

Homemade SANTA

By Ansel Beauregard

Harvey Butler ran a chapped hand through the lank brown hair that fell over his forehead and stared contemptuously at Jack and Gordon Linter. Their blue eyes were on him, wide and questioning. "You sure there ain't no Santa Claus?" six-year-old Gordon asked worriedly.

Harvey laughed. "Course the Linters were little kids, six and seven, but they ought to know better. You think I'd be parading around in a split-out jeans an' a patched shirt if there was?"

"Probably Santa Claus is bringing you new ones for Christmas," Jack said hopefully.

Harvey sneered, thinking of the barren Christmases at his house. They were lucky if they had a tree even. This year on account of his little sister—just over three now—mom had said they'd try to have some presents. "Any new clothes I get we buy," he said, "an' usually I just get my cousin's old stuff hand-me-downs, mom calls them."

"Well," again Gordon looked hopeful, "that doesn't mean anything. Mostly Santa brings toys, not clothes."

"Not to me, he doesn't. I tell you there isn't a Santa Claus except for your folks."

Gordon's eyes filled with tears and Jack looked like crying. "Are you sure?" he asked, his voice quivering. "Your little sister told me Santa Claus—Kaws she calls him—is coming to your house."

The wind seemed to whistle through all the holes and thin places in Harvey's clothes. "Carol said that? Honest?"

"Yeah," Jack said "you know how funny she talks. She said he was coming through the door, cause you don't have a chimney, when the lights are out and bring her a doll and some other things."

"What things? Try and remember," Harvey felt chilled. If Carol was expecting Santa Claus, counting on him like these kids... How would she feel when he didn't come?

"Doll cradle and a wagon," Gordon said. "And a trike—twike she called it—painted red. You were just kidding us, weren't you, Harvey?"

Harvey looked at their faces and felt mean that he had told them the truth. After all, he was a little bit enough to know better and they were just little guys. "Sure I guess there's a Santa Claus, but sometimes he doesn't get to all the

houses. Like Carol said, we don't have a chimney for him to come down, so he probably missed us a couple of times."

The light was back in the boys' eyes. "Sure, that's it. What're you making that scowly face for, Harvey?"

"This time Harvey chose his words carefully. "Well, he might miss our house again this year and Carol'd sure be disappointed, so I was trying to think how I could see she got what she wanted. I think I can make her a wagon at the Boy's Club and a wooden cradle. You think that'd work?"

"Sure," Gordon agreed enthusiastically, "long as she thinks Santa brought them, she won't know the difference."

"What about the doll and the trike? You can't make those," Jack pointed out.

Harvey shivered, leaning against the board fence. "Mom gave me money for a hair curler that I could use for a doll. Usually Mom gave me hair curls 'cause they were so expensive, but she had a burned hand now."

"Hey, Jack," Gordon shouted excitedly, "how about that old trike in the garage? Harvey could fix the wheel..."

"Sure," Gordon answered, "and I'll bet we can find some red paint." "And we could make her some blocks at the Boy's Club easy."

Harvey shoved his hands in his pockets, swallowing quickly. "Gee, that'd be fine, she doesn't have any now. See you later."

"Come on, Gordon," he heard Jack yell happily. "Let's go find that trike."

The Queen In New Zealand



—By—
Nellie Scanlan
(New Zealand's Distinguished Novelist)

Once, when I was speaking in America, I mentioned that December was mid-summer in New Zealand. Afterwards, a little woman came up and said: "Then, you would keep Christmas in June."

When I reminded her it was the date, not the season, which determined Christmas, she shook her head. "That's nonsense! You simply couldn't celebrate Christmas in summer."

There are many people living in the Northern Hemisphere, who cannot imagine what it is like to eat Christmas dinner under a blazing sun. This year, Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will be experiencing a mid-summer Christmas for the first time, when they visit New Zealand.

If the summer sun shines as the GOTHIC enters Auckland waters, the Queen and her husband will see that magnificent expanse of Waitemata Harbour, with the shapely peak of Rangitoto Island on guard over this lovely northern city. It will be a scene very different from the wintry aspect of Sandringham, where the Queen has been accustomed to spend Christmas.

Our climate has some affinity with the temperamental English climate, and just as rain may drench an English Ascot, or even a Coronation procession, we too, may have a brief wintry spell, to belie our summer boast. This actually happened when the Queen's parents, then Duke and Duchess of York, arrived in Auckland Harbour over twenty years ago. It was high summer, but a sudden drenching squall blotted out the scene, until the ship had almost berthed.

Then the rain cleared, presenting a wet and sparkling city, gleaming like a jewel in the dazzling sun. It may be so again, as the Queen and the Duke land to spend Christmas with us.

Even Artificial Snow
Christmas Day is a very long day in this country. The Christmas Eve parties slide over the rim of midnight. The church-goers from midnight services will join the belated revellers on their homeward journey, as the first hint of the summer dawn creeps into the sky. Coze on its heels comes a trumpet call, a beat of drum, a shout of delight, to signal that the children have discovered their bulging stockings; and it may be only about 4 a.m. There is little peace after that. The children have had Santa Claus in the shops, with magic caves, and Christmas trees with artificial snow. And many have Christmas trees at home, with drawn blinds to show off the tiny electric lights.

Christmas carols! A few choirs or groups may sing, and the Royal party may find that this link with Christmas at home has been provided. But singing carols from house to house is not a regular custom. Bands, however, often play carols, but they do not shatter sleep until dawn has decently arrived.

Necessarily, the Queen's program for Christmas day will differ somewhat from that of her subjects here. Royalty is always on duty, and there will be a few duties for Her Majesty to carry out; and the day must provide an interval for that all-important broadcast. But in so far as the Queen is able on that day to catch glimpses of New Zealand's Christmas habits, she will observe many differences.

One Long Holiday
Here Christmas is the great holiday season of the year. All schools close for the long summer vacations about a week before Christmas, and do not re-open till early February. All shops close for four days at Christmas, so there is no fresh meat or bread for four days. And they close again for four days at New Year, after a brief opening, between these holidays, to enable people to replenish their stores of food. Some shops close on Christmas Eve, and do not open till after New Year. Banks and post offices close like the shops. The lawyers and courts have their long summer vacation. Many people also take their annual holiday at this time.

Race meetings at Christmas and New Year, are customary all over the country; city meetings and country meetings. Of course, Her Majesty and the Duke will attend

the races at Ellerslie on Boxing Day. This is the beautiful Auckland race course, famous for its flowers, its gardens and trees. This is the "Ascot" of the season, but "Ascot" with a difference.

No "Bob-Each-Way" Bets
There will be no bookmakers, none of that raucous shouting of the odds, the bowler hat, the big black bag! Only the silent Totalisator. There is no chance of putting a "shilling each way on Roly-Poly," for the lowest sum the Totalisator will take is a ten-shilling bet.

There are also tennis tournaments, cricket matches, regattas and yachting events. In a way, it is as if you had transferred the English Christmas into the middle of the June-July London season.

One feature of the English summer, is the number of people who spend their holidays on farms, with home-grown food cooked and served by the farmer's wife and daughters. You will not find that in New Zealand. The farmer may have plenty of Christmas guests, but they are friends and relatives. You will never see a notice on the farm gate, offering holiday board, or even bed and breakfast to the touring motorists. The New Zealand farmer's wife does not take Christmas boarders.

ONE OF THEM

(By Anne O'Sullivan)

Hesitant but determined, Ransome had brought his fiancée, Hilda, home for Christmas to his parents' mountain ranch. Now, on Christmas Eve, Bridget, his young school-teaching sister, and Gloria, his white-collar sister, sat in the pine-paneled living room, admiring the yet undecorated Christmas tree. And Hilda seemed to be getting along particularly well with Gloria, the ambitious, the contemptuous sister whose city veneer denied her mountain heritage.

He was the first to stir from the surprising but comfortable dark. "I'll take care of it, Ma," he called toward the kitchen, "probably just a blown out fuse."

"Wouldn't you know it?" Gloria's voice rose sharply, complaining. "Hear that wind?" Ma asked with the low, pleasant chuckle that characterized her to her family.

Pa, armed with a lantern, stamped in the back door, shedding snow as he shook his heavy jacket off. "Brrr, a real snow-piling easterner, but the animals are all right."

"Did you check the fuse box, Pa?" Ran asked. "Not much use—the wind probably took care of a transformer. What's the matter, boy? When you were living at home we didn't even have electricity."

"Yeah, well, we still got plenty lanterns around?" "Long as we got horse sense, we'll keep the lanterns ready," it was Ma's turn to laugh. "Likely our lights'll be off two-three more times this winter."

"It's that Hilda he's thinking of," Pa said shrewdly. "Let's go in with the girls. She's a fine girl, Ransome."

"We can't trim the tree, Pa, when the light strings won't work." Gloria sounded petulant, dissatisfied. Was Hilda disappointed too? Ran wondered.

Ma and Pa laughed. "You sure have the all firedest short memory!" "Remember the times we trimmed the tree with popcorn balls and all?" Bridget asked. "Let's do it tonight, shall we, Ma?"

"Why, of course, Pa and I'd get a sight of pleasure out of that. How about you, Hilda?" "I'd like to help." To Ran she sounded enthusiastic, but maybe it was just politeness.

"A sight more work too," Gloria pointed out. "Why you won't move..." "I'll need another lantern for kitchen, Pa, if I'm to string cranberries," Bridget interrupted zestfully.



"I wish you'd let me help," Hilda said.

Ran knelt beside the deep fireplace, built by his great-grandfather, to stir the coals. As a boy he had risked burning himself to pop corn in a frying pan; now he had a long-handled popper. The angry surge of wind reassured him in a strange way. He was at home. Safe and protected. If only Hilda could share his feeling for this place...

He leaned on his heels, whistling, as the kernels began to pop. "I wish you'd let me help," Hilda said. "Bridget sent me in with a bowl, salt and butter."

Ran moved aside, finding it natural for Hilda to kneel and work beside him. Her eyes sparkled and her face was flushed in the firelight, but Ran missed his chance to ask if she were happy when Bridget summoned them to string popcorn.

"Gloria held up a string of popcorn. "Not half so pretty as tinsel." "Means more," Bridget said. "Seems like popcorn strings have a special beauty—the kind you can't buy."

Soon the Christmas tree was festooned with strings of popcorn and cranberries. It looked beautiful to Ran even before they moved presents underneath. He caught the satisfaction on everyone's face, though Gloria still looked cynical.

Just then Hilda rushed out of the room and went upstairs. When she came back, she paused half-shyly in the doorway, an accordion in her arms. "I thought you'd have a piano and, now that the radio's off, maybe you'd like some carols. It's been such a perfect evening."

Ran knew then, as he guided her into the circle and saw the family make way for her, that Hilda was one of them and his voice rose exultantly in "O Come, All Ye Faithful."

Did you realize that there are over 800 different varieties of mistletoe? Its original name was "mistletan," a Saxon word meaning a different sort of twig. One type of mistletoe in Spain has bright red berries, while others are adorned with blue berries.

Egyptians Made Elaborate Dolls For Children

No one knows for sure who made the first doll, but it can be assumed the earliest figures were sacred gods and ancestor images. These doll-like forms were not toys for the delight of children, but solemn religious figures that preserved the tribe from harm.

Then, somehow, somewhere, a change took place. Dolls became a toy for girls and the most popular Christmas toy of them all.

Dolls have been discovered in Egyptian tombs and ruins, some even had real hair; some were ivory, carved by craftsmen for a king's daughter; others were made of straw by an overworked mother in a peasant's hut.

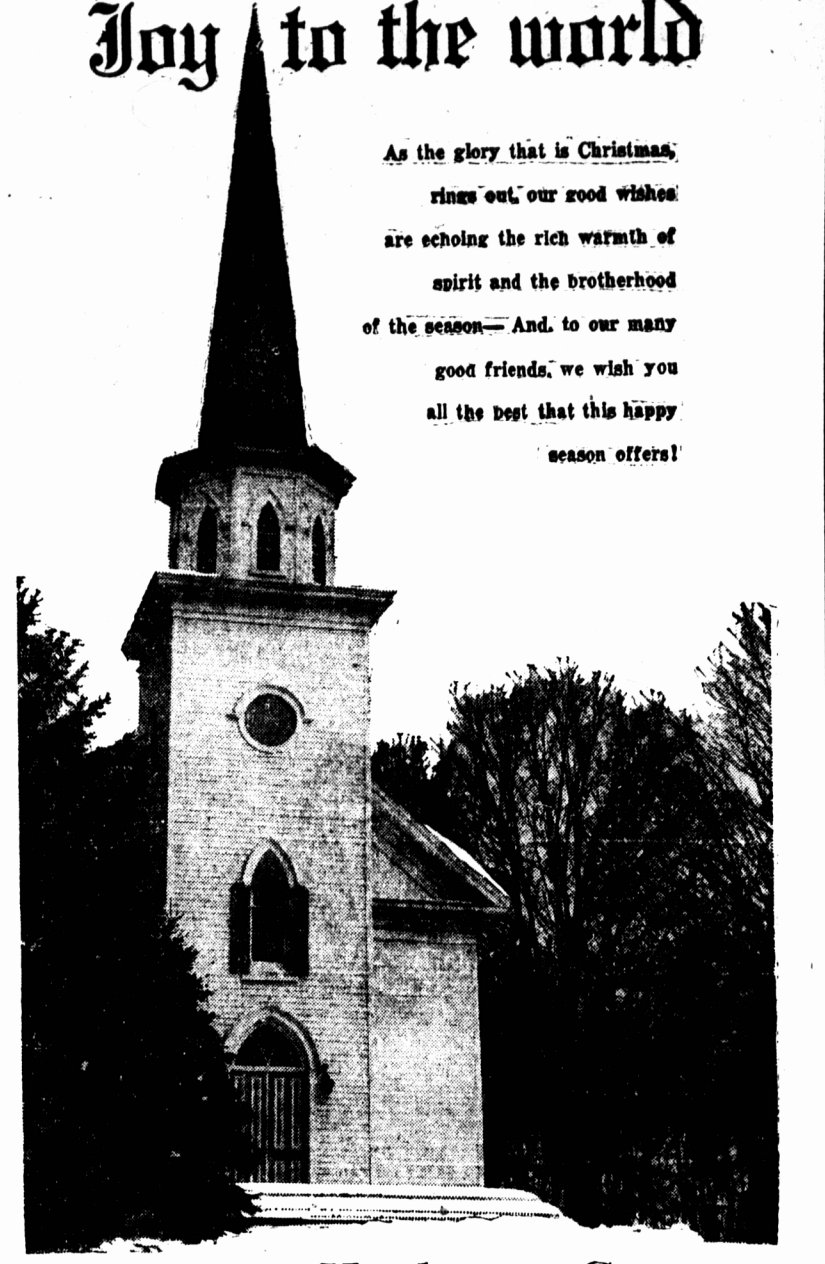
In ancient Greece dolls were played with and cherished by little girls until they were ready to be married. Then (their dolls were taken to the shrine of a favorite goddess) and, often with tears, presented to her. The Roman children played with the dolls, too, but after the fall of the Empire there came a long period in which there is no record of dolls.

Not until the thirteenth century when dolls were made in Nuremberg and dressed in the fashions of the times did little girls again play with dolls. They were here to stay.

By and by in Europe, the French fashion dolls became all the rage, not for children to play with but as models from which fine ladies could pattern their own modish costumes.

In America, the Indian children had dolls of their own made of raw hide and feathers and wood. Pioneer children had dolls much like these, and some were made of braided cornhusks, or nuts or corncobs, or rags, and were dearly loved in spite of their plainness.

Much later, lifelike dolls were imported from Germany, where the doll industry had reached enormous proportions. These dolls had fine china heads with carefully painted faces and kid bodies that were joined at the arms and legs. Later there came the Japanese-made dolls which were inexpensive enough for almost any child to own. Then the American-made dolls began to appear—the special dolls, the kewpies, bilikens, Buster Browns, teddy bears, Patsy dolls and Shirley Temples and phonograph dolls, with all the host of others that have followed and which are still to come. For dolls always will be part of childhood and part of Christmases as long as there are little girls and boys to play with them, and parents and fond kinkof to buy.



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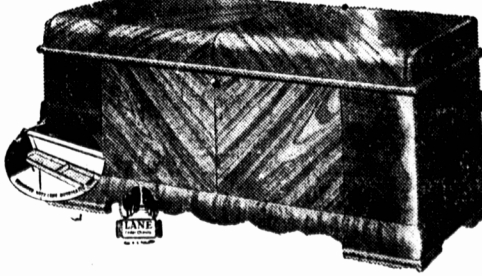
HO! HO! HO!

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