

The Return of Santa Claus.

BY MARION Z. FICKERING.

From north to south, from east to west,
Was heard the sound of woe,
For all the wise ones had decreed
That Santa Claus must go.
"He's nothing but a myth," they said
"And well-taught girls and boys
Have quite outgrown such fairy tales,
And laid aside their toys."

Dear me, the clamour that arose!
From eyes black, blue, and gray
Rained down the tears as when the clouds
Bedew the flowers of May.
"Dear Santa, who for centuries
Had loved the children so!"
Oh, myriad little rosy feet
Went scurrying to and fro!

Poor banished Santa sat alone
When Christmas Eve drew nigh;
The wondering reindeer clasp their bits,
The toys unheeded lie;
When, lo! the door flew open wide;
In swarmed a motley crew,
Fair Southern maids and winsome lads
With eyes of Northern blue;

The sturdy peasant child, whose shoes
Kriss Kringle's gifts await,
The dainty princess of the realm
In glittering robes of state,—
They clasped the Saint with loving arms;
They drew him to the sleigh;
Small fingers swift packed jingling toys:
The reindeer sped away.

Full many a shout of victory raised
This dimpled army, when
With toddling guard, the good old Saint
Came to his own again.
So, hang your stockings, little ones,
On Christmas Eve, because
They never, never can destroy
Our dear old Santa Claus.

A CHRISTMAS GIVING.

BY HAL OWEN.

"What do you suppose you'll get
Christmas?"
"Oh, lots of things; just let's think
what we would like to get, and write
letters to Santa Claus."

"All right, we can write them here on
the rug, and send them up the chimney."
Little Howard ran to get paper and
pencils, and he and Ruth were soon busy
writing, stretched out in front of the
bright fire.

"How many things have you written?"
asked Howard after a quiet time.

"I couldn't say; twenty-five at least."
"Oh, I can't think of more than ten
new."

"What are they?"
"A donkey, a monkey, some skates, a
Ferris wheel, books, a new sled, a top, a
fire engine, a knife, a bushel of candy."

"Oh, my, that's pretty good, and you
need them all, too."

"Well—yes—perhaps I do; anyway I
want them. People really don't need
anything they don't have, specially
Christmas presents."

"Don't they? Why, yes, poor people
do, they need lots of things."

"It must be pretty hard to really need
a Christmas present."

"Yes, horrible, I am glad we do not."

"Let's think of some more things we
want."

"Suppose we think of some things
other people want."

"That's too tiresome," answered How-
ard. "I just want to think of myself."

Mamma overheard this talk, and began
to think her little people needed some
help in making their Christmas plans.
So she sat down on the rug, too, and
said:

"Let me play too; we will tell each
other some things. First, tell me what
is Christmas?"

"It is Jesus' birthday."

"Yes. Why do we celebrate birth-
days?"

"Because we are glad we were born,
and we want to have a good time, and
make everybody else glad too."

"Just so, now listen: Jesus is the
Lord, the King of all the world, and he
came down to this world a beautiful little
baby. He came to a lovely mother in a
very poor home. He grew up a poor
boy, helping his father, cheering his
mother. As he grew older, he helped
and cheered and taught every one who
came to him. He gave his whole life
for the good of others. By his life and
his death he made the whole world bet-
ter. Now, can we do enough for him?
We ought to feel glad, anxious to do all
we possibly can of his work, that is, do-
ing good. You see why it is we celebrate
his birthday as the greatest day in all
the year, because we are so happy and
thankful for his life. Because he gave
that life for us, we want to do and give
all we can for the good and happiness of
others. Oh, it is a wonderful time, a

beautiful time, and we must do all we
can to make everybody feel so."

When Mrs. Caryl stopped talking, How-
ard drew a long breath, saying: "That
all sounded so good, I forgot you were
preaching. What can we do besides
hanging up our stockings, having a
Christmas tree and Christmas dinner—
oh, yes, and going to church?"

"What would you do all those things
for?"

"To have a Merry Christmas."

"To have a Merry Christmas, or to
make one?"

"Why, both."

"But, my dear little boy, would that
be doing anything for others? Would
that be the best way to celebrate the
birthday of one who never thought of
himself, who did everything for others?"

"Oh, I see, we ought to make a Merry
Christmas for others, and let others
make a Merry Christmas for us. Oh,
yes, I see."

Mrs. Caryl could not help smiling that
the children could not give up the idea
of their own pleasure, but she deter-
mined that they should find it in the
right way. So she told them of an in-
teresting plan:

"I know a little town away up north
in the woods where there are no stores
except a grocery store and a meat mar-
ket, where the people live for their
business, fishing, wood cutting, and a
little farming; they have very little
money, and they are never able to get
anything extra. There is a Sunday-
school in a small chapel where the chil-
dren love to go, for they have a good,
kind teacher; they learn their lessons
well. I have heard them say their
catechism better than you can. They
learn to sing, and they have a few Sun-
day-school papers. Now, when Christ-
mas comes, what can these children do?
They really have nothing to do with, ex-
cept a tree; they can go out in the woods
and pick out a fine tree. Now don't
you think it would be good to send them
some things to put on the tree?"

"Yes, jolly; let's do it."

"But if you do it, it means a giving
up, a real giving up of something of
your own that you will feel, for you can-
not have as much yourselves, though I
am sure you will have more satisfaction."

"How shall we do it?"

"Of course I want to help you all I
can, but I want you to think it out and
plan it somewhat for yourselves. Make
believe that you are the little wood-
children, and think what you would like
to have sent to you."

"What a funny plan. We'll try it."

So the children went to work in ear-
nest. A good-sized box, called the Christ-
mas box, was placed in the corner of the
nursery, and in it were put the things
as fast as they were ready. In one
corner of it they placed a candy-box
with a hole in the top where they slipped
in all the money that came to them for
Christmas, and when the time came to
spend it they went with mamma as usual
to visit the Christmas stores. Instead
of spending it for expensive toys and at-
tractive trifles, they bought needed
things: caps, mittens, dresses, aprons,
groceries, and for the festivities: oranges,
nuts, figs, and some canned fruits.

Another day was spent in Santa Claus'
workshop. All the old toys and torn
books were brought out, and with glue,
tacks, scissors, and paste, were made
over as good as new. The scrap-books
were really very pretty, made of manilla
paper or silesia, with pictures cut,
trimmed and fitted from old books.

The greatest fun of all was packing the
box; the children did all they could
about it, wrapping up the things and
arranging all manner of surprises. They
were surprised themselves to find the box
was not big enough, so a barrel was
brought up and lined with picture papers.
Papa contributed a pile of clothes, and
grandma put in a big roll of flannels,
so the barrel was filled up "plump" full.

What do you suppose was right in the
middle of it? A present from Mrs.
Hobson, a loyal English woman, to the
teacher, nothing less than a real English
plum pudding! Wasn't that a pretty
good heart for a barrel?

When it was all packed and headed
and marked, Peter took it to the station,
and away it went on its blessed mission.
But it found no happier children than
these it left.

When Christmas came, though it did
not bring as many toys or as fine gifts
as usual, it brought a deeper pleasure to
the little givers. And when they read
the letter from the wood country telling
of the beautiful happiness that had come
to forty children by this real giving, this
giving up, they knew as they had never
known before, the best meaning of
Christmas giving.

"Well," said Howard, "this is the
bettermost Christmas I ever had, and I
am going to make another one next
year."

TOM'S PLOT.

BY ANNE H. WOODRUFF.

The teachers and officers of the Sun-
day-school were met to discuss ways and
means for the annual Christmas enter-
tainment. The usual preliminary talk
was over, when Miss Norton, one of the
teachers, said:

"I would like to have our school fol-
low the example set by many Sunday-
schools, in giving instead of receiving
presents at Christmas time. It would
do the children good, and make them
quite as happy if not happier. It would
be a practical illustration of the Saviour's
words, 'It is more blessed to give than
to receive.' Surely the end and aim of
the Sunday-school is to learn to follow
his teaching. I happen to know that
the Orphan's Home in D— is sadly in
need of assistance these hard times. One
of the directors told me they were dis-
couraged, the funds were so low. Let
each one of our pupils contribute some-
thing, no matter how trifling in the case
of the poorer ones, and so have a share
in the joy of giving. These articles can
be hung on the tree, and the children
have their entertainment as usual."

She paused, and there was a dead
silence. Then one after another of the
teachers spoke against the plan, saying
it would be too great a "disappointment
to the children."

Miss Norton said in reply that the end
and aim of the Sunday-school should be
to make the children unselfish and
Christlike. However, she was in the
minority, and must submit, though her
disappointment was evident.

Tom Burton was waiting in the ad-
joining room to lock the church. He
often assisted the sexton in his work.
He could not help overhearing the dis-
cussion, and as Miss Norton was his
teacher, he pricked up his ears to listen.
The talk set him to thinking. Tom was
fourteen years of age, and not particu-
larly addicted to meditating. It was
too much trouble. He was noisy and
boisterous at times, and a ringleader in
all sorts of mischief. Indeed, Miss Nor-
ton often felt utterly discouraged be-
cause her class of boys seemed so full
of animal spirits, and gave no outward
evidence that the good seed she so faith-
fully sowed in their young hearts
had ever sprouted. It would have given
her great surprise and joy if she had
known of the real affection they felt for
her, Tom in particular.

He walked home in a brown study.
Indeed, his unusual thoughtfulness was
remarked by the whole family. His
brother declared, "Tom was in the
dumps," and his mother said, cautiously,
"I hope you are not going to be ill,
dear; there are so many cases of La
Grippe," at which Tom burst out laugh-
ing. He did not seem to suffer from
loss of appetite, so her fears subsided.

"Say, sis, I want to talk to you," said
he to his sister, a year or two younger.
The two were closeted together for some
time, the result of which was a deep-laid
scheme to be carried out at Christmas
time. Tom took his classmates into his
confidence, and Mary, his sister, did the
same, and a thorough canvass was made
of the pupils, about fifty in number.
Each one was carefully and cautiously
sounded, and if his views on the subject
under consideration were favourable, was
taken into the secret, if not, of course
he was left in "outer darkness." All
were sworn to secrecy.

As the time approached, mysterious
signs, nods, winks, and giggles were con-
tinually passing between the youngsters,
and all were on tiptoe with expectation.

The preparations went on, the church
was trimmed with evergreens. The tree
was at last arrayed in all its glory
festooned with strings of popcorn and
gay with many coloured trimmings, with
oranges and bags of candy. Last of all,
before the teachers went home to get
ready for the evening, the presents were
hung on the tree, with the scholar's name
attached. There were books, dolls, and
toys of all kinds, and many articles both
useful and ornamental.

Tom and a number of other boys had
been working like Trojans. Never had
they been so willing, so helpful, so ready
to do anything and everything, so jolly
bubbling over with irrepressible bursts
of merriment, over nothing at all, ap-
parently.

"Who is going to stay until it is time
to open," asked the superintendent, "I
cannot." And so said all the teachers.

"Oh, I will," said Tom. "I came on
purpose; the sexton told me to."

"So will I," said Arthur Peaton.

"And I," said Dick Thomson.

"And I," said another boy.

"That will do," said Miss Norton,
smiling; "we can safely leave it all in
such good care."

At seven the children were all as-
sembled, and in a state of suppressed
excitement. Giggles and whispers, and

Ssh, ssh, ssh, passed through the
crowd, and their bright, happy faces wore
a very pleasant sight.

"What a mistake it would have been
not to have given them their presents.
They expect them. I never saw them
so excited before," said one of the teach-
ers to Miss Norton, who made no reply.

"Yes, you are right," said the super-
intendent. "It is the only way to hold
the children."

There were recitations and singing by
the school, and such clapping of hands
and generous applause was very gratify-
ing to the performers, at least. Tom
was greeted with rapturous cheers and
significant giggles. He stopped on his
way to the platform to scowl at some
small fry who seemed unable to control
themselves, and whispered, fiercely,
"You'd better look out or they'll smell a
rat."

The end of the programme was reached
at last, and the time had come for the
distribution of the presents. The pastor
made some brief remarks. He said he
was glad to see such happy faces, but
hoped they would not forget the meaning
of Christmas. The birth of Jesus meant
peace and love and good will among men,
and hope for the poor, the needy, and
the suffering. He hoped the next year
to institute a new order of things, that
of giving by the scholars instead of re-
ceiving." How the children clapped
and clapped and laughed! The good
man looked bewildered; he did not under-
stand it at all. Neither did the rest of
the grown-ups. They were not in the
secret.

It was soon out. The presents were
taken from the tree, and instead of the
scholar's name alone, this is the way the
label read:

FROM MARY CARTER

To a little girl in the Orphan's Home.

FROM TOM BURTON

To a fellow in the Home.

The excitement was intense and the
applause tumultuous.

"How in the world did they manage
it?" asked Miss Norton.

"It was Tom Burton's doing," an-
swered one of her boys. "We changed
the labels when you all left this after-
noon. Tom says we fellows ought to try
to please you."

"Not to please me," said she, as Tom
drew near. "There is one whom we
should try to please, isn't there, boys?"

"Yes'm," answered the boys, bashfully,
and I think they had some dim notion of
pleasing him when they tried to help
their teacher bring about a Christmas re-
form in the school.

Christmas.

BY MARIAN DOUGLAS.

The inn was full at Bethlehem;
A busy crowd was there;
And some were rich, and some were
wise,

And some were young and fair;
But who or what they were, to-day

There is not one to care;
But in the cattle's manger,
There lay a baby stranger,

Soft nestled like a snow-white dove,
among the scented hay;

And, lo, through him was given
Our song to earth and heaven,

The song two worlds together sing upon
a Christmas Day:

"Glory to God! Good will to men!"

O listen! Wake it once again!

Peace upon earth! Good will to
men!"

They sing it, those who sang it first,
The angels strong and high;

They sing, in shining white, the saints,
Who died long years gone by;

And all the fluttering cherub throng,
The children of the sky;

They sing, the patient, waiting souls
Who still faith's comforts know;

They sing, life's happy innocents,
Their faces all aglow;

One melody fills heaven above,
And floats from earth below,

The song of that sweet stranger,
Who in the cattle's manger

Lay, nineteen hundred years ago, among
the scented hay.

All sin and wrong forgiven,
Earth seems close kin of heaven,

And sweet two worlds together sing upon
a Christmas Day!

A Luminous Tree.—A most remarkable
luminous tree grows in Brazil. It is
about six or seven feet in height, and is
so luminous that it can be plainly dis-
tinguished in the darkest night for a
distance of more than a mile, while in its
immediate vicinity it emits sufficient
light to enable a person to read the
finest print.