

Technical and Bibliographic Notes/Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique; which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing/
Le titre de couverture manque
- Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.
- Additional comments:/
Commentaires supplémentaires:

- Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached/
Pages détachées
- Showthrough/
Transparence
- Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression
- Includes supplementary material/
Comprend du matériel supplémentaire
- Only edition available/
Seule édition disponible
- Pages wholly or partially obscured by errata slips, tissues, etc., have been refilmed to ensure the best possible image/
Les pages totalement ou partiellement obscurcies par un feuillet d'errata, une pelure, etc., ont été filmées à nouveau de façon à obtenir la meilleure image possible.

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
				✓							

8193
M147
cop. 2



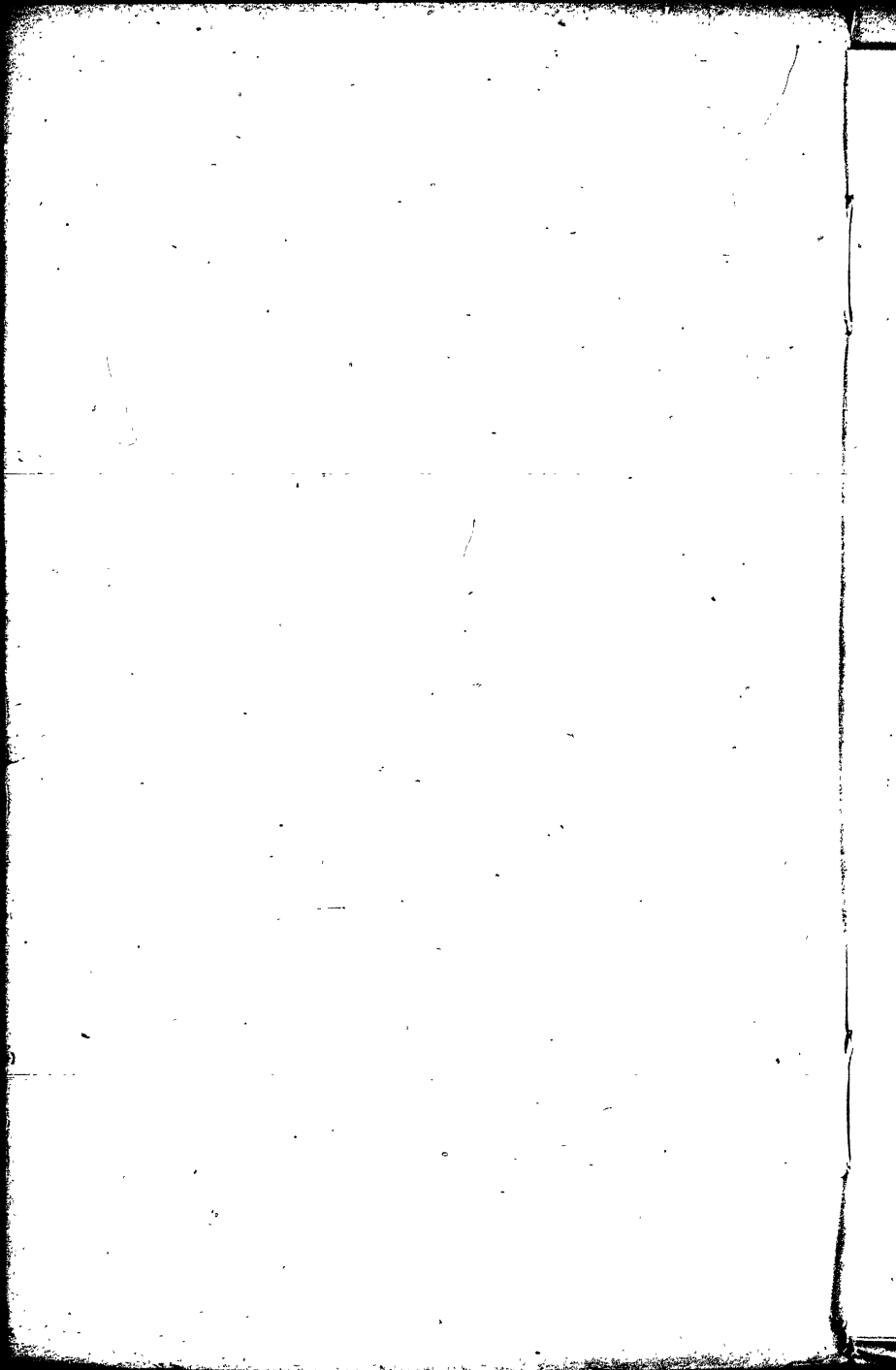
The Home of Santa Claus

A Real Christmas Story



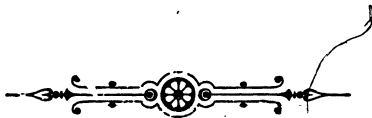
By a Lover of Children

A
8193
.M147h
cop. 2

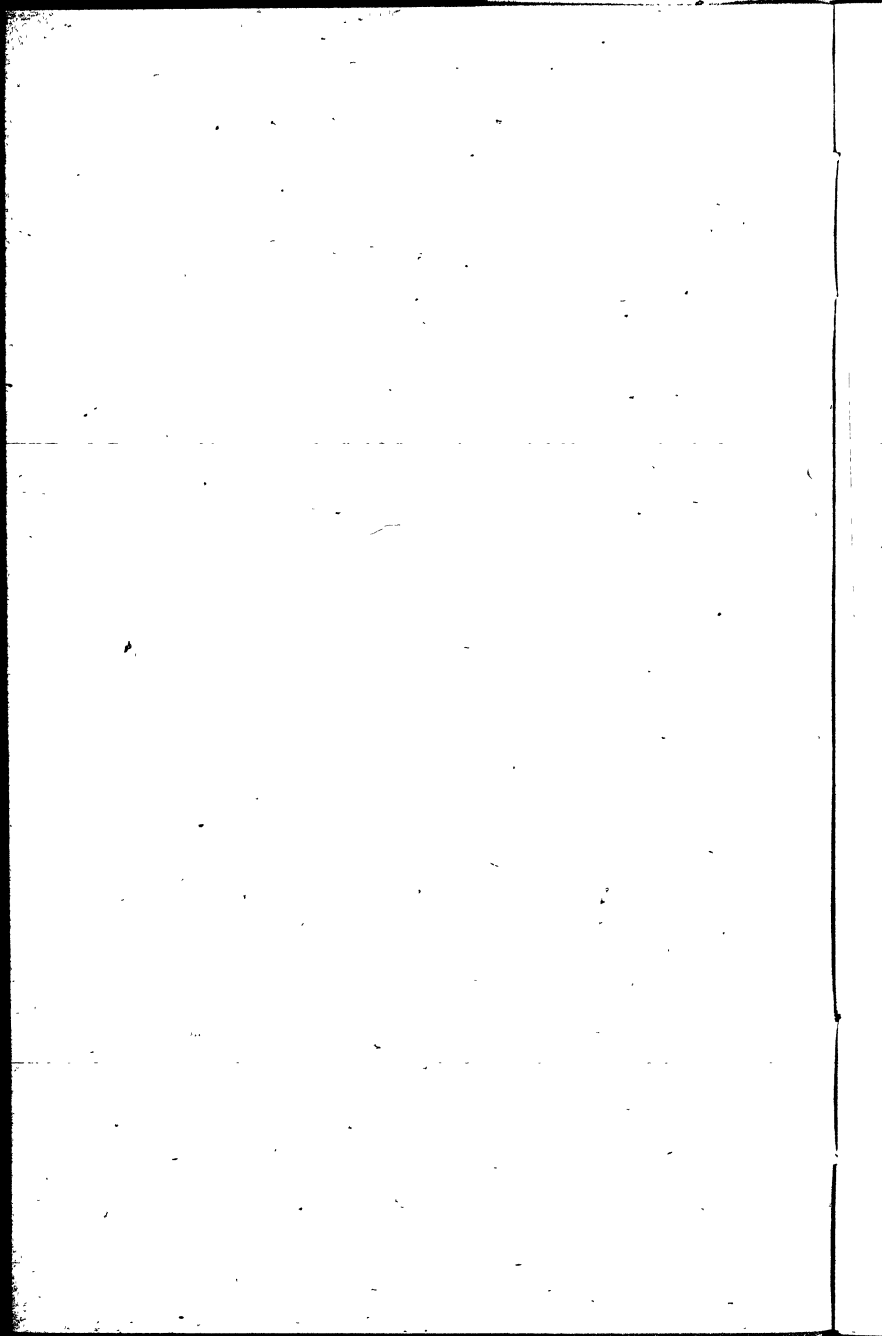


DECEMBER 24TH.


Santa Claus, when you are coming
Up the street to-night,
Don't forget to call on us,
We always have a light.
You will find a little stocking,
Hanging by the flue,
If you fill it with good things,
We'll thankful be to you.



48175-



The Home of Santa Claus

ERY, very long ago, in a far off country there lived in a small stone house by the side of a road leading to, and about six miles from a large city, an old man and his grand-child, a little girl named Stella. Stella always lived in that house. She was born there—her mother being the old man's daughter, whose husband had been killed in a great battle. Stella's mother grieved sorely over the loss of her husband, and though she lived for some years after his death, she never regained perfect health or happiness, and died when Stella was but ten years old, leaving the orphan to the care of her good and holy grandfather.

When Stella was christened her grandfather wished her to be named Stella Matutina, after the Morning Star—which he considered the most beautiful object in the whole world.

After the first pangs of their sorrow, for the dear mother and daughter had gradually worn away, Stella and her grandfather lived quite happy in their humble home.

They were rather comfortable, too. They owned a few acres of fertile land, which yielded sufficient fodder for their small stock (consisting of a cow, a pony, and a few hens), as well as several bushels of grain, chiefly oats

and Lerley. A broad, good-natured-like tree, produced the rosiest and sweetest of apples. There were also, various kinds of fruit growing there, such as dates, grapes, nuts and so on, and last, but by no means least, was the wonderful candy tree.

The candy tree was a low-spreading easy-to-reach sort of a tree. One might almost call it a shrub, bearing a profusion of small-sized pods, similar to our ordinary bean pod. The skin of these pods were quite thin and velvety, and contained an assortment of different colored and different flavored berry-like fruit, which from its delicious sweetness derived the name of candy. When ripe, the choicest of these were deftly picked and shelled by Stella's willing fingers, dried, and stored away for a certain purpose. The surplus, as well as that of other fruit, grain and vegetables, were carefully saved and afforded food for the numerous birds, and other little forest folk, which during the winter were not forgotten by Stella and her grandpa.

The house was wonderfully snug and cosy. The kitchen, which contained a large fire-place, where a cheery fire continually burned during the cold winter, was warm and comfortable, and was their chief living-room. Off the kitchen to the west, was Stella's room—her grandfather preferring the east side bed-room, since from there he could see the glorious Morning Star, which he loved so dearly, and which also served him as a time-piece, in the early hours of the morning. There were no clocks at that time. Another room off the kitchen, to the front, opened into the

small hall, which led from the kitchen to the front door.

This was their spare—or guest room. Its walls were tastefully covered with white birch-bark, artificially stained in different colours. The floor was covered with rush rugs, ingeniously braided and sewed together, long years before by Stella's own dear mother. It contained a few pieces of home-made furniture, also similarly stained. This stain was obtained from the juice of various kinds of bark, small twigs and leaves.

The small mantel above the chimney, displayed a nice collection of pictures and curious ornaments.

Stella was a very bright and active child, and as there was no school near there, to go to, she devoted her time in caring for the home and helping her grandpa, though he would not have her do any hard work. He had a woman come in once a week, to do the hardest work. Stella herself, being able to do the rest.

Although Stella never went to school, she was by no means an ignorant or stupid child, for her grandpa, who was a very learned man, taught her sufficiently to enable her to read her little Bible, and also innocent and amusing stories. She was very fond of knitting, having learned that art from her dear mother, when of a very tender age.

At first she knitted only teeny weeny articles, such as doll's stockings, tiny scarfs, and mittens, but as she grew older, her work also grew, and when she attained her twelfth year, she was able to do almost any kind of knitting.

Stella made money in this way, for she could sell any amount of stockings, socks, children's stockings and mitts, to the city folks, who paid her liberally for them. Besides these, Stella always had in reserve, a little pile of children's mitts, scarfs, and wristlets for the poor children, whose mothers could not afford to buy such things.

Nor was Stella's grandfather by any means idle during his leisure hours. Being an industrious and a very skilful man, he spent his spare time making such articles in the line of dishes as were used at that time, such as wooden bowls of all sizes, wooden spoons, even to table knives and forks.

He had a small room upstairs, which he kept well filled with material for his work, and during the long winter evenings, he might be seen in his cosy chimney corner finishing up some article of which his load consisted when he made his annual trip to the city, which he usually made on or about the last week in December.

Besides the articles mentioned, Stella's grandfather made various kinds of toys, such as wooden tops, small balls, wooden dolls and manikins. These toys he never sold, but laid to one side for the poor children, whom he loved with all his heart. The dolls and manikins Stella would dress in the cutest of clothes and help her grandpa distribute them among the children, for she hardly ever failed to accompany him on his trips to the city, and Oh! how the dear little grim faces would brighten up at sight of the kind-hearted pair, and the

sweet young voices sing out their thanks and appreciation.

And let me whisper here that it was not toys alone, that the dear ones received from their good benefactors. There were the sweetest of cookies, Stella's own make, candy, apples and other kinds of fruit. And how the dear old man's eyes would twinkle with joy at the sight of the happy faces.

On one occasion when Stella was in the act of dressing up a manikin, she paused in her work, and after a few moment's meditation, rose, and going to her room she brought out her knitting box, putting some stitches on her needles, she counted and recounted, pausing to think every now and then, and after a few minutes, she had started what appeared to be a small wristlet. This she placed on the manikin's head. Resuming her work, she knitted and narrowed skilfully. Again she tried it on the little head, and again she knitted and narrowed, then finished her task. And what do you suppose the result was? She had made the cutest and prettiest little cap that ever was.

After dressing and putting away her small folks, a wonderful thought occurred to Stella. Would she, could she, make a cap like that for her grandpa? Another little girl would think of herself first, but not Stella. Her dear grandfather was first in her every thought.

Going upstairs, and to her dear dead mother's chest, she took from it her mother's long and glossy-from-work, wooden needles.

How her little hands trembled and her tears ran hot and fast into the open chest, but she had an object in view, and fought bravely to overcome her emotions. Stella worked on a mysterious something for nearly a week. Of course, she would not have her grandpa know what it was, for the whole world, it was her first and only secret, but as it was for a good cause, she kept it tucked tightly in her own warm little heart.

At last the eventful day arrived, on which the stocking cap was finished, and with it came the first sign of winter. The air was cold, and before night the wonderful white snowflakes began to fall. Stella was fourteen years old then, but at heart, she was a child, and where is the child whose heart does not jump, and whose eyes do not dance at sight of the first snow?

Oh! how Stella's heart beat as she went into her room, to bring the cap for her grandpa. He was sitting by the chimney where a great fire was burning, his tattered old hat hanging on a peg near by. Stella approached cautiously, holding her hands behind her.

"Shut your eyes and stretch out your arm, and I'll give you something to keep your head warm," she said.

He did so, and when he opened his eyes there was the most wonderful cap he ever saw, and well it might be, for it was the first of its kind ever made.

Words cannot describe the joy in the dear old man's heart, at the sight of so beautiful and appropriate a gift.

It was soft and thick, for Stella always used the best of yarn for her work. The crown of the cap was dark blue in colour, while red and white stripes adorned the rim, and a bunch of tassels hung jauntily from the top, which bobbed and danced merrily, as if playing hide and seek among the old man's snow white hair, to Stella's delight and amusement, as she watched through the kitchen window when he cut wood or shovelled the snow around the house and barn.

One cold, crisp morning towards the end of December, Stella Matutina awakened in an unusually happy frame of mind. She had an expectant feeling, as if something entirely out of the ordinary was pending. At first she attributed it to the thought of their approaching trip to the city, which hitherto had been the chief event of her young life, but she quickly put that thought aside, as she murmured to herself, I believe Cousin Zyra and children are coming today or tomorrow. Her door being open the brilliantly lighted kitchen and the warmth of her own room told her that her grandfather had risen some time before, and had gone to the barn.

Slipping out of bed, she dressed hurriedly said her prayers, and began preparing breakfast.

Her grandpa, too, seemed more cheerful than ever as he entered the house. He was fairly bursting with joy as he greeted her with his usual: "How is the star of my heart this beautiful morning?"

"Wonderful!" came the prompt answer, "I never was as happy in my life."

"What!" he exclaimed, "Do you feel it coming to?"

"Feel what coming, grandpa?" she asked, raising a dazzlingly beautiful face to him.

"More snow," he answered slowly, "a few more inches, and the city for the old man and his grand-daughter."

Stella's lovely face fell, and threatening tears almost betrayed her disappointment. Her sweet lips trembled. She had picked the brown herb-pot from its bed of hot ashes on the hearth, and was pouring the fragrant liquid into her grandfather's cup, there being no tea or coffee used at that time.

"What's the matter, Stella?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh! nothing," she replied. "Only I—I thought perhaps Cousin Zyra and children might be coming to visit us today, or tomorrow."

"Catch Cousin Zyra travelling in this kind of weather," the old man said, meditatively.

"I'm afraid your prophecy is going to mis-carry this time, my dear."

It was not the first time that the child had prophesied coming events in her childish way.

"If it isn't them, I do believe we are going to have some other nice company," she went on, "and I was going to ask you to do something for me."

"I will do anything in my power, to make you happy, Stella," he returned with feeling.

"What is it you want me to do this happy morning?"

He had arisen from the table and was standing on the hearth, his back to the fire. Stella walked up to him, and placing her hand on his shoulder she replied pleadingly, "Please don't think me foolish, dear, but I thought you might kill a—two chickens for me, as I want to be prepared, in case some person or persons may happen along you know."

"Ah, ha," he exclaimed, with assumed gravity, "and is it the Prince Charming who is coming to take away the star of my heart?"

The little girl blushed hotly, tears again almost showed themselves. Laying her flaxen haired head against his breast, she said, "You shall never see that, grandpa, dear, I love you too well, to ever leave, unless I die, of course," she added.

"No mention of that word please, this happy morning," he faltered. "I will kill the whole lot of them, if that is all," he chuckled. "How many did you say you wanted? Four?"

"Oh, two will do nicely, thank you," she said.

He was not a tall man. Stella was fourteen years old. He kissed the top of her ~~hand~~ *head* and went out. Left alone, Stella actually wept from happiness. The dishes were washed, and put away in a jiffy. Then with a light heart, she began preparing for her expected guests.

In the broad iron oven, above the fire, she could bake a batch of four small pies. She also baked a batch of smooth white biscuits

and cookies, before putting the chickens in to roast. In the meantime her grandfather returned with the fowl, picked and cleaned all ready for the dressing. In a comparatively short time, Stella had everything in order. Early in the afternoon she was for the first time in her life really tired. Her grandfather urged her to rest a while. All through the forenoon the snow fell in crisp white flakes, but the wind had changed, and a low drift prevailed, filling every track and crevice, and whirled about the doors and windows.

Going to her bed, Stella slept for over an hour. Getting up refreshed, and more cheerful than ever, and donning her best dress of blue homespun cloth, over which she pinned a pink and white pinafore, she fluttered around arranging the table for supper. Her grandfather in his corner was finishing a couple of small manikins. Everything in readiness, Stella passed the time watching him and carefully brushing the tiny chips and dust into the open fireplace. Several little bundles of long narrow strips or chips, hung above the chimney served as matches (which were not then thought of).

On the white covered table, which was nicely decorated with bunches of evergreens, dotted with freshly picked holly, two stout yellow candles, unlighted, stood in their carved wooden holders. A smaller one, lighted, stood on the kitchen window-sill

It was not until about nine o'clock that night that Stella's spirit began to lag. Her grandfather, in his corner, had finished the last manikin, and she had brushed the last speck of dust into the fire; nor a word was

uttered concerning her apparently miscarried prophecy.

"Time for lunch, eh," the old man spoke. He was lighting the lantern to go to the barn as was his wont, to see that all was safe for the night.

Stella filled the herb-pot in readiness for their customary good-night lunch.

A gentle rap at the front door startled them. They exchanged hurried glances, their hearts beating in unison. Stella glided quickly across the floor, took the lighted candle, and a few moments later had opened the front door.

Three snow be-spattered forms were standing on the broad stone step, a sweet-faced young woman, holding a little boy by the hand, and a tall middle-aged man. Also standing near by was a white-faced rug-covered pony, whose large trusting brown eyes gazed longingly at the open door.

"Oh! come in, come in," Stella cried eagerly, "you must be frozen. Never mind the pony, Mister, my grandfather will care for him.

"Thank you, child," the stranger replied, and taking a small sack off the pony's back, he entered the house.

In the meantime, Stella's grandpa, whose sharp ear had caught the word pony, was hastily preparing a pail of oatmeal and water near the hearth, as the strangers, followed by Stella, entered the kitchen. His stocking-cap pushed back from his forehead, revealed his twinkling blue eyes and round-rosy face. The

stranger extended his hand briskly as the two exchanged greetings, thus, "Nicholas!" this from the stranger. "Why! Joseph!" from the other, "Your wife and her child, I presume," he added, turning to the two. In a flash he was kneeling cap in hand, before the Holy Child, whose little hand was raised in blessing.

"Stella Matutina," he called out to his grand-daughter, who was hurriedly filling three small cups from the herb-pot for the strangers, "Stella, my child, we have with us tonight, the Holy Family."

Stella's face went white, she left everything, and approaching the group around the hearth, dropped on her knees before the Holy Child, and kissed his little wet feet. Nicholas, encumbered by a pail of warm drink and the lantern, went to see to the pony.

Joseph, after a short time followed him. Stella then accosted the Virgin Mother, who was removing the sandals from her child's feet. "I will get him a pair of stockings," she said, and slipping into her room, she returned with a lovely pair. They were pure white, with pink heels and toes. She also brought a pair for the Mother. Removing his wet stockings, she pinned them together with a small sharp thorn, and hung them to dry on a peg, by the chimney.

When the two men returned from the barn, Stella lit the candles and in a short time they all sat down to supper. Good enough to sit before a King, and did not indeed a King sit in their midst, a King whose kingdom was not of this world, but the glorious King of

Heaven. The splendor of the Almighty Father, who by the shedding of His blood upon a cross was to give His life for our redemption.

Stella's cooking was highly commended and enjoyed by the weary travellers to the delight of her dear grandfather's heart.

"How old is he?" their host questioned, alluding to the child. The mother glanced at her husband, who replied meditatively, "seven years tonight."

"Oh! so he is, so he is," Nicholas chuckled, "We must not forget that, eh, little one?"

The Divine Child lowered his head, and a slight shadow for an instant flitted upon his lovely countenance.

After supper the holy virgin helped Stella wash and put away the dishes. Seeing the little boy's head nodding sleepily—he was sitting on his foster father's knees—she went to him. Winding her arms about him, she murmured, "Mother's own precious baby."

Stella with a lighted candle led the mother and child into the sleeping room. Later on she went in to have a good night look at the child. He was sleeping peacefully, his tiny hand clasped in that of his mother's as she knelt praying by the bedside.

"O-o— isn't he heavenly?" the little girl ejaculated in a low voice. "Yes, He is heavenly," the mother returned, rising from her knees, "He came from Heaven." She tucked him easily a little to the back of the bed, to make room for the holy man who had been chosen above all others, to support by the

work of his hands, guide and protect the Son of his wife and of God.

That night as they lay in their bed the Virgin Mother told Stella some wonderful incidents concerning the child. She told her how He had left His glorious home in heaven to save His people, that He was God and man, and how His God-head was veiled by His humanity, and that after His death He would rise again, and return to His heavenly home, after redeeming the world.

The prudent woman excluded all the painful experiences in store for Him, these she kept to her own heart. When the grown ups were at breakfast the next morning, the Divine Child slipped shyly into the kitchen, running toward the chimney to get His stockings, which Stella had hung there the previous night.

To his great joy he found them stuffed full to the brim, with all kinds of goodies. Standing on a low stool he reached for them, taking them down, he skipped lightly across the floor and placed them in his mother's lap. Their contents turned out to be, some pretty toys, a thick warm pair of mittens, wristlets, and a small scarf, some fruit and candy; also, tucked tightly in the thumb of one of the mittens was a small round shining piece of gold. The Son of God looked every inch a boy, as in an ecstasy of joy, he fluttered around his small possessions, his murmured thanks, mingling with those of his parents.

It was when the holy trio were about to resume their journey that the supernatural element in the child's nature asserted itself.

The weather had turned warmer, and the light snow had packed sufficiently to make the roads passable. Stella's grandfather had fetched around the white-faced pony, which was now standing near the door, saddled and ready to carry its precious burden. The jovial host was standing on the hearth, back to the fire, capped and mittened, while farewells were exchanged and invitations for future visits were extended.

The Blessed Mother accosted her child, and said: "Now, darling, what do you say to our good and holy friends?" There was not the slightest trace of emotion in the musical young voice, as He addressed the man before Him:

"Owing to the goodness of your heart, Saint Nicholas, your soul-stirring love for My Father's little children, your kindness and charity to the sick and poor, you shall be chosen above all people, to bring comfort and happiness to millions and millions of hearts. I will ask of My Father, and he will give you a team of snow-white reindeer, whose sparkling harness and jingling bells shall be seen and heard only by the Angels. On the twenty-fourth night of every December, till the end of time, you shall assume your natural form, you will be as you appear now, your merry blue eyes twinkling with joy and happiness, your warm heart overflowing with heavenly love, the spirit of which shall pervade the world, it will enter into the hearts of all the people. Their stores and factories shall be at your disposal on that night. The white robed angels fluttering between Heaven and Earth will fill

and re-fill your pack, from one end of the earth to the other. You will travel so fast, that you shall be able to visit every house in the world. And by all means, be sure and fill every little stocking you shall find near the chimney, as you have filled mine last night. Little Stella here will accompany you, on your merciful trips. She will be your guiding star, and hold the team while you skip into every house. Should you find some doors and windows barred against you, don't let that discourage you. You can step on the roof and in a flash pop down the chimney and fill the stockings. From henceforth your name shall be Santa Claus, the mention of which will kindle joy and happiness in the heart of every child."

Thus saying, the wonderful Child with His parents, took leave of St. Nicholas's humble home. They had been on their way to the city to register their names, as was customary at that time; night overtaking them they were guided by the bright light in the window of the stone house by the road, and decided to seek lodgings there for the night.

And thus, my dear children, is how it has come to pass, that on every Christmas night the stockings are filled by the wonderful visitor, who comes to every home, and whose pictures and letters appear in the newspapers during the first weeks of December, to warn the grown ups against closing their hearts on the poor, and to remind the children to hang their stockings by the chimney that night before going to bed.

THE HOME OF SANTA CLAUS. 19

The little stone house by the road, in a far-away-country is still standing, and on every Christmas night a bright fire burns in its chimneys, while two familiar forms may be seen, hustling and bustling about, as they wait for the beautiful team of snow white reindeer, which is to speed them along on their journey around the world.

For the first pack of goodies is filled in and taken on that night, from The Home of Santa Claus.

[The End]

