

Keeping the Secret.

BY FLORENCE E. PRATT.

A secret with Santa Claus, and he will never tell, how so many secrets because keeps them all so well. Oh, dear mother, if you could guess how very surprised you'd be! Nobody knows the least thing of Santa Claus and me.

I could tell you, mother dear; sure you would love to know, you wait till Christmas, do you think? The days are so very slow! something you need for your dressing case—made it—all from me; square, and pink, and covered with lace, and its name begins with C!

Mustn't know till Christmas Day, my! aren't secrets fun? I can keep them, can't I, mamma! never would whisper one;—St. Nicholas

The children enjoy the "Intelligencer." The children's parents say it is a good and helpful friend of themselves and their children. We hope they will all stay with us for another year, and us so by sending their remembrance this month. They can, also, help by introducing the "Intelligencer" to other homes.

A Ride With Santa Claus.

BY MARTHA GRAHAM.

Teddie flung himself into a big arm chair in the sitting-room window, and looked down into the street with a very sulky expression. People were trying to and fro, carrying big Christmas looking parcels; the snow was flying down in lovely, big flakes; lights dashed past jingling merrily, and the whole world seemed glad that Christmas was so near.

All except Teddie. He was decidedly cross.

"Now Teddie boy," said his Aunt, who was trying to coax him into better humor, "you can't expect everything at Christmas. Think of the many poor little boys that never see anything."

"Pshaw, I guess there ain't many," growled Teddie, swinging his feet impatiently. "But I know loads and loads of fellows that get whatever they want, and I don't see why I can't have a new sleigh and a pair of snow-shoes, just as well as Arthur Raymond. He gets everything."

"Perhaps Santa Claus will bring them if father won't let you buy them."

"No, he won't, for father always says, and he said Santa Claus wouldn't bring much this year."

"But think of all the nice presents you get from every one in the house. Believe you'd like Santa Claus to bring you his sleigh full!"

But Teddie was not to be comforted, so his aunt left him, feeling very sorry that one little boy was about to spoil the happiest day of the year.

Teddie still sat in the big chair, swinging his feet disconsolately. Down the street the lights were beginning to twinkle through the snow. The fire in the grate crackled merrily, shedding a bright glow over the cosy room. He could hear his mother and Aunt Alice moving about in the kitchen below. The fragrance of the Christmas cake they were baking came up the stairs. But nothing could divert the thoughts of the little boy who sat frowning upstairs.

"Santa Claus might bring them," he said, at last, "but if he don't—"

A scraping noise behind made him turn quickly. The room was quite dark except for the bright circle round the fire. But what a noise there was in the chimney! A scrambling, bumping noise, as if a nest of swallows had tumbled down it. Teddie was just going over to investigate the affair when suddenly, to his amazement, down came a pair of legs right into the fire, and the next instant their owner, a little, bright-eyed man, dressed in fur, skipped across the hot coals and out into the middle of the room!

It was Santa Claus himself! Any one could have recognized his fur coat, long white beard, peaked cap and twinkling eyes. Teddie knew him at once, but he could only stare at him with his mouth open.

"Ha! Ha! Hello!" cried the jolly little man, capering about the room and giving Teddie a sly dig in the ribs with the handle of his long whip.

"Here's a boy with nothing to do, and I'm so busy I haven't time to wink. What do you say to a ride with me, and help to fill stockings to night, eh?"

"Me!" Teddie managed to gasp.

"Yes, you," with another dig that made the boy jump. "I'll bring you back before long; hurrah, no time to lose!"

Teddie never could tell how it happened, but in a moment he found himself with overcoat, cap and mittens on, tearing up the chimney with Santa

Claus as easily as he had ever run up the stairs.

Out they came with a jump upon the snowy roof; and there stood the cutest little sleigh with a great, big bundle strapped on behind, and harnessed to it eight stamping, rearing, champing, little reindeer not much bigger than cats! Teddie laughed with delight at the sight. Santa Claus laughed too. He was nearly always laughing. He pushed Teddie into the cosy, little seat, leaped in beside him and the eight reindeer sprang from the roof and whirled off in a manner that took Teddie's breath away. He never believed it was possible to go so fast. They sped away up over the city, the little reindeer hoofs coming down upon the snow-clouds as if they had been the best road in Canada. The little boy held on with both hands and looked over the edge of the sleigh at the city with its twinkling lights and white roofs lying far beneath them.

"Too early for filling stockings yet. Everyone's awake!" cried Santa Claus letting his long whip curl away over the heads of Dasher and Dancer, who were leaping a little too highly.

"We'll just go for a spin first and then come back to work!"

It was a spin! It made Teddie's head spin, too. Away they flew—up, up above the snow-clouds, up above the snow-clouds, up above the storm, where the stars glittered in the clear blue sky and the earth was blotted out; and then down again through clouds and snow; and the earth appeared again, with cities and towns and lonely country houses, dim and white and far away.

Suddenly Santa Claus leaped to his feet, and looked down at Teddie's native city as they flew over it once more.

"All right, they're asleep!" he shouted. "Down Prancer! Down Vixen. Time to start to work!"

Down they went like a dart, the city coming nearer, the sounds of bells growing louder and the lights becoming brighter every instant. Teddie clatched the sides of the sleigh, harder than ever. He felt certain they would all be dashed to pieces upon the tops of the houses, but Santa gave a dextrous twist to the reins just at the right moment, and the thirty-two little hoofs came down upon the roof of a house as gently as a snowflake.

Out jumped the little driver in a dreadful hurry. He grabbed a big telescope which he placed against the roof; and Teddie was amazed to find that he could see through it right into the house beneath.

"Sound asleep! Out with bag No. 7!" cried Santa Claus.

Teddie scrambled round among the bags in the back of the sleigh until he found number 7, and down the chimney went Santa Claus like a shot. He came popping up again before Teddie thought he could possibly have reached the bottom, sprang upon the sleigh and away they flew.

Such a night's work as that was! Teddie had never bustled round like that in his life before. Santa Claus was like lightning. When they came to a house and found by the aid of his magic glass that the occupants were still awake, crack! went the whip; and away went the sleigh to swoop down upon another place. And Santa Claus laughed and sang and cracked jokes and his whip, and roared at his little steeds until Teddie was weak with laughter. It was glorious! He wanted to go on like that forever.

"Not many more places in this city," said the jolly little driver at last. "We'll go to your house last, and he gave a droll wink at a well-filled bag behind."

"Away, Thunder and Lightning, away!"

The obedient little animals leaped forward, arriving upon the roof of a small rather poor looking house. Santa Claus applied the glass and Teddie peeped in also. He saw beneath him a bare, little room, with scarcely any furniture. An old bed stood in the corner, three little heads appearing above the ragged quilt. A poorly dressed woman sat crouched over an old, half broken stove that seemed to give out no heat at all. The children were not all asleep, one small head was raised from the hard, straw pillow and a weak, little voice said,

"Mother, don't you think Santa Claus'll come and bring us something to eat? Surely he'll come, when he forgot us last Christmas."

The woman raised her haggard face and looked with sad eyes at the poor, little, pale faced boy in the bed.

"No, Teddie," she said in a tone of despair. The Teddie on the roof among the toys started at hearing his own name.

"No, Teddie, Santa Claus can't ever come to us any more, we're too poor!" and she dropped her head upon her hands again. Teddie number one turned to Santa Claus, whom he found unmoving desperately among his toys.

"Ain't you going to give him something, Santa Claus? He's so poor and sick looking!" and his name's Teddie, too."

For answer Santa Claus sprang into the sleigh again, gave a crack to his whip that made Comet and Copid nearly jump out of their harness and off they went like the wind.

"Santa Claus!" cried Teddie, in amazement and distress. "Was it because he was awake?"

"No, but I haven't anything for them. You see I can't bring any more than my sleigh-full and there are some boys and girls that seem to want everything."

There was silence for a long time as they flew over the white earth. Then Sant.

"I don't neglect anyone if I can help it; and sometimes the boys and girls help me. Every year a whole crowd of my boys and girls send me word to bring them just a few things and take the best to a poor child. But nobody sent word for that poor little boy to be supplied. His bag was next to yours. I always put all the Teddies together, but you wanted so much, and I heard you grumbling last year, so I had to bring a big bag because your father—"

Teddie's was left out.

Teddie number one felt a chill creep over him that was not caused by the wintry air. He felt as if his heart would burst.

"Santa Claus!" he cried desperately, "Give my bag to the other Teddie. I don't want any presents. I couldn't enjoy them!"

There was no answer, for just then they dashed into a snowstorm. Teddie shut his eyes from the blinding flakes that were driven into his face.

"Santa Claus!" he called again, "Will you?"

But the roaring of the storm was the only reply as they dashed through the dark clouds. Teddie put out his hand to feel if his companion were near.

"Santa Claus! Oh, Santa Claus, where are you?" he cried.

Suddenly a bright light shone right in his face, and the snowstorm stopped. Teddie opened his eyes. But instead of Santa Claus and the reindeer there stood Aunt Alice smiling down upon him, her hand still up to the gas-jet, which she had just turned on.

"Why, sleepy-head!" she cried laughing. "Tea is ready, and we called you three times. Were you dreaming about the presents you want Santa Claus to bring?"

Teddie got out of the big arm-chair in a daze and followed his aunt downstairs. And you wouldn't believe how he surprised all the family by his conduct the next day. The ride with Santa Claus had had a most wonderful effect.—The Westminster.

Jerry's Chocolate Cake.

"When I am a man," said Jerry Whitmore, searching his plate anxiously for crumbs of vanished cake, "I am going to have a whole chocolate cake to myself—a whole, big, round chocolate cake, my dear. I am, indeed, and nobody shall have a bite of it. I would like to see how it feels to eat a whole cake by myself."

"You need not wait until you are a man," said his mother. "I will make you one to-morrow."

"Will you really, mother—all to myself?"

"Yes, on one condition—that you will not give anybody a bite of it while it lasts."

"Ho! I can easily promise you that; for I don't want anybody to help me to eat it, I can tell you."

Mrs. Whitmore sighed a little, and wondered if Jerry was a selfish little boy as he thought he was; but she made him the cake. As soon as the icing was firm Jerry cut a big slice for himself, and sat down on the kitchen step to eat it. His little brother Rob came and stood in front of him, with his hands behind his back.

"Wis! I had a piece," said Rob, looking at Jerry.

"Mother," called Jerry, "can't I give Rob a piece?"

"Certainly not," said his mother.

Go away, then, Rob, and don't watch me eat it," begged Jerry. I'm not; there stood the little man eyeing the cake until it was gone, while two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"That piece didn't taste good one bit," said Jerry to himself. "I won't eat any more when Rob is around."

The next time he took a piece he slipped out the door to hide himself in the woodshed. Bounce, the little black and tan terrier, thinking he was going out to play, slipped after him; but just before the couple got out of sight the mother called Jerry, remembering not to give Bounce any cake.

"Oh, isn't that a pity!" said Jerry to Bounce, and then he had to eat his cake with Bounce being for every bite. I was wiser than Rob, because he couldn't eat the whole of it."

"There, eat two pieces of cake spoiled for me!" grumbled Jerry

"Eating a whole cake isn't half as much fun as it's cracked up to be."

When the tea bell rang Jerry was just as ready for bread and butter and milk as if he had not tasted anything for twelve hours; and there, on his upturned plate was a half of what the Whitmore children call a "snowball." It was a white cake, white inside, with white crumbs and citron, and round and white outside, with particularly nice sugar-icing. Nobody made just those cakes except Aunt Martha Mason.

"That cake was sent to Rob, Jerry, and of his own accord he asked me to save you a piece," when he to everybody's surprise, big boyish Jerry burst out crying. "I hate chocolate cake, mother!" he said. "I never want to see another piece as long as I live!"

S. Mrs. Whitmore knew that Jerry had learned his lesson. She did not believe that he would ever again thank anything sweeter than he kept to himself. "Suppose we bring out your cake and eat it for supper?" she said to her little boy.

Jerry's face cleared all in a minute. Oh, mother, he said, "that would be so nice!"

And I think that if Rob and Bounce had been allowed to eat all that Jerry wanted them to have, they would both have dreamed of their great-grandfathers that night.—Children's Paper.

Be Content.

Long, long ago a robin and a butterfly talked over their troubles one day.

"How much nicer it would be to live in a house, as mendo!" said the robin.

"There's a black cloud in the sky, and I'm sure it's going to rain. I'll have to cuddle up under the leaves, and my feathers will be damp. I fear I'll take cold and lose my voice."

"I have to hide away, too, when it rains," said the butterfly. "I'd be a great pity if the water washed off my lovely powder, and a big shower might drown me."

Miss Butterfly was quick witted. "Why not go to live in that house now? The window's open." And she flew in at once. The robin was more cautious. He looked on the window-sill, and pecked around. "I don't see any place for a nest."

"Pshaw! You don't need a nest in a house," said his gay little friend. So Master Robin flew in, and perched on the first thing he found, which was a book; but he looked homesick. Miss Butterfly fluttered to a quill-pen, and made believe it was a flower.

Pretty soon there were sounds, and the robin listened as hard as he could.

"O papa! a child's voice said. 'Look there! Sh-sh! Keep still! You'll scare them! What a beautiful butterfly for your collection! And, papa, mayn't I have the bird in a cage? I'd like a robin with my canary.'"

A man's voice answered low, "Run around outside then, deary, and close the window softly, so they can't get out."

Master Robin's brains were wide awake now. He spoke quickly: "That man's an en-ento—well, I can't say it; but he's crazy on insects, and he'll stick a pin through you, my lady. And that girl thinks she'll put me in a cage! I guess not! Let's fly!"

Out they flew, just as the little man's hand touched the sash. They heard her cry of disappointment as they dashed by her.

O papa! they just went out like a flash; and they're both gone!"

But Master Robin and Miss Butterfly laughed happily to be out again in the free air. The black cloud was gone, and the warm spring sun was shining on the garden-beds of crocus and hyacinth. How beautiful it was out of doors! Living in a house was not to be compared to it.

"Better be content where our Maker meant us to live," said Miss Butterfly. A wise afterthought of the highly-tighty little creature!—Sunbeam.

Sing It.

When I was a little boy I used to play with my brother and sister under the window where mother sat knitting. She rarely looked out, but the moment we got angry she always seemed to know, and her voice would come through the window, saying: "Sing it, children, sing it!"

Once, I remember, we were playing marbles, and I shouted out to my brother:

"You cheated!"

"I didn't!"

"You did!"

"Sing it, children! sing it!"

We were silent. We couldn't sing it.

We began to feel ashamed.

Then came the sweet voice, the sweetest but one I ever heard, singing to the tune of "O, how I love Jesus the words:

"Oh, Willie, you cheated!
Oh, Willie, you cheated!
Oh, Willie, you cheated!
But I didn't cheat you!"

It sounded so ridiculous we all burst out laughing.

You cannot sing when you are angry; you cannot sing when you are mean; you cannot sing when you are wicked. In other words, you cannot sing unless you feel in some degree faith, or hope, or charity.—Selected.

How to Prepare a Stew.

A celebrated cook gives the following advice concerning the preparation of that most economical and nutritious dish—a stew:

"A stew is prepared with a less quantity of water than is used in making soups, and cooked at a moderate heat for a longer time. As a part of the nutriment is to be left in the meat, you do not cut it small, as for soups; cut into pieces convenient for serving. Put the bones, gristly bits and the poorer parts of the lean meat into cold water. This draws out the richness and gives added nutritive value to the broth. When the water boils skim out the waste portions and add the tender portions, then the juices are kept in them. By slow simmering, not by fierce boiling, the fibers are softened and the coarser and cheapest kinds of meat are made tender and nutritious. Pieces of meat from the shin, the sitch-bone, the flank, the neck, and the shoulder are suitable for stews, but the skin is the richest, it has so much marrow in the bone. Fowls, the tougher parts of mutton, lamb, and veal may all be used in stews."

TRY IT.—A newspaper paragraph has been widely copied announcing that there is no expression to the eye, that all power to portray feeling lies in the lid alone. Nearly forty years ago a game was played to prove this very fact. A large sheet was hung on poles. The guests were divided into two companies, one on either side of the sheet. First one pair of eyes, then another, was made to look through two small holes made in the sheet, and though these eyes were examined closely, their identity could never be discovered. Neither husband nor wife knew those of the other. The game, by the way, is worth reviving, and will occasion endless fun on winter nights.

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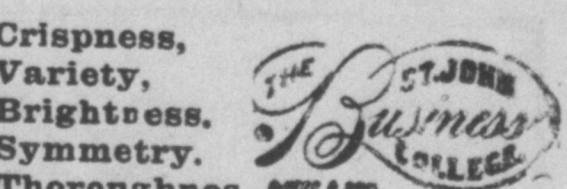
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