

# ..A Joyous Christmas..

And may the New Year be filled with Health, Happiness and Prosperity, is our heart-felt Greeting to all our Loyal Friends and Customers.

## The Yale State Bank

### A SURPRISE SANTA CLAUS



**H**AROLD! Harold Barton!" called Sally's voice from the kitchen door. "Father says be sure to close and lock!"

"Oh, I know all about it," called Harold from the barn door. "Don't bother your head about me." He turned his back and stalked into the barn, carrying a big basket filled with holly, fir boughs and mistletoe. Harold was to dress the Christmas tree and decorate the barn, for the tree was too large for the house, and the barn, which was well built, had been fitted up with stoves.

Harold and Bert Penn put the last touches to the decorations and the tree just as the supper bell rang the day before Christmas. Dinner was early, as some cousins were to come in the evening and they had to be met at the station four miles away.

The Bentons lived on the edge of a town at the foot of a thickly wooded mountain that sheltered many a wild animal and often human beings almost as wild.

The cousins came and soon were safely tucked away in the beds and on the sofas that were not used by the uncles and aunts, and all was quiet.

Two persons were not asleep, though. Sally was thinking: "I wonder if Harold did lock the barn up well—with all our beautiful presents there. Suppose some of the woods tramps should break in. Oh, dear, I wish morning were here!"

Harold also, rolled up on a mattress on the garret floor, remembered that, although he had locked the large doors, he had not thought about the little door, and he could not remember whether it was fastened.

Morning dawned bright and crisp. Harold helped the gardener build the fires in the stoves in the barn and then waited impatiently for Uncle John, who had promised to act as Santa Claus and who could not get there until the last moment. The train arrived without Uncle John, and the smaller children were beginning to fret at the delay. So it was finally decided that they would have to do without a Santa Claus, for Uncle John had always taken that part, and no one could be persuaded to take his place.

The candles were lighted, and the family and guests trooped over to the barn. Such cries of surprise and delight there were when the big tree stood before them in a blaze of glory! When the "ohs" and "ahs" had died away a little, Harold started to make

an apology for the absence of Santa. "Santa Claus was detain"—he began, when a whistling sound and then a tinkling noise like sleighbells came from the tree. He stopped in astonishment. Every one else heard the noise, too, and thirty-two pairs of eyes were turned toward the tree. Certainly something was moving in the tree. The branches toward the center shook, though no one touched the tree, and as every one watched breathlessly the branches parted, and the queerest little figure you ever saw pushed its way out and stood on a limb, bowing politely right and left. It was about two feet high, with long flowing white beard and hair and dressed just as you always expect to see Santa Claus.

The children looked up in open mouthed astonishment. Harold among them, and the grownups, with puzzled expressions, were trying to solve the mystery when another sharp little whistle was heard, and the tiny Santa Claus, using his hands and feet with much skill, climbed down a branch or two. In so doing he turned his back and showed a long brown tail beneath his coat.

Then there was a shout of laughter, with clapping of hands, and the children fairly danced with joy as the small Santa Claus, sitting demurely on a branch, took hold of a very pretty pink and white dolly and, after examining her wax face closely, kissed her lovingly. At this there was a louder roar of laughter, in the midst of which a gruff voice called out:

"Here, you beggar! Let it alone!"

This voice came from the hayloft, and when the thirty-two pairs of eyes turned immediately to see who spoke they saw two pairs of legs hanging over the edge of the loft and two bearded faces peering down.

The two bearded men came down, one swinging from the beam and the other climbing down the ladder. Harold, with an exclamation of delight, flung both arms about the most hasty-looking one.

They every one exclaimed, "Why, Uncle John!" And Uncle John laughingly explained that he and a friend, whom he introduced as Mr. Whitman, had arrived on the midnight train and, as they did not wish to disturb the family, had tried the barn doors. Then they had decided upon this surprise.

"And the Santa Claus monkey is himself a present for you, Harold, to remind you to lock doors," said Uncle John, with a twinkle in his eye.



QUEER FIGURE PUSHED OUT.

### A KIND FAMILY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT



**O**NCE, long ago, in the mountains of southern France, there lived a poor but honest family of a father, mother and two children. The father was named Adam and the mother Hannah. The son, Peter, was twelve years of age, and the daughter, Esther, was only nine.

Father Adam was an honest, hard-working man. On the steep sides of the mountains he kept his sheep and a cow, and in a little valley that lay between the mountains Mother Hannah made a garden, tilling the soil by her own hands, with the aid of a few simple gardening tools. And her son Peter gave her what assistance a boy of his years could give. Esther kept the little thatched cottage tidy and clean, preparing the meals for the three workers who were out of doors most of the day and who came in at night from their toil very, very tired.

But they never crumpled at their lot, for they had hopes that Fortune would smile on them some time. And she did—in the form of a fairy.

One morning the day before Christmas Father Adam and family sat

at their plain wooden table eating mush and milk. Adam spoke.

"Tis the holy time of Christmas, mother," he said, "and we should do an act of charity toward some one poorer than ourselves, even though it should be giving ever and ever so small a gift. The Lord gave his life for sufferers in his name on the day of his Nativity. What say you, mother?"

"You are right," agreed Mother Hannah. "There is the Widow David, who stands in great need. She has two children, and the wolves got among her sheep and killed three of the finest. She is trying hard to keep her children and herself. What say you to our sending her a bag of wheat and a small cheese?"

"Very good, mother," agreed Father Adam. "And as I shall have to watch the sheep and cow either Peter or Esther shall take the wheat and cheese to Widow David's cot."

"I'll go," offered Esther, "for Peter and mother are digging up the ground for the planting of vines in the spring."

So it was agreed that Esther should take the dogcart and make the journey over the mountain to the cottage of the Widow David. As soon as breakfast was over Esther tidied up the house and placed the noon meal—a loaf of bread, a jug of homemade wine and a small cheese—on the table.

"Mother and Peter will be hungry after the forenoon spent in the garden," she said. "Poor father always carries his bread and cheese in his pocket and eats as he herds the sheep."

"Now, before going I shall fix the fire to hold till noonday; otherwise the house will be cold on mother's and Peter's return."

So saying, Esther picked up a huge log that lay beside the fireplace. "Ah, this is the log father said should burn on Christmas eve fire. It will soon be Christmas eve, and I'll throw the log on the flame and have the house cheery on the return of the dear ones."

But just as Esther was lifting one end of the heavy log—the Yale log—a flash of light leaped from the farther end and caused Esther to close her eyes. When she opened them again there before her stood a fairy. "Ah! I have come to bring you some Christmas cheer," said the fairy. "Your parents are good and deserving folk. They were robbing their larder to help the needy widow. So here is a bit of good fortune for you and yours, little helpful maid. Take of it for yourselves and for those about you who are in need." Then, before Esther could reply, the fairy had disappeared, leaving on the hearth a bag of gold.

The little girl ran out and called in her parents and brother. When the father looked into the big bag of gold he said that there was enough there to keep them all in comfort for the rest of their lives and with which to help their less fortunate neighbors as well.

And you may be sure there was a merry Christmas for the family, with many good wishes for the kind fairy.



BEFORE HER STOOD A FAIRY, around their plain wooden table eating

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