

ting up for President? Or is it "Alter E."? Whatever his name or his political principles, supposing him to have political principles, he is conceded to be the alter ego of David B. Hill, and, like Hill to be a Democrat of the still type—very still.

SANTA OLAUS.

How the old superstition comes back to the old children, as memories of Christmas time leap the gulf of half-a-century-ago. Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, Kriss Kringle, Kristinche—by whichever name we called him, he was real to us all. As real as anything we knew or knew of, was this benevolent old fellow who loved good children and didn't like bad ones, yet distributed his favors with so much less regard for the conduct of his little friends than for their worldly condition.

Our minds were logical then—as logical as they are now, perhaps, though not quite so well informed; and the conviction forced itself upon us that there was something unsound about the prevalent dogma that Santa Claus was no respecter of persons.

We knew, for instance, that Freel Remer, the carpenter's son, was just as good a boy as ourselves whose grandfather owned a farm. Our own folks might not have agreed with us, but we, being introspective, knew that really he was not only as good but better; and in view of Kristinche's omniscience (as to boys) we realized, of course, that the Christmas saint ought to know it, too. Yet Kristinche was content to fill Freel's stockings with a red apple or two and doughnuts like his own mother cooked, while making ours to bulge with strange and superior gifts.

And then we heard of other children's luck with Santa Claus when we visited our cousins in New York. They were ever so much better off than a country boy whose grandfather owned a farm. At least we thought so, and they dressed and acted so. And Santa Claus favored them more than he did us. If he discriminated somewhat against Freel in Pequest valley, how great was his discrimination against us in favor of our

cousins down in the city. Yet, both Santa Claus and ourselves, we two knew that those cousins of ours weren't any better than we. Nor was that the whole story. Our cousins told of acquaintances of theirs, rich beyond any of our dreams of avarice or ambition, so rich that their fathers and mothers wouldn't so much as speak to ours—more than to say: "Why, how-de-do?" if they met casually; and these rich boys and girls, though not especially good as the reports reached us, they received presents from Santa Claus in untold abundance and of indescribable magnificence.

Those were the facts. Of course we reasoned from them. We reasoned logically, too. If we didn't reach correct conclusions, it was because we hadn't yet got facts enough, or our inexperienced minds needed a little jog. What we thought about it was that the whole thing didn't fit together just right. Santa Claus might like good boys better than bad ones, but it didn't seem so. It seemed as if he liked rich ones better than poor ones. Or, he might be omniscient but the facts raised a doubt. Or, he might not be a respecter of persons, but then his actions at Christmas were no tribute to his judicial acumen. So we settled down to the state of mind that afterward served us with certain church dogmas at Sunday school. We concluded that Santa Claus was all he was said to be, disposing of the conflicting facts by assigning the whole subject to the realm of mystery into which little boys must not pry.

But the day of awakening came. There were no new facts. No more were needed. The whole case against Santa Claus was complete. Nothing was needed but a suggestion, a hint, a pointer. Freel Remer furnished the pointer. Who of all of us has not had his Freel Remer, to say to him in one form of phrase or another, what our Freel said to us:

"There ain't no Kristinche. It's your pap!"

One gasp and it was over. Every conflicting fact fitted every other now. We saw it all, and Santa Claus went instantly and forever out of our life, except as a delightful memory inextricably mixed up with red-mouth trumpets and

strange candy. There was no Santa Claus and never had been, but only "your pap"!

This accounted for Freel's doughnuts against our toys. It accounted for the cheapness of our toys as compared with our cousins'; and of the magnificence of what their rich friends got as compared with what they got. It accounted for the whole Santa Claus mystery, respect for persons and all. That one word, "pap," which only Freel was allowed to use without rebuke, for his folks didn't mind—that one disrespectful appellation fairly blazed with wisdom. We can see the red glow of it even now across the wide half-century gulf.

It wasn't agreeable at the time. Although we had learned a truth, we had lost a fetish; and that experience is never pleasant. Jolly old Santa Claus, beloved old St. Nicholas, dear old Kristinche, merry old Kriss Kringle, he was gone, and we mourned for him as we did for Freel's shaggy dog, "James K. Polk," when he died of old age. It was a new world now that we lived in, and a dead one. Love had gone out of it; for Santa Claus was no more, and what could any world be without its Santa Claus?

Who had wrought this havoc? Freel Remer had done it, and no longer could he be trusted friend of ours.

But now there succeeded another state of mind. Isn't it so? Didn't we then pretend to believe in Santa Claus, lest "pap" might forego presents on Christmas eve for children so highly sophisticated?

Yes, when Santa Claus ceased to be a superstition we turned him into a convenience. We had been pagans; we were now hypocrites.

We all did it, didn't we? But that was not for long, and maybe it wasn't altogether as sordid as it seems. Maybe we were still mourning in this crude way the dying out of our more childish faith in the god of the Christmas stocking.

At any rate, with the passing of the superstition something we had not expected came into its abandoned place. It was "pap." Santa Claus had faded into a myth, but the greater reality of parental affection, which Santa Claus only

personified, had entered into our consciousness.

Isn't this the experience of us all? And doesn't it repeat itself, in ever varying form, again and again through life?

One prized superstition after another—religious, political, social—fades away, leaving for a time a blank and possibly stimulating hypocritical instincts. But when it has served its uses (and all good superstitions serve good uses), we find upon fully relinquishing it, that the truth which it has only symbolized becomes more real to us than the symbol ever was.

Just as fatherly and motherly affection—a mere abstraction, if you please—looms up now above the accumulated memories of half a century, as infinitely more real and concrete than the Santa Claus myth by which that affection was expressed at Christmas time, so do even greater truths become the more real as with intelligence and good motive we abandon the superstitions that have supported them in the progressive stages of character building.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Brooklyn, N. Y., Dec. 19.—The speech delivered by Congressman Robert Baker in the House on December 14th fully justifies the efforts put forth by The Radical Democracy of Brooklyn for his election in the campaign of 1902 in the Sixth Congressional District of New York. Our speakers then promised the voters of that district that if he were elected, unlike so many who had been sent to Congress in the past from our city, he would be heard from upon the trust and other economic questions in a way that would command attention from Congress and the country. He has already redeemed that promise in the speech referred to, which is a notably vigorous arraignment of the protectionist superstition, of the Republican claim that universal prosperity exists in this country and that every man who so desires can obtain employment—in the language of Representative Hepburn, of Iowa—"at a compensating wage." The falsity of this claim is vividly shown by Mr. Baker in the many instances he cites of the miserable wages paid to the coal miners, the farm laborers, the factory operative and the shop-girl; while convincing evidence is also presented in the list of lock-outs and shut-downs and wage reductions, culled

from the recent newspaper press, that even the limited prosperity of the past few years is rapidly disappearing.

We are gratified to learn from the New York Times' report that "the speaker had the undivided attention of the House and evoked frequent applause from the Democratic side;" and still more pleased at the sustained interest in the speech shown by requests for a large number of copies for distribution in their own districts received from two leading Congressmen of the West. These requests clearly indicate that the speech is as well adapted for circulation in rural communities as in the crowded labor centers, and The Radical Democracy strongly urges democratic Democrats everywhere to write at once to their Congressmen for as many copies as they can profitably distribute. In this connection we recommend the plan The Radical Democracy itself has adopted, of sending the speech to registered voters.

Requests for copies should be addressed to one's own Congressman, as it would be impossible for Mr. Baker, who is a poor man, to respond to more than requests for individual copies, while the Congressional committee can and no doubt gladly will fill orders given by any Congressman for as many copies as can be profitably used in his district.

Real Democrats will be particularly pleased at Mr. Baker's review of the principles for which Tom L. Johnson, of Ohio, and Gov. L. F. C. Garvin, of Rhode Island, are making such sturdy fights in their native States.

PETER AITKEN.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, Dec. 24.

The Panama question (p. 554) has become a subject of most serious controversy at the American capital.

Since our last report on this matter the Republic of Panama has been recognized by Russia, Germany, Austria, France and China; but no recognition has yet been made by any country on the American continents, except the United States.

Reports of military movements by Colombia against Panama have frequently appeared in the news dispatches. None have been confirmed, however, except a recent one, to the effect that a small body of Colombian troops have taken possession of Pinos island, off the

Atlantic coast of Panama, about 50 miles west of Cape Tiburon. Even this is now denied.

Meanwhile the United States have been strengthening their naval and military forces at Panama. They have also sent William I. Buchanan, of New York, as American minister to Panama. Mr. Buchanan's appointment was confirmed by the Senate and he left at once for Panama. But on the 19th Senator Gorman moved a reconsideration on the ground that confirmation had been allowed inadvertently; in consequence of which, under the rules of the Senate, Mr. Buchanan's appointment now stands unconfirmed.

But the event of principal interest and importance regarding the Panama question is the carefully prepared speech delivered on the 17th by Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, in conditional criticism of the Administration. Mr. Hoar's speech is printed in full at page 291 of the Congressional Record for December 17th. The point he emphasized was not whether the Republic of Panama had been recognized prematurely by the Administration, but—

whether our Administration, knowing or expecting beforehand that a revolution was coming, so arranged matters that the revolution, whether peaceable or forcible, should be permitted to go on without interruption, and only took measures to stop the Republic of Colombia from preventing it. Did the President, or the Secretary of State, or any other department of our government, purposely prevent Colombia from anticipating and preventing a breach of the peace and a disturbance of the transit across the Isthmus by sending her troops there before it happened, and so virtually let the revolution take place, and say to Colombia, "You shall take no precautions to stop it?" Did we, in substance, say to Colombia, "We will not allow you to prevent a revolution in your province of Panama by moving your forces there" before it broke out?

After reviewing all the documents which the Administration had sent to the Senate, Mr. Hoar concluded that—

all our government, by its own statement, seems to have done in its anxiety that transit should not be disturbed was not to take measures that violence should not occur, but to take measures that violence should not be prevented. It performed its duty of keeping uninterrupted the transit across the Isthmus