

## SANTA CLAUS.



Strange old fellow this Santa Claus! To judge from all the good things he does in one night he must be the busiest, kindest, dearest old creature that ever lived. His brow may be wrinkled, and his long beard snowy, but his heart is young, and his limbs are as active as those of any juvenile chimney-sweeper. Old as he is he does not seem to care very much for old people; perhaps they are too wide-awake for his habits. What a stealthy way he has of doing good! That is the best thing about him; he makes no fuss in doing a thousand kindnesses. He springs noiselessly to the crib-side, where the gaping stocking—the longest in the house—hangs ready, and in a trice pours into it dolls, bon-bons, tops, marbles, till it is overflowing, and away he skips as silently as a butterfly fluttering among pea-blossoms. A word of advice to our young friends; don't keep awake on Christmas Eve to catch a glimpse of Santa Claus. No one ever has seen him, and you are sure to be disappointed. Then it is not polite to try to catch him if he does not wish to be caught. He has good reasons for wishing to keep out of sight. Perhaps he is very ugly, and knows it. Perhaps he is afraid of making a row in the bed-room, and disturbing the house. Perhaps he carries so big a sack of toys and sweets that he knows if he were seen the children would

make him rummage it to the bottom, and then shake the bag, so he would not finish his work by the time the Christmas joy-bells began ringing.

## CHRISTMAS.

A time of feast and revelry,  
Of mirth and giddy joy,  
When flows the wine, and in the cup  
All cares cease to annoy.  
The madness of the jovial band  
Rises each moment higher,  
Till all a-glow, their veins are filled  
And burn with liquid fire.  
Poor hungry wretches wistful look  
For help—to them—in vain;  
These "jolly dogs," what care they for  
A hapless brother's pain?

A time of dull self-righteousness,  
When bigots call profane  
The claiming of one day of rest  
From toil of hand and brain.  
"What's this one day to us," they cry,  
"Of all days of the year?"  
"Why should we cease our daily work?"  
"Why should we others cheer?"  
"'Tis plain that in the winter time  
"No shepherds watched by night."  
"'Tis the wrong day, why then should we  
"Make one poor sad heart light?"

A time of chastened thankfulness  
For countless mercies given;  
A day for deeds of purest love,  
Like choicest gifts from Heaven.  
Why should men waste in vain disputes,  
And poor religious strifes  
The few brief days which this world's cares  
Leave for a higher life?  
Then let your heart be open thrown,  
Give of your plenteous store  
To clothe and feed and warm the poor  
Who shiver at your door,  
For the sake of Him who came to earth  
One night in the times of yore.