



SANTA STARTING IN AEROPLANE.

The Herald Angels by RICHARD BARKER SHELTON

DRAWING BY M. MEYER



On the Still Winter Air Rose the Three Childish Voices.



HE nursery rang with the childish voices. "Hark, the herald angels sing—" "That's too high. Wait a minute!" "Hark, the herald—" "That's better. Now, Seraphina! Now, Thad!" "Hark, the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn King—" "Seraphina, can't you take that piece of candy out of Thad's mouth? He nearly choked himself just then. You can have it back, Thad, when you've sung two verses. Don't be such a baby! Now, good and loud!" "Hark, the herald angels sing—" Schuyler bellowed lustily and beat time with a drumstick. Seraphina sang with much fervor and many false notes; while little Thad followed the tune manfully, and substituted a "la-lala" when the words proved elusive to his four-year-old memory. The second verse brought to a successful issue, Schuyler dismissed the chorus and turned to the door. "You see if you can't teach Thad the words of that second verse while I go downstairs and get some joss-sticks for the censer," he told Seraphina. Schuyler Van Brunt was working under difficulties. Doctor Post had told him of the old English custom of singing carols in the streets on Christmas morning. It had taken a strong hold on the boy's fertile imagination—so strong a hold that he had planned to smuggle Seraphina and Thad from the house, when Christmas came, and to sing a carol out-of-doors in true English fashion. Then, just when he needed Doctor Post's advice most, there had been some vague trouble between the doctor and Aunt Margaret. Aunt Margaret no longer wore the diamond ring on the third finger of her left hand, and Doctor Post came no more to the house. It was very disheartening. Schuyler wanted to ask Doctor Post a score of questions about the carols. Did the people who sang them wear surplices, like the choir boys in the Christmas procession at St. Jude's? Did they stand still or march around while they sang? These and other points sadly taxed his eight-year-old intellect. But his determination to sing that carol in the street never faltered. Hence the secret rehearsals in the nursery. After much deliberation, he decided that surplices would lend dignity to the occasion, and this decision was furthered by the thought that night-gowns would make very passable surplices. Then, a tomato can suggesting possibilities, he added a censer to the properties. A tomato can punched full of holes, swung on the gilt cord that comes about candy boxes, and filled

with burning joss-sticks, would make a beautiful censer. It was Christmas Eve, and Schuyler's plans were complete. He felt sure they would put up a very creditable carol in the morning, even if Doctor Post's advice had not been obtainable. As he crept upstairs with the joss-stick, which he had begged from Agnes, the second girl, he felt that the last obstacle had been surmounted. "Come on now, once more," he said as he entered the nursery door. "Elsa will be up with supper in a minute. We've just time before she comes. Stand up, Thad. Yes, I'll let you have a piece of the joss-stick if you'll sing good and loud. Now!" II. Very early in the gray of the Christmas dawn Schuyler awoke, bounced out of bed, and began to rouse his cohorts. He tiptoed to Seraphina's little white cot and indulged in a series of vigorous shakes and punches. "Get up! Get up, Seraphina! It's time to go out and carol," he whispered hoarsely. Seraphina arose, and, sitting on the side of her bed, blinked at him reproachfully. Little Thad was already awake and ready for anything which savored of exciting novelty. The two elder children dressed hurriedly, and between them they managed to put on little Thad's clothes. Then Schuyler crept noiselessly to the hall below and returned with coats and hats and mittens. When they had bundled themselves into these outer garments, each donned a "surplice." At the last moment Schuyler bethought him of the brilliant cord on his father's bathrobe, and at the imminent peril of discovery he stole into Mr. Van Brunt's dressing-room and returned with the coveted cord encircling his small waist. This finishing touch, he felt sure, made him quite like the altar boys at St. Jude's. He fished beneath his bed and drew out the tomato can censer filled with the joss-stick. "Come on!" he whispered, and led the way down the wide stairs. With a caution worthy of better things, he shot the bolts and opened the front door. The three grotesque figures stole silently out and stood on the stoop in the cold Christmas dawn. The air was still and biting; the silence of the streets appalling. Seraphina's mind reverted to the luxury of the bed she had just quitted. "O-o-oh!" she chattered. "It's cold—aw-awful c-cold to be out in your nightie!" Schuyler snorted scornfully. "Haven't you got enough on underneath it?" he demanded angrily, and Seraphina was silenced. "O-o-oh!" echoed little Thad, and then, evidently thinking the sooner he caroled the sooner he would be back in the house, he began in his piping voice: "Hark, er herald dangel—" Schuyler thrust a hand over his mouth. "Shut up!" he said disgustedly. "Do you want Elsa to come out and sneak

us back into the house? Come on, now!" He led the way down the steps and around the corner, where he paused to light the joss-stick in the tomato can. When they started again, little Thad tripped on his night-gown surplice and went sprawling into the gutter. He was rescued, howling; but not until he had been promised unlimited candy could the march be taken up again. "Who are you going to sing your carol to?" demanded the practical Seraphina. "Ninny! To no one in particular," said Schuyler. "You ought to sing it to some one," she persisted. "Well, who?" he challenged; but Seraphina was unable to defend her point thus specifically. "I'll tell you," he compromised, "we'll go to Doctor Post's. We'll sing it on the way, and sing it to him, too." Through the deserted suburban streets they marched; Schuyler in the lead, swinging his smoking censer valiantly; Seraphina ambling along in his wake; and little Thad bringing up the rear, his strange surplice bearing unmistakable evidence of the gutter from which he had been recently fished. And on the still winter air rose the three childish voices in the old, old hymn. Doctor Post heard them caroling on the lawn, and came to the door in his bathrobe. The three strangely garbed figures met his astonished gaze. "Good Lord! What have we here?" he gasped. "We're herald dangel," piped little Thad. "We're Christmas carolers," corrected Schuyler with much dignity. "I'm frozen," chirped Seraphina. The doctor made a heroic effort to maintain his gravity. "Come in, come in and get warm," he said. "Merry Christmas to you!" They filed up the steps into the warm, wide hall, the tomato can sending out its reek of burning joss-stick. "I would like to ask if carolers generally wear surplices and carry censers?" Schuyler questioned doubtfully. The doctor's eyes twinkled. "The best I ever heard did," he said gravely. "At that moment the telephone bell whirred wildly, and this is what they heard the doctor say:

"Hello! Yes, this is Doctor Post talking. Who? Oh, it's you, Margaret!—he lingered affectionately on the word— "Y-es. Now don't be alarmed. They're not lost. In fact, they're here with me this minute. They came to sing me a carol in good old English fashion. No, don't trouble to send Elsa; I'll send them home in the carriage as soon as I can get Dan up. Not at all! Good-by! Oh, Margaret, merry Christmas! Perhaps, if you don't mind, I'll drive over with them. Thanks. Good-by!" Half an hour later a carriage drew up before the Van Brunt house, and from it emerged Schuyler, Seraphina, Thad and Doctor Post. Mrs. Van Brunt and Aunt Margaret met the cavalcade at the door. "Oh! Oh!" said Mrs. Van Brunt, gathering the three strange little figures in her arms, while tears of merriment ran down her face. "Doctor Post had turned to Margaret. "I thought I'd come with the herald angels," he said laughing, "and let them plead peace on earth and mercy mild for me." Her eyes softened. A hesitating smile trembled on her lips a moment uncertainly, the next moment with no uncertainty whatever. And then he knew that the herald angels had accomplished an unwitting mission. (Copyright, Frank A. Munsey Co.) The Christmas Guest. Whoso shall come any way this night, By moon or hill or shore, For him the blessed candles' light, For him the open door. (Oh, Mary, this for thy Son's sake, Though mife comes in no more!) My heart is sweet, my Yule logs burn, My board is decked and spread; For any who may seem in turn, Are warmth and wine and bread. (Oh, Mary, grant my son this night Be housed and comforted!) Bid, bidden or begged come for guest, My heart shall share his woes, And on his head my hand shall rest (To bless him ere he goes. Oh, Mary, grant my son this night That blessing and repose!) This night, for thy one Son's dear sake, Wait light and warmth and wine Oh, Mary, we be mothers both! Take these my tears for sign, And this I do for thy sweet Son Wilt thou not do for mine? —Theodosia Garrison

Seeing Santa Claus A Christmas Story For Children By MARY E. LUNDGREN

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IT WAS a few days before Christmas, and King Winter was preparing the roads for Santa Claus' long drive. The snowflakes were tumbling over one another to do his bidding, and Jack Frost shouted to Donald, who was flattening his nose against the windowpane, that he would better stay in the house if he did not wish to get his ears pinched. Donald was "half past four" and Aunt Madie, sitting before the fire, "half past forty." Early in the former's career the two had formed an exclusive mutual admiration society. The little boy climbed upon the arm of the lady's huge easy chair, and the two sat cozily in front of the heater, gazing thoughtfully into the glowing coals that showed through the encircling isinglass and made the only light in the room. "Is Santa Claus our papas and mammas, Aunt Madie?" "The Santa Claus I saw certainly wasn't Donnie." "Did you ever see Santa Claus? Honest, did you?" "Let's make it a story. Once upon a time, long, long ago, when I was a little girl, we were poor, so poor that Brother Fred (your papa, Donnie) and I never got much for Christmas. We couldn't understand why Santa Claus did not give the poor a lot and the rich just a little to even things up. Mother said it was to give the rich a chance to be good to the poor and the poor a chance to grow good by suffering patiently, and then both would be worthy to celebrate Christ's birthday. Fred's patched suit hardly kept out the cold, and this Christmas I am talking about I had such a queer little ache way down in my heart that some way couldn't get cured. I told Fred, but he said we must pretend to be ever so much pleased with whatever we got, even if it should be only a stick of candy, because mamma would feel so sorry, and she didn't have nice things either, but had to work all day long and late at night sewing for the railroad boys." "Poor grandma! Let's give her something nice this Christmas. She can have all my pennies." "Mammas don't mind so much not having things if their boys and girls are good, but I am afraid Fred and I worried her sometimes and made her much trouble. Anyway, that Christmas eve I slept with mamma, and I remember we had hardly enough covering to keep us warm." "Poor Aunt Madie! Did you get cold and wake up and see Santa Claus then?" "I think some kind of noise awoke me. It was a beautiful night. The moonbeams that crept between the curtains sat close to the shadows, silently watching, just like the shepherds the first Christmas eve. You remember the story, dear? It was so still that I almost expected to hear the angels sing. Then, of course, I began to think of Santa Claus. I wanted and wanted to see him, but I was dreadfully afraid I would. My heart was going pitterpat when—what do you suppose Donnie?—I really saw something move in the corner!" "And it was Santa Claus?" "It looked like a man, and I could see by the bobbing of his head that he was coming toward me. I thought of

Santa Claus, and I thought of robbers, and I did not know what to think." "What did you do, Aunt Madie?" "Bob, bob, went his head, and he seemed to be coming closer and closer. I was so scared I never thought of mamma at all, or whether she would get hurt, supposing it wasn't Santa Claus, but slipped under the covers, way down to the foot of the bed." "I shut my eyes, put my fingers in my ears and trembled myself to sleep, for the next thing I knew something heavy bounced upon the bed, and there it was Christmas morning and Fred was pelting me with my funny, bumpy stockings." "And was that all you saw of Santa Claus?" asked Donald disappointedly. "I looked over toward the corner. Would you believe it?—there was that man yet. I jumped and pretty nearly screamed and then laughed and laughed and laughed." "Why, who was it? Oh, I know. It was your papa, and he had been filling your stockings in the night." "No, sir-ee! My Santa Claus wasn't either papa or mamma." "Then it was my papa, your brother Fred, Aunt Madie?" "Wrong again, young man. It was mamma's broom dressed in Fred's new suit of clothes and new stockings, boots, cap, scarf and mittens. The whole thing was hung up in a dark corner on the clothesline." "But you said it walked toward you, Aunt Madie?" "I said it seemed to be coming closer and closer. It was so cold that mamma had let the cat stay in all night, and when kittle played with the man's feet his head bobbed and bobbed just as if he were walking." "Wouldn't I be scared, though? And, my, what a dandy present for Fred! I am going to ask papa if he remembers. Did you get just as nice, Aunt Madie?" "I was very happy over my presents that morning. I did not have to make believe at all. You see, times were getting better for us. I never had any more heartaches at Christmas after that, and I learned that to stop some other little hearts from aching is the best gift we can make." "That's why you send me with such big bundles to the little house around the corner. Can't I give something, too, Auntie?" "Yes indeed, Donnie. Aunt Madie was a very little girl, but, do you know, she will never get over being ashamed that she was too big a 'traid cat' to think of mamma's danger." "And your Santa Claus was only a scarecrow, after all!"

"Santa Claus'll Get Us."



The Chimney Climber. Quoth Santa Claus, "I'm getting fat, And, though I'm not a churl, I think the person for this job Would be the hippest girl." —Lillian's Wabble THE AFTERMATH. WE'VE done our little charity, we've been a little kind, We've called ourselves by no ble names and boasted noble mind, We've preached of the deserving poor and listened to their plea, And we are snug and satisfied and proud as proud can be. "This Christmas we at least," we say, "were kind to some poor soul." When the Christmas spirit gripped us—and we sacrificed a dose! But hearken, ye, my brothers all, and hearken with a will: The poor are always with us, and they're broken hearted still. They're living in their loneliness, they're living in their pain, And they're calling, calling, calling, and they ask your help again. We gave them cheer at Christmas, then we made our little bow, But the winter chill is with them still, and who will help them now? —Edmund Leamy in New York Times