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danced back into the room and said. "Oh, let's play mariners!" Jessie and Jenny had never heard of such a game, but the princess told them that she was a ship on the high

be the picest Christmas that I have

So Peter went away, and the prin-

cess, with her eyes shining like stars,

had since I was a wee bit of a girl."

seas and that they were to tell from her cargo what country she hailed

"I carry tea." she began. "Where do I hall from?" "China," guessed Jenny.

"Japan." cried Jessie, with her little

Then the little girls pondered. "It might be india," ventured Jenny, but the princess shook her head. Then Jessie cried, "It's Ceylon!" And that

And after that Jessie brought a cargo of oranges from Florids and Jenny



THERE STOOD A WHITE FACED, SHIVEBING

brought a cargo of rugs from Persia and there were cargoes of spices and of coal and of coffee and of fish and of grain and of lumber, and the princess finished triumphantly by carrying a cargo of oysters from the Chesa

"One more," begged Jessie, "I carry a cargo of castles," said the sparkling princess. "Where do I hall from?"

The little girls guessed and guessed. and at last the princess said: "That wasn't a fair one, really, for

my castles are castles in Spain." Then, with Jessie in her arms, she told them of her own castle building. and when she had finished she said. "And so your mother shall have all of

my sewing, and that will keep her busy until spring." "Oh, you are going to be married and live happy ever after!" sighed Jessie rapturously. "It's just what a

fairy princess should do. "And what you should do," said the princess, looking at the clock, "is to go to bed, bed, bed, so that you can

wake up early in the morning. She tucked them in and came back later in a fascinating pink kimono with her bair in a thick yellow braid. and she kissed them both. But it was little lame Jessie that she kissed jast. And then she went away like a glorious vision, and the little girls sauk into slumber.

In the next room the princess opened the door cautiously, and there was Peter with snow all over him, and his arms were full of holly and mistletoe, and a great tree was propped against the doorpost.

"Quietly, quietly, Peter," warned the princess, and Peter tiptoed in and set the tree up in the corner, and its top reached to the ceiling.

The princess opened the steamer trunk and took out two white Teddy bears, one with a flaring blue bow and the other with a flaring pink one. and then she took out a green and a yellow and a red and a blue fatry book and a beautiful square basket of candy, tied with holly ribbon, and then from the very bottom of the trunk she drew string after string of shining little silver bells, fastened on red and pale green ribbons.

"I was going to get up a cotilion for the children at the other house." the princess explained to Peter, "but these little folks need it so much

The little bells went "tinkle, tinkle," as Peter hung them, and Jessie,



'YOU ARE THE LITTLE MOTHER," SAID THE PRINCES

dreaming in her little bed, heard the sound and thought it a part of her

trimmed and whisperso and taughed thethe Meridian. some one rattled the doorknob. Peter opened the door, and there stood a white faced, shivering little

And white Peter and the princip

"Oh, what has happened to my little LOTTE McGILLVRAY.

girls?" she parted "I saw the Bah and it is so tate. Then as she belief the golden befred vision in pink and the gay tree and Peter in his trim livery she gasped, "Why, I believe it is fairles!" And she sat down very suddealy in Jessie's bulr.

"You are the little mother," said the princess as she knelt beside ber and put her areas are of her and told her how star stone to be there and when she bud Fel-bed "Id simply, "And 1 have anted own mother so much this Christians, and the little cirls were en errort that I knew I should tone you'

"Yen to riffithe ching!" cried the little mother to the call princess, and the benutifut lad- con her head down on the other's shall -boulder and wept because in spite of her riches she had been very, very lonely in her big house

And after Peter had gone they talk ed until midnight of Jessie and Jenny, and then they concorted great plans about the pretty things that the little mother was to make for the princess.

And in the morning Jessie and Jenny, waking in the early dawn, saw sitting on the footboard of the bed two Teddy bears, one with a flaring plok bow and one with a flaring blue bow, and the Teddy bears beld out their arms saucily and gazed at the bappy little girls with twinkling eyes.

"Oo-oh!" cried the little girls, who and never seen a Teddy bear before. And that was the beginning of the most wonderful day of their lives, for all day the tree went "tinkle, tinkle," as they foraged in its branches for bonbons. And the chicken dinner was a delicious success. And in the afternoon they all took a ride in the princess' sleigh, with Peter driving on the box, and when at last be set them down on their own humble doorstep and lifted little Jessie in his arms the princess/smiled at them radiantly from under her plumy hat.

"Remember, Peter will come for you every Saturday, and you are to stay at my house all day," she said. "Oh, yes!" Jenny sighed, with rap-

"And you are to come to my wed



THE PRINCESS SMILED AT THEM RADI-ANTLY BENEATH HER PLUMES.

ding in the spring-all of you." said the princess gayly. "And see the prince!" over Peter's shoulder,

"And you are going to let me share a third of your mother?"

"Yes, oh, yes." from both of the little girls.

"Then you shall share a third of Peter," the princess called back as the smiling coachiman drove her away through the glistening snow.

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