



# FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE



## A Letter to Santa



**DEAR SANTA:** This Christmas you'll have a big task, To do all the favors I'm going to ask; And first I must tell you I mostly desire, For every cold household, a big roaring fire; For every small child that is poorer than me, A drum and a fife and a green Christmas tree, A cake and a pie and a warm pair of shoes, And mittens that any small person would choose.

I want for their Mamas a crispy new dress, I want for their Papas—you never would guess— A pipe and a coat and a shiny new hat, And a dinner so big it would make them look fat. And when you have finished and find it is late You may draw in your reindeers and stop at my gate And give me! Oh, goodness! I know what I'll do— I'll leave the whole secret, Dear Santa, to YOU!

## MINCE PIE FOR CHRISTMAS

**A**LL morning tantalizing smells from the big kitchen had made Richard and Ruth most uncomfortable. And Aunt Dinah, the cook, wouldn't let them get so much as a tip of a nose inside the door. "Run erlong, you had chillun," she had declared pompously, "an' don't pester me non—y' all knows y' swine ter hab some terrorror, but—"

"Can't we have just a taste, Aunt Dinah?" Richard had pleaded. "Ain't ah done tole you no!" Aunt Dinah answered, pretending to be very angry. "Run erlong now an' let me bake dese heah mince pies—run erlong!"

Richard and Ruth had declared Dinah a "mean old thing" and they even thought they would not give her the little Christmas presents they had purchased for her—but they had to "run erlong" just the same.

Then, several hours later, just before lunch, Mamma told them to put on their warm wraps and caps as she wanted to send them on an errand—"a bit of Christmas charity," she explained.

"Now, children," she said, "I want you to take a little Christmas cheer to poor old Mrs. Jones and her five little children. I'm afraid they will not have much of a Christmas unless we send them some good things."

"Ruth is to carry these two holly wreaths and you, Richard, are to take the big basket Aunt Dinah will give you. It contains roast chicken and potatoes and celery and cranberry sauce and bread and lots of things to eat. And, oh yes, there's a big mince pie, too, which Dinah has just baked. She tells me it will not go in the basket, so you will have to carry it—and for goodness sake, Richard, be careful not to drop it!"

Presently the brother and sister were trudging along on their errand

of "Christmas charity." Ruth put each arm through a wreath and then jammed her hands down in the great pockets of her coat—so Jack Frost couldn't nip them. Richard swung the basket on one arm and bore the huge mince pie in front of him in the other hand.

They walked along in silence for a while. Presently Richard drew in a long breath through his nose, "Whew!" he said, "Smells mighty good, doesn't it, Ruth?"

Ruth smiled. "Um-m-m-m: I just love mince pie!"

"Maybe—maybe," Richard suggested after a while, "Mrs. Jones doesn't like mince pie?"

Ruth shook her head sadly. She knew that couldn't be true—for she couldn't even imagine anyone not liking mince pie.

"My!" exclaimed Richard. "I'll have to rest, Ruth, or my arm'll drop off! Gee, but it's tired holding that pie! Here, let's sit down on that old log over there."

By this time the children were well beyond the outskirts of the village, almost in the open country—and they had still quite a distance to go before they reached the humble home of Mrs. Jones and the five Jones children. It is true, you know, walking in the snow, particularly if one is carrying something.

So they sat down.

Richard held the pie on his lap, for he thought that much safer than putting it on top of the basket. And it was too, except for one thing—Richard himself.

To this day he can't tell you just how or why they acted so, but presently his fingers stole down and seemed to fasten on a piece of that pie before he could draw them away. And the next instant—plop!—the piece had disappeared into his mouth. "Oh, Richard!" cried Ruth, springing to her feet. "You mustn't do that! Whatever will Mrs. Jones think?"

Richard grinned. "Aw, shucks," he answered, "she won't even notice it—just a little piece off the edge!"

"But you can notice it, indeed you can, Richard!" Ruth persisted.

Richard looked closely. Yes, there was no denying it, he could see most plainly where the piece had been broken off. Presently his mischievous face lighted up.

"Then I'll have to make it the same

and nervous-looking children arrived at Mrs. Jones' front door. Though they were welcomed profusely, they seemed to have no enthusiasm in returning the greeting.

"It was so nice of you children to carry all these things," said Mrs. Jones as she unpacked the basket, while the five Jones children crowded around her, their eyes wide with astonishment and pleasure. "Your Ma told me she would send me some—why, did she forget the mince pie? She said she would make sure to send one—and I've been telling my little children all about how good mince pie tastes—they've never tasted it, and they're just crazy to—land sakes, I do declare, she's gone and forgot it!"

Poor Richard! Poor Ruth! Each looked at the other and then down at the floor.

Just then the little Jones children began to bawl. Yes, bawl—not cry, or weep or shed tears—but bawl! Here they had been looking forward to mince pie and now—now—

Finally Ruth could stand it no longer; so she told Mrs. Jones how Richard had been carrying the pie and how he had stumbled and hurled it into a snow drift where, alas, it was squashed to pieces!

At that, the five little Joneses began to bawl all the louder!

Mrs. Jones tried to hide her disappointment, and she looked sorrowfully at her children. "There, there, I guess you couldn't help it, Richard," she said. "I—just wish I had money enough to buy one for them. Hush, children, don't cry! Maybe—maybe soon I'll get you some mince pie."

But the five wouldn't stop bawling; in fact they couldn't, for they had fairly set their little hearts on eating mince pie.

All the way home, Richard and Ruth walked slowly and with heads down.

"If you only hadn't, Richard!" Ruth sobbed.

"Ye—yes, I know!" he admitted. "It was all my fault. And—and, just think, Ruth, of all the mince pie we will have tomorrow, and those poor little children none at all!"

"Maybe Mamma will—" suggested Ruth.

"Oh, no, no!" interrupted Richard quickly. "We mustn't tell her! Please don't! Please—Ruth!" Suddenly his face lighted up with joy and relief.

## Susie's Tree

**S**USIE had lived in a pretty house in an Eastern city, and she had all the toys and all the parties that a little girl needed to make her happy. She had even more than these—she had a loving mother and an indulgent father, who lavished heartfelt affection on her.

"You are spoiling the child," said one of their neighbors. "It is all well and good so long as you can indulge her, but a time may come when she can't have it, and then you will see!"

"Susie is a sensible girl and will know how to take reverses should they come, but I pray God she may



tioning the subject, because she knew there could be no celebration, although papa was building up a new business, and mamma was already much better. But her parents thought of the jolly Christmases they used to have, and in the quiet of their bedroom they tried to plan a surprise for their pet, one that would cost next to nothing but would have the desired effect on Susie.

"I have a plan for a tree," said Mother, "and I'm sure she will enjoy it because it will be different. Leave it to me."

On Christmas Eve Susie went to bed without a suspicion of what was in the wind. She said her prayers as usual, adding: "Thank you Lord

"Do you think she'll like it?" asked the Father.

"I'm sure she will," said Mother, "but trouble came sooner than you would have thought it possible, and in a few months' time Susie's father had lost his money, her mother had been taken ill, and the Doctor said nothing would help her but the dry Western climate."

Susie was then the life of the family. She vied her best to cheer the father, who was bowed down with cares, and she waited on the mother and returned all the love that had been given to her.

"I wish Mrs. Miller could see her now," thought Susie's mother, as the child bustled about fixing up the room and waiting on her. "She would not think that she had been spoiled."

Then came a busy time for the family, pulling up stakes and moving with bag and baggage to a small Western town, where the father was to begin anew to amass a fortune, and the mother was to remain her health.

Susie revelled in the new life that opened up before her, and while she had pleasant recollections of her friends in the east, and remembered fondly the beloved toys she had to give up, she loved this new world surrounded by high mountains, and lived in by rugged men who had rough exteriors, but kindly hearts.

A month passed amid these surroundings, and Christmas was close at hand. Susie purposely avoided men-

for making mother better so soon, this shall be my Christmas gift, and it is the best I ever got. Amen!"

"Take a peep, is she asleep?" asked the mother an hour later.

"Yes, we can get to work," answered the father, as he quietly pushed the clothes-tree into the last room and began to tangle branches of evergreen around the top. Then, with Mother's help, he decorated it with the toys the village shop boasted of, and in a twinkling a lovely tree was displayed to view.

"Do you think she'll like it?" asked the father.

"Knowing my Susie, I'm sure she will. Put these in a conspicuous place on the tree," said Mother, "I crocheted them for her while she was in school. She has a long distance to go, and will want warm gloves."

"And I had the boys down in the village make this for her," said the father, producing a squirrel-fur coat, and cap to match.

Susie's mother looked her joy. "Happy Christmas," cried Susie, running into her parents' room next morning. "What can I do for you, Mother?" she asked, after kissing them.

"Go into the living room, dear, and pull up the shades!"

"O-o-o-o-o-o!" was what they heard her say, and they knew that she liked her tree.

## In the Christmas Toy Window

**I**T was night. The window of the little shop was full of overflowing with Christmas toys. In the dim light from a single jet—for the shop was a small one in a dingy side street—they seemed to be all jumbled together. Some were standing on their feet, others were stowed at an angle, tilted against each other or against the glass of the window, and still others lay prone, like heaps of wounded upon a battlefield.

Long since, the Christmas crowds, which had wended their merry way through the shopping district, had returned to their homes and, no doubt, to dreams of Christmas Eve and the morning following.

The chimneys in the tall spire of a nearby church rang out two o'clock. Suddenly, there came a stir among the toys in the window, a rustle as of many small bodies turning over, straightening out cramped limbs and breathing deeply.

Over in one corner of the window stood a Soldier Boy, and beside him a Jointed Doll—very proud of her joints—dressed in a becoming gown of baby blue. At their feet sat Sato, a boy-doll from the land of the Mikado.

"Grr-rr-rr!" growled Soldier Boy in what he imagined was a fierce voice. And again, "Grr-rr-rr!" He'd like to get my hands on that fellow who sent me off without my musket! And he reached up with both hands and twisted the pointed ends of his mustache fiercely. Then he glanced sideways at the Jointed Doll.

But she was looking down demurely and smoothing out a slight wrinkle in her skirt.

"Me cold. Me cold," spoke up Sato, tucking his hands in the folds of his kimono sleeves.

Soldier Boy smiled scornfully, shrugged his shoulders and glanced again out of the corner of his eye at the Jointed Doll. "Humh!" he said disdainfully, "I don't call this cold—but a soldier, of course, doesn't mind any kind of weather! Why, I wouldn't mind it at all if old Santa Claus had selected me as one of the toys for his big bag—in fact, I wouldn't have minded one bit the long cold ride through the snow, over the housetops, clear from out the Frozen North. Not I!"

Still the Jointed Doll did not speak. "Me like sunshine, cherry blossoms, sailing kites," said Sato in mournful tones. Then, after a pause, "What's

Christmas?"

"The Jointed Doll spoke up, "Mercy," she trilled, "do you mean to say that you don't know what Christmas is? Well, Sato, I can't tell you all about it, but I can tell you that it's the time when people give and receive presents—we're Christmas presents. And everyone is so happy and so gay. And—"

"Humh!" interrupted Sato. "Me saw little girl—look in at me—and she cry. Say 'Oh, I'll only have that beautiful Japanese doll for Christmas!' I tell her come and take me—I tried this place—but she no come—and go way with tears. Why she no take me?"

"I shall be sold tomorrow," said Soldier Boy in a haughty tone. "This afternoon a little boy looked over the whole window and picked me out as

"Oh, I hope someone buys me," spoke up the Jointed Doll. "I do so want to be a Christmas present! I've noticed many, many little girls looking at me—and they seem to like me, too. But they shake their heads sadly and walk away. It must be because of this thing people call money. I can't understand it. Some people have lots of it and seem able to buy any and everything they want for Christmas; and others, when they have learned that I sell for what is called one dollar, look sorrowfully at me and—"

"What I sell for?" interrupted Sato. "Twenty-five cents," answered Soldier Boy gruffly. "Which is fifteen cents more than you're worth!"

"Why, that's all you sell for!" exclaimed the Jointed Doll, addressing the Soldier Boy directly for the first time.

Soldier Boy's cheek flushed. "Ain't! Maybe so, maybe so, but a soldier, you know, serves for love and so—a—he is always undervalued until war comes!"

"Ha!" spoke up Sato. "Me see! Before you be Christmas present, some one pay money for you. Ha? Me glad what you call twenty-five cents not so much as one dollar. Ha! Easy boy me, so me be sold sure! A little girl look at me today—she say she save up pennies for me. Now I understand, but—huh—"

Yet neither the Jointed Doll nor Soldier Boy heard what also was puzzling the mind of little Sato, for just then the chimneys sounded the quarter-hour and instantly every toy fell back into the exact position in which it had been placed by the old fellow who kept the shop. Their breathing spell was over, for that night at least.

A little fairy, who happened to be present, told me the story as I have related it to you; and she explained that every toy at Christmas time is just as anxious to be someone's Christmas present as were the three we've been talking about. And she further explained that when a child, while looking at the toys in a store, suddenly sees one which he feels he just must have—why then it's simply that the desired toy is calling to the child to buy him—and the child hears the call! Strange, isn't it? It may be so, and it may not. I don't know what you think about it. I believe it, of course, because I believe in fairies; but then, you see, I know fairies very well—lots of them. And that, of course, makes a great difference!



At their feet sat Sato.

the thing he wanted most. His Nurse—quite an ordinary person, I'm sure—called his attention to the fact that I have no musket; but he merely laughed at her. "I don't care, Nurse," he said, "he's so fierce and so brave a soldier that he doesn't need a musket! So—so you see what a fine fellow I am!" And he fell to twirling his mustache and glancing now and then at the fair lady on his right.

all around!" he declared, joyfully. And forthwith he began to break off the crust, piece by piece—yet, it should be noted, not throwing small pieces away, but eating them!

"Oh, Richard!" cried Ruth. "Wh-what will Mamma say?"

"Well," mumbled Richard slowly, "I can't help it. Besides Mrs. Jones'll think it was made that way! Here, have some, Ruth!"

But Ruth would not. Instead, she kept on urging her brother to stop. She even told him that he was, yes, stealing, since the pie didn't belong to him. And—

Just then, those dreadful fingers of Richard's misbehaved again; at all events, they at least slipped. For instead of breaking off merely a piece of the crust, they carried off with them the crust and a big piece of the pie—quite more than Richard could have bitten off in three bites, and Richard's "bites" of pie weren't small, either!

At this, Richard himself was alarmed. Really, he insisted, he hadn't meant to do it! Poor Ruth began to cry, whereupon, for some strange reason, Richard became angry. "Come on," he declared. "We've been resting here long enough. If—if you haven't been tired, Ruth, we wouldn't have sat down and—and then, you see, this wouldn't have happened! Come on!"

With Ruth drying her tears on her coat sleeve—a thing she should not have done, of course—they resumed their journey.

Suddenly, Richard stumbled and fell—and the mince pie flew out of his hand and landed deep in a snow bank!

"Oh! Oh-o-o-oh!" cried poor little Ruth.

"I stubbed my toe!" cried out Richard, almost as much frightened as his sister. "Oh, Ruth! What shall we do! What shall we do!"

Richard had not fallen "on purpose," though Ruth was at first inclined to think that he had. But, truly, he had not. So he was as worried as was his sister.

A while later two strangely subdued

They walked along in silence for a while.

"I know, Ruth!" he cried. "I have a whole dollar that Uncle Will gave me yesterday to buy Christmas things with—and you don't think those big mince pies at the bakery cost over a dollar, do you, Ruth?"

Ruth didn't know. But she welcomed the idea instantly.

So Richard went home and got the dollar out of the corner of his bureau drawer and then met Ruth, who had been waiting at the bakery for him and—

"Well, the five little Joneses had their Christmas mince pie after all. And, don't you know, Richard, somehow seemed to find real pleasure in spending that dollar for the pie; indeed, it didn't cost quite that much, so he had plenty left over with which to buy candy for them. He spent every penny of it, too, and wished he had more!"

All of which shows that while Richard was a bad boy to even so much as touch the pie with those naughty fingers of his, he had also a lot of the real Christmas cheer within his heart. Don't you think so?

**TOO BUSY TO LISTEN.**

"Now Sonny," said his teacher, "you were naughty again today. Didn't I ask you to pray to be a better boy?"

"Yes, ma'am; but I guess the Lord was too busy and didn't hear me."



They walked along in silence for a while.

## OUR PUZZLE CORNER

- BEHEADINGS.**
1. Behead a word meaning close and get a part of the head.
  2. Behead act of using and get a wise person.
  3. Behead to weary and get anger.
  4. Behead part of a boat and get ill or sick.
- Beheaded letters spell something found on the Christmas table.

- ENIGMA.**
- My first is in sick but not in well, My second is in mountain but not in dell; My third is in rats but not in mice, My fourth is in oats but not in rice; My fifth is in live but not in die, My sixth is in smile but not in cry. My whole is the name of something very popular at Christmas-time.
- Answers.**
- BEHEADINGS:** Nuts. 1. Near-ear; 2. Usage-sage; 3. Fire-are; 4. Sail-ail.
- ENIGMA:** Carols.

## CHRISTMAS PRESENT PUZZLE.



Tottle and Benny spent many long delightful hours down town looking in at the wonderful Christmas toys before they at last decided what they each selected.

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**AESOP'S RETOLD**

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**SHEPHERD BOY AND WOLF.**



**A** SHEPHERD boy was set to keep Not far away a flock of sheep; He thought 'twould be a pleasant joke To frighten all the village folks By crying "Wolf! Good people, hear! A wolf is coming very near!" But when they came at his report, He only laughed and called it sport.

Soon after this it came to pass The wolf did really come—alas! When now he called no one gave heed, None came to help in time of need.

"Aha!" exclaimed the village men, "That fellow crieth 'Wolf' again; Three times at least we've been deceived, The rascal cannot be believed."

With scattered sheep the woods were filled, Many were either lamed or killed; The boy, who ran to save his life, Was beaten by the shepherd's wife.

A liar is not believed forsooth, Even when he speaks the truth.

