



## THE LETTER-BOX

### ABOUT SANTA CLAUS.

OUR "affectionate reader," Pendleton King of Augusta, Ga., sends us the following letter of distress:

AUGUSTA, GA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I want so to know something about Santa Claus. I asked my papa, and he has looked in all his cyclopedias, but can't find anything. He tells me to write to you; for if anybody knows anything about Santa Claus it will be St. NICHOLAS.

Your affectionate reader,  
PENDLETON KING.

Bless the child! Why, we don't know nearly so much about Santa Claus as he does. We are grown-ups. Santa Claus does n't care much for us, as compared with the little folks. He has no ill will toward any one in the whole wide world, of course, but it is his business to look after the youngsters. Of course there must be grown people to earn the bread and butter, and to pay the rent, and to look after children's clothes, and do such things. But there must also be somebody to see that at Christmas-time the children's needs are looked after. That is Santa Claus's particular business. He likes it, too, or else he would n't do it. He lives somewhere near the North Pole, so he can't be interfered with. It is the only place where he can be sure of not being overrun with callers, who would take up all his time, and prevent him from getting his Christmas budget ready—by no means a light piece of work. As to how he makes up his load of toys, it is certainly curious; but it is his business, not ours. He uses reindeer to draw his sleigh because no other animals can endure the climate in which their master must live. Just what the Saint looks like is not altogether certain, but there is a belief among the children who have sat up to receive his visits that he is not so big but that he can get through an ordinary chimney; that he is compelled to dress in furs because of the cold ride through the long winter night; that he looks good-natured because no one that loves young folk can help looking so; and that

his beard and his hair are white because he is older by some years than he was in his younger days. He must be a jolly and kindly old gentleman, for otherwise he would n't be giving out his toys in that sly, queer way of his—after the little ones are fast asleep and snug in their beds. Oh, we can tell quite a number of things about his tricks and his manners! but as to having seen him—you can be sure that no one has seen him, for all they may try to make you think they have. Why, even the watchman has n't seen him, and the watchman sits up all night. Just think how fast he must travel! and, dressed in white fur, he looks like a big ball of snow whizzing through the air—at least, he is *supposed* to go through the air. He could go anywhere he chose, for no officer of the law would dare interfere with *him*, you may be sure.

Don't sit up for him; he does n't like it. He loses valuable time when he is compelled to dodge the prying eyes of little Susan Sly and Master Paul Pry, and so kindly an old fellow should not be bothered. Just go to bed, close your eyes up good and tight, and—see what you will find in the morning!

Oh, by the way, we nearly forgot to say that some persons have said they doubted whether there is any Santa Claus; but that is their misfortune. Be kind to such, but do not waste time in arguing with them. Just smile and change the subject; there is no law compelling them to think as you do. Leave them to do the talking while you go on emptying your stocking.

When Santa Claus stops coming to your house, you may begin to inquire whether he has ceased to exist.

Till then hang up your stocking, and here's wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!

