

••• LITTLE FOLKS •••

Nan's Ride with Santa Claus.

(By E. Louise Liddell in the 'Ledger Monthly'.)

'Now, mamma, I'm really and truly going to watch to-night, till I see Santa Claus,' said Nan.

Mamma smiled, as she put an extra pillow under the little girl's head. She had not forgotten how Nan had gone off to Dreamland last Christmas Eve while watching for Santa.

'I don't see what made mamma laugh,' thought Nan, when she was left alone. 'I'm a whole year older

'I wonder why they always have such a big, tall Santa Claus at all the Christmas trees?'

But the little girl was too much interested in watching her visitor to waste time in wondering about his size, for he was very busy filling her stockings. A shining gold thimble went into the toe. A nice sealskin pocket-book just filled the foot. Handkerchiefs, gloves and candies followed. Then Santa took a Noah's ark from his pocket and looked at it.

'The idea!' thought Nan. 'I guess he doesn't know I'm nine years

dear down the chimney, so I could see them?' hinted Nan.

Santa shook his head.

'No, they draw the line at chimneys,' he said. 'Couldn't get 'em down. But see here! What's to hinder your taking a ride with me?'

Nan's eyes shone with delight.

'Oh, will you take me?' she cried. The words were hardly out of her mouth before she was gliding up the chimney, perched on Santa's broad shoulders. And the next moment she was on the roof and Santa was bundling her up in a long sealskin coat that covered her from head to foot. Nan clapped her hands as she caught sight of the dainty sleigh and the eight prancing steeds, who were tossing their heads as though they were impatient to be off.

Santa helped her into the sleigh and tucked her in. 'Just wait a minute,' he said, 'while I get my rope-ladder out of the chimney.'

'Ladder?' repeated Nan, in surprise.

'Yes, ladder,' returned Santa. 'You didn't really suppose I could run up the wall or the chimney-side like a fly, did you?'

A moment later, Santa cracked his whip, the bells jingled, and away flew the reindeer, their tiny hoofs flying in the air.

'Oh, my, what fun!' cried Nan, as they whirled past chimney tops, and leaped (Nan couldn't tell how) from one roof to another.

'You see, I had made all my calls in your neighborhood before I stopped at your house,' Santa explained, as he drew up before a very aristocratic-looking chimney. 'I guess you'd like to go in here with me.' And the next thing Nan knew, she was making a journey down the chimney with her funny little friend.

'I don't let the grass grow under my feet,' said Santa, as he stepped out of the fireplace.

'I think you are a very rapid man,' said Nan, who was a little bewildered by this sudden change.

Santa laughed, and going up to a big Christmas tree that stood in one corner of the dimly-lighted room, he began to load it with all sorts of beautiful things.

'Isn't it nice here?' said Nan, looking up at the lofty ceiling and the glittering chandeliers. 'And, oh, do you hear that lovely music? I'm sure there's a band somewhere.'

The door leading into the next room was slightly ajar. Nan crept toward it, and peeping in, could hardly keep from crying out at the sight that met her eyes. For there was a company of little folks, arrayed in the quaint costumes of years before. The boys in knee-breeches, gaily colored vests, vel-



NAN PERCHED ON SANTA'S BROAD SHOULDERS.

than I was a year ago, and of course I can keep awake.'

But it was tiresome waiting. The clock struck nine, then ten, then eleven. 'I don't s'pose he'll be here much before twelve,' said Nan, with a sleepy yawn.

Almost at the same instant she heard a faint tinkling of bells, followed by a scuffling sound in the chimney, and then a queer little figure bounded into the room.

Of course, it must be Santa. There were the rosy cheeks and snowy beard, the fur coat and big pack. But this little man wasn't more than half as large as Nan had imagined Santa Claus to be.

'Dear me!' she said to herself.

old, or he wouldn't think of leaving that. I do wish he'd look at me!'

But Santa swung his pack on his back and seemed to be getting ready to leave, so Nan coughed gently.

Santa started and looked around. 'Bless me!' he exclaimed. 'I had no idea you were awake!'

'Why, I stayed awake on purpose to see you,' said Nan.

'Well, I declare!' said Santa, with a rollicking laugh. 'I wish you a merry Christmas, my dear. Sorry I can't stop and talk awhile, but you know this is my busy day—night, I mean.'

'I suppose you couldn't bring your sleigh and the dear little rein-