

[Fac-simile of Original MS.]

## A visit from St. Nicholas

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It was 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, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the 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 the lustre of mid-day to objects below;  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny rein-deer,  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

## "A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS."

If any of us should happen to have an old friend whom we had never seen, we would be delighted to have his photograph, that we might know exactly how he looked.

On the opposite page is the likeness of an old friend—certainly an old friend to most of us. It is a *fac-simile*, or exact imitation, of the original manuscript of that familiar poem which is now as much a part of Christmas as the Christmas-tree or the roast turkey and mince-pies. No matter who writes poetry for the holidays, nor how new or popular the author of such poems may be, nearly everybody reads or repeats "T was the night before Christmas" when the holidays come round; and it is printed and published in all sorts of forms and styles, so that the new poems must stand aside when it is the season for this dear old friend.

Just think of it! Jolly old St. Nicholas, with his sleigh and his reindeer and his bags full of all sorts of good things, made his first appearance to many of us in this poem. Until we had heard or read this, we did n't know much about him, except that on Christmas Eve he shuffled down the chimney somehow, and filled our stockings.

Now here is a part of the poem,—as much as our page will hold,—exactly as the author, Mr. Clement C. Moore, wrote it. Here we see just how he dotted his i's and crossed his t's, and how he wrote some of his lines a little crookedly.

If we knew nothing about Mr. Moore but what we read in the biographical notices that have been written of him, we would never suppose that he troubled his brain about St. Nicholas and his merry doings, or thought of such things as reindeer and sleighs and wild gallops over house-tops. For he was a very able and learned man. He was the son of Bishop Benjamin Moore, and was born in New York, July 15, 1779. He was graduated at Columbia College (of which his father was at one time president). He was a fine Hebrew scholar, and published a Hebrew and English Lexicon and a Hebrew grammar. He was afterward Professor of Hebrew and Greek literature in the Protestant Episcopal Seminary in New York. He was a man of property, and had something of the St. Nicholas disposition in him, for he gave to this seminary the plot of ground on which its buildings now stand. Mr. Moore wrote many poems, which were collected and published in a book in 1844, and he did other good literary work; but he never wrote anything that will keep his memory green so long as that delightful poem on the opposite page.

The original manuscript of these famous verses is in the possession of the Hon. R. S. Chilton, United States Consul to Clifton, Canada, whose father was a personal friend of Mr. Moore, and who very kindly allowed us to make this *fac-simile* copy of a page of the manuscript for ST. NICHOLAS.



PUSSY'S LESSON. (DRAWN BY MISS SCANNELL.)