

## Another Night Before Christmas

By Leigh Mitchell Hodges

They did not draw up at each chimney-top, though,  
For Santa leaves out naughty children, you know;  
And on this Christmas Eve, I must say with a sigh,  
There were just a few houses he had to pass by.

After 'while this good little boy  
Saw they had come  
To the chimney that rose from  
His very own home,  
And his eyes they grew big  
And his heart it beat fast,  
For now he would see all his  
Presents at last!

Yes, there was the drum and  
The real choo-choo train,  
And the nice set of tools and  
The big candy cane—  
But the blue soldier-suit and  
The puppy named Mike  
Were missing, and so were  
More things he would like!

"Please wait, Mr. Santa!" he cried out. "I wrote  
For lots more than that when I sent up my note."  
He was ready to cry, when the darling old fellow  
Smiled at him and said, in a voice very mellow:

"I got your note, too, and I read it all through,  
And I packed every present, as always I do;  
But when I looked down from my snow-covered crags  
I saw a poor boy dressed in nothing but rags.

"And I said to myself, 'That dear boy will be glad  
If I give this warm suit to that shivering lad.  
And I'm sure he would rather this puppy-dog small  
Be left with a child who has no pets at all.'"

For just a wee minute the boy could not speak,  
But he smiled thro' a teardrop that rolled down his cheek,  
And he said, "Santa Claus, you did just what was right,  
For they needed those things more than I do. Good night!"

And when he awoke from this wonderful ride,  
He slipped to the fireplace, and there he espied  
Not only the presents he wanted, but more  
Than ever he'd dreamed of or heard of before.

And the first things of all his surprised eyes to strike  
Were the blue soldier-suit and the puppy named Mike!  
And a note from Old Santa was pinned to a sleeve,  
Saying, "As ye have given, so shall ye receive."

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'Twas the night before Christmas, and all thro' the world,  
Every good little boy and girl snugly was curled,  
With eyes shut in sleep or with eyes shut in fear,  
Lest if open, Saint Nicholas would not come near.

And out on the edge of a snug little town,  
Where the snow-man had covered the fields that were brown  
With a blanket all feathery, fluffy and white,  
In a neat little home shone a bright little light.

In that same little home in a warm little bed  
A good boy of seven was hiding his head.  
For he knew—as you all know—that tho' you can't sleep  
On the night before Christmas, you still mustn't peep!

He had written to Santa Claus long weeks ago  
His letter had gone up the chimney, and so  
He was sure that when daylight came over the hill  
The things he had asked for his stockings would fill.

He had asked for a drum and a real choo-choo train;  
For a nice set of tools and a big candy cane;  
For a blue soldier-suit and a puppy named Mike,  
And a whole lot of other things good boys should like.

And now thro' the covers he thinks he can hear  
A patter of hoofs that tells Santa is near.  
At first they are loud, but then dimmer they seem,  
And they carry this little boy into a dream.

Now, of all the fine dreams that in Sleepland have grown,  
There was never a dream quite so fine as this one,  
For this same boy of seven—mind well what he says—  
Was riding with Santa Claus up in his sleigh!

So close to the dear old man's side was he stowed  
That he felt the warm glow of his cheeks as they roared,  
And 'twas he held the lines when the reindeer would stop  
To let Santa out at each new chimney-top!

Oh, how the bells tinkled as onward they flew!  
And how they did hurry the work to get through!  
And what loads of presents they left here and there  
As they scurried along thro' the crisp, wintry air!

