



A MODERN CHERUB.

The Children's Christmas.

WHY TOM DID NOT GET HIS ROCKING HORSE.

Tom was only five years old, but thought he could ride the wildest of rocking horses and so petitioned Santa Claus to bring him not the steady-going easy brown horse of well known habits and easy gait, but a fiery black steed with long long rockers that would go up up ever so high and upon whom he would feel like St. George killing the Dragon, or Bellerophon or the Mounted Policeman when he chases the small boy from an orchard.

Well Tom had been a very good boy, and so felt that his prayer would be answered, for Santa Claus remembered well the good boys. And so it would have been, but that Santa was too particular in selecting the very finest steed from his wonderful stable. All went well on the trip from the North Pole, but nearing Tom's house the saddle or straps got entangled in a patient pack-donkey's trappings, and the fiery steed began to snort. However, the roof was reached and the proper and biggest chimney selected, and Santa Claus finding he could not carry this tremendously fine horse down on his back, caught him up ignominiously by the rockers and was about to thrust him down. But this was too much for the pampered haughty long-pedigreed steed. He baulked, he kicked—kicked till he freed himself from his rockers, and off he went galloping fast and hard north, due north, while Santa Claus more surprised than he had ever been in his life lost ten whole minutes of his valuable time gaping in astonishment at the effect of the refractory conduct of his too fiery and well-fed horse.

SANTA CLAUS RHYMES.

Hear the bells ring Christmas chimes,
Blessings on these merry times,
When all the girls and all the boys
Fond of playthings, fond of toys,
Happy made, spread wide their joys,
Fill the sober house with noise,
Declare no government, no laws,
No reign but that of Santa Claus.

His right there's none will dare dispute,
His wisdom none can well refute;
'Tis very funny how he knows
Who are his friends and who his foes,
And only shares his dolls and toys
With good, believing girls and boys.

What stories too his books all tell
Of ding dong, pussy in the well,
Of far-famed Jack and romping Jill,
Tumbling together down the hill,
Of the riotous living of little Jack Horner
Eating a Christmas pie in a corner.

The eventful life of Robin Redbreast
That pussy-cat never would leave at rest.
But chased from tree to handy wall
And got a well-deserved fall,
While little Robin all day long
Safely whistled his pretty song.

The garden mistress merry grow
The story of dear little Boy Blue,
Who slept when he should blow his horn
And let the cows eat all the corn,
Under the hayfork he's fast asleep
Instead of minding cows and sheep.

Santa Claus has some curious dogs,
To say nothing of wonderful frogs,
There's one dog his name was Buff,
He used to trot for Grandpa's snuff.

Coming home he met a fox
Who took a pinch and broke the box
But if poor grandpa's snuff was spill'd
The fox was chas'd and almost kill'd.

Another dog he had no name,
But for that was not to blame;
He could not to himself give one,
And those who ought, they gave him none.
He belonged to Mother Hubbard,
The old dame who had a cupboard,
But, who so poor was left all alone,
She could not give her dog a bone.
A dog without a name or bone
His cries would melt a heart of stone.

Another dog on one fine day
Met with a cow upon the way;
The cow she had a crumpled horn,
Tossed the dog quite over the barn;
Strange to say quite safe and sound
He lit upon the friendly ground.
But this same cow one night in June
Too frolicsome jumped over the moon
At which the dog began to laugh
Nor stopp'd till night was spent one half
This was the dog that worried the cat
That cat that watch'd and kill'd the rat
The cat that hid within a fiddle
And played the first Hey diddle, diddle.

Who told us all about Bluebeard
That wicked man by children feared
That laid a plan to take the lives
Of all the women made his wives!

A story that we love right well
Is of that Giant-Killer Sovell;
His name was Jack; he kill'd off hand
All the giants of the land.

Another friend is Tommy Tucker
Singing sweetly for his supper
He got it, and he got a knife
To eat it with, and got a wife
Who made him happy all his life.

Who knows all these and hundreds more,
We never can exhaust his store,
Why Santa Claus, Ring Christmas chimes
Blessings on these Merry Times.

When the Popes governed in Rome it was long
the custom for the peasants of the surrounding country to dress themselves in the skins of sheep to represent shepherds, come into the city and sing from door to door of the wondrous birth in Bethlehem so long ago. We have had our Christmas waits too, but they seem to have degenerated. But surely the children singing their Gloria in Excelsis at the early Mass are continuing the First Christmas carol sung by the Angels on that first Christmas Day.

A collection of Christmas carols, old ones especially, would be very interesting. One I have to a plaintive catching air begins—

"God rest you merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay;
Remember Christ our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save poor souls from Satan's fold
Which long had gone astray."

CHORUS—Oh tidings! Oh tidings!
Oh tidings of great comfort
O tidings of great joy.

and on through seven verses of description of the events of the first Christmas-tide.

I suppose every child is familiar with the traditional Yule Log of Christmas, the Wassail of New Years and the Twelfth Night Cake in which is hidden the ring that tells who will first be married. A remnant of the pretty custom of choosing by lot a mimic court, etc., such as we read of as being done in Holyrood during the time of Mary Queen of Scots survives in the fashion of wearing the fantastic caps, etc., contained in the pretty and often artistic snapping mottoes.

The young gentleman who appears at the head of this page has been caught in an attitude which will be appreciated by all who know him. Whatever the high flown pleasures of bon-bons may be, there is an everlasting joy in exploring for last traces of jam or syrup.

SOME HINTS FOR THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

A firm base for the tree can be obtained by planting in a butter tub filled with earth: folds of bunting or colored cheese-cloth or the pretty crinkled paper are draped around the sides and top of the tub and it serves to hold gifts too large and heavy for the tree. Before beginning to arrange the tree an old rug or crumcloth should be spread to protect the carpet from the drip of the candles, while a pail of water within easy reach is a wise precaution.

Now for decorations. Your tree has of course been carefully chosen, due regard being paid to the symmetry of the branches, the apex forming a crown. Cut from common pasteboard pendant hearts, anchors, crosses, crescents, stars, &c.; brush both sides with liquid glue or mucilage, immerse in a bowl filled with either or all of the following ingredients: sand, sawdust, mustard seed, pounded rice. When this rough coat is dry the ornaments can be colored with any enamel paints. Tiny little flags can be bought for a few cents the dozen, and when stuck into the smallest and shiniest green, yellow and red apples or into little gilt and silvered cornucopias, prove gay and effective. Miniature Chinese lanterns add a festive air and fill up vacant spaces; snapping mottoes, even of the cheapest variety, contrast gaily with the dark green of the tree while the grotesque caps contribute to the fun.

The pretty crepe papers make exquisite flowers that can be pinned amongst the twigs and wreathes around the trunk of the tree. Some sheets are cut into narrow strips gummed to one another end to end, and you have yards and yards of ribbon for festoons and rosette. In long loops and tassels let them radiate from the centre stem in all directions, and hold sustained the slender strands of gilt or silver "hair" as it is called, that drip from bough to bough in glittering showers.

These threads of gold and silver, and the ornaments of colored glass are somewhat expensive but can be used from year to year.

A ball or two of tinselled thread, or a bunch of Japanese gold is unwound and strung in spirals from branch to branch, the glittering threads serving as lines from which to suspend the Christmas gifts.

Strings of cranberries and pop-corn, sugar canes in red and white, are always effective. Little candles and tiny tarlatan bags of candy are affixed at every available point.

Over all at the very top of the tree hovers the "Christ-kindchen," a bisque or waxen angel with floating hair, golden wings and arms outstretched as if showering all the blessings upon the little ones below.

MRS. EMMA O'SULLIVAN.

