

"If you with an engine, strong, trusty and tried,
And engineer skillful and brave for a guide,
Will take me this night to Chicago away,
And land me ere dawn of the next Christmas day,
Then I with all people my kingdom throughout,
Will honor the name of the Rock Island Route."

Soon over the wire, in the clear midnight hour,
Comes answer as noiseless as dew on the flower,
"With our Silver Engine, one hundred and nine,
The pride of the nation and boast of our line,
We'll land you in safety, ere dawn of the day,
In Chicago, just five hundred long miles away.
'Tis a feat that no man ere attempted to do,
But we'll give you an engineer worthy and true;
And if Johnnie Hill, with the hundred and nine,
Cannot take you the distance in that length of time,
There's not man or engine this great land throughout
That can do what you ask of The Rock Island Route."

As light summer clouds fly before the fierce blast,
The woodland, the hills and the valleys fly past,
"The deep tangled wild wood," the home on the plain
Are lost to the view in the flight of the train.
The bridges—the prairies—it darts quickly o'er,
Now hid in the forest, now skimming the shore,
It speeds madly on, and is lost to the sight,
As it flies o'er the rail in the dark silent night.
Now hark! hear the rumble, the long sullen roar
Like waves of the ocean that beat on the shore,
It dashes through towns, where people in fright,
Rush forth from their homes in the dead hour of night
To talk and to wonder; but wonder in vain,
At the cause of the runaway passenger train.
Yet on, through the dim and now quiet street,
With roar like the tramp of a half million feet,
It speeds, until just as the clock tolls out five
Within the great depot on time it arrives."

Soon sleigh with presents loaded, the reindeers from the train,
Stand waiting, now impatient to speed o'er land again.
Santa Claus he gives a whistle, then they swiftly dash away,
The night winds 'round re-echoing the words they hear him say:
"Oh! 'Great Rock Island Railroad,' may power be ever thine,
And safety, joy and comfort be where ere thy headlights shine;
Peace be on earth, good will to men, and to earth's children dear,
A merry, merry Christmas, a joyous, glad New Year."

'Twas Christmas Day: the merry bells rang out in early morn,
Proclaiming joy unto the world, another Christmas born.
The sun sank slowly in the west, in tints of brightest gold,
The air was filled with childish laugh, as Christmas tales were told;
And all the day, round firesides bright, from river to the lake,
Was told the story of the ride that Santa Claus did take.

✎ If our young readers will write to JAMES SOUTAR, the Rock Island Agent at Chatham, he will send them] Maps and Printed Matter descriptive of the route which Santa Claus took on his memorable ride.