

OUR YOUNG FOLKS

Santa's Annual Visit



Down the chimney he comes creeping;
Through the nursery goes peeping;
Flutters the stockings, great and small,
Then proceeds to fill 'em all.

In the boys' go bags and staves,
Sometimes books and brand new slates;
Dolls and tin and toy soldiers,
Till they spill upon the floor.

In the girls' are trinkets rare,
Waddling dolls with natural hair!
Picture books, and ribbons bright,
Till they fill the stockings tight.

When with one last look about,
Santa stealthily steals out,
Jumps into his sleigh that's near,
And comes no more 'till the next year.

ANNIE JAMES.



A Calm Witness.

A lawyer was cross-examining a witness with a view to getting him muddled in his testimony. The following questions and answers occurred:

"Did you see the plaintiff faint a short time ago?"

"Yes, sir."

"People turn pale when they faint, don't they?"

"No, sir, not always."

"What, do you mean to tell me that a person can faint and not turn pale? Did you ever hear of such a case?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you ever see such a case?"

"I did, sir."

"When?"

"About a year ago, sir."

"Who was it?"

"I can't say, sir."

"The lawyer excused the witness."

Lottie's Strange Christmas Eve Experience.

BY MAUD WALKER.

Lottie Andrews was an only child, but she was not what that fact might imply in most cases. She was not a spoiled child. She was a sweet-tempered, generous, affectionate little girl, 12 years of age, possessing as sunny a disposition as one could wish to find in any little girl. Her home was a comfortable one, where happiness reigned. Her papa and mamma were her chums, as well as being inseparable comrades to each other. Thus you will see that the Andrews' home was an ideal one.

During the preparatory days that ushered in the Christmas time, Lottie, her mamma and papa were very busy making plans for the poor, arranging that the hearts of many little ones should be made glad with a gay Christmas morning—little ones who, but for the generosity of the Andrews family, would doubtless spend a wretched day. Lottie had helped with the buying of all the toys and pretty warm garments that had been sent in baskets and boxes to the houses of many poor families. And when, on the last day preceding Christmas Eve, Lottie discovered another poor family, where two little children lived, two little ones whose holiday season held no promise for them, she ran home to her mother, saying:

"Mamma, it's too late now to get into the shops to make many purchases, but we just must fix up a nice box for two little children that I came across today while going down to our dressmaker's. They were standing in front of a shop window looking so longingly at a few cheap toys displayed there. I stopped and talked to them a minute, asking them their names and what they expected Santa Claus would bring to them on Christmas. The little girl, not quite so old as I, said, 'Oh, we're so poor that Santa Claus never comes to our house. He can't find it, I guess, for there's no fireplace big enough for him to come down through. You see, we have just a little stove, and it's always so smoky that if he tried coming down the stove pipe he'd strangle. We never get anything from Santa Claus.' Then I got the little ones to take me to their home, which is just two rooms at the top of one of those dreadful tenement-houses down by the river. I didn't go up, for I knew you would not want me to do so unless you were along with me, but I got the number and street, as well as learning the door on which they lived. Their name is Small—Sammy and Lena. Small—said that her grand-mother keeps house for them, and they said they didn't know what their father works at, but that he sleeps mostly during the day and goes out at night."

"Yes, dearie, you do perfectly right in not going up in one of those tenement houses," said Mrs. Andrews, "for one never can tell what sort of persons might be there. And you did right in taking pity on the two little ones, and in being so thoughtful as to get their names and address. We'll fix up a box and have John deliver it there on the night of Christmas Eve. But let me see, haven't we old toys and playthings enough about the house to fill a good-sized box? You know the closet in your playroom is filled

to overflowing with toys which I will no longer use, so we would better give them to some little ones who will be happy to own them. And I'll put in some cakes, nuts, candies and a glass of jelly. Then, if you think the little girl could make use of some of the things you have outgrown, we'll make up a nice box of them for her."

"Oh, that's just the thing to do," cried Lottie. "Let's go to my playroom at once and make a nice selection of toys for those children. I'm so glad, mamma, that you always bought a certain number of boys' toys for me, for now I'll have a nice assortment to give to little Sammy. When you were buying them for my nursery you thought I was to have them there for my little boy friends to play with when visiting me. But now they are going to do a better service than that of entertaining well-to-do little boys who have toys and to spare in their own homes."

And so the greater part of the evening was spent by Lottie and her mother in making a selection of pretty and useful toys and garments to fill two good-sized boxes to be sent on the following day to Sammy and Lena Small, top floor of a rickety old tenement-house on the banks of a dark, still-looking river filled with warehouses, bathhouses and tenement-

houses of hard reputation. After the boxes had been duly packed, unlabeled and sealed they were left in Lottie's bedroom, where, from the house-maid, she got them on the morning to carry to their destination. When Lottie's mamma had her good night, and went to her own room, it being Lottie's bed time, how long Lottie had been there she did not know, but sometime during the night she was awakened from her slumber by a noise in the room as of some one moving about. Being still half asleep, and coming from dreamland, where she had been calling on Santa Claus and assisting him in assorting toys for poor children, Lottie opened her eyes to behold a figure which—in her sleepy condition she mistook for old St. Nicholas. Then, sitting up in bed, and smiling in a friendly way for the room was lighted by a street lamp near the corner, which shone in through the window. Lottie said in a cordial tone: "Ah, Santa Claus, I'm so glad to meet you in person. And now that we've got the present question for the poor children all settled I shall take it upon myself to see that our own, John, delivers every box before tomorrow night at 12 o'clock."

The strange figure came quite close to Lottie and bent over the bed. "Now,

look here, kid! Not a word outen you, or I'll stop your mouth so's it won't open for awhile. And the terrible man held a revolver up that Lottie might see it. "I'm here to help myself to what I can find, an' I'm not in the humor to be fooled with 'I understand'!" Lottie nodded her head, but did not dare to open her mouth for fear of the terrible weapon. "I belong to that class of pe-er-ee what's got to live by their wits or sleight of hand," the man continued. "And it's up to me to make you rich for ever yer contributions to me. I've got kids of me own what's got to eat. It's Christmas time for you—yea, the rich, but where's the Christmas for my little ones? So you just keep a tongue to yer cheek an' I'll help myself."

Lottie sat bolt upright now, for she was fully awake, and realized that a burglar was in her room. But she had no idea of screaming for help; she knew that would be the wrong thing to do. So she sat very quiet, watching the man as he opened the drawers and closets, looking for valuables. As he stooped to examine the contents of a little wooden chest in the room he struck his foot against one of the boxes that was packed and labeled to be sent to the poor family down by the river the following day. With a

muttered curse for the foot he struck against the box seemed to be crippled—the man turned to look at the object of offense. Quickly his eye caught the plainly written address on the side of the box. It was: "Sammy and Lena Small, top floor the Luck Treatment-house, River street." The man's eyes grew wide and his hands clutched convulsively. Putting the revolver in his pocket, he bent still closer to the box, reading over and over the address written thereon. Then, turning his dogged eyes on Lottie, he whispered hoarsely: "What's this mean, kid?" And he pointed toward the address on the box.

"It's a box of Christmas things for a dear little boy and girl who live at the place named on the box," said Lottie, surprised to find that she could talk without fear. In fact, while the man was looking at the box so intently all fear had gone from Lottie's mind, and she felt that she could talk to the burglar as she would to anyone less dangerous.

"What do you know of them kids?" asked the man, his hands closing over the box tenderly. "Them kids are mine—MINE—do you know that, little grand lady? Yea, Sammy an' Lena Small are mine, the children of a common law-breaker." His voice trembled as he spoke and he turned his eyes away from Lottie's. Then he continued: "I hadn't always bin a bad sort, little grand lady, I hadn't. I got me foot crushed in a factory. Then I lost me job. After that I couldn't git work, with this thing in the way." And he pointed to the crippled foot. "Then times got awful with me—me old mother an' me little Sammy an' Lena with nothing to eat an' no money in me pocket. I got desperate, I did. Says I to myself: 'Let's go an' take it from the rich. They don't care if we starve. So let's take our share of what's hoarded up in their fine homes.' An' so I go an' does it. I creeps into houses an' takes what valuable I can find. It buys bread and fire for me old mother an' me little Sammy an' Lena. But I hadn't a real bad sort, little grand lady, an' when I see that box all packed an' ready to be sent to me own little kids I says to myself: 'If there's some rich as has a heart. An' I don't intend to take another thing from this house. All I want is this box what's to carry Christmas into Sammy's an' Lena's little hearts.'"

The man hugged the box as though it were the body of a beloved child. His voice broke in sobs, and he bent his face on his breast.

Lottie crept from her bed and went softly to the burglar's side. "Poor man," she said, "I'm not afraid of you, since I know you are the father of Sammy and Lena Small. You are not doing right now, but I'm sure you'll be a good man again if—if someone helps you to do so. Please take the box—and also that one over by the sofa, for they are both for Sammy and Lena and go home at once. Tomorrow is the day on which Sammy and Lena must have their presents—Christmas Eve—and you shall be Santa Claus yourself. And tomorrow you must come here again, for I shall tell my

mamma about you and she'll see that you get some honest work to do." A frightened look came into the man's face. "Oh, no, no, kid, don't tell yer mother about me, she'd call in the cops an' have me plucked. And that would be awful on—Sammy and Lena an' me old mother."

"Oh, you do not know my mother, poor nun," said Lottie. "She'll be too glad to help you back into the right way again. My mother is a good woman, you may depend on that. But you don't stop to consider how much worse it is for Sammy and Lena and your old mother when you are doing as you are taught than if you were really helped by the police. There's always the danger and the sin, you know, sir."

The burglar looked into Lottie's clear blue eyes, his own eyes taking on a milder expression. "You are a real GRAND little lady, a little lady with a HEART," he said. "If all folks were like you there'd be no such men as me. I'll go home an' carry along the boxes so's to have a Christmas for my little ones. An' tomorrow I'll come back to talk with yer mother. She's a good woman, an' I can trust her to do something to help me. Only a good woman could have such a little girl as you are."

"Yea, you come back tomorrow, and you shall be assisted in finding honest work," said Lottie in a determined voice. "And now I'll let you out of the house by the front door so if a policeman on our beat sees you with the boxes he'll not be suspicious. I give them to you."

And the following day the man whom Lottie had so miraculously turned from the path of wickedness into the path of right returned to find Lottie's mother full of deep interest in his case. And before the week was ended the father of Sammy and Lena Small had found honest employment as janitor in the home of the Andrews, with comfortable living rooms for his old mother and little ones. And so he goes about his work earnestly, he repents to himself every little while: "And a little child shall lead them."



JIMMY'S CHRISTMAS EVE VISION

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They were standing in front of a shop window, looking so longingly at a few cheap toys

A Christmas Memory.

(With apologies to Alice Cary.)

Of all the beautiful pictures
On Childhood's Christmas's wall
Is one of an evergreen Christmas tree
That standeth broad and tall;
In whose very topmost branches
A blue-eyed, dolly swain,
While lower down to a friendly bough
A teddy bearlet clings;
And there quite close to Teddy
Hangs a soldier boy of tin;
A drum, with sticks expanded,
To make a warlike din;
A life with wondrous music
Quite hid'd'n away inside;
A sled so strong and splendid
That at least four boys may ride;
A picture book of fables,
An engine that will run;
A top piano with real keys,
A foot chest and a gun;
And from the gay, green branches,
Feathered as ribbons bright,
Swing strings of soft white popcorn
That glisten in the light,
And everywhere hangs candy
For children, great and small,
So, of all the Childhood's memories,
This seemeth the best of all.

MAUD WALKER.

and friends, I have decided to let you all rest through this busy season and take an airship in which to do my traveling. The children know their hearts are now so numerous that it behooves me to make all possible speed in visiting them. "How were grand days, I greet you. But you could not do that now, old friend. So you shall rest this Christmas and I shall try the airship. If it fails to be successful, I shall return to my old and trusted reindeer and never again desert them."

Then Santa Claus bid each reindeer an affectionate farewell, saying that the airship would be completed and delivered to him on the following evening and that he would seek the toys and be off as soon as he could do so, giving

himself plenty of time to make the journey to earth in the event of any unexpected delay through accident.

The following evening the reindeer watched with many misgivings the preparations going on in the great stable yard for Santa's annual earth visit. A great number were tied there a monster with horns, wings and gapes, a monster that looked a heart for a soul for the work he had. And the reindeer who had always felt such pleasure in their work shook their antlers sadly, saying: "What does an airship know about children? If Santa cries out to 'Hurry up, my airship, I shall be late at the houses of my little friends if we don't get a move on us, do you think the He-lose-thing will understand and respond as we always did? No, no, its wings will not go the faster, nor will it fly back. 'Aye, aye, good master; we'll fly faster than the wind, for the little ones shall not be disappointed.'"

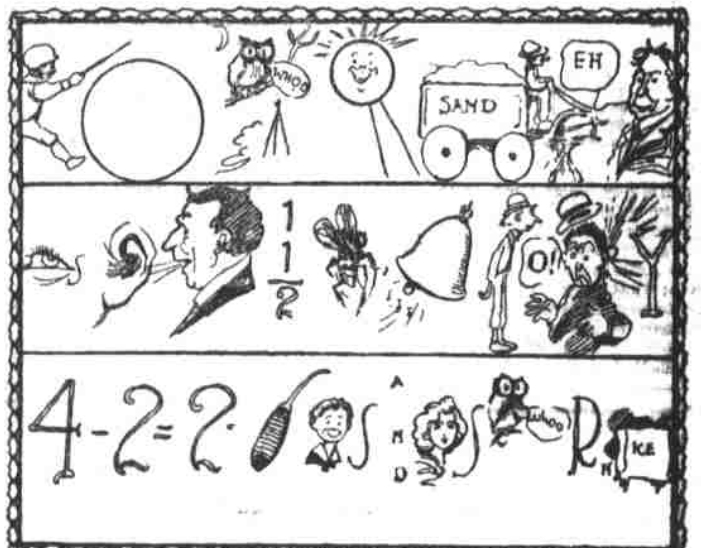
About 6 o'clock, by the world's time, old Santa Claus, with his thousands of toys done up in bags and boxes, got into the airship and started outward at a pretty good speed. But soon he came into contrary winds that carried him far from his desired destination, for they took his airship right to the North Pole. And what did Santa want to go there for? There wasn't a human being with in thousands of miles of the spot, let alone the thought of a child with a Christmas stocking hanging beside the fireplace. Santa tried vainly to guide the airship rightly, but as the reindeer had said, the thing did neither heart nor

soul it was only a MACHINE. And so the time sped by and Santa found himself in a terrible dilemma. He used every means to make his airship fly either eastward or toward his own realm above the clouds, but nothing had got caught in a regular wind circle which swept like a hurricane about the North Pole, going in one direction all the time round and round, like a spinning top.

Just as Santa Claus was about to resign himself to the terrible fate which seemed inevitable, there was a sound of sleigh bells coming through the air. As Santa came round toward the south in his revolution about the Pole he looked landward, and there there there he saw his own 20 reindeer coming at a speed he had never before witnessed. To them was hitched his dear old sleigh, the one he had used so many, many, many years to carry the thousands of toys to earth. But how was he Santa to stop this machine, this terrible airship in its whirl? It was in the strong current of the wind and could not get out of it.

But while he was trying to solve this new serious problem old Puggin Fastfoot reared in the air, caught the edge of the airship basket from old Puggin Fastfoot's antlers and away it went in its wild whirl around the North Pole, where

Christmas Rebus.



doubtless it still swings round and round, but I will continue to do so until some great explorer goes there and stops it.

Christmas Fun.

HIS IDEA.
Willie—Say, Nat, let's buy pop a hole for Christmas.
Nattie—Why do you want to buy him a hole?
Willie—'Cause I heard me some say who wanted him to turn over a new leaf.

PUZZLED BY DISCRIMINATION.
Little Sambo—Mamma, kin Santa Claus see in de dahn, same as a cat?
His Mamma—I dunno, chile. What makes you a picion dat he could?
Little Sambo—He sebber makes no mistakes an' gibe me some of dem rocky horses an' steam julfines like what de white chileen gibe.

GENEROUS FATHER.
Dobbins—Given any thought to your boy's Christmas gift yet?
Hobbins—Why, yea I've thought up a splendid idea, but it would be just my luck to have no know Christmas time.
Dobbins—Oh! A soid, sbt!
Hobbins—No, I thought I might bid him a snow man.

Never, never play with fire,
Never tell the pussy's tail,
Never touch ma's pie,
Then when Nanny comes around
With his bag of toys
For the best of boys.

Conundrums.

When is a soldier like beef?
When in quarters.

When is a clock like a dismantled man?
When striking.

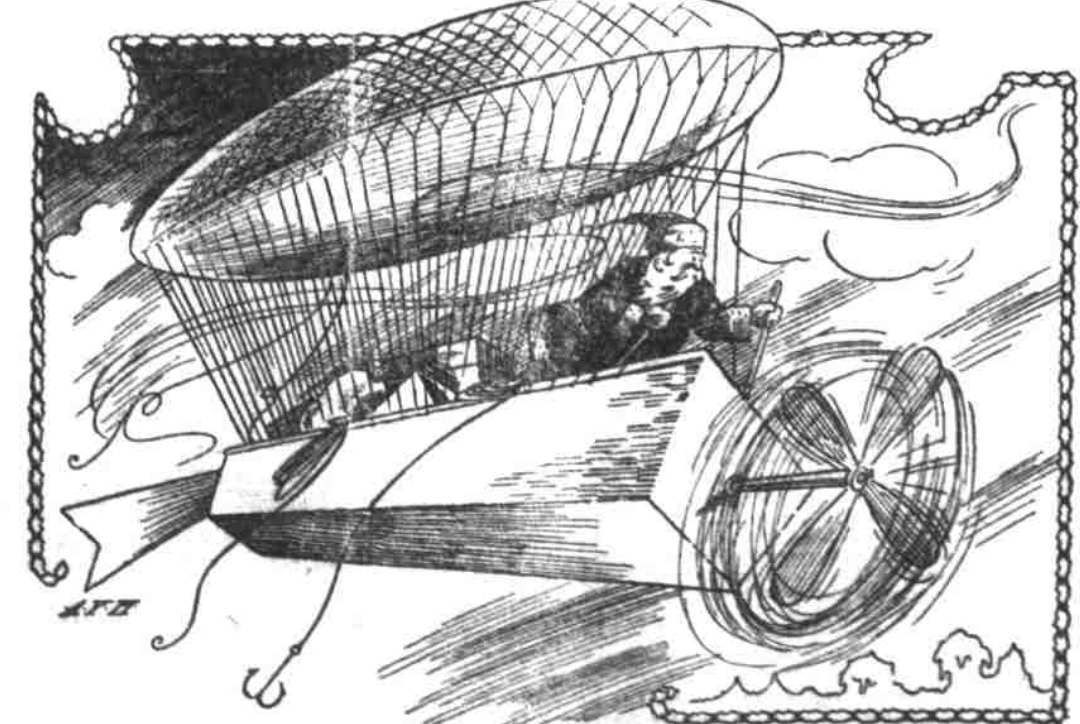
Why is a widow like a gardener?
Because she is to be found in weeds.

When is a balloon like an atom?
When out of sight.

How a Tragedy Was Averted in Santa's Realm.

A STORY FOR THE WEE TOTS, BY HELENA DAVIS.

There was great sadness in Santa Claus' realm. It had been learned by the old and faithful reindeer that the fond mother had determined to try making his Christmas journey in an airship. He—Santa—had conceived this bit of shocking news to one of the inner circle, a member of his cabinet—a cabinet composed of the most celebrated toy-makers in the realm. And, strange to say, this member of the inner circle had approved of Santa's plan. And then the story had leaked out, just as all stories that are intended to be kept secret do leak out. First it was whispered among the factory workers; then it reached the stables, where the reindeer—20 strong—overheard the stable hands discussing it. And the way of the wise of those poor old and faithful reindeer! For the first time in the life of Santa Claus he was to forsake them—forsake them and go traveling in a new-fangled thing that was named "Airship." The oldest reindeer of the 20 acted as spokesman after the first horrible news had been digested by them. "Well, my counterparts," he said, shaking his huge antlers, "if our old and beloved master, Santa Claus, has decided that we can no longer be of use to him, we must make the best of us and a repent. I for one cannot find it within my heart to condemn our master. In all things he tries to be just. It may be that his duties are growing; that his territory is extending; that the little ones on the earth are multiplying so rapidly that no longer can we carry him on his rounds as formerly. But let us be assured that when the time comes for Santa Claus to take his



The thing had got caught in a regular wind circle which swept like a hurricane about the North Pole.