

he heard Nannie close the front door, he looked out again. They were gone.

There were no more tears in him. He went back to the playroom, dumbly, and sat down among his toys. The sight of the fire-crackers gave him a sickening feeling. He began to set up his soldiery as mechanically as an older person would turn from grief to an accustomed task.

But weeping had made him hungry, and he deserted his wars to look out a side window at the neighboring fire-hall clock. Then, from the window, he went to a wall of colored pictures which Frankie and he had cut from the "Christmas Graphic" and pinned up on the plaster; and, at last, he began to wander from picture to picture, "playing showman" as Frankie and he had done.

He was before a picture of Nelson at Trafalgar, glowing with an imagined eloquence which did not shape itself in words at all, and swaying a huge public with emotion—(let his father beat him then)—when suddenly he saw Miss Margaret sitting in the front row of his audience.

The audience vanished. Don had found for himself that strange companion of so many solitary children, an imaginary playmate.

He made a round of the pictures with her, played Imprisoned Princess and the Game of War, and took her on a tour of the empty house. He showed her the post in the attie where he mailed his letters to Santa Claus, and he assured her that Santa Claus never failed to answer them. He took her to his