path to the little house overyone to be visited beforehand." by the well sweep. Just us he urrived,

was black. That was before Julia had chimes of Westminster Abbey.

his cordial reception. the was almost as good as visualis. was getting pretty lonesome home." realize what it all was about a big ing a scene as a motion picture direc. He never mentioned Julia to anyone, red-faced man with a red coat and

would donute the sled and horses. If ful Christmas plan. Her list of gifts that morning. He Hilus took back there was difficulty about finding a was almost completed. It was as long their basket and deposited it in the volunteer Santa Claus, as a last re- as your arm. Not one of the families sleigh, and went on until the list was port she would put on the red cout knew a word as to the plan. She completed. He was about to turn and the whiskers herself. The sled showed Blins the heaps of toys and around to go home, when he thought of would be piled high, and they would dolls and clothes, waiting to be wrap- the left-over basket. go from house to house, shouting ped up, and packages tled with red "It doesn't seem the right thing to Merry Christmas and leaving toys and ribbon. Mr. Downs, the owner of the take it back," he murmured, and dedolls and things just like a real Santa mill, was going to donate a turkey to chief that if only he could find Claus performance in a story-book. every one of them. The grocer agreed house on his own account, where it People entered into Miss Hulpin's to let her have the market baskets could be left, he would take a chance plan with enthusiasn. Carrets were heeded. It was wonderful how many on the contents being welcome. He he ransacked and things brought to light people wanted to help. Some supplied drove on to do a little Hanta Claus that had long been forgotten. Her the crumberrios, others the turnips, and errand of his own. It was vetting little cottage was soon stuffed so full others candles. Webster & Page had colder, so he chirped to the horses to that she had to send out an H. O. B. donnted their bly bobsled for the de- hurry a little. But Webster & Page's signal for help. Her assistants were livery trip, and everything was com- old team never hurried when their knees. immediately set to work making lists plete but Banta Claus himself. Even heads were turned from home.

and painting and mending, and the his red cout was all finished, and Kate After he had driven a little further had been wondering whether Bleve, Shelbyville auddenly stopped us the skinny-clerk who only accepted the town, and Bills was out on a country

way of finding his daughter. Some- the paper, she told her cousin Silas, was coming out of the chimney. There and admire it. "And now do tell me times he thought so long that it would "But I told him it could not be, because wak a little service flag in one of the all about it. What did the little girls be dark and the thousand eyes of night we were working in secret. None of windows, homemude and badly faded, have?" and little Lil's voice sounds

the visit that had been promised to before, had couted all the trees with a ed at the intruder with open-eyed One day, when the ten-forty truin the sleighing. The sleigh was piled arrived at Shelbyville, a tall man high with the presents. Blins had been to the station agent and asked direc- go. It would spoil the whole scheme door. tions to Miss Halpin's home. By foi- if anyhody went with Banta Claus.

station ugent, he found his way up to alone," she told Bilus, "and us nu one Main Street, turned to the right at the knows you are in Shelbyville, it wil Presbyterian Church, and was soon be all the finer. And I'll take you to The horses were the unly telitale Kate Halpin was wondering how she things. But perhaps the children could ever rig up that skinny clerk would not notice that it was l'age & down at Webster & Page's so that he Webster's old team, under the red could even slightly resemble Hanta callco blankets decorated with ever-Slaus. There was a knock on the green boughs, instead of reindeer like door. She opened it. There stood of Runta's. What the team muy have Banta Claus himself. But she soon - lacked is speed, they made up in noise, nited him as her cousin, even though because they were covered with bells when she had seen him last his board of us many different tones as the

Bilas entered into the spirit of the Hilas' face lighted up wonderfully at game with schoolboy relish. At every house he drove up with a fingling of "Well," he said, choking up a bit. bolls and a "Merry Christmas," and to her boy. "I thought I'd come and see you. It before the astonished children could

list, because he had no children, told of them.

boy sitting huddled up close to the Johnnie replies; "dolls in pink and

was supposed to-rules its wooden arms and legs when you pulled a string. He pulled it experimentally and althe boy's it worked. The arms gave back soon;" then runs for dear life great flop and the flop broke the loc. It flopped again. That was too much for the boy. He edged over, his eyes

"Whore's your par" Hilas asked him. "He's gone to war." "Where's your ma?" the back door. "She's coming."

The boy jerked his thumb toward Just then a woman came through

Santa Claus dropped the wooden

"It's your grandpa, lkey-Oh-" eried as though her heart would break. But she was up uguin, and by her boy,

"You're right, Julia," was the an-

Hilus, and a little buy between his "Wall, there's dinner enough!" she exclaimed. When the greetings were over, and they gathered around Kate's bountiwhere infull Bhelbyville-or in all the having quite such a Merry Christmas

JOHNNIE'S SACRIFICE

One, two, three, four merrily rings a beauty! but who it is from, and what

hubbub has ceased, and fifty expect ant little faces are raised to hers. Why is teacher's face so bright, they "Children, I have some good news

for you," she says, smiling round upon them. "Christmas, as you know, will soon be here, and each one of you, yes, every buy bad girl there is to have Christmas gift, and to-but here a choor interrupts the speaker, fifty pairs of eyes shining with ouger unticipathe that Miss Brooks has no heart to will the increasing noise of the do-its of shitdren. How many, she won-den with a sigh, have ever had a real Christmay gift-have ever known the joy of a doll that will go to sleep, or a lack with wonderful colored picture? There is little Johnnie Blake ip the corner, his bright blue eyes gandig up to the celling, pleturing himner with a cricket-but that will hit real cricket ball; little Lucy clasping her hands in centany in the hope of a dressed doll. How much it means to these little thinly-clad children -a real toy of

Brooke's voice is heard above the buzz of children's voices to say, "You must stay in your places and the toys will be given out. Now you may'go." Mins Brooke sighs as the last of the little eager, flushed faces disappears with a smile, and thinks with wistful eyes of the scone just witnessed, the joy that has been brought to the children by somebody's kindly thought. Again she sees Johnny's happy, -oxpectant face, how excited the children will be to-morrow, and so thinking she proceeds to unpack and arrange neatly on the hig table the numerous gifts for the children. Colden-haired dolls in wonderful frocks, that will go right off to sleep, soldiers that will stand up stiff and straight in their bright rod coats, tea-sets just made for an "At Home," and ten rosy-cheeked cricket balls with ten shining new cricket bats, in fact, everything that would bring boundless delight to the children of the poor.

their very uwn.

Miss Brooks satt the last doll up, and then covered the table with a cloth in readings for twelve o'clock

Would twelve o'clock ever come? Subdued excitement was visible on every face, a feeling of unrest was in 3 the air: oh how slowly the school clock ticked, how long and unending the morning seemed to the waiting children; sums would not go right, twelve was the only number that seemed to be fixed in their busy little minds, busy with the thoughts of what twelve o'clock would bring. Even to Miss Brooke the morning was a trial, lessons were not the usual success, the children simply could not listen when the carefully covered up table held comething for each of them. Twelve o'clock; yes it was really

striking at last. Excitement was at its highest pitch as Miss Brooke uncovered the loaded the in all its splendor. A loud gasp of "Ohl" incredulous delight visible on every small face, then Miss Brooke raised her hand again. "One by one children, we will start from the top-Nancy Goddard." Nancy trembling all over with suppressed excitament in another moment clasps in her little thin arms doll so wonderful to behold that she really thinks she must be dreaming. Johnnie is soon hugging the muchprized bat and ball, how he has longed for a real bat, and though cricket days were a long way off he could see himself victorious, he would beat Tom Perkins, see if he wouldn't. He gased at it with glowing pride, a cricket bat all shiny and new his very own! Was any child in a nursery laden with every desired toy as happy as Johnnie with his one? No, Johnnie had every-

thing he wanted now. "I find I have one doll left over." says Miss Brooke after having distributed all the gifts. "I will put it aside for the present; and new children run away with your toys for mother will want to see them, I know." With shouts of joy off they scam-

per. Johnnie treading on air, without a doubt he was the happlest boy in the world. But on nearing home his speed slackens, for he must go gently, or he may wake sister Lil. Hoftly he lifts the latch and turns the handle, and tip-toes up the rickety stairs. Sister Lil might be asleep, he must not waken her, but us he peops cautiously around he sees the big eyes wide open, and on seeing him the little

cripple gives a cry of delight. "A bat a real cricket bat," says

"Oh, oh, 'how lovely!" Interrupts I would be happy always in bed with 'a real doll." Tears were shining in the blue eyes, so like Johnnie's, and he could not bear to see the little sis-

ter he adored crying." "Nover mind, Lil, aleur," he says, soothingly, "when I go to work for breaks off auddenly, an idea comes Into his head. But could he, could he give it up? "Lil," he shouts, as he rushes from the room. "I'll be down the road back to school. He must not stop, if he does he might look at the beautiful shining but under his arm and change his mind again; no, he must think of little Lil's tearful blue eyes and get to school in time. Hot and dishevelled he runs into the urms of Miss Brooke, who is just. preparing to leave. "I have come," gasps Johnnie, "to ask if-if you would change my but for the doll that was left over." All this through Johnnie's hard run was a little incoherent, and

until he regains his breath Miss Brooks gently tells him to rest, and then the whole story has to come out, and Miss Brooke, deeply touched at Johnnie's sacrifice, takes the hat and wraps up the beautiful doll. "Now, you must let me know what little sister Lil thinks of her doll," she says, as Johnnie's misty blue eyes follow the bat out of sight and guiping down a sob in his throat he replies, "Yes, Miss Brooks, thank you," and rushes off at top speed ugain.

Poor Johnnie; he learns what a real sacrifice means, as Miss Brooke intended him to do; as he sits alone Visions of that long-cherished but rise up before him, and then the swer! pleture of his beloved little sister gitting up in bed with the doll held tight in her thin little arms consoles him and bravely he nuts his own Joys

And so Christmay dawns. Johnnie by Id's bodside, patiently superintending the doll's tollet, and suggesting names for the christening and then the dreaded question comes: "Johnnie, where is you but ?! In the excitament of the udvent of the doll this had been forgotten, "Oh, I-,-hello, there's some one knocking; I will go und see who it is." Rat-tat tat, again comes the knock, and on opening the door Johnnie confronts the matnun, a very

"Master John Grant," says the mail the unexpected purcel. And so upstafrs it is opened on Ill's bed, the beloved doll staring fixedly at the pro-

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