

The Little Ones.

Bird Notes.

Our teacher makes us sing the scale,
All sitting in a row,
It's up the staff and down again,
Do, re, mi, fa, sol, do!

And oh, I grow so tired of it
I long to run away,
To find the flowers and hear the birds,
And jump and shout and play.

There are no staffs in out-door land,
No do's and re's and mi's,
And yet there's always music sweet
From all the shrubs and trees.

One day I ran away from school—
Oh, I was bad, I know—
Off to the fields and woods and
streams,
Where ferns and flowers grow.

And I was in a lovely place,
And picking flowers dear,
When, oh, I heard the sweetest songs,
Of birds so high and clear;

And looking up, I saw a sight—
A sight that made me laugh;
I saw do, mi, sol, la, si, do,
Upon an airy staff!

The Fairies' Tree.

Very early on Christmas morning Doosey crept out of bed and tiptoed to Aunt Horton's parlor. There was a gas fireplace there where he had hung a stocking just before he went to bed. Doosey wondered if its chimney really led out to the roof. Through the night he felt sure he heard the gallop of the reindeers' hoofs, then Santa Claus' big hearty "Gee haw!" Aunt Horton had said there was no such thing as Santa Claus, and Christmas gifts were nonsense. Doosey was only seven, still he remembered his dear mother's stories of Santa Claus, he remembered two stockings stuffed full and a Christmas tree, then stories and songs in the firelight, and a tear rolled down Doosey's cheeks as he groped about in the darkness. He caught hold of his stocking with a little cry of disappointment; it was empty, quite empty. He crept back to bed again and buried his face in the pillows.

"There isn't any Santa Claus," he sobbed, "yet my mamma knew; she said there was, sure." Doosey's face looked very grave as he sat down to breakfast beside his Aunt Horton. He was the only child in the big boarding house; he could only stay there if he was very quiet and good; his Aunt Horton had told him so when she came after his mother died.

The boarders said, "A Merry Christmas," to each other, but they did not look as if they meant it. Yes, one did, it was Mrs. Loder, the pretty young lady who sat at a distant table. She walked in while Doosey was eating breakfast. She stopped to kiss him. She whispered "Merry Christmas," and dropped a bundle beside his plate.

Doosey opened it excitedly. He found a little box with a sliding lid. Out jumped a grey mouse, which stared at him with beady black eyes. Doosey gave a scream and Aunt Horton almost tumbled from her chair. She did not feel any better, even when she discovered the mouse was not real.

After breakfast Doosey sat curled up on a sofa, making the tiny grey creature jump in and out from its box, when Mrs. Loder came and sat down beside him.

"How many presents did Santa Claus bring?" she asked.

"He didn't bring me one," answered

Doosey, gravely, then he told how his stocking hung empty that morning.

"And the little grey mouse was the only Christmas gift?" Doosey nodded solemnly.

"Wait a minute," said Mrs. Loder. "I'm going to see your Aunt Horton."

Back she came in a few minutes, happy and excited.

"Aunt Horton says you may go with us to the country," she said.

"The really, truly country?" asked Doosey, clapping his hands.

"Yes, the really, truly country," answered Mrs. Loder.

Doosey was bundled into a sleigh between Mr. and Mrs. Loder, half buried in warm furs. The sun was shining on the wide white snow world as they drove out to the country. The trees and fences made beautiful shadows. Birds were about chirping merrily, while they searched for seeds and berries in the woods. To Doosey, who had always lived in a great city, it seemed like fairyland. Then followed a visit and dinner at a big farmhouse, where there was a great family of children. Santa Claus had been there. He had left a load of presents, besides there had been a magnificent tree, Doosey saw it still gorgeous with all sorts of beautiful things. He had a very happy afternoon, while Mr. and Mrs. Loder went off for a drive. It was growing dark when they returned, so Doosey was bundled into the sleigh again and good nights were said.

"I have a wonderful secret, Doosey," whispered Mrs. Loder; "whom did we meet this afternoon but Santa Claus? He felt so badly because he could not pass the gas log in Aunt Horton's room, so he had been to make a compact with the fairies and they have planned a Christmas for you."

"For me?" exclaimed Doosey.

"Yes, and we are ordered to blindfold you till you reach the fairy ring."

She tied a scarf about Doosey's eyes. He fairly trembled with excitement as they flew over the snow crust with a jingle of bells ringing in the clear air.

"Now!" cried Mrs. Loder, and the horses stopped.

Doosey's eyes were uncovered.

"It is fairyland, it is," he whispered.

They were standing under the great pines with the moonlight making gray shadows, but in front of Doosey gleamed a hundred tiny candles among the branches of a little fir tree. There were balls of gold and silver and chains of red blue and green tinsel. A gauze winged fairy tiptoed at the very top of the tree. Among the branches were toys, a little red wagon, books, a trumpet, a train of cars, games, a grey donkey on wheels, a tool box, all sorts of things the little boy had gazed at longingly through store windows.

"Who is everything for?" he whispered. "Everything is for Doosey," said Mr. Loder. "This is the tree the fairies trimmed."

From somewhere in the distant woods came a jangle of sleighbells and a loud shout. It was the great family from the farmhouse, all come to see Doosey's fairy tree. They danced around it and shouted and sang and helped to pile the Loder sleigh full of the beautiful toys.

"Good-bye, everybody, and good-bye dear fairy tree," cried Doosey as they drove away out into the darkness. Till the last moment when the forest buried it, Doosey's eyes were turned to the wonderful fairy tree with its glimmer of a hundred candles.



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