

THE NIGHT BEFORE



CHRISTMAS

Title: The Night Before Christmas

Author: Anonymous

Language: English

Subject: Fiction, Literature, Children's literature

Publisher: World Public Library Association

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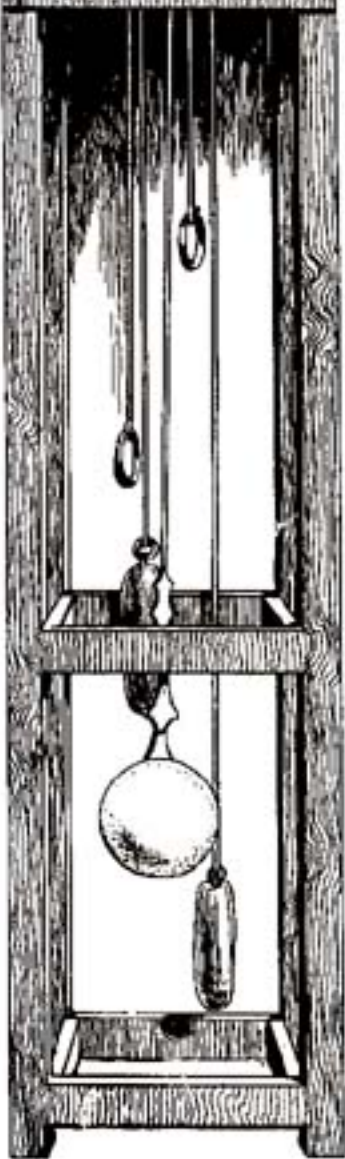
World Public Library Association
P.O. Box 22687
Honolulu, Hawaii 96823
info@WorldLibrary.net



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A VISIT OF ST. NICHOLAS

'T 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 Saint
Nicholas soon
would be there ;
The children were
nestled all snug
in their beds,
While visions of
sugar-plums danced
in their heads,



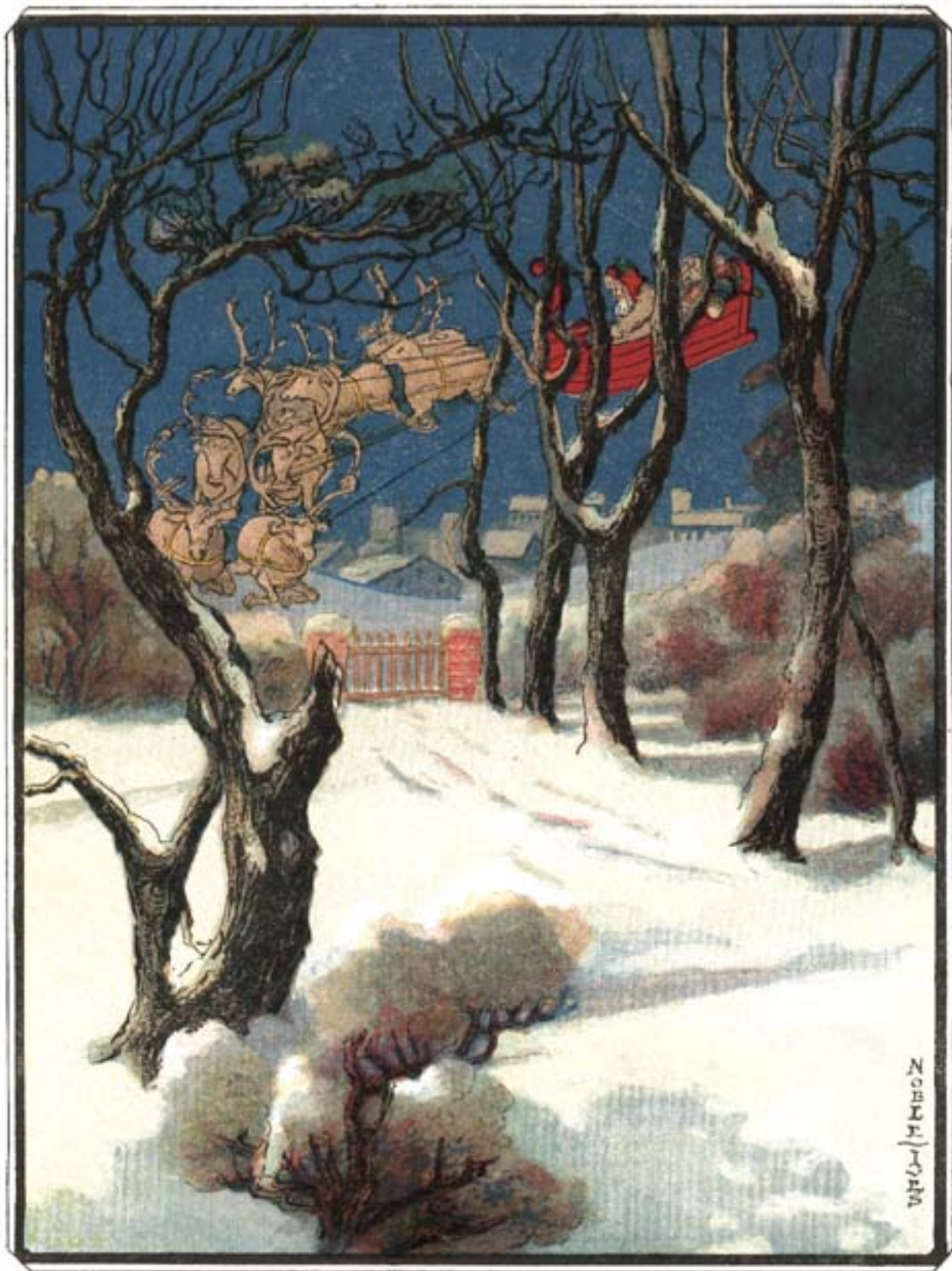


The children were nestled all snug in their beds."



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 rose such a clatter,
I sprang from my 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 a luster of mid-day to objects below.





NOEL F. JONES

" Out on the lawn there rose such a clatter."



When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny Reindeer;
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be Saint Nick.



More rapid than eagles
his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and
shouted, and called
them by name--

“Now, Dasher!

now, Dancer!

now, Prancer
and Vixen!

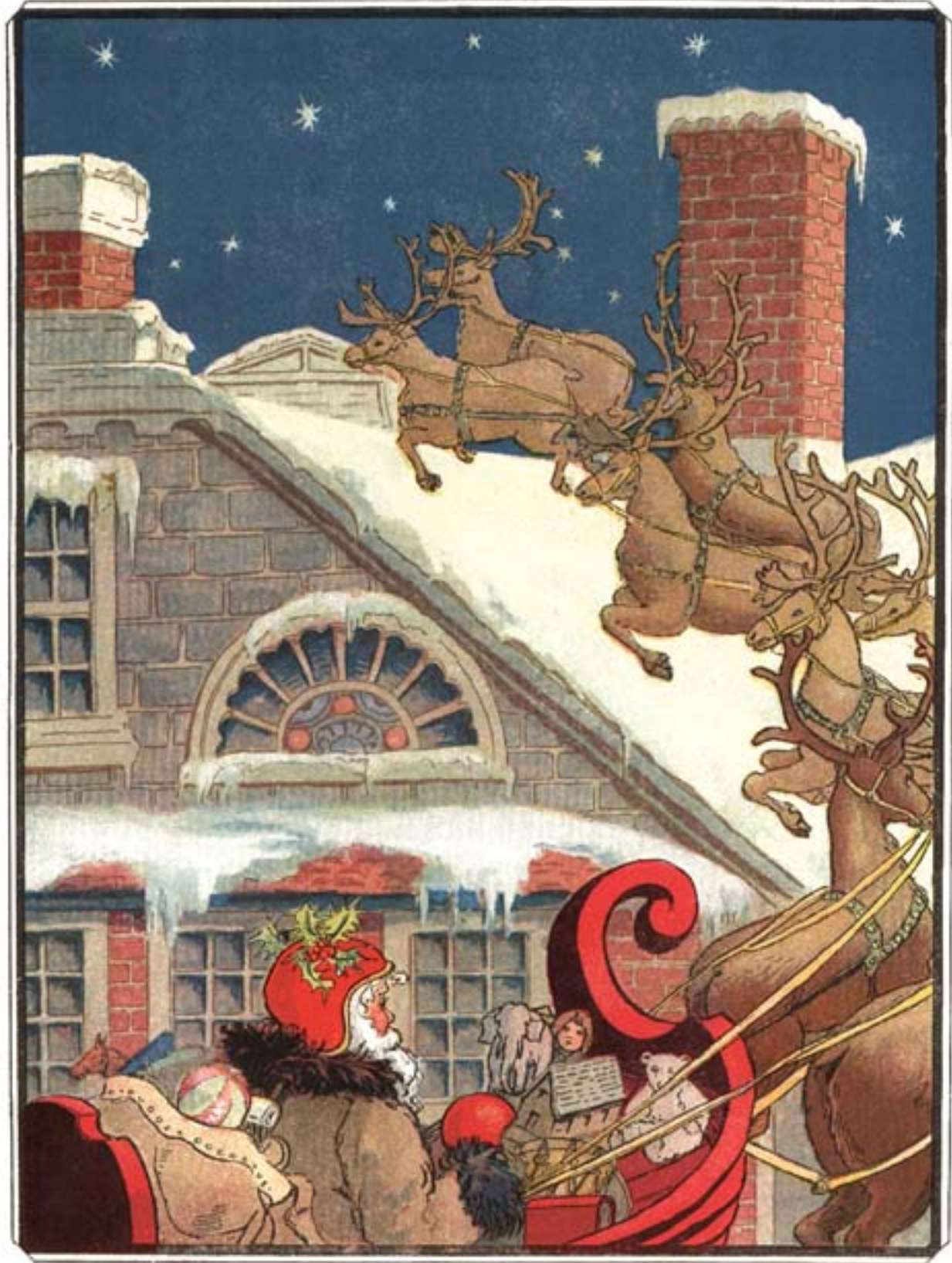
On, Comet! on, Cupid!
on, Dunder and Blitzen!



To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall,
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,

So up to the house-top
the coursers they flew
With sleigh full
of toys—and
Saint Nicholas too.
And then in a
twinkling I
heard on the roof,
The prancing and
pawing of
each little hoof;





“ Up to the house-top the coursers they flew.”



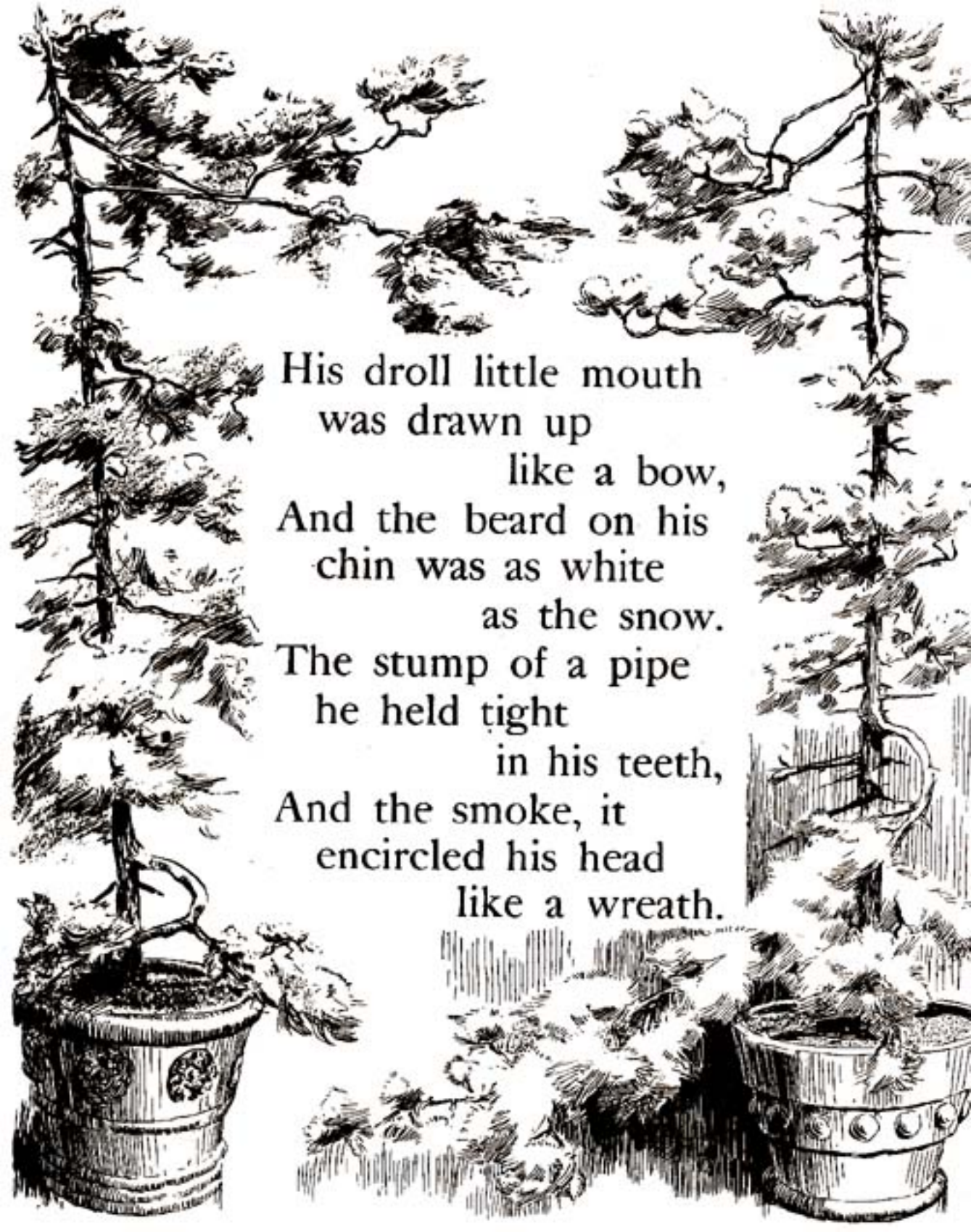
As I drew in my head,
and was turning around,
Down the chimney
Saint Nicholas came
with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur
from his head
to his foot,
And his clothes were all
tarnished with
ashes and soot;

A bundle of toys
he had flung on his back,
And he looked like
a pedler just
opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled!
his dimples
how merry;
His cheeks were like roses,
his nose like a cherry;





" A bundle of toys he had flung on his back."



His droll little mouth
was drawn up
like a bow,
And the beard on his
chin was as white
as the snow.
The stump of a pipe
he held tight
in his teeth,
And the smoke, it
encircled his head
like a wreath.



He was chubby and
plump—a right
jolly old elf;
And I laughed
when I saw him
in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye,
and a twist
of his head,
Soon gave me to know
I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,





“ He filled all the stockings.”



“Laying his finger aside of his nose.”

And laying his finger aside
of his nose
And giving a nod,
up the chimney
he rose.

He sprang to his
sleigh, to
his team
gave a whistle,
And away they all flew

like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
“Merry Christmas to all,
and to all a good-night!”



The End.

