

The New Books for Younger Readers

By ANNE T. EATON

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT.

By Rachel Field. Unpagged.
New York: The Macmillan
Company. 50 cents.

IT is good to find as Christmas draws near that Rachel Field, whose "Little Book of Days," "An Alphabet for Boys and Girls," "Taxis and Toadstools" and many other books are perennial favorites with young readers, has written another story for children.

"All Through the Night" tells the Christmas story with a lovely simplicity that makes us feel we are seeing the happenings of that first Christmas night through the eyes of the gentle creatures who were there to greet the Child. Miss Field recalls the gracious tradition of the animals in the stable who, finding speech at midnight, were the first to worship. Step by step we follow the story—evening, the crowded inn, the star through the stable roof bright as purest silver; the hush when the young swallows and mice were safe from their enemies, "for in that hour nothing died"; the Child in the straw-filled wooden manger where all the animals stood to view Him; the band of shepherds who came to worship before the star grew pale.

Always we feel the animals playing their part in the story. The night coming on when the birds and beasts and insects of the stable knew that the world was theirs as the world of day could never be, the darkness warm

ment" that she can draw convincingly a natural, happy family of parents and children, and it is pleasant to find again in this little volume the Tucker family of "A Pint of Judgment." In this new story the children are deeply interested in a box on the top shelf of their mother's closet, marked Rabbit's Nest. In a literal mood Ellen, Derek, Sally, and even Lovey, the youngest (the last murmuring "Lovey wants a baby bunny"), search the house for young rabbits, manage

real one failed to keep Kersti out of mischief.

Perhaps, indeed, the fact that there were so many people to look after her made her feel herself a person of importance and encouraged her sturdy independence and determination to have her own way. Kersti's naughtiness was appalling, but she had a way with her. Even St. Nicholas (in a dream which blends happily with the events of Kersti's real life) yielded finally to her persuasions and gave pres-

this artist-author has drawn St. Nicholas on his great white horse, as, followed by the patient Pieterbass, he rides the clouds or mounts the snow-covered roof, make this a picture-story book of enduring charm and interest.

Christmas Stories

THE SHINING TREE AND
OTHER CHRISTMAS
STORIES. 267 pp. New York:
Alfred A. Knopf, \$2.

"The Shining Tree" contains twelve Christmas stories never

ful and attractive addition to the Christmas bookshelf.

Holiday Tales

STORIES TO READ AT CHRIST-
MAS. By Elsie Singmaster. 231
pp. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
Company. \$2.

Fresh, unhackneyed Christmas stories for reading and telling are hard to find, so Miss Singmaster's book, containing seventeen short stories, all but one of which have appeared in magazines, is very

welcome. With reading aloud in mind, either in the home circle or in such gatherings as Sunday schools, or adult and young people's clubs, the author has cut the stories for this purpose and arranged them in order according to the time required for reading aloud, the first and shortest consuming approximately eleven minutes, the last and longest twenty-five minutes.

Many of the stories, though not all, deal with small town and country life, a few have a Pennsylvania Dutch flavor. All of them have a fine human quality that warms the heart, but the author has too much humor and understanding ever to become sentimental. Though the stories all deal with modern times and people of today, there is considerable variety in plot and setting. Readers from 10 on will enjoy these stories of children and adults who find unexpected happiness on Christmas Day, or better yet, discover that they have the power to bring



From an Illustration by Hilda van Stockum for "Kirsti and Saint Nicholas."

be, the darkness warm and alive with the familiar scents of fur and feathers, and grain and straw, doves cooing sleepily and, as Mary and Joseph arrive, bright eyes beyond the ring of light the lantern made, furry ears and quivering nostrils.

The sturdy little dog who, tired with barking at so many strangers in the inn yard, slept in his corner by the oxen's stall, is an endearing addition to the usual group of animals, made by an author who understands and loves dogs. When the cock crowed and Mary and Joseph made haste to depart, the dog, stiff from his long night vigil, rose and followed them to the door. Pots were on the fire; there were savory odors in the air; there was a buried bone, but the little dog did not seek it. "Wait," he barked, and did not pause till he had caught up with the man who led the plodding donkey and his burden along the dusty road. "Here I am," he barked again, "let me come with you."

This little book is just the right size to be loved and cherished and carried about by small readers. The drawings of manger and stable, of lambs and oxen, and the Holy Child, have the simplicity and childlike quality of the text.

Before Christmas

THE RABBIT'S NEST. By Elizabeth Morrow. 43 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company. 50 cents.

Mrs. Morrow has already demonstrated in "A Pint of Judg-

to pull down the "Rabbit's Nest," and are much surprised by its contents.

There is humor and gayety and a fine relationship between children and grown-ups in this genuine and friendly little tale which young and old will enjoy and which will make excellent pre-Christmas reading.

Enter St. Nicholas

KERSTI AND SAINT NICHOLAS. Written and illustrated by Hilda van Stockum. 70 pages. New York: The Viking Press. \$2.

Christmas is essentially a home festival, so a book which by means of its text and illustrations takes the reader straight into the heart of a household full of eager children in holiday mood is always a welcome addition to the Christmas-story shelf.

Hilda van Stockum's story begins far enough back to show us Kersti as a tiny baby — Kersti, who should have been a boy but whose six older sisters consoled themselves for their disappointment, when the stork failed to bring the much desired brother, by thinking of her as a kind of live doll and sharing the care of her, which was a help to their very busy mother. However, even six make-believe mothers and one

ents to the bad children, on the theory, advanced by Kersti, that the presents might make them so happy that they would be good all the rest of the year.

The sayings and doings of Kersti ring true and her honesty and self-reliant charm bring forgiveness as they would in real life. Kersti herself (who had heard the Bible story) explained, "I'm not naughty at all. I'm—I'm prodigal. Prodigal people get presents all the same. Only don't give me a fatted calf, I'd rather have a house made of cookies."

The many full-page pictures in soft, lovely colors, the black-and-white drawings, the high spirits with which Kersti's escapades are depicted, the cozy interiors, the homely scenes, combined with the childlike imagination with which



From an illustration by Rachel Field for "All Through the Night."

published before, although several of them suggest well-known and popular books. Thus in "Sudden Mary and Christmas," we find a new story about the favorite heroine in Emma Block's "Till Potatoes Grow on Trees." The title story in which Hildegard Hawthorne tells us how Longfellow surprised his family with a shining tree and how a little Danish boy thereby found a home and a mother to take the place of those that he had lost, reminds us of Miss Hawthorne's biography of Longfellow, "The Poet of Craigie House." Angela Thirkell describes Christmas in a Victorian nursery; Lois Lenski in "Day of Work and No Cheer," shows how even the Puritans found it difficult entirely to suppress the desire to celebrate the Christmas season; Marcel Brun and Betty Bowen's story tells of feudal times in France. Irene Smith's "Mister Skip" is a tale of Santa Claus. Two modern Christmas Days are described respectively by Mabel Robinson and Adele de Leeuw, Harry Rubicam supplies a cowboy's Christmas and Jean Thomas tells of Christmas in the Kentucky mountains.

Varied in interest and age appeal, this book will please readers from 10 years on. It can be read with pleasure at any season and will prove a use-

happiness to other people. A book that is genuinely in the spirit of Christmas.

Babar Returns

BABAR AND FATHER CHRISTMAS. By Jean de Brunhoff. Translated from the French by Merie Haas. Unpaged. New York: Random House. \$3.

It is very fitting that the tales of one of the friendliest and most lovable of the picture-book animals should include a Christmas story. Strange to say, that happy Elephant country to which Babar returned after his youthful Paris experiences, and where he lived with Celeste and their children, had never celebrated Christmas, and the joys of Christmas trees and Christmas gifts were quite unknown there. When Babar, however, hears of Father Christmas, he promptly sets out for the North Pole to bring him back to Elephant land. How, after a difficult journey, he succeeds in finding Father Christmas and his well-organized toy factory, and persuades him to fly back in a bird-drawn aeroplane, is set forth in the story, which ends with a Christmas celebration, a lighted tree and presents, and the departure of Father Christmas for his northern home.

Childlike, gently humorous and convincing in its logical detail, "Babar and Father Christmas" will take its place in childish hearts with Jean de Brunhoff's other much-loved books.