



The Merriest Christmas Ever to those Boys and Girls who can never find enough to read. Here's wishing that Old Saint Nick will put a good book in the stocking for all of you!

Practically all boys and girls who attend school are familiar with Clement C. Moore's jolly Christmas poem, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. When Mr. Moore wrote that poem he did not know that for many years to come the boys and girls of the United States would be memorizing it or reading it over and over again each year when Christmas comes around.

Mr. Moore wrote the poem as a present for his own little girls only. The little Moore children were so happy over the present that they showed it to many of their friends on Christmas day. As usual many guests spend the Christmas holidays with the Moore family in Chelsea, New York. It so happened that one of the visitors copied the poem in her album. This visitor lived in Troy, New York. When she returned to her home after the holidays, she showed the poem to the editor of the Troy newspaper—the Troy Sentinel.

The very next Christmas the editor published the poem in the Troy Sentinel and with it he put an old woodcut picture of St. Nicholas. This occurred in 1823.

After that other papers copied the poem so that each year, more and more boys and girls became familiar with it; and today, after 112 years, English speaking boys and girls all over the world can be heard repeating with the merriest twinkle in their eyes—

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

“’Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the house

Not a creature was stirring, not even
a mouse;

The stockings were hung by the
chimney with care,

In hopes that St. Nicholas soon
would be there;

The children were nestled all snug
in their beds,

While visions of sugar-plums
danced in their heads:

And mamma in her kerchief, an I
in my cap,

Had just settled our brains for a
longer winter nap.—

When out on the lawn there arose
such a clatter,

I sprang from my bed to see what
was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a
flash,

Tore open the shutters and threw
up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-
fallen snow

Gave a lustre of midday to objects
below:

When what to my wondering eyes
should appear,

But a miniature sleigh and eight
tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively
and quick

I knew in a moment it must be St.
Nick.

More rapid than eagles his couriers
they came,

And he whistled and shouted and
called them by name:

“Now, Dasher! now, Dancer!” now,
Prancer and Vixen!

On, Come! on, Cupid! on, Dunder
and Blitzen!

To the top of the porch, to the top
of the wall!

Now, dash away, dash away, dash
away all!”

As he flew leaves that before the wild
hurricane fly,

When they meet with an obstacle,
mount to the sky,

So, up to the house-top the coursers
they flew,

With a sleigh full of toys, and St.
Nicholas too.

And then in a twinkling I heard
on the roof

The prancing and pawing of each
little hoof.

As I drew in my head and was
turning around,

Down the chimney St. Nicholas
came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur from his
head to his foot,

And his clothes were all tarnished
with ashes and soot:

A bundle of toys he had flung on
his back,

And he looked like a peddler just
opening his pack.

His eyes how they twinkled! his
dimples how merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose
like a cherry;

His droll little mouth was drawn
up like a bow.

And the beard on his chin was as
white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight
in his teeth,

And the smoke it circled his head
like a wreath.

He had a broad face, and a little
round belly

That shook, when he laughed, like
a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right
jolly old elf

And I laughed when I saw him, in
spite of myself.

A wink of his eye and a twist of
his head

Soon gave me to know I had nothing
to read.

He spoke not a word, but went
straight to his work.

And filled all the stockings; then
turned with a jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his
nose,

And giving a nod, up the chimney
he rose.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team
gave a whistle.