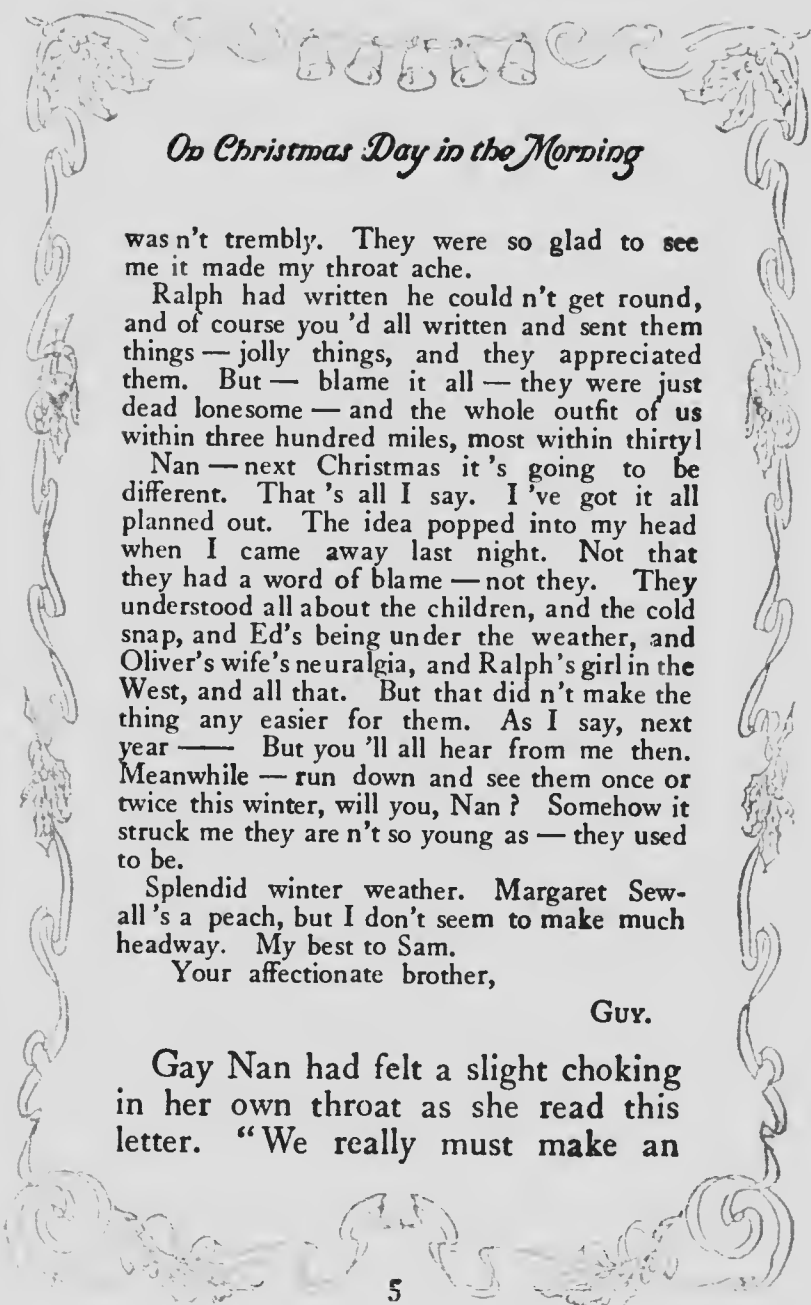




On Christmas Day in the Morning

was n't trembly. They were so glad to see me it made my throat ache.

Ralph had written he could n't get round, and of course you 'd all written and sent them things — jolly things, and they appreciated them. But — blame it all — they were just dead lonesome — and the whole outfit of us within three hundred miles, most within thirty!

Nan — next Christmas it's going to be different. That's all I say. I've got it all planned out. The idea popped into my head when I came away last night. Not that they had a word of blame — not they. They understood all about the children, and the cold snap, and Ed's being under the weather, and Oliver's wife's neuralgia, and Ralph's girl in the West, and all that. But that did n't make the thing any easier for them. As I say, next year — But you 'll all hear from me then. Meanwhile — run down and see them once or twice this winter, will you, Nan? Somehow it struck me they are n't so young as — they used to be.

Splendid winter weather. Margaret Sewall's a peach, but I don't seem to make much headway. My best to Sam.

Your affectionate brother,

Guy.

Gay Nan had felt a slight choking in her own throat as she read this letter. "We really must make an