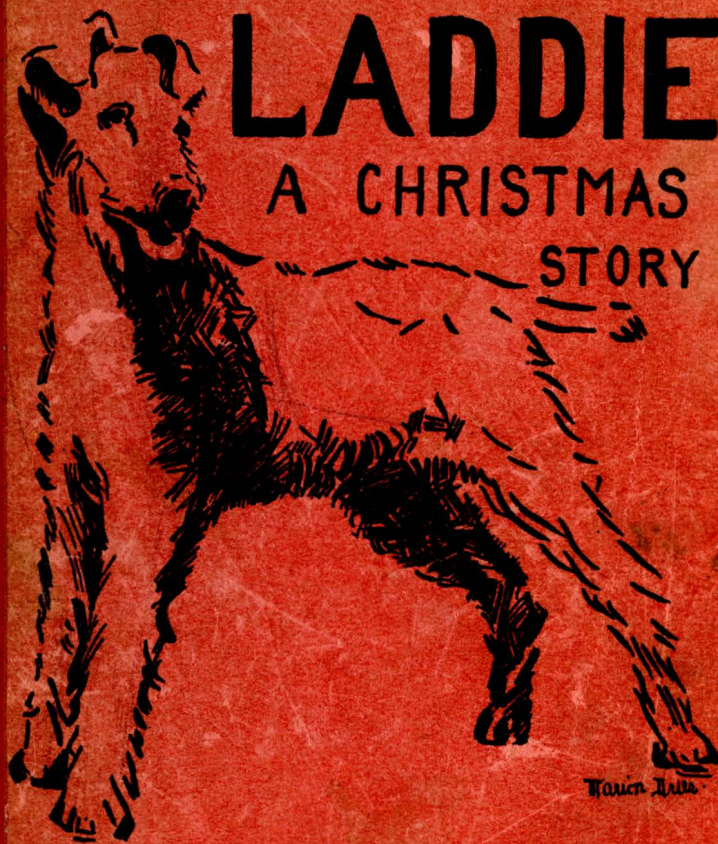


LADDIE

A CHRISTMAS
STORY



Walter Dill

PREFACE

"Laddie" is the combined efforts of first and second grade children between the ages of six and eight in a class room in one of the Kingston schools. The children worked collectively; one child started with an opening sentence, the others took the thought and followed on until the tale was finished.

The work was guided by the Editor, and the sentences written down as given and then reconstructed by the children as the story proceeded. Thus, the imagery, the plot, the construction are all from the children themselves so that in sending out this fanciful tale it is well to say it is a story "For Children, by Children". It is sincerely hoped that "Laddie" may be received by its readers as enthusiastically as it was produced by its originators.

It is pleasant to note that the illustrations are done by a Kingstonian, Marion Cobb Dries, a graduate of the Kingston High School. This might well be called a Kingston tale, written and compiled by Kingston children, illustrated by a Kingstonian and edited by a Kingston teacher.

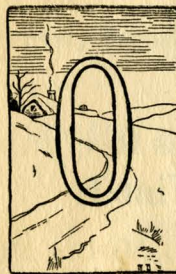
Edited by Elspeth Hardy.

Illustrated by Marion Cobb Dries.

Kingston, November, 1928.

LADDIE

A Christmas Story



ONCE there was a family.

They lived in a big city.

A city is a place where
there are many people.

There are many stores in
the city.

The stores are in tall buildings.

They have elevators and moving
stairs.

The family had five members.

There was a father, a mother, a boy,
a girl and a dog.

The boy's name was Peter.

The girl's name was Betty.

The dog's name was Laddie.

Laddie loved Peter and Betty very much.

One day the family moved to the country.

The country is a place where there are few people.

The country has many trees to climb and ponds to skate on in Winter.

There are only one or two stores in the country.

In the winter there is much snow. Boys and girls can slide all day.

This family liked the country.

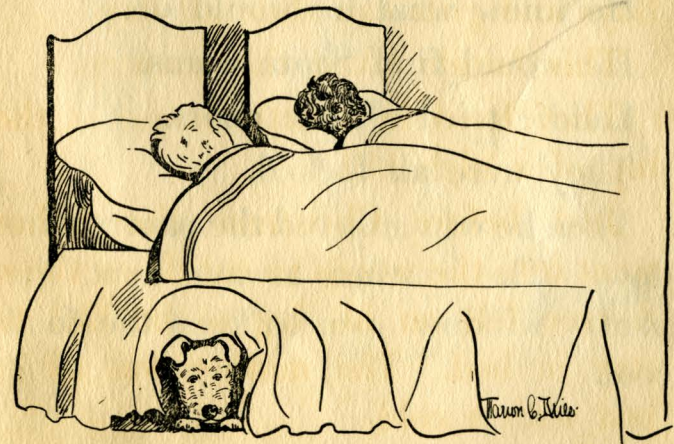
They lived in a little house at the top of a high hill.

Just before Christmas the father went into the woods to cut down trees. A tree fell on his leg so he had to stay in bed. The mother was ill in bed with a cold.

Poor Betty and Peter!

The night before Christmas they went up to bed feeling very sad.

Mother and father could not get out to buy any toys so Christmas would be a joyless day for them. Laddie trotted up the stairs after them. He was sad, too, for he loved Peter and Betty. His brown eyes were thoughtful. As Peter and Betty were making ready for bed Laddie lay un-



der Peter's bed thinking and thinking. He heard Betty sniffle softly so that mother could not hear. He saw Peter swallow hard.

Laddie thought and thought.

Soon it was quiet in the tiny bedroom.

The children had fallen asleep.

Laddie jumped up, shook his stubby tail and went down stairs without making a sound.

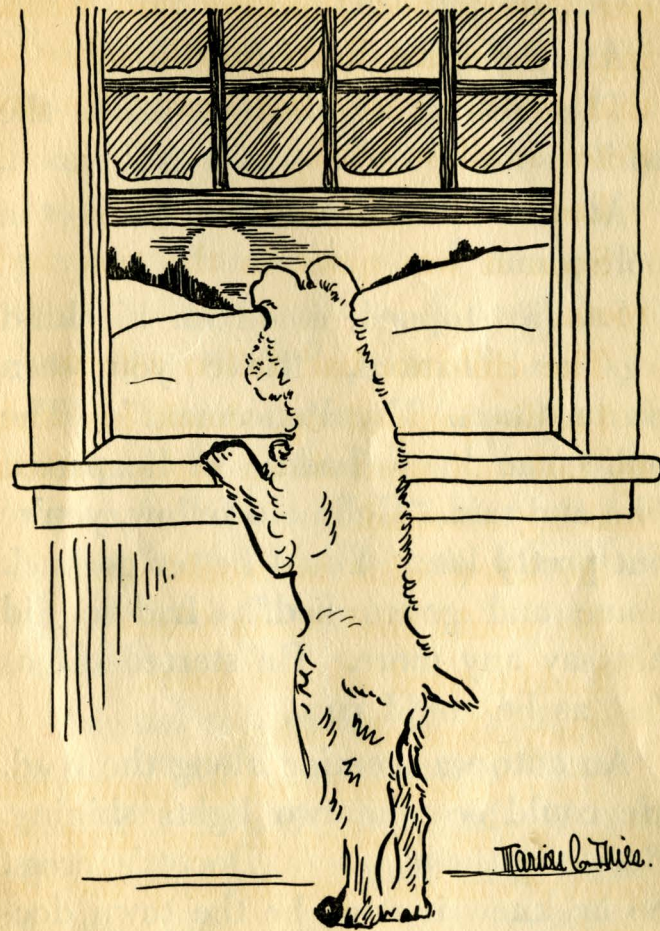
He knew what he would do.

He would find Santa Claus.

Laddie tried all the doors.

They were all locked.

Then he remembered the pantry window. The mother always kept the pantry window open to keep the food cool.



Out he jumped.

Away he ran down the hill.

The trees made shadows across the white snow. There was a full moon.

At the foot of the hill he met a policeman.

Laddie stopped, stood on his hind legs and barked, "Have you seen Santa Claus, Mr. Policeman?" The policeman knew Laddie so he patted him and said, "Hello old fellow, you're out pretty late. You'd better go back home and go to bed." Laddie did not say any more. He started off as fast as he could run.

An auto was coming along the road. He could see the two lights shining. Between them was a Doctor's cross. So he knew it must be the town doctor. Laddie knew him so he stood

up on his hind legs before the auto. The doctor stopped his car and leaned out to see what was there.

"Oh! it's you, Laddie" he said. "What do you want?" Laddie barked, "Have you seen Santa Claus? I have something to say to him. I need to see him very much."

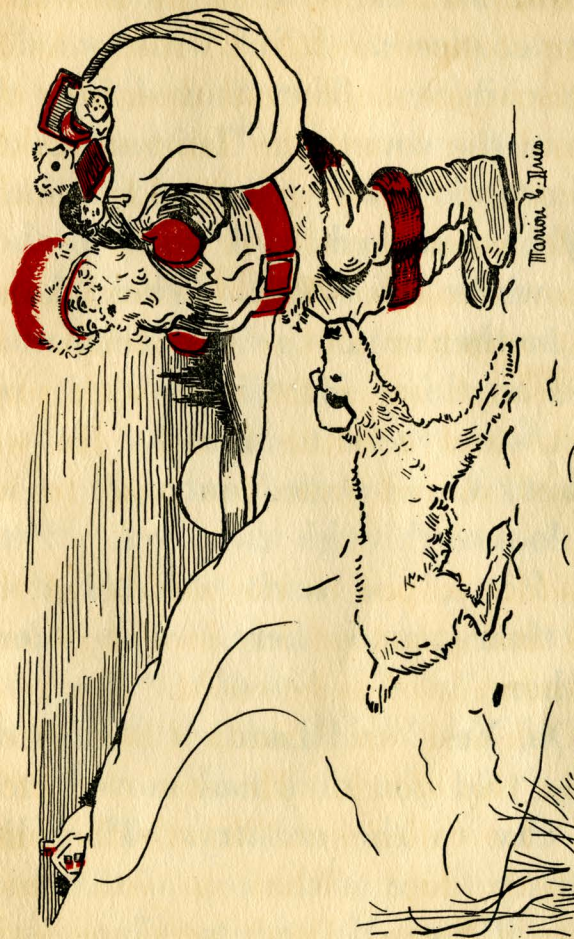
The doctor seemed to understand but said, "You foolish dog. You had better hop in with me and go back to bed." But Laddie only looked disappointed and started off down the road.

Around the corner he heard sleigh bells. "Ah!" he thought, "here he comes." But it was only a party of young people returning from a sleigh ride. They threw crumbs at Laddie as they went by.

Laddie was very tired by this time so he stopped awhile to rest. As he sat there, his stubby tail thumping the ground, he heard the faintest tinkle. He cocked his ear up. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, went the silvery bells.

Sure enough. Up the road came eight reindeer and a big sleigh. In the sleigh sat a fat man with pink cheeks and a white beard. He was dressed in red from his head to his feet.

Laddie leaped to the middle of the road and stood on his hind legs and barked as hard as he could. The reindeer slowed up. Santa Claus stood up in the sleigh. He saw the little dog. He called out, "What's the matter little dog? What do you want? I'm in a hurry. Don't keep me waiting." Laddie came up to the sleigh.



"Oh! Mr. Santa Claus just wait a minute, please. I live with two dear little children. They moved from the city to the country. Their names are Peter and Betty. You don't know they have moved, so I want to show you where they live. Their father and mother are both sick. They won't have anything for Christmas if you don't stop there to-night."

Santa Claus pulled out a big book and looked through the pages. "Peter and Betty," he said. "No, I don't see their names here. They don't live here."

"Oh, Yes," said Laddie. "They do. I just told you they had moved from the city to the country. They live away up there at the top of that high hill. Please Mr. Santa Claus, stop there to-night?"

Santa Claus looked at Laddie kindly and said, "All right, small dog. I believe you. Hop in beside me. He pushed aside a big drum to make room for the little dog. It did not take Laddie long to jump in. With a crack of his whip Santa Claus sent the reindeer flying over the ground.

When they reached Peter's house Santa Claus took a lovely doll from his pack and a big flexible flyer from the back of the sleigh and started down the chimney.

Laddie went into the house through the pantry window. When he came into the bedroom the doll lay in Betty's arms and the flexible flyer was beside Peter's bed.

Laddie crawled in under Peter's bed. He went fast asleep a happy, happy little dog.

In the morning such joy was in that
house. Betty played with her doll.
Peter rode down the long hill all day.

And who do you suppose sat on the
back of the flexible flyer?

