

# SANTA CLAUS NOT A MYTH

## A ONE-ACT PLAY FOR YOUNG FOLKS

By Horace Varney

MRS. THORNTON

MR. THORNTON

MARTHA, MAUD AND AGNES (Twins), GRACE, ROBERT, Their Children

SANTA CLAUS, In Person

Martha is fourteen, Maud and Agnes about twelve, Grace about five, Robert about ten. Costumes pretty and modern. Traditional dress for Santa Claus.

[SCENE. Music and drawing-room attractively furnished. Fireplace center back, doors at right and left of it, cheerful fire. Piano down left. Small sofa right center turned to command view of fireplace. Window right, square-topped table stands near. Singing with piano heard before curtain rises. Curtain goes up as first stanza is being ended. Mrs. Thornton is discovered at piano, Mr. Thornton, Martha, Maud, Agnes, Grace, and Robert grouped about her, all singing.]

O, the sweet, glad bells, the merry, merry bells,  
    Ringing clear for Christmas.  
    Joy they bring,  
    While we sing,  
    Praising thee, O Christmas.

    Ring, we'll sing,  
    Praises wing  
    To that saint so jolly,  
Good Saint Nick, whose mission 'tis  
    To banish melancholy.

Now the bells more joyous ring,  
    Good Saint Nick is coming,  
    Reindeer's feet  
    Sharply beat,  
    The frosty air is humming.

O, the sweet, glad bells, the merry, merry bells,  
    Heralding rare pleasure,  
    Hasten night,  
    Day dawn bright,  
    Round with joy each measure.

O, the Christmas bells, the merry, merry bells,  
    Gladder yet are ringing,  
    On its way  
    Is the day  
    In whose praise we're singing.  
    Softly, softly, softly sing,  
    Tuneful bells in gladness ring.

[As Mrs. Thornton is about to rise there is a general call for another song.] Just one more! only one more, mamma! Please, mamma, please! [Mrs. Thornton, about to refuse, changes mind at a nod from Mr. Thornton.]

Mrs. Thornton. Very well, but what shall it be? I thought that you had sung all the Christmas songs you know.

Grace. Sing "A Jolly Good Fellow."

Mr. Thornton. [Drawing Grace to him.] Where did you hear of such a song?

Grace. Robert knows it.

Other Girls. Yes, and we know the refrains.

Mrs. Thornton. [Looking through pile of

music.] It is all right, it is a song about Santa Claus.

Mr. Thornton. [As Mrs. Thornton holds out music to him.] O, that?

Mrs. Thornton. Yes. Are you ready, Robert?

Robert. Yes'm. [Mrs. Thornton plays short introduction. Robert takes stand well down stage, others remain near piano and join in the refrains.]

In the Northland, you know,  
Where the ice is, and snow,  
Lives a jolly good fellow,  
    Kris Kringle by name.  
He is young, although old,  
And his laugh rings like gold,  
While his heart, long grown mellow,  
Keeps ever the same.

### REFRAIN.

There's a jolly good fellow,  
Whom you really should know,  
With a heart long grown mellow,  
And a beard white as snow,  
He is known as Kris Kringle  
By the young and the old;  
In cot, hall, field, and dingle  
Are his praises oft told.



"O, the sweet, glad bells."

Now jolly Kris Kringle,  
With bells all a-jingle,  
After swift deer he's speeding  
From Northland to Rose.  
He urges them faster,  
They give to their master,  
And their track, fast receding,  
Is lost in the snows.

## REFRAIN.

After swift deer he's speeding,  
With bells all a-jingle;  
It's a glad race they're leading  
For rare old Kris Kringle.  
They are proving their mettle,  
He greets them with singing,  
There's no pausing to fettle,  
Kris Kringle they're bringing.

Kris Kringle! Kris Kringle!  
Cot, hall, field, and dingle,  
With glad echoes resounding,  
Are praising thy name.  
They call thee good fellow,  
Tell how age doth mellow,  
And a lot more, redounding  
Some measure of fame.

## REFRAIN.

He is a good fellow,  
A jolly good fellow,  
His equal we doubt if ever you'll see.  
You may search field and dingle,  
But you'll find that Kris Kringle  
Stands quite by himself, no equal has he.

*Mrs. Thornton.* [Rising. Mr. Thornton takes Grace in his arms, who makes manifest signs of sleepiness. Robert moves, unnoticed, to fireplace, looking at fire, lost in thought.] That is all for to-night. It is nine o'clock. You know the rule for Christmas Eve is early to bed. [Crosses to door right of fireplace.] Martha, I want you to help me. [Exit. Martha follows immediately. Agnes and Maud hold whispered conversation near piano.]

*Mr. Thornton.* Well, is it to bed, Pet?

*Grace.* [Reply almost smothered by yawn.] Yes.

*Mr. Thornton.* That's pretty evident. [Crossing right.] O Robert, cold?

*Robert.* No, sir.



"I was thinking about Santa Claus."

*Mr. Thornton.* Dreaming?

*Robert.* No, sir, I was thinking about Santa Claus.

*Mr. Thornton.* Hum! He is a better subject for dreams. [Throws door open right of fireplace.] Come! finish your thoughts in bed. [Exit Robert.] Girls! remember it is Christmas Eve.

*The Girls.* Yes, sir. [Continuing conversation. Exit Mr. Thornton, Grace giving him a kiss as they are passing out. She has grown very sleepy.]

*Maud.* Did you hear Robert say it?

*Agnes.* Yes, I did.

*Maud.* Said that it is his belief that there is no Santa Claus?

*Agnes.* Yes. Said he'd want to see him before he'd take stock in him.

*Maud.* Isn't that terrible, not to believe in Santa Claus, when we know that he is just as real as—as papa is?

*Agnes.* Just. But I feel sure it is Billy Jones and Arthur Smith who have got Robert to thinking such things. I have heard them say lots of times that Santa Claus is all a make-believe.

*Maud.* So have I, and it isn't one bit nice in them, for Santa Claus is no make-believe; he is Santa Claus.

*Agnes.* Yes. [Mrs. Thornton returns.]

*Mrs. Thornton.* Why, girls, is this getting to bed early?

*Agnes.* We are going right away, mamma. [Kisses Mrs. Thornton.] Good night.

*Mrs. Thornton.* [Giving kiss.] Good night.

*Maud.* [Action similar.] Good night, mamma.

*Mrs. Thornton.* Good night, dear. [Exit Agnes and Maud door left of fireplace. Mrs. Thornton extinguishes light beside piano. Crosses right.] Let me see; O, the tree can stand on this. [Indicates table near window. Martha returns with seven stockings.]

*Martha.* Shall I hang up the stockings?

*Mrs. Thornton.* No, I will do it. [Receiving stockings.] Tell your father to bring in the tree if he has it ready. [Hanging stockings.]

*Martha.* What do you think I heard Agnes and Maud saying?

*Mrs. Thornton.* You will have to tell me.

*Martha.* Why, that Robert doubts there being a Santa Claus.

*Mrs. Thornton.* Robert?

*Martha.* Yes.

*Mrs. Thornton.* Robert has as much right to beliefs as any one of us. See if your father has the tree ready. [Exit Martha. Hangs last stocking. Crosses to table, which she makes ready to receive tree.] Robert is not the first one, and won't be the last, to express a doubt regarding a matter of faith. But doubts can never harm the truth. Santa Claus will continue to live long after those who have doubted his reality have gone. [Enter Mr. Thornton, door right of fireplace, with tree decorated with various ornaments and candles; moves toward table.]



*Mr. Thornton.* Where is it going? on this table?

*Mrs. Thornton.* [Helping with the tree.] Yes.

*Mr. Thornton.* It is about the prettiest tree we have ever had.

*Mrs. Thornton.* Yes, quite.

*Mr. Thornton.* Where are the presents going?

*Mrs. Thornton.* [Extinguishing a light over mantel.] The smaller things in the stockings, the others about the tree. [Continues busy here and there.]

*Mr. Thornton.* That's all right. Grace asked me on the way upstairs if I thought Santa Claus would bring a tree.

*Mrs. Thornton.* She prayed for one.

*Mr. Thornton.* Did she?

*Mrs. Thornton.* Yes, right after [extinguishes last light, throws curtains back from window, leaving room lighted by moon and firelight] she had said, "Give us this day our daily bread," she added, "And please, dear God, I want a Christmas tree."

*Mr. Thornton.* She will find that God answers prayer. Is everything all right?

*Mrs. Thornton.* Yes. I will look after the presents.

*Mr. Thornton.* By the way, what had come over Robert this evening? His mind is usually weighted with problems, but to-night he was more deeply absorbed than usual. He told me that he was thinking about Santa Claus.

*Mrs. Thornton.* The girls say that he doesn't believe Santa Claus is a real person.

*Mr. Thornton.* Robert is pretty young to be expressing doubts of that sort.

*Mrs. Thornton.* The matter had best be left to Santa Claus.

*Mr. Thornton.* Yes. [Clock strikes off stage.] What! half past ten?

*Mrs. Thornton.* Yes. We must finish and get to bed. [They pass out by door left of fireplace. Stage is left vacant for two or three seconds. Door right of fireplace is opened slightly. Closes. Opens a little wider. Closes. Opens sufficiently to see Robert's face. Almost closes, opens, Robert's head and shoulders appearing. Looks about. Satisfied that he is alone, enters, closing door with care. Moves about room with show of caution, looking everywhere that might serve as hiding place. Notes tree and stockings, also that there are no presents about. Looks up chimney flue, out of window, first scraping frost from glass. Stops by sofa, sits on edge. Ponders. Robert is in night-gown and slippers.]

*Robert.* [Rising.] One thing is certain, he hasn't been here yet [goes to fireplace, looking at clock], and it is after eleven o'clock. If he does come, he will find he is expected. But it's my opinion he won't come, that Santa Claus is all a myth anyhow. [Returns to sofa. Sits.] That's what Billy Jones says. Says he read about it in a book. If it was something that Billy just knew himself, perhaps I wouldn't believe it, but it was in a



"He hasn't been here yet."

book; things are true in books—at least they are in good books. Then Arthur Smith says that he knows that Santa Claus is all a make-believe, and Arthur never told a lie, not even a little one. His uncle over in France, where he stayed a whole year, told him that Santa Claus was all imagination, just a scheme to hoodwink little girls and boys with; very pretty fable, but no foundation for it. Arthur's uncle is a very great man. He's in a chamber of some sort, deputy, I think Arthur said. I know that mamma and papa say that Santa Claus comes from ever so far away; that he has a sleigh, drawn by a lot of reindeer, and a pack in it that contains presents for every good girl and boy in the world. [Fixing pillows in one corner of sofa.] Guess it must be a pretty big pack. Well, they say that he gets into every house on Christmas Eve, and that on Christmas morning the good children find the very things they wished for, either in stockings or on Christmas trees. [Fixing himself amongst pillows.] Now I'd believe my mother and father long before I would Billy Jones or Arthur Smith; but Billy didn't say so himself, it was in a book, and Arthur's uncle, who is a deputy something [yawns], told him. Anyhow I'm going to see [yawns] if Santa Claus [yawns] does fill the stockings and puts [yawns] the presents on the tree or— [prolonged yawn]. Dear! I wish he'd hurry, I [yawns] am—so—s-l-e-e-p-y. [Starts, looks toward window.] What was that? I was sure I heard bells. [Clock indicates that it is about to strike.] O it was the clock. [Clock strikes.] Quarter to twelve. He must come soon, if he's coming at all. I am going to fix myself comfortable

and pretend that I am asleep. [Lies down, eyes shut. Opens them two or three times, last with show of exertion. Raises head once as if he thought that he heard a noise. Falls sound asleep. Brief pause interrupted by noise of bells approaching rapidly. Noise ceases, brief silence interrupted by clock striking twelve, followed by Santa Claus singing, voice coming from outside of window. With repeat, voice moving, dies away.]

*Santa Claus.* [Singing off stage.]

Over the snows I've come;  
Swift as a thought I've flown,  
||: Hither, thither, and yon,  
Eager to serve mine own. :||

[Robert murmurs as if dreaming. Santa Claus comes on singing by door left of fireplace.]

#### ROBERT'S DREAM.

[Santa Claus disposes of pack in left center.]

That girl or boy sleeps well  
Who dreams of Christmas joys,  
And visions entertains  
Of a world filled with toys.

[As he continues he moves down front, crosses right, moves up, stopping by sofa.]

O'er housetops low and tall,  
Down chimneys shallow, deep,  
In cot and palace I  
Faith with the faithful keep.

First that I ask is love;  
Next, to be generous, kind;  
Lastly, unselfish deeds,  
Bearing others in mind.

#### REFRAIN [last stanza only].

Over the snows I've come,  
I've come;  
Swift as a thought I've flown,  
I've flown,  
Hither, thither, and yon,  
And yon,  
Eager to serve mine own,  
Mine own, mine own—  
Eager to serve—mine—own—

[Looking about, taking special note of stockings and tree.] They seem to be expecting me, but when they were having a new house built why couldn't they have thought to have one chimney made large enough to take me in? If some one hadn't forgotten to lock that side door, I should have been barred out altogether, and one family in Environville would have been greeted Christmas morning by empty stockings and a presentless tree. Well, now that I am here I must get to work; I haven't much time to spare.

*Robert.* [Restless, talks in sleep. Santa Claus interested on discovering him.] I—I only know what Billy Jones told me, and Arthur Smith said his uncle told—

*Santa Claus.* Here's a go if ever there was one. This boy started in to find out for himself if I am the real thing or merely a myth. Now he's dreaming about me, and he's not the first one. We'll see what comes of it. I must get to work, or day will catch me with a great deal not done. [Unfastening pack.] Good share of this is for the Thorn-tons.

*Robert.* [Restless mutters in a low tone unnoticed by Santa Claus. Suddenly sits bolt upright, speaks eagerly.] Yes, that's the song! It goes [Santa Claus approaches, greatly interested] this—who are you? [Draws back into corner of sofa.]

*Santa Claus.* Never you mind for the present who



"Who are you?"

I am. What about this song? How does it go? anything like this? [Hums a measure.] *Robert.* [All signs of fear departing.] O no, that isn't it. [Getting down.] But, do you sing?

*Santa Claus.* I leave that for others to say. I know a few tunes, and I try not to mar them. I also have a fair ear for new matter. Now, shall we have the song? Has it a refrain?

*Robert.* Yes, indeed, a very pretty one.

*Santa Claus.* Well, what is the song like?

*Robert.* It goes like this. [Hums air.] And the refrain goes this way [hums through].

*Santa Claus.* Very pretty, and it seems to me I know it.

*Robert.* You do?

*Santa Claus.* I think so.

*Robert.* Shall we sing it?

*Santa Claus.* By all means.

*Robert.*

Of trees in the greenwood  
There's many a score,  
Beech, birches, and maples,  
And such a lot more,  
And not a few stately,  
And all of them fair,  
But the Christmas tree it  
Finds none to compare.



REFRAIN.

'Tis the tree that I love,  
Aye, better than all,  
Though some be more stately,  
Widespreading and tall;  
But of all of the trees,  
Yes, count them all fair,  
None with the Christmas tree  
Can ever compare.

There's the pine and the palm,  
Each lofty and grand,  
And the tough-fibered oak,  
That can storms withstand,  
And the elm and the ash,  
The spruce, always green,  
But in first place of all  
The Christmas tree's seen.

REFRAIN.

'Tis the tree that is first,  
Wherever you go,  
And the people you find  
Of Christmas time know,  
Though some be more stately,  
Widespreading and tall,  
'Tis the cross-bearing tree  
Is first of them all.

*Santa Claus.* A very pleasing song, well sung—by you, sir.

*Robert.* But you sing very well, sir.

*Santa Claus.* [Expresses whistle without sound. Proceeds as if remark had not been heard.] It contains many sentiments that I feel bound to indorse. Tell me, are you familiar with this? [Sings.]

There is no one half so jolly  
As jolly old Saint Nick.

*Robert.* O yes, sir; I know it well.

*Santa Claus.* Then join me in the refrains.

There is no one half so jolly  
As jolly old Saint Nick;  
His home's in the Northland, O!  
You may think to catch him napping,  
But you must know a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

REFRAIN.

He's a jolly, jolly fellow,  
Is jolly old Saint Nick,  
Who comes from the Northland, O!  
And he may be caught a-napping  
Should you know of a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

Why not strive to be as jolly  
As this jolly old saint  
Who hails from the Northland, O?  
You will find 'tis worth your trying,  
So try without restraint,  
As they do in the Northland, O!

REFRAIN.

We will strive to be as jolly  
As jolly old Saint Nick,  
Hailing from the Northland, O!  
And you'll never find us napping,  
For if it is a trick  
It's something we want to know.

*Santa Claus.* [With Robert, in conclusion.]

O, he is a jolly fellow,  
Is jolly old Saint Nick,  
Coming from the Northland, O!  
But if you should catch him napping  
You'll have to know a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

[Santa Claus returns to pack, from which he quickly takes several parcels. Robert follows wonderingly, wonder increasing.]

*Robert.* Why, you are Santa Claus himself.

*Santa Claus.* Ha! ha! ha! [continues re-

moving parcels] ho! ho! ho! I should guess as much.

*Robert.* But I never once suspected you, and we've been singing about you, too.

*Santa Claus.* Well, that is rather odd. But here I am, and you can see for yourself that I am what I am.

*Robert.* And you are really, truly Santa Claus?

*Santa Claus.* In every particular.

*Robert.* I want to shake your hand.

*Santa Claus.* [As they shake hands.] So you shall, and I am only too glad to shake yours.

*Robert.* I had begun to think that you were a mere invention, not real at all, but now I know that you are just as real as anybody.

*Santa Claus.* [Continues removing parcels from pack.] Just, and possibly a little more so. When you come to know more people you will find that some are as unreal as unreality itself.

*Robert.* Yes, sir. Are all those things for us?

*Santa Claus.* Yes, and I am going to ask you in a moment to assist me. [Removes more packages from pack.]

*Robert.* Is everything in there for us?

*Santa Claus.* Not everything. There are some things for Billy Jones and Arthur Smith.

*Robert.* But—

*Santa Claus.* Yes, I know, they say that I am a myth and pretend not to believe in me



"Are all those things for us?"

at all, but they are going to change their minds, and believe in me just as strongly as you do.

*Robert.* Are you going to talk with them? Can't either one of them sing.

*Santa Claus.* I can't just tell what I shall do. [Placing pack by door left of fireplace.] Now I want your assistance. We are going to fill these stockings. Let me see. O, yes; this is the way they run: Mamma's, papa's, Martha's, Maud's, and these belong to Agnes, Grace, and Robert.

*Robert.* Why, how did you know? I couldn't have said right off.

*Santa Claus.* Well, I have to be able to or I should never get my work done. The packages are all marked. The small ones go into the stockings, the things that the stockings won't hold go on and about the tree. [Presents are disposed of rapidly, Robert rendering much assistance.]

*Robert.* There are lots of things. This bat and ball for me?

*Santa Claus.* Yes.

*Robert.* And these skates and fur cap?

*Santa Claus.* Yes.



"I saw him. He's just as real as you, mamma."

*Robert.* Is this a real seal skin for mamma?

*Santa Claus.* Yes.

*Robert.* Can these dolls for Agnes and Maud really talk?

*Santa Claus.* Try them.

*Robert.* How funny! it said "Mamma," and this one says "Good morning."

*Santa Claus.* They are quite progressive dolls.

*Robert.* I should think so. O, here are golf sticks for papa and for Martha, and a new tennis set, and books for all of us. I like books, books that tell about things and about people who do things. Don't you?

*Santa Claus.* I must confess that I like a good story well told.

*Robert.* Why, here is a doll for Grace that walks. Isn't that queer? Santa Claus, you are a very wonderful fellow.

*Santa Claus.* Thank you. My attempts are pretty feeble at best. I am forever planning things that never get done, and they are the very things that I feel sure would create the

greatest wonder. Is everything disposed of properly?

*Robert.* Yes, sir.

*Santa Claus.* Stockings full to overflowing?

*Robert.* Yes, sir.

*Santa Claus.* That tree almost looks burdened. Well, I am done here for this year. What do you say to another song?

*Robert.* O, the very thing. Will it be something that I know?

*Santa Claus.* Yes, indeed. You will sit on the sofa, I will sing the verses, and you join in singing the refrains. Are you quite ready?

*Robert.* Yes, sir, but you have not said what the song is going to be.

*Santa Claus.* That's so. It's the "Santa Claus Lullaby."

*Robert.* I know that well.

*Santa Claus.* For a boy who had quite come to the conclusion that Santa Claus is a myth you make a pretty good stand in his favor.

*Robert.* I am very sorry, sir, that I ever thought of doubting you. Now that I know you are a real person, I shall tell everybody all about you.

*Santa Claus.* I am sure you will. Are you ready for the lullaby?

*Robert.* [Seating himself upon sofa amid pillows.] Yes, sir.

*Santa Claus.* Then I will begin.

When the Northland is covered with ice and snow,  
Old Santa Claus into the night will go.

With his pack and deer—

It's a sight that's queer—

He'll speed o'er the housetops though tempests blow.

#### REFRAIN.

Then sleep till the dawning shall waken thee,

Sleep, my child,

Thy dreams be fair,

||: For out of his store there is sure to be

A gift most rare, my child, for thee.:||

Throughout the long night he keeps to his way,

Turns not aside, nor in thought does he stray,

Till, empty his pack,

His face turning back,

He speeds away home with break of day.

#### REFRAIN.

[Robert is sleeping before refrain is ended, having settled himself much as before.]

Sleep on, my child; may thy dreaming be sweet!

Sleep in peace,

Good angels tend.

||: The morning that's coming on wings most fleet

Some grace will lend for joys complete.:||

*Santa Claus.* [Contemplating Robert for a moment in silence.] Sleep on, little man; I have troubled your dreams long enough, but only that you might know. [Goes to tree, then to mantel, then glances about room.] Nothing is forgotten. I feel as if I have been dreaming myself. I begin to think that I have overstayed my time a little. It's a comfortable home, surely. [Robert murmurs and moves slightly.] More dreams. Peace, little man. [A rooster, distant, is heard crowing.] What can that bird be thinking about? It can't be [clock off stage strikes



four] it is four o'clock. [Sound of bells made by animals shaking themselves.] The deer are getting restless. No wonder. I must hustle now if I never did before, or day will catch me with my work not done. [Exit with pack by door left of fireplace, singing.]

There is no one half so jolly  
As jolly old Saint Nick;  
His home's in the Northland, O!  
You may think to catch him napping,  
But you must know a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

[Last two lines voice sounds from outside window. Then sleigh bells ring overhead, their sound dying rapidly away. Robert, restless, mutters half audibly, suddenly springs to his feet on sofa singing, as if it were a part of dream, continuing thus till Mrs. Thornton causes him to waken.]

*Robert.*

O, he is a jolly, jolly fellow,  
Is jolly old Saint Nick,  
Coming from the Northland, O!  
But if you would catch him napping,  
You'll have to know a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

[Mrs. Thornton, in a skirt and dressing sack, rushes on by door right of fireplace as Robert begins to speak.] Ah! Santa Claus, I heard you. There's one more verse; let's have that too.

*Mrs. Thornton.* [Arms about Robert.] Robert! Robert! what ever is the matter? [Others come on, Agnes and Maud by door left of fireplace. Mr. Thornton, in dressing gown and slippers, carries Grace, who is in

night clothes. Martha, Maud, and Agnes wear loose gowns, or skirts and loose sacks. Mr. Thornton turns on lights, and after a moment the children are interesting themselves in contents of stockings and presents on and about tree.] Are you ill, Robert, or have you been dreaming?

*Robert.* I haven't been dreaming. It is Santa Claus, mamma. He is—well, he was here, and we were singing and having a fine time.

*Mrs. Thornton.* Robert, you have been dreaming. But why are you here?

*Robert.* I came to see Santa Claus, and I saw him. He is just as real as you, mamma, or anybody, as for that matter. We talked and we sang, and he left us all these things.

*Mr. Thornton.* There is certainly plenty of evidence to prove that Santa Claus has been here.

*Robert.* O, he has been here, for I saw him, and we sang:

There is no one half so jolly  
As jolly old Saint Nick;  
His home's in the Northland, O!  
You may think to catch him napping,  
But you must know a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

REFRAIN. [All singing.]

He's a jolly, jolly fellow,  
Is jolly old Saint Nick,  
Who comes from the Northland, O!  
And he may be caught a-napping,  
Should you know of a trick  
That isn't known in Northland, O!

*Curtain.*



## FOR THE NEW YEAR

I TENDERLY review my page of years,  
And sadly, sadly note each blot and stain;  
Some lines are straight and true, some blurred with tears,  
Others are marred and crooked, and I fain  
Would hide them from the curious public gaze—  
Those sad mementos of my younger days.

But hopefully I turn toward the blank space—  
The fair, clean page whereon I still may write;  
I raise my head, and with a smile I face  
My task; I'll leave a record white;  
I'll profit by past errors, and the rest  
Will leave to Fate; I'll simply do my best.

—*Daisy Maytum Kelso.*