

Then from the room beyond there came abruptly a sharp, annoyed voice that made Roy jump "I'll see him, Mason," it snapped.

"Just step this way," the very superior young man said hurriedly; and then Roy was ushered into the next room.

All of a sudden as he walked he felt his knees going weak and beginning to knock together, for it is no small thing to get to see a strange millionaire about the difficult business of softening his heart.

Roy suddenly found himself in a big room, but the only thing that he really noticed was the flat-topped desk that occupied the left side of it. Behind this Ivor Ensor was sitting writing quickly on slips of paper that he kept dropping into a wire basket on his left. The millionaire was thin and fragile-looking. His hair was almost white and his sharp, clean-shaven face was very pale. His hands as he wrote seemed to be only skin and bone and made Roy think at once of claws. In fact the idea occurred to him as he stole quietly to a chair opposite the millionaire that Ivor Ensor, as he sat crouched up over his desk, looked just like a great bird.

Soon the millionaire stopped writing and put down his pen. "Leave me alone for a minute or two, Mason," he said testily.

Then the very superior young man took up the basket and went out.

"NOW, what do you want with me?" Ivor Ensor asked, leaning forward and looking more like a bird than ever.

"'Bout Joe Bailey," Roy managed to gasp.

"About Joe Bailey?" the millionaire repeated, his black, piercing eyes flashing suddenly. "And who's Joe Bailey?"

"Joe's a cripple," Roy told him. "I pass his place going to school. He can't do anything but sit in a chair on the porch, and he wants one of those mechanical outfits for Christmas that you can make all kinds of things out of. But his mother's a widow and hasn't got much money. So Santa Claus is his only chance of getting it."

"And what's gone wrong with Santa Claus?" Ivor Ensor asked innocently, for Roy had hesitated.

"Santa never calls at Joe's place," Roy explained, having gained courage by the pause. "Joe hasn't hung up his stocking for years and years, 'cos he never used to get anything in it."

"Too bad! Too bad!" the millionaire muttered, looking thoughtfully at his hands.

"So I went and saw Santa Claus about it," Roy confessed, trying to work around to his point gradually.

"Saw Santa Claus?" the millionaire queried incredulously as he looked up quickly with stern, set face. Then his features slowly softened. "And what did old Santa have to say?" he asked, smiling slightly.

"He said he couldn't possibly leave anything at Joe Bailey's," Roy ex-

A MESSAGE TO SANTA CLAUS

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plained, "unless Old Tight Wad softened his heart. That's you, isn't it?"

"Who calls me Old Tight Wad?" the millionaire demanded fiercely, still leaning across his desk.

"'Most everybody," Roy told him, although he was beginning to feel

artist, and you live up on Park Avenue?" the millionaire said.

"Up near your place," Roy told him.

"What else did Santa Claus say?" the millionaire asked, as if he were really interested.

"He said you'd have to send him

"What's that?" the millionaire growled, tugging out his watch. "It doesn't expire till four."

"It's five after four, sir," the clerk said nervously.

Then something seemed to break loose within the millionaire. His whole manner changed, his body shook convulsively with uncontrolled passion and his face became terrible to look upon. "Mason!" he shrieked suddenly. "Mason!"

And the very superior young man came in at a run.



"Flora"—A Christmas Eve Prayer for tired little Teddies

T. H. Ashc, Onchunga

scared. "That's your other name, isn't it? 'Most everybody's got another name, haven't they? My other name's 'Bouncer'; that's what the boys call me at school; but, of course, my real name's Roy Allerton."

"ALLERTON? Allerton?" the millionaire repeated thoughtfully, and then Roy knew that he had made a slip by mentioning his name.

"Your father's Edgar Allerton, the

message before he could leave anything at Joe Bailey's place," Roy told him, "and he said you couldn't do that until you softened your heart."

Just then the young man with the plastered hair tiptoed in and stood at the end of the desk for a moment or two.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but Brand and Weston have just phoned to say that your option over a hundred thousand Conrad Coppers has expired."

"How are Conrad Coppers?" the millionaire spluttered.

"Went up another three points just at the close," the clerk answered.

"Didn't you know I wanted those shares?" Ivor Ensor demanded, beginning to struggle to his feet. "Didn't you know I was merely keeping Brand on tenterhooks until the very last minute?"

"I thought you were letting them go, sir," Mason said apologetically.

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No Rubbing Laundry Help FOR WASHING CLOTHES