

Our Boys and Girls.

WHEN SANTA CLAUS COMES.

A good time is coming! I wish it were here,
The very best time in the whole of the year:
I am counting each day on my fingers and thumbs,
The weeks that must pass before Santa Claus comes.

Good-bye for a while, then, to lessons and school,
We may laugh, talk and sing, without branches are brown,
No troublesome spelling, nor writing, nor sums,
There's nothing but playtime when Santa Claus comes.

I'll hang up my stocking to hold what he brings,
And hope he will fill it with lots of nice things;
He must know how dearly I love sugar plums,
And like a big box-full when Santa Claus comes.

And now that the snowflakes begin to come down,
The wind whistles sharp, and the bkranches are brown,
I don't mind the cold that my finger benumbs,
For it brings the time nearer when Santa Claus comes.

PLAYING CRIPPLE.

"What in the world are you children doing?" cried mamma, coming into the sitting-room in a great hurry. "Papa thought the chairs and tables must all have taken to dancing around, to make all this racket, but it is caused by three little people."

"We're playing we're crippled, mamma," explained Roy, balancing himself on two broom-handles, and holding one fat leg out behind him. "Mabel lost a foot in a railway accident, and Bob and I are wounded soldiers."

"It's lots of fun," panted Mabel, fastening the string of her shoe on the foot supposed to be lost. "I'm learning to manage my crutches just right."

"Whatever started you on this queer play?" asked mamma, pulling the rugs straight, and picking up the things the children had upset in their attempts to use sticks instead of feet.

"Miss Abbott said in Sabbath-school yesterday that it would be nice if we would do without candy and such things for a month, to help little Ben Fish get a wheel-chair," said Bod. "He goes on crutches, you know, and Miss Abbott says they hurt his arms. We thought we'd try and see if it is hard work going on crutches, and it ain't at all."

"So you don't think it is necessary for Ben to have the chair, then?" said Mrs. Pearl quietly.

"Why, you see, mamma, we're willing to help," said Mabel quickly, "but we don't see why Miss Abbott wants us to give up all our money for a month to buy the chair. If Ben gets the chair this summer, it will be time enough, for he can't go out when the weather is bad anyway."

"Well, you must do as you think best about it," said Mrs. Pearl. "You earn your money, and spend one-third of it as you please. If you want to give

your allowance for Ben's chair, I think you will enjoy it more than candy, but that is for you to decide."

"I'm going to rake the yard one of these days," said Ray, "and I'll give that money for the chair. You know papa said we might spend the money we got for odd jobs as we pleased; so I'll give that."

"And I'll hem your towels, and give my money," said Mabel.

"Let's go out in the yard and play marbles," suggested Bob, but mamma called him back. "I haven't seen your new play; so wait till I get my work, and you may show me till dinner time how it goes."

The children took their sticks once more, and mamma settled herself by a window to watch. At first it was great fun trying to see which could do her errands to the other rooms first, but by-and-by the game became tiresome, and Mabel slipped her crutches under the edge of the lounge, and took up a favorite book.

"Come here, Mabel," and mamma took the pillows off the lounge so the little girl could lie flat on her back. This is the way Ben has to rest many times a day because his back is so weak. When he walks a short distance on his crutches, it makes him very tired; so he lies down without a pillow to rest. Here, Roy, there is room for you at the other end; and Bob can have the cushions on the floor."

They didn't like to lie down, but it was a part of the game; so Bob laid down the toy engine he was repairing, and settled himself on the pillows; while his brother studied the paper on the ceiling, and wondered how long mamma wanted them to play being crippled.

"Is it an hour?" asked Mabel, twisting about on her end of the couch.

"Oh, dear, no," laughed mamma. "It is just seven minutes since you all lay down. Isn't it odd the time seems so long? Ben says sometimes he is sure it is a week before the doctor will let him get up, when it has only been three or four hours."

Three or four hours! Three small people knew they never could stand an hour of lying perfectly still, and began to make plans of escape by coaxing mamma to let them play something else. It seemed to Bob he had never wanted to do so many things before as he did while sticking to his cushion. He felt sure his pet dog had not been fed, and would suffer if he did not attend to him immediately; but mamma, sewing by the window, showed no signs of wanting them to get up. Mabel hoped Roy would ask to leave the lounge, but Roy being the oldest had to keep up his reputation for endurance; so they listened for the clock to strike the half hour, and tell them dinner time was surely, if slowly, coming.

"Mamma, I believe I'll give all my money for Ben's chair, and hem your towels as soon as we stop playing this," said Mabel, suddenly. "I don't see how poor little Ben lives, if he has to lie on his back like this."

"I'll give mine, too," said Bob. "I'm so tired of playing cripple. Do you suppose a chair will help Ben's back, mamma?"

"The doctor thinks so, my boy. He can be out in the fresh air most of the time during the pleasant weather, and the crutches can be laid aside. It hurts his back so much to walk with them, but his mother has always been too poor to buy a chair. Are you all sure you want to do without candy for a month, and give your money to Miss Abbott for the chair?"

"Sure!" came back the answer from the three childish voices.

"Then I think it would be better not to play cripple any more, but try to earn some money to help the fund along. Don't you?"

Bob, Mabel and Roy sprang from their places, and in a few minutes were busy at the tasks their mother found for them. "Please don't burn up my crutches, mamma," said Mabel soberly. "I want to keep them to remind me of my resolve, if I should get lazy and selfish before Ben gets his chair. I never knew how hard a time the poor boy had until to-day."

"I guess I'll keep mine, too," remarked Roy. "I'm glad they're not for-sure ones."

The children never played cripple again, but when the new chair was bought for little Ben, no one was happier than the make-believe cripples, and they faithfully pushed the invalid up and down the shaded street day after day when other children forgot the poor boy. Whenever Mabel saw the crutches she had used the only time she had played the new game, she made new resolves to help crippled children every chance she had, and the boys shared their candy with Ben before touching a bite of it.

"I wish all the children would try playing cripple," said Miss Abbott when Mrs. Pearl told her the story. "I wondered why your little folks were so faithful to poor Ben. Their hearts will always have a very tender place for unfortunate people."—*Pittsburg Advocate.*

We trust the INTELLIGENCER has so commended itself to its present readers that they will desire to have it a visitor in their homes for another year. Their prompt renewals will be gratifying and greatly encouraging.

HOW TERRY USED HIS CHANCES.

BY SALLY CAMPBELL.

Terry Dempster and a good many of the other boys were on their way to school. They passed the fruit-stall at the corner. Terry said good-morning to the woman that kept it. He was glad Will Mace stopped him to buy bananas, because he liked to look at her. Her eyes and her hair were so black, and her cheeks were so red, and she wore such big gold hoops in her ears.

She gave Will the bananas, and while he was putting them into his book-bag she held out his change. Terry took it for him. One of the pennies he shoved back across the counter.

"She was giving you a cent too much," he explained to Will, as he handed him the others.

"You are good at arithmetic, sonny," said Will. "A penny isn't very much of a mistake."

"Not if you are an Italian, anyway," agreed Terry, "and aren't used to changing money in English."

A big, red apple had rolled off the stall and along the street until it had turned the corner. Terry picked it up and ran back with it.

"You might have taken that with you," said Will. "Nobody would have seen."

Terry laughed. He did not seem to think that Will expected any other answer.

Two or three days later Terry was playing croquet at recess. The game was getting very exciting. Terry's ball was in a bad position.

"You can move it out from the hedge, Terry," said one of the big boys

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who was looking on. "Wait. Let me show you."

"Not so far as that, I can't!" cried Terry. "That's very far!"

"Oh, yes, you can," said the big boy, easily. "You're all right now. Go ahead."

"It's more than a mallet's length," said Terry, measuring. "I was sure it was."

He moved the ball back six inches, and tried for his wicket. He missed it. He lost the game.

"Isn't it a pity," said the big boy, "that you can't cheat a little at croquet just for sport?"

"I don't think it is," said Terry. "I'd rather you couldn't. It would spoil it. It wouldn't be any fun if it wasn't fair."

"Don't you like to win?"

"Yes, when it's real," said Terry.

One day when school was out, Terry had got almost to the corner where the fruit-stand was. Suddenly he stopped short in dismay.

"Oh, dear! I'll have to go back! I left my copybook. Miss Stone said I was to copy over at home the page that I blotted so much."

"Tell her you forgot it," said Bobby Price. "You did."

"But only for half a block," said Terry. "That wouldn't satisfy her, I guess."

"I guess not," said Bobby. And he didn't say another word.

The weeks and the months went by until the first school term was over and the second had begun. One Saturday afternoon Mrs. Dempster came home from down town and hunted through the house for Terry.

"What do you think?" she asked him, "that Miss Stone told me ten minutes ago?"

"What?" asked Terry, who regarded Miss Stone as the most beautiful and