

THE EVENING TIMES, ST. JOHN, N. B.

Santa's Annual Visit.



Down the chimney he comes creeping,
Through the nursery goes a peeping.
Hunts the stockings, great and small,
Then proceeds to fill 'em all.

In the boys' go balls and skates,
Wondrous dolls with satin hair,
Picture books, and ribbons bright,
Till they fill the stockings tight.

Then with one last look about,
Santa stealthily steals out,
Jumps into his sleigh that's near,
And comes no more 'till the next year.

ANNIE JAMES.



A Calm Witness.

A lawyer was cross-examining a witness with a view to getting him muddled in his testimony. The following questions and answers occurred:

"Did you see the plaintiff faint a short time ago?"

"Yes, sir."

"People turn pale when they faint, don't they?"

"No, sir, not always."

"What, do you mean to tell me that a person can faint and not turn pale? Did you ever hear of such a case?"

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"Did you ever see such a case?"

"I did, sir."

"Who was it?"

"About a year ago, sir."

"Was a negro, sir?"

"Twas a negro, sir."

The lawyer excused the witness.

A Christmas Memory.

(With apologies to Alice Cary.)



Of all the beautiful pictures
On Childhood's memory's wall
Is that of an evergreen Christmas tree
That standeth broad and tall
In whose very topmost branches
A blue-eyed dolly swings.
While lower down to a friendly bough
A teddy bear hangs.
And there quite close to teddy
Hangs a soldier bold of tin;
And, armed with sticks suspended,
To make a warlike din;
A life with wondrous music
Quite hidden away inside
A sled so strong and splendid
That at least four boys may ride;
A picture book of fables,
That glances that will run;
A toy piano with real keys,
A tool chest and a gun;
And from the gay, green branches,
Festooned as ribbons bright,
Swing strings of soft white popcorn
That glisten in the light.
And everywhere hangs candy
For children, great and small.
So, of all the Childhood's memories,
This seemeth the best of all.

MAUD WALKER.

How a Tragedy Was Averted in Santa's Realm.

A STORY FOR THE WEB TOTS.

There was great sadness in Santa Claus' realm. It had been learned by the old and faithful reindeer that their fond master had determined to try making his Christmas journey in an airship. He—Santa—had confided this bit of shocking news to one of the inner circle, a member of his cabinet—a cabinet composed of the most celebrated toy makers in the realm. And strange to say, this member of the inner circle had approved of Santa's plan. And then the story had leaked out, just as all stories that are intended to be kept secret do leak out. First it was whispered among the factory workers; then it reached the stables, where the reindeer—20 strong—overheard the stable hands discussing it. And the woe, oh! the woe of those poor old and faithful reindeer! For the first time in the life of Santa Claus he was to forsake them—forsake them and do his traveling in a new-fangled thing that was named "Airship." The oldest reindeer of the 20 acted as spokesman after the first horrible news had been digested by them. "Well, my comrades," he said, shaking his huge antlers, "if our old and beloved master, Santa Claus, has decided that we can no longer be of use to him, we must make the best of it so said a verdict. I for one cannot find it within my heart to condemn our master, in all things he tries to be just. It may be that his duties are growing; that his territory is extending; that the little ones on the earth are multiplying so rapidly that no longer can we carry him on his rounds as formerly. But let us be assured that when the time comes for Santa Claus to take his depart-

ure he'll not go without a word of affection to us, a word of thanks for our past helpfulness to him in his noble and happy work."

The other 19 reindeer nodded their heads approvingly, saying that since it was Santa Claus' wish to "jave them on the shelf," they would retire from active life without a murmur, wishing all success to him—their beloved master—in his new mode of travel. But though they did not condemn Santa for his having taken up with so strange a thing as an "Airship," their hearts were heavy, indeed. No more real excitement of travel for them! No more would they rattle the bells on their harness as they fairly flew through the air in obedience to their master's reins. Ah, it was a sad, a pitiful outlook for the old and trusted reindeer of Santa Claus' stable. They had been his companions for so many, many, many countless years that to be put aside now for a twentieth-century machine—yes, a MACHINE, a thing without a heart!—was a most heartrending thing.

The following morning, after the airship news had reached the reindeer, the door leading into their comfortable stable was opened and in walked Santa Claus. His eyes were full of tenderness—yes, even tears of love glistened in them—as he pat-

ting with toys which you will no longer use, so we would better give them to some little ones who will be happy to own them. And I'll put in some cakes, nuts, candies and a glass of jelly. Then, if you think the little girl could make use of some of the frocks you have outgrown, we'll make up a nice box of them for her."

"Oh, that's just the thing to do!" cried Lottie. "Let's go to my playroom at once and make a nice selection of toys for those children. I'm so glad, mamma, that you always bought a certain number of boys' toys for me, for now I'll have a nice assortment to give to little Sammy. When you were buying them for my nursery your thought was to have them for my little boy friends to play with when visiting me. But now they are going to do a better service than that of entertaining well-to-do little boys, who have toys and to spare in their own homes."

And as the greater part of the evening was spent by Lottie and her mother in making a selection of pretty and useful toys and garments to fill two good-sized boxes to be sent on the following day to Sammy and Lena Small, top floor of a rickety old tenement-house on the banks of a dark, evil-looking river with warehouses, boat-houses and tenement-houses of hard reputation.

After the box-making had been duly packed, nailed shut and labeled they were left in Lottie's bedroom, where John, the houseman, should get them on the morrow to carry to their destination. Then Lottie's

mamma bade her good night and went to her own room, it being Lottie's bed time. How long Lottie had slept she did not know, but sometime during the night she was awakened from her slumber by a noise in the room as of someone moving about. Being still half asleep, and coming from dreamland, where she had been cal-

ling on Santa Claus and awaiting him in as serene a state of mind as a child can be, Lottie opened her eyes to behold a figure which—in her sleepy condition—she mistook for old St. Nicholas. Then, sitting up in bed, and smiling in a friendly way—for the room was lighted by a street lamp near the corner, which shone through the window—Lottie said in a cordial tone: "Ah, Santa Claus, I'm so glad to meet you in person. And now that we've got the present question for the poor children all settled I shall take it upon myself to see that our man, John, delivers every box before tomorrow at 12 o'clock."

The strange figure came quite close to Lottie and bent over the bed. "Now, looks heavy, kid! Not a word out of you, or I'll stop your mouth so it won't open for awhile." And the terrible man held a revolver up that Lottie might see it. "I'm here to help myself to what I can find, an' I'm not in the humor to be fooled with. Understand!"

Lottie nodded her head, but did not dare to open her mouth for fear of the terrible weapon. "I belong to that class of people what's got 'em live by their wits or sleight-of-hand," the man continued.

"And it's up to me to make you rich for over yer contributions to me. I've got kids of me own what's got to eat. It's Christmas time for the rich, but where's the Christmas for my little ones? So I've just kept a tongue in yer cheek an' I'll help myself."

Lottie sat bolt upright now, for she was fully awake, and realized that a burglar was in her room. But she had no idea of screaming for help; she knew that would be the wrong thing to do. So she sat very quiet, watching the man as he opened the drawers and closets, looking for valuables. As he stooped to examine the contents of a little cedar chest in the room he struck his foot against one of the boxes that was packed and labeled to be sent to the poor family down by the river the following day. With a muttered curse—for the foot he struck against the box seemed to be crippled—the man turned to look at the object of offense. Quickly his eye caught the plainly written address on the side of the box. It was, "Sammy and Lena Small, top floor the Dock Tenement-house, River street." The man's eyes grew wide and his hands clutched nervously. Putting the revolver in his pocket, he bent still closer to the box, reading over and over the address written thereon. Then turning his dogged eyes on Lottie, he whispered hoarsely: "What's this mean kid?" And he pointed toward the address on the box.



They were standing in front of a shop window, looking so longingly at a few cheap toys.

place named on the box," said Lottie, surprised to find that she could talk with- out fear. In fact, while the man was looking at the box so intently all fear had gone from Lottie's mind, and she felt that she could talk to the burglar as she would to anyone less dangerous.

"What do you know of them kids?" asked the man, his hands closing over the box tenderly. "Them kids are mine—MINE—do you know that, little grand lady? Yes, Sammy an' Lena Small are mine, the children of a common law-breaker. His voice trembled as he spoke and he turned his eyes away from Lottie's. Then he continued: "I hain't always bin a bad sort, little grand lady. I hain't. I got me foot crushed in a factory. Then I lost me job. After that I couldn't git work, with this thing in the way."

He pointed to the crippled foot. "Them times got awful with me—me old mother an' me little Sammy an' Lena with no- thing to eat an' no money in me pocket. I got desperate, I did. Says I to meself: 'Let's go an' take it from the rich. They don't care if we starve. So let's take our share of what's hoarded up in their fine homes.' An' so I go an' does it. I creep into houses an' takes what valuable I can find. It buys bread and fire for me old mother an' me little Sammy an' Lena. But I hain't a real bad sort, little grand lady, an' when I sees that box all packed an' ready to be sent to me own little kids I says to meself: 'Here's some rich as has a heart. An' I don't intend to take an- other thing from this house. All I want is this box what's to carry Christmas into Sammy's an' Lena's little hearts.'"

The man hugged the box as though it were his child, and he bent his face to his breast.

Lottie crept from her bed and went softly to the burglar's side. "Poor man," she said, "I'm not afraid of you, since I know you are the father of Sammy and Lena Small. You are not doing right now, but I'm sure you'll be a good man again if—if someone helps you to do so. Please take the box—and also that one over the sofa, for they are both for Sammy and Lena—and go home at once. Tomorrow is the day on which Sammy and Lena must have their presents for Christmas Eve—and you shall be Santa Claus yourself. And tomorrow you must come here again, for I shall tell my mamma about her and she'll see that you get some honest work to do."

A frightened look came into the man's face. Oh, no, kid, don't tell your mother about me, she'd call in the cops an' have me pinched. And that would be awful for Sammy and Lena an' me old mother."

"Oh, you do not know my mother, poor man," said Lottie. "She'll be too glad to help you back into the right way again. My mother is a good woman, you may depend on that. But you don't stop to consider how much worse it is for Sam- my and Lena and your old mother when you are doing as you are tonight than if you were really taken by the police. There's always the danger and the sin, you know, sir."

The burglar looked into Lottie's clear



JIMMIE'S CHRISTMAS EVE VISION

blue eyes, his own eyes taking on a mild expression. "You are a real GRAND kid, little lady, a little lady with a HEART," he said. "He folks were like you there'd be no such men as me. I'll go home an' carry along the boxes so's to have a Christmas for my little ones. An' tomorrow I'll come back to talk with yer mother. She's a good woman, an' I can trust her to do something to help me. Only a good woman could have such a little girl as you are."

"Yes, you come back tomorrow and you'll be assisted in finding honest work," said Lottie in a determined voice. "And now I'll let you out of the house by the front door so if a policeman on our beat sees you with the boxes he'll not be sus- picious. I give them to you."

And the following day the man whom Lottie had so miraculously turned from the path of wickedness into the path of right returned to find Lottie's mother full of deep interest in his case. And before the week was ended the father of Sammy and Lena Small had found honest employ- ment as janitor in the home of the An- dews' with comfortable living rooms for his old mother and little ones. And as he goes about his work earnestly, he re- sents to himself every little while:

"And a little child shall lead them."

Conundrums.

When is a soldier like beef?
When in quarters.

When is a clock like a dismistified man?
When striking.

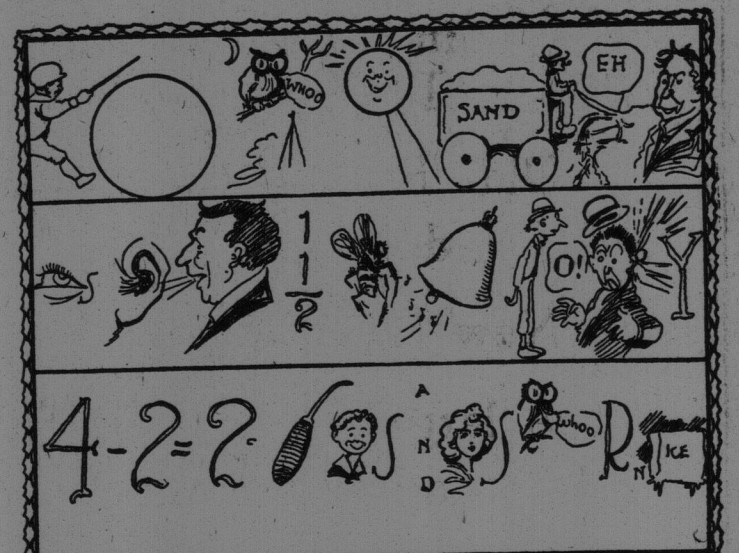
Why is a widow like a gardener?
Because she is to be found in weeds.

When is a balloon like an atom?
When out of sight.

ALONG ABOUT MIDNIGHT.

How peaceful is the lover's look,
Ah, what a smile he wears,
Until the maiden starts, and says
"That's Father on the stairs."

Christmas Rebus.



continue to do so until some great explor- er goes there and stops it.

As soon as Santa was once more safe from the terrible airship and had his pre- cious toys snugly packed away for the journey he ran to Puggin-Fastfoot, em- bracing him lovingly, saying: "Now, my dear trusted Puggin-Fastfoot, how did you know I was in distress? And how in the air did you get here so quickly?"

"We've been following you, great and good master," said the old reindeer. "We all felt that some accident—maybe fatal to you, at least fatal to the toys, and therefore the children—might befall you in that hideous thing you call a modern airship. So we begged the stable-hands to hitch us to the trusty sleigh, and we followed you within an hour after your departure. And we've made about as good time as did your airship, sir."

For a few minutes Santa was too much overcome to speak. Then, embracing each reindeer in turn and thanking him for his loyalty to so disloyal a master, he said: "Never again shall I forsake the old and tried friends for the new. Now, my boys, off we go to the earth, as has been our custom for, lo! these many hun- dreds of years. And not a minute shall we lose, for you are in better condition today than I have ever seen you. So long as I live to reign over Christmas Time just so long shall you be my trusty car- riers and faithful friends. And now away toward the south, passing the wind as a bird passes the flowing stream."

And the reindeer, knowing that but for their timely appearance at the North Pole a terrible tragedy would have happened, shook their antlers and swept over the frozen earth like an arrow in its flight.

And not one moment was Santa behind them on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Fun.

HIS IDEA.

Willie—Say, Net, let's buy pop a bowl for Christmas.

Kettie—Why do you want to buy him a bowl?

Willie—Cause I heard ma say she want- ed him to turn over a new leaf.

PUZZLED BY DISCRIMINATION.

Little Sambo—Mamma, kin Santy Claus see in do dahi, same as a cat?

His Mamma—I dunno, chile. What makes you a p'ison dat he could?

Little Sambo—He neither makes no min takes an' gibs me none of dem rockin' horse and steam engines like what de white chillun gets.

GENEROUS FATHER.

Dobbins—Given any thought to your boy's Christmas gift yet?

Bobbins—Why, yes, I've thought up a splendid idea, but it would be just my luck to have no snow Christmas time.

Dobbins—Oh! A sled, eh?

Bobbins—No. I thought I might build him a snow man.

Never, never play with fire,
Never tell pa lies,
Never pull the pussy's tail,
Never touch ma's pies.
Then when Santy comes around
With his bag of toys
He will leave a lot of things
For the best of boys.

Jones—What are you going to give your wife for a Christmas present?

Brown—She hain't told me yet.—Judge.

The thing had got caught in a regular wind circle which swept like a hurricane about the North Pole.