

**DOUGLAS FAMILY**

ANNIE J. DOUGLAS

Christmas letters

1899 - 1901

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Box 5

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J. G. Mason Esq  
Xmas letters }

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In the year of Teetotum 1899.

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What Old Father Santa Claus  
wants to say to his  
Little Douglas and Alie.

Did'nt I laugh to find you, my dear Captain Douglas, and my dearest little Alie, both asleep in your nice warm cots when I dropped down the chimney to see you last night. What were you thinking about not to wake up and give me a kiss, and pull my long beard just when I was in the humour for it. But no - there you lay, both sleeping and dreaming about something - something nice I am sure for you were smiling so prettily that I almost thought you were two little angels in blankets.

I wonder what you were dreaming and smiling about? Not about Fairies, I am sure. Boys and girls only dream about Fairies in Summer time, when they fly about here - there - and everywhere, in gossamer dresses - which mean no dresses at all. But, Oh! my, it's too cold for Fairies at Christmas time. It gives us the shivery shakeries to think of them now, does'nt it?

Well, I think you were dreaming of me, of my big fur cap, and gauntlets, my long white beard, and my big sleigh filled with all sorts of things, drawn by my beautiful prancing Reindeers. But, Oh! let me tell you you must not forget next year, to leave a nice soda cracker, and a piece of nice white sugar for my Reindeers - they are so good, and they like crackers and sugar so much. I know- or think I know -

you were dreaming of me, because I saw so many lovely smiles, and so many pretty dimples playing on both of your faces. First I tickled your ears, then your noses, and then your eyes, with the big Peacock feather, which you know I always carry, but it was all no use, you did nothing but sleep, and dream, and smile.

At last knowing I must hurry, or I could never finish my big lists of callings, I had to leave you, fly up the chimney, and away, and away, on the tops of the clouds. You know I have thousands of other visits to make to my good boys and girls before morning daylight comes in, so I rubbed my hands, put on my gloves, cracked my whip to my prancing Reindeers, and off I galloped and left you all to yourselves, and your pretty dreams.

Well, how sorry I am that I lost my kisses, but the little boxes I left for you at the foot of your cots, will show that I didn't forget you, and in remembrance of me I shall expect that you'll be two of the very best of the best boys and girls in Montreal all through the year till next Christmas comes again, and if I come again I'll dance a snow dance on a grey goose's tooth-pick. Won't that be fun?

I have asked Grandma to give you this my parting message, with four big kisses - two on each cheek - for each of you.

In three or four years when a big Leap year Christmas comes, and you and I are jolly and well, you'll have to pay me off by tickling my nose, and ears, and eyes, with a big Peacock's feather too - then we'll have a big time of it, dancing on the grey goose's tooth-pick, and

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with lots of laughing, jollity, and kisses all round, Won't we?

Now don't you forget me, and remember I am,

Your loving dear old

Santa Claus.

with loss of language, joy, and peace will remain, God's way  
You don't yet know me, and remember I am,

Your loving God and

Jesus Christ,

Walter S

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COMMERCIAL  
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CO.

IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE GOOD KING GOLDBENDERRAMS - 1901.

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Fast asleep again, my dear little Chuggy-wiggles, dreaming your dreams and smiling your smiles as prettily as ever. Did you not promise a hundred thousand times that this year you'd be sure to keep awake and see Santa Claus dance the snow dance on the Grey Geese's Toethpic, and load him with a hundred thousand kisses.- But I am thinking you are getting too big for Sant Claus and don't care for him like you used to do; that you think he has no business to come down the chimney in the middle of the night and into your nice warm room with his big fur coat and cap covered all over with snow, and put down his <sup>cold</sup> ~~cold~~ face and kiss you on both cheeks. Well you don't know how sorry I shall be if this is so, but I want to tell you that no matter what you think I am still Santa Claus and shall always be Santa Claus - and if I don't come down your chimney I shall come down the chimnies of other boys and girls and get my kisses from them. But you really don't feel like that towards your dear old Santa Claus I am sure, and I also feel that if you lived to be as old as the great Methusala, who lived till he was nearly a thousand years old, you'll never forget me - never refuse me a welcome, and never forget to load me with as many kisses as I can carry away.

Well, as you are asleep and I and my Reindeers have a thousand calls to make before day-light comes I can't linger longer so I leave this letter telling you all about a Christmas I had years ago away down South with my little darkey Piccinies - What fun I had all through that Christmas Eve, to be sure.-

When it was known around the Plantations that Santa Claus and his Reindeers were coming, expectation was on tip-toe among the youngsters - and all that the old Mammies could do to get them to bed and off to sleep was'nt worth pennies.

As soon as the good Deacon of the Church - brother Snowflake heard that I was in the Parish, he called on me and expressed the

inexpressible gladness my visit would bring not only to "de dear Picinnies but to all de good Bredren and Sisters of de flock," "Dey thought it a mighty big honor.--"

When mentioning that I should start on my visits as soon as the clock struck twelve, midnight - he uttered a surprise and said "that if I did not start 'fore midnight, I would never reach half the Picinnies dat were awatin' for me, that Picinnies were very numerous in his Parish, and he feared that instead of my visit bringing gladness, der would be crying and trouble all ober de Plantations." When I heard this I quickly changed my plans, and assured him that I and my Reindeers would start in the evening as soon as darkness set in. This pleased the Deacon highly, and he left me with a beaming countenance to spread the news far and wide - and as he left me I heard him repeat "God bless de good Mister Santa Claus.--"

It was well that Deacon Snowflake had given me the warning, for when the eve came, and my visits had begun I realized the value of his admonition. If I had not been Santa Claus I would never have dreamed that there were so many little woolley-headed Picinnies in the world as were down there, they were as thick as buttercups in June - and the greatest lot of mischief-making little regues as ever was seen.--

It would take a week to tell you all about the Picinnies I saw or the fun they were up to - none of them were asleep like you, but were all awake and as full of play and mischief as young kittens.

As I was coming down the first chimney I heard whispering voices in the room, and knowing there must be lots of Picinnies there, I stepped in the chimney and listened; there was a stove-pipe hole in the chimney, and through it I saw the room was skight alive with little curly-headed, almost naked youngsters, who were earnestly whispering what they hoped "The dear good Santa Claus would bring 'em.--"

One said in a low down whisper "Say Joe, dur you jest know what I want Santa Claus to fetch me?"- "I want him to fetch me some



'Possum stew - some Persimmons - some Mince Pies - some Sweet Cakes - some Sugar Candies - some Peanuts, lots ob em - some Pumpkin Pies - some Raisins, and ef he brung me a new pair of pants, and big, deep pockets in 'em fer Oranges and Lemons and Crackers and Jack-Knives, golly! would'nt he be a good old Santa Claus -"

"Golly! Joe you is a greedy groundhog," said Pete - "Dus you athink dat Santa Claus is sich a big fool as you is? - Dus you think he's agwine to empty his big Reindeer sleigh jest fo' you, and dat he's got nothing left fo' de rest of de Picinnies dats waitin' fo' him? Dus you think dat Santa Claus has nothing to do but to fill up his big Reindeer Sleigh and fakak fool wid a mean boy nigger like you is?" - "In co'se not - Santa Claus brings good things only to good people, not to grabbing Picinnies like you, so stop your greedy nonsense -" "Perhaps Santa Claus wont brung you nothing."

"I'll be awful glad ~~now~~, if Santa Claus brung me a nice new Cap fixed all round wid brass buttons - a pair ob Top-boots, way up to de knees, some Cakes and some candies, ef he does I'd like to hug him almost to death."

Another little rascal said that "he would like Santa Claus to brung him a bran' new coat and mits, a chunk ob cake and some candies and ef he would brung some nice sweet coffee fur Mammies Christmas breakfast in de mornin' he would thank him till he died - Golly! I dose like coffee sweet, but Mammy always puts de kettle on de hub away, 'cause she says she is afear'd I done gone busted 'cause I drink so much."

Then a rougish looking Picinny with bright sparkling eyes and a mop of shaggy wool over his head whispered "Say Pete, ef Santa Claus done goes pass me to-night wid out fetching me nothing, does you a think I'se a'gwine to mope and cry 'round de chimney corner all day jest fur de fun ob crying? - Go way wid you, I does nothing ob de kind, I jest go and whistle and play de same as if Santa Claus neber come'd to de house, but ef he does come all de same, Pete, I wish he'd fetch me a big soldier drum and brass hon's wid a soldier officer unif'om, and wid gold lace and buttons on de coat

and wid big stripes up and down de both legs ob de pahts, and a pair ob top-boots wid spurs in der heels, and a soldier cap wid de feathers all a flying in de win' and gold all round de peak - Would'n I be a big Gen'l then on a big white horse a prancin' in de sun, at de he'd ob de Reg'ment, like Gen'l Washington a going to battle and to fight de enemies ob his country- Lor- a massey, Pete, would'nt de good Santa Claus be a angel?- I'll pray de good Lord dat Santa Claus jest fetch all dese to me.--"

Then a little girl whispered, "Say Pete, does you know what I want Santa Claus to bring me?"- "In co'se not" said Pete "Does you a think I knows all de fool nonsense dat runs thro' de wool skull ob your Punkin head-" "Dar say you's a wantin' Santa Claus to bring you a big doll wid golden haär- chocolate candies and figs - a fin' dress wid lots ob ribbens and furbelows, and all dat sort fool nonsense, but does you 'spose you is a big white lady wid lots of money in de Banks?" "Go way you fool Picanniney - you don't know nothing 'bout Santa Claus-" "Santa Claus ef he brungs you a Jack-rabbit-foot and good luck wid it, or something lake dat, you be mightyproud and <sup>a</sup>mightyglad little nigger girl."

Then the little girl voice whispered "Pete, you is a nasty mean nigger-" " I did'nt want nothing ob de kind" "I want Sant Claus to bring me some lovely Alabama flowers to take to dear old Aunt Dinah who is a dying on her sick bed, and is a praying to de good Lord Jesus, dat he will take her in his arms across de ribber, into de City ob Jasper, whar de angles strike dar golden harps and sing dar Hallelujahs to de Lord for eber and eber."

Scarcely had she said this when the light from my lantern accidentally shone through the hole in the chimney and revealed my presence- in an instant the whispering ceased, there was a great fright among them, and away they ran helter-skelter, here, there and everywhere.- Two little Picinnies crawled under the bed - one rushed into a cupboard - another darted behind the curtains, while two pretty little curly headed girls buried themselves under the blankets and were as quiet as little mice asleep.-

Softly I came from the chimney and saw a long row of stockings hanging on the walls and these I quickly filled with good things from the young King ~~an~~ Goldendreams' Royal storehouses. You may be sure I did not forget the flowers for old Aunt Dinah who was waiting to pass over the river into the delectable city of God.

The next house I entered, the room was quite dark and all the Picinnies were asleep, but their stockings hung around in anticipation of my visit - Scarcely had I finished filling the stockings (some were very large) when the back door below flew open with a bang and the footsteps of a man were heard on the floor. Then a woman's voice shouted out "In all de wo'ld Sam, whar did you get dat big fat turkey?" "Shoo - hush yer chitter-chatter Mirandy, you doe'nt know nothing"- "Jest tol you this, As I was a going to de Piney woods last night to shoot de coon dat was a prowlin' 'round dar, I happened to pass Massa Jenkins Turkey Barn, so I jest drop'd in to see ef Mr. Coon warn't already thar - Well, jest as I was a looking 'round in de moonlight, Mister Gobbler widout <sup>saying a word</sup> dropped down from de roost and was a gwine to run away out ob de door when I seize him by de neck, and 'fore I say Jack Robinson, Mister Gobbler done gone dead, sure as you is alive." "Now, none ob your fool scolding, Mirandy, does you think I tol' Mr. Gobbler to drop down from de roost? Dose you think I told him to run away?- Ef his neck did not stan' de little constrain-check I gives him an' it got out of joint, was dat de fault ob dis nigger? I want you to answer dese questions?" "No Sam did eberything for de best, it was jest de weakness of Mister Gobbler's neck dat troubled him, and date all about it, - But was'nt it pervidental dat I was at de barn 'fore Mr. Coon, jest in time fur de Christmas, ~~was~~ ain't he a cherub, Miranda?"

Sam Had scarcely finished his story when strains of singing came floating through the air, and as it came nearer and nearer I caught the words of a song,

"Swing low, sweet chariot,

Swing low, sweet chariot,

And hear de bells a ringing

For de good Yord Jesus he's comin' down to-night

To set his ransom people free

To set his ransom people free

Swing low, sweet chariot.

Several other verses were sung, but I remember the first only, the verses commenced with "Swing low, sweet chariot", and had the same refrain, "To set his ransom people free".

Then a song of greeting <sup>to</sup> the new born king was sung. Some of the men's voices I noticed were of a deep mellow quality, and was very pleasing to the ear. The melodies to me were quite new, but there was a pathos in them that was very impressive, and lingered in my memory for years.

Day light was now approaching, and as my sleigh was emptied and both myself and Reindeers were tired - cracked my whip and off we went over the clouds and away and away to the good northland, where you and Santa Claus rejoice to live.

My story is told, but before closing my letter I ought to tell you that the good, dear old King Omega, who was so sick last year when I called on you ~~quietly at midnight~~ <sup>at midnight</sup>, passed away <sup>at</sup> a week after Christmas, and three weeks after that his dear little Vic, whom he so much loved and talked about, followed him to the City of the great King, whose maker and builder is God. Both have entered into rest and have received the glad welcome "Well and faithfully done, enter into my joy and sit down on my throne.-" Both were honored in their lives and in their deaths, people the world over, paid them the tributes of their love. - "Victoria the good and great" is chiseled on monuments wherever the English language is spoken, but greater tributes to her memory are yet to be executed. Her name is like alabaster and will be held in remembrance for all the centuries to come.

Both of their successors are proving worthy of their high positions and I am glad to say that King Omega's son, King Golden-dreams is not a whit behind his father in ability, and his Royal <sup>store</sup> houses are to be always open to me for good things at Christmas and

and New Year's time for the children, so you see the children will never be forgotten.

Now for all this news I hope you wont forget your dear <sup>old</sup> loving ~~wives~~.

Santa Claus —