



ST. NICHOLAS IN HIS TRAIN.

THE MISER'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

Hae ye heard o' the auld Scotch miser,
Who'd skimmed and saved sae lang.
His heart had grown cauld as his siller,
Till he ken'd nae ane's sorrow nor
wrag?

But a' that his hoard could gi' him,
Was a care, not restfu' peace,
Carkling care, lest a thief should rob him,
Till frae life he sought release.

In despair he gaed himsel' to drown
Ane Christmas Eve i' the burn;
To a pleadin' bairn he tossed some gold,
Scarce stopping his head to turn.

"For I can need it nae mair," he groaned,
"When gane frae this weasome world;"
But a sudden joy shot up i' his heart,
An' the flame round the embers curled.

Till a' his being grew bright and warm
Wi' the thoct that came as light:
That life was worth living an' gold was
good,
Did he but use it aright.

Then he bied him hame to his attic,
An' frae bag an' box, an' chest,
Took bank-notes, an' gold, an' silver,
In haste, for he could na' rest.

Till wi' lavish hand he had given
To a' the pair folk around—
They scarce could thank him for wonder,
Till, joyful, he said, "I hae found

Mair happiness come frae giein'!
Tho' sma' the giftie be,
Than frae all the hoarded treasure
Ye keep for yoursel' to see."

THE LEGEND OF ST. NICHOLAS.

The popular saint of Christmas time, the children's beloved Santa Claus, takes his name from an early Bishop of the Greek Church, born at Lycia, who died about 340. The legendary story is that good Bishop Nicholas in making his pastoral rounds one day heard three children weeping in a house, on account of their poverty and wretchedness. According to the story he threw three purses, one for each, in through the window, or as some say, down the chimney, and thus relieved their necessities. He became the favorite patron saint of school boys, girls and children, and takes high rank as a saint in the Greek Church. His name has been contracted into Santa Claus, and in our picture he is shown bearing his pack of toys, and knocking at the window to reward the good children who dwell within.

The more orthodox view, however, is

that Santa Claus is a jolly old fellow who lives away up near the North Pole, and on Christmas Eve sets out with his reindeer team, on his world-wide mission. This is fairly maintained in the bas-relief picture on this page.

SANTA CLAUS IN OTHER LANDS.

By Katherine E. Megee.

In Germany the coming of Santa Claus is celebrated with more elaborateness than in any other country. From the imperial family in the palace to the most humble



ST. NICHOLAS.

cottage, the Christmas tree is the chief object of consideration. Among the well-to-do, presents for the servants and poor are on the same tree, or on a table beneath it, with those of the children and older members of the household. Early in life the children are taught to think of those who are less fortunate than themselves, and make the Christmas season

one of peace, good-will, and happiness to all.

A very pretty feature of the Christmas festivities in Sweden—where the yule-tide lasts until January, the twentieth—is the erection in every dooryard each Christmas morning of a pole, the top of which is tied with a large, full sheaf of grain—a feast for the little wild snow-birds. No family thinks of sitting down to the Christmas table until these little creatures have visited.

In Belgium the children have a graceful and interesting memorial custom connected with Santa Claus. Instead of driving from housetop to housetop in the wonderful sleigh, which is carried along by the famous reindeer, Santa Claus pays his visits to our little brothers and sisters over the sea astride a beautiful pony with silvery mane and flashing eyes. On Christmas Eve each child takes his best pair of sabots (wooden shoes), and placing them on the window ledge, fills them to overflowing with hay, oats, fodder—thank-offering to the Christmas pony. Next morning upon hurrying to the window they find that the offering has been accepted and the little sabots are brimming over with all the toys and sweetmeats so dear to a little Belgian's heart.

In France the children place their shoes in the chimney of Christmas night to obtain some glittering present in the darkness from their good fairy.

The Chinese—except those who have become acquainted with the Christian idea of that day—observe Christmas in much the same manner that the small boy in Canada does the First of July, i.e., by making all the noise they can, especially with fire-crackers which are supposed to frighten away evil spirits; crackers are also used by the Chinamen as an expression of good feeling, and are intimately associated with all of their festivals, and all occasions out of the ordinary routine.

PROVISIONS FROM TREES.

There is a tree that grows in Sumatra, Algeria, and China says The Philadelphia Public Ledger, that is known as the vegetable tallow tree. From its fruit large quantities of oil and tallow are extracted, and the fruit is gathered in November or December, when all the leaves have fallen. Excellent candles are made from the berries of a tree that grows in some parts of South Africa and the Azores. At Sierra Leone is found the cream fruit tree, the fruit of which is very agreeable in taste. In Ceylon there is the bread fruit tree, from which a food is made in the same way that we make bread. It is said to be equally good and nutritious. In South America we find the milk tree.—Morning Star.

The Sunday-school is the garden in which God grows noble characters.