

# "Rush" Santa Mail



UNDERWOOD

# A Basket of Grapes

Blanche Tanner Dillin

IN THE east of a cloudless sky shone a bright star as a beacon, over the town. Groups of town folk hurrying in its direction appeared as the wise men who followed the star of old.

Every one would be attending the Christmas entertainment given at the church, so no need to keep his fruit shop open, decided Matt Hughes, as he joined the happy joyous throng round in that direction.

From where he sat he could plainly see the star, and he fell to dreaming of another Christmas when that same star shone as brightly as now, but instead of the snow-clad hills of New England there was the wide expanse of the California desert. Across that desert toward the star rode a lone horseman, a song on his lips and a smile on his face. From his saddle hung several packages in the bright holiday wrappings.

As he drew near a cabin the song changed to a shout of greeting which died to a low exclamation of surprise as he saw there was no welcoming light. After searching in the dark he had struck a light, and then had come the discovery of the written message. It was the same old story—unaccustomed to the desert the problems confronting one trying to conquer it had proved too big. Howard James, the playmate of his childhood, college friend and later neighbor out here in the West, proved now to be the real love of Dolly Hughes instead of Matt.

One day the name James Howard was spoken in his presence; the similarity in the name of his former friend caused him to locate the man. Then he learned that Dolly had not survived long after reaching there.

# WAITING for SANTA



## MERRY CHRISTMAS

by Katherine Edelman  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS!** Merry Christmas! No two other words could ever hold so much of warmth and gladness within them. There is a nameless something in their sound that fills the heart with happiness. As we hear them, the Christmas spirit, that most delightful and happiest of feelings, takes possession of us. And it is no selfish happiness that the words evoke, for we are not content to keep it to ourselves; we want to go out and make others happy, too; to share our joy with all the world. We want to bring a smile to other faces; to help lessen and lighten the burdens that others may be carrying.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Just two short words, and yet how much they mean! What unnumbered hours of happiness they bring! What glad and joyous things we wish for those we love as we call them out! What hopes surge within our hearts that the best in life may come to them! As we repeat the words friendship grows deeper and more sincere, and home ties and ties of kindred sweeten and strengthen. There is a magic within them that makes us prize and value all the gifts that are ours; that makes us appreciate and cling close to our precious possessions.

And what memories they evoke! Memories of other happy Christmas days, of halcyon friends and comrades that are now beyond the grasp of our hands; of the happy and never-forgotten days of childhood.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

A smile and a song follow the words. They can bring gladness into every heart and bright sunshine into the day. And as long as the world goes on they will always remain as now, the happiest, the heartiest and the most joyous words that man can speak or write.

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## Christmas Is for Children

Christmas is first of all for the children. Don't forget the tree, and that they will enjoy making the popcorn balls and candy and stringing bits of cotton to hang from the branches.



HERE are all sorts of presents. Some presents are duty presents. These are not quite so nice. Some presents are presents exchanged between friends for years and years and years. These are very nice, keeping up the old friendship, the old traditions, the old links.

Sometimes these are between people who have not seen each other for years, who keep up their friendship, who keep it secure through all the years by the Christmas link.

Then there are presents one gives to children. These are always fun. And there are presents one can give to children who otherwise would have no Christmas. These are even more fun. And there are presents one can give to little lonely, wide-eyed children who gaze wistfully into lighted shop windows.

There is hardly anything that brings a glow to the heart more than giving presents that are complete and overwhelming surprises to the recipients.

Then there are presents one can give to those faithful postmen who so unerringly bring the greatest boon in the world to one's door—the mail.

And there are presents one can give to one's milkman and iceman and to little boys who deliver packages and messages around Christmas time.

All of these presents are such a pleasure to give. They are the presents that give such happiness to the giver, and the recipient feels the giver's good wishes, appreciation, tribute.

But perhaps the nicest of all presents to receive and to give are those that are absolutely not necessary from any viewpoint at all—not presents of gratitude, not presents of appreciation, not presents of joyous impulse, but the presents given because in the heart of the The Nicest Xmas giver is a desire to do something for that person—a wave of warmth and friendship and just the sort of feeling that says:

"I think I'll give that good friend something this Christmas. I just feel as though I'd like to do it—no reason for it whatever—but I feel as though I'd like to do this."

These are the very nicest presents of all!

# Santa Claus on the Road

by Frank H. Sweet

OM CHASEM was jovial, half-fellow-well-met, and did not like to work, except at repairing an old automobile which he owned. He and his big family were now on their way to Florida, planning to camp out.

They were going slowly, owing to various aspects of the car, chief among which was old age. Suddenly came a familiar squashing sound.

"Nother puncture, pa!" shrieked Arathusa, aged sixteen.

"Get me a plaster, Thuse," pa called out. "Fix it in a jiffy."

Thuse snatched a plaster from the top of the junk box. It was the one thing that was always handy and in place. She hopped out.

In twenty minutes it was fixed, and they were going again, slowly, with pa glancing slyly over the side. Two miles, perhaps, when again came the familiar sound.

"Nother tire puncture!" once more shrieked Thuse. "That makes seven this afternoon."

"Only five or six," expostulated pa. "Seven, 'cause I counted," positively. She hopped out with another plaster.

Cars of all sorts were continually passing, going the same way. Another two miles or so, and a very handsome car appeared, coming to an abrupt stop opposite. The driver uttered a smothered exclamation.

Pa was out again, with Thuse standing by him with a plaster.

"Comes o' pickin' up one inner tube thrown away on the road, an' buyin' another in a junk shop for twenty-five cents," sniffed Thuse. "Why don't you buy a new one for a change?"

"There was some good in 'em, Thuse," explained pa. "I hate to see things wasted. Can I help you, sir?" to the other car owner.

"Don't know," replied a perplexed voice. "Something seems to be wrong. I don't know what."

Pa left his own work unfinished and went to the other car, crawling under with his makeshift tools.

Five minutes later he crawled out. "Just a nut loose," he said. "All right now. You can go on."

"Let's stop here and trim a tree for the children," suggested a woman in the car. "I saw a nice place a few rods back, with something that looked very much like holly. We won't reach Jacksonville till after Christmas."

"All right. Just as you say. I'll drop the bunch of you, and then skip over to the town and buy a few things for the kids. Say," to pa, "you've got a mighty nice bunch of holly in your car—and some mistletoe, I'll be bound."

"Not for me," laughed pa. "I noticed 'em back yonder and cut 'em, thinkin' I might meet somebody on the road who'd like some. You're welcome."

The transfer was made, with a "We are certainly grateful," from the woman. "Now we'll go back to the place I saw."

Pa's wife had been busy, and was out beside the road preparing dinner during the wait.

"All ready," she now called.

Dan, the ten-year-old, openly scoffed. "Salt pork an' measley 'taters," he said. "No, thanks, I'm not hungry."

The rest ate, excepting Thuse, after which pa returned to his puncture.



The Dinner Was Spread Lavishly Over a Big, White Cloth.

He was just ready to start again when Thuse called:

"Here comes that man."

"All invited to dinner and Christmas tree," genially. "The wife insists. No back talk."

Pa would have refused, but a look at the faces of Thuse and Dan deterred him.

"All right," he said, "be right over."

At first sight of the dinner, spread lavishly over a big, white cloth, Thuse whispered, audibly, "Turkey, and gobs of it." Dan merely chuckled.

After they were all so well filled that they gasped, they went to the Christmas tree, where everybody received as many presents as they could carry back, and pa himself had a full set of new tires. It was the first time pa had ever looked embarrassed.

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# The Christmas City

by William L. Gaston

IN THE Christmas city everybody called him Uncle Kriss. None of the young people knew that he had any other name. But everybody knew that Christmas would not be Christmas if Uncle Kriss did not direct the festivities.

Uncle Kriss was neither rich nor poor. He had no family of his own. Nature fashioned him on the pattern of Santa Claus. He was never happier than when planning a happy Christmas for the town—the town which came to be called the Christmas city.

Long before Christmas Uncle Kriss would go day after day with the boys and girls into the hills to gather evergreens and red berries for wreaths. A truck was sent to haul them to town. Then for a full week everybody worked making Christmas wreaths. A big bow of red crepe paper was fastened to the bottom of each wreath.

On the day before Christmas there was a Christmas wreath in the front window of every home, rich or poor. The Christmas city looked to be, as it really was, the home of Santa Claus. There was always a big tree erected in the street downtown and decorated with colored lights, cotton and tinsel. A small tree was sent to every home in town where there was a child. "Give the people plenty of Christmas," Uncle Kriss used to say, and they will need no police nor jail. The town had a small jail but only once in ten years had there been anybody in it on Christmas day, and then there was a Christmas wreath in the little window behind the iron bars.

On Christmas morning Uncle Kriss formed the men into a company of good fellows and sent them from home to home among the poor to see that no child was missed and no one was cold or hungry on Christmas day, in the Christmas city.

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Matt Silently Extended His Gift.

With a curse on his lips the husband left, and although the two had lived in the same village for several years, they had never spoken to each other; but Matt had never revealed the identity of the other man.

Words of the program mingled with his dream, such as "The Glory of the Lord shone 'round" and "They brought Him gifts" and the words of the minister at parting—"Little children love one another."

An idea which formed quickly in his mind crystallized into action and Matt found himself hurrying first to his shop and then to a little home in the other part of town. Entering the presence of his once while friend, Matt silently extended his gift.

"Matt!" the word was half a question and half an exclamation. The one addressed placed his offering in the other man's hands.

"Howard," he said, "I have brought a token of forgiveness." As he saw what the basket contained Howard clasped the gift more tightly.

"A basket of California grapes!" he cried over and over. "Just what I have longed for."

"Why it's only a basket of grapes," stammered Matt.

"No," Howard after a moment replied in a choked voice, "it's much more than that; it's an answer to prayer."

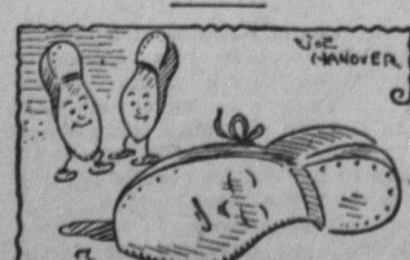
"Well," Matt said as he turned to go, "I'm glad that you like them." At the door he turned and extended his hand.

"Merry Christmas, Howard," he said.

The other grasped the outstretched hand—"Merry Christmas, Matt, and God bless you." And the next moment the bearer of the gift was out under the stars.

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## KIND WORDS



First Shoe—"He was a pretty good chap."

chap." Second Shoe—"Yes, he was a 'whole-soled' fellow!"

**Experienced**  
 The main dish of the dinner, a ham-loaf, was accompanied by horseradish sauce. "Will you have some horseradish, Mary Ann?" the host asked his young guest. "No thanks, I've had experience!" was her sage reply.

**Willing to Help**  
 Tenant of New "Ideal Home"—Do you know that there's grass coming

up between the boards of my dining room?

Landlord—Grass? Oh, I'll soon pu that right. I'll send round a man with a lawnmower this morning!—Humorist.

**He Might Join the Army**  
 An Atchison man is very unreason able. He doesn't like to eat in res taurants and hotels, yet he knocks off his wife's cooking. We don't know what should be done with that kind of a man.—Atchison Globe.

## Sign of Respectability

He—I suppose you've heard about Old Man Diogenes, who went around with a lantern looking for a decent and respectable man?

She—How foolish of him. One doesn't find respectable men on the streets at night. They're home with their families.

**Box of Sardines**  
 Polygamy would never work in this country. Think of six wives in a kitchenette!—Everybody's Weekly.

## MOST OF IT KILLED



She—"Most women just go round

killing time." He—"I've been wonder ing why I can find so little time for anything."

**Just So**  
 "A girl shouldn't look back at a young man."  
 "Uh."  
 "And a young man shouldn't look back at a girl."  
 "Well!"  
 "But both frequently do just to see if the other is looking on the side."