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Our Outlook

EVERY YEAR.

Life is a count of losses,
Every year;
For the weak are heavier crosses
Every year;
Lost springs with sobs replying,
Unto weary autumn sighing,
While those we love are dying,
Every year.
The days have less of gladness,
Every year;
The nights more weight of sadness,
Every year;
Fair springs no longer charm us,
The winds and weather harm us,
The threats of death alarm us,
Every year.
There comes new cares and sorrows,
Dark days and darker morrows,
Every year;
The ghosts of dead loves haunt us,
The ghosts of changed friends taunt us,
And disappointments daunt us,
Every year.
To the past go more dead faces,
Every year;
As the loved leave vacant places,
Every year;
Everywhere the sad eyes meet us,
In the evening's dusk they greet us,
And to come to them entreat us
Every year.
"You are growing old," they tell us,
Every year;
"You are more alone," they tell us,
Every year;
"You can win no new affection,
You have only recollection,
Deeper sorrow and dejection,
Every year."
Too true! Life's shores are shifting,
Every year;
And we are seaward drifting,
Every year;
Old places, changing, fret us,
The living more forget us,
There are fewer to regret us,
Every year.
But the truer life draws nigher,
Every year;
And its morning star climbs higher
Every year;
Earth's hold on us grows slighter,
And the heavy burthen lighter,
And the Dawn Immortal brighter,
Every year.

—Gen. Albert Pike.

SANTA CLAUS A NUISANCE

Notwithstanding the romance and ecstasy of the young people, which comes with Santa Claus, it is beginning to be seriously questioned whether he is not more of a burden, than a pleasure. If this reflection were confined to niggardly aunts and uncles or to fathers who take no pleasure in the screaming delights of the children, it would hardly be worth reflecting.

But quite seriously sane men and women are beginning to assert that Santa Claus is overdone and that it is with a sense of actual relief that they wake up on the morning of Dec. 26th with the sweet assurance that "its all over."

The rage for gifts and tokens have certainly gone far past their real meaning and significance. Every family having branches reaching down to the second and third generations and opening out into an unaccountable host of cousins and aunts and distant friends, all of whom must be remembered, is under constraint to make inventories of the gifts they must provide.

Then the gifts themselves when stacked up, under and around the Christmas tree, in the ordinary size family, resemble—a section of some sample room of a toy merchant—only that the babel of voices which tell how Santa brought "the doll" and "the teddy bear" and how Johnny broke his Noah's Ark open and knocked off the neck of the giraffe" and a thousand other things, make it impossible to complete the comparison.

Then there is the boy Jim who got three pocket knives and protested because "he knew that it was not Santa at all, and uncle Jake ought to have known that he wanted a gun."

A week later there is a wreck of Santa's gifts to contemplate, and all the fun is gone. Still other innumerable little tragedies attend the seasons comedy of love gifts and jealous gifts, to be followed by serious trouble as to what we can exchange for that splendid cut glass decanter that came from Mrs. Disspla, or that bracelet that Miss Carry Line sent, "we know just because she wants us to return the gift."

All this and much more than can be told suggests the doubtful side of the old grizzly pagan, Santa Claus.

SANTA CLAUS AS BENEFACTOR.

But then, what about the untold wealth of generous gifts which this same old patron Saint scatters with lavish hand all over the land? The Salvation Army mo-

del of him is not half so much a fiction as he is himself. But back of these gifts of food and clothing to a million poor, back of those golden streaks of sunlight which pour into the tenement house and the rickety flat, back of the generous gifts which make ten times ten thousand hearts to leap for Joy is this same Santa Claus.

The Christmas tree may cost money, time and thought, but does it cost too much when it brings into the home, even of the average mechanic, visions of beauty and mysterious wealth from toyland and picture realm. And is it without advantage to the man who is busy with the sordid things of money making that, once in a while, he has free license to forget his conservative dignity and be a fool for others sake? Is it not worth a good deal to the man of wealth that he can put a few dollars and quarters in his pocket and make the shoe shiner and the stable boy and news boy happy, or better still, line his pockets with five dollar gold pieces, and place them in hands that are thin and white? Is it an advantage or otherwise to be reminded that this would be a good day to send a check to the orphan's home or the hospital or to the struggling little church over the way?

SANTA AS A BUSINESS MAN.

Then there is the business view of Santa Claus. And this also has two sides.

On the one hand the Christmas trade is a sort of carnival of buying and selling.

Ordinary trade is set aside. Everything, in retail business, is all more or less inflated. Regular goods take the place of special articles of purely fancy value.

The trade too is gradually driven into very narrow limits of time. Everybody looks toward a given date. If the merchant makes a clearance of all his stock—good! If he should have found a slow season or make an over stock there is disaster.

Then follows a reaction. The stimulus of the unusual results in a fall, sometimes almost a paralysis and the merchant is face to face with a series of difficulties that are so common that they need not be named.

On the other hand revivals in trade, like revivals in religion, are desired and sought for and there are thousands of people who would consider it almost disaster not to have an occasional business awakening.

On the whole is not the annual visit of Santa Claus like that of a national birthday, one that should be fostered for the good there is in it, while the weaknesses of the world in relation to it are carefully watched and regulated.

THE STRENUOUS LIFE.

ITS EFFECTS UPON HEALTH AND LONGEVITY.

We hear of many things which contribute to the death rate of the people. If we were to follow closely all the counsels of medical men and hygiene reformers we should come to the conclusion that there is absolutely nothing that we can either eat or drink which does not contain the poison germs that strike at the roots of physical life.

Now comes a statement from permanent and reliable Chicago physicians that heart disease is greatly on the increase and that the cause of it is to be found in the strenuous life of such cities as Chicago together with the tendency to rapid and over eating, late hours, and drinking.

There is good reason to urge this warning. Beyond all question the tendency to rush at meals and winding up days of intensity with late suppers and drinking is breaking down the health of many.

As Dr. Baldwin, Chicago City physician, says, it is "not so much the work we perform in itself, but the habits that accompany the strenuous pace" that bring about the mortality. Overeating, rich food, late suppers, and too much liquor, coffee, tobacco, automobile rides, and general dissipation are what is killing off some of our most prominent people."

EVEN PLEASURES ARE STRENUOUS.

"The conclusion by New York physicians that the rapid mode of life all over the country is increasing the death rate from heart disease is borne out by the statistics from the Chicago department of health," said Dr. Drake. "Our strenuous city life is responsible. There is a tendency on the part of a great many of our people to crowd as much activity as possible into their hours of work, and their pleasures are taken on the same strenuous plane.

"The death rate from Bright's disease also is increasing in an alarming degree. There were 2,225 deaths from Bright's disease in Chicago this year, and 2,128 in 1906. This, too, is largely due to the nervous mental strain under which our people are living. These diseases are beyond sanitary control. The department of health cannot do anything much to combat the increasing death rate. It can give people advice, but will they take it?" This is surely a case in which we should not only receive advice but act upon it.