

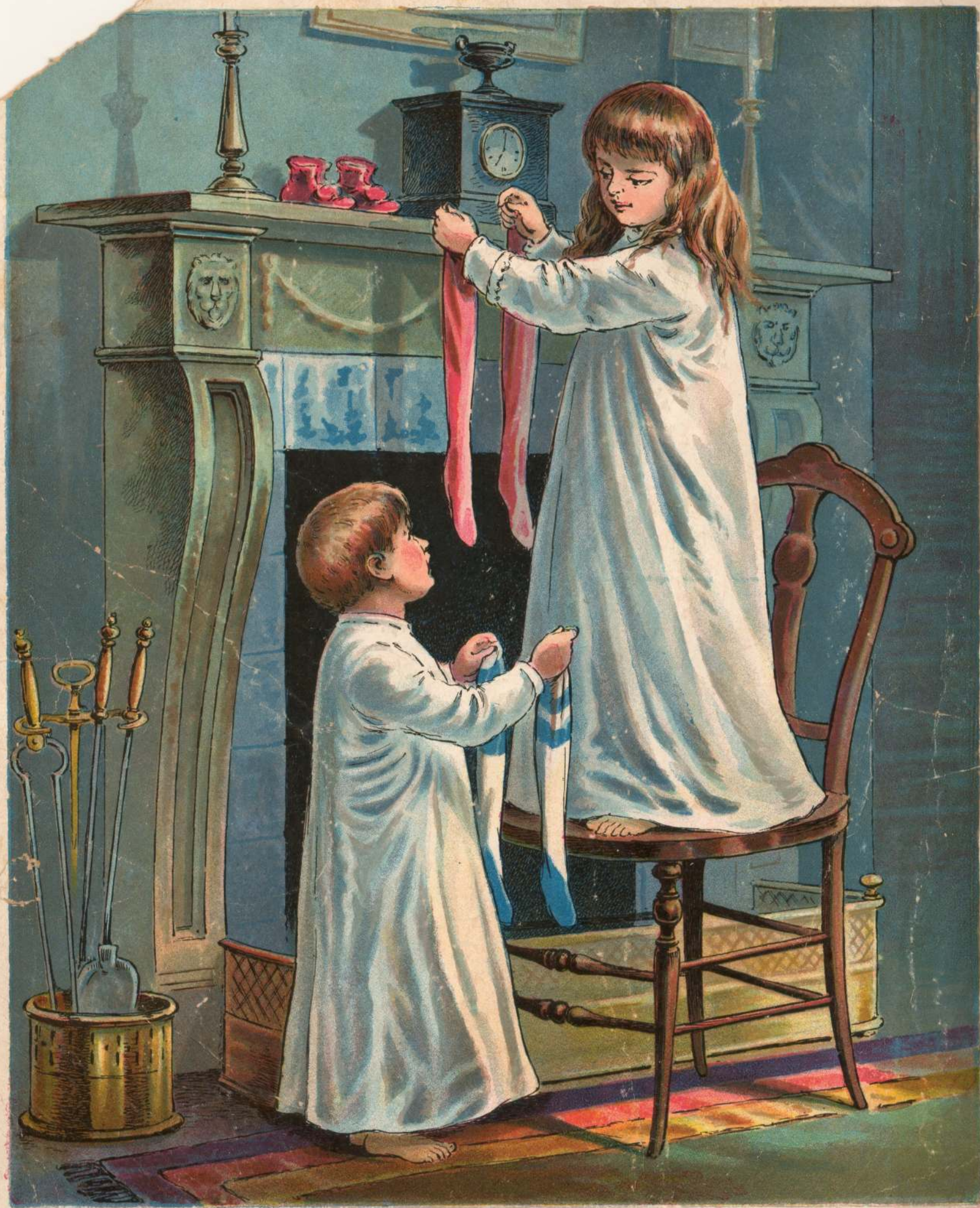
THE NIGHT before CHRISTMAS



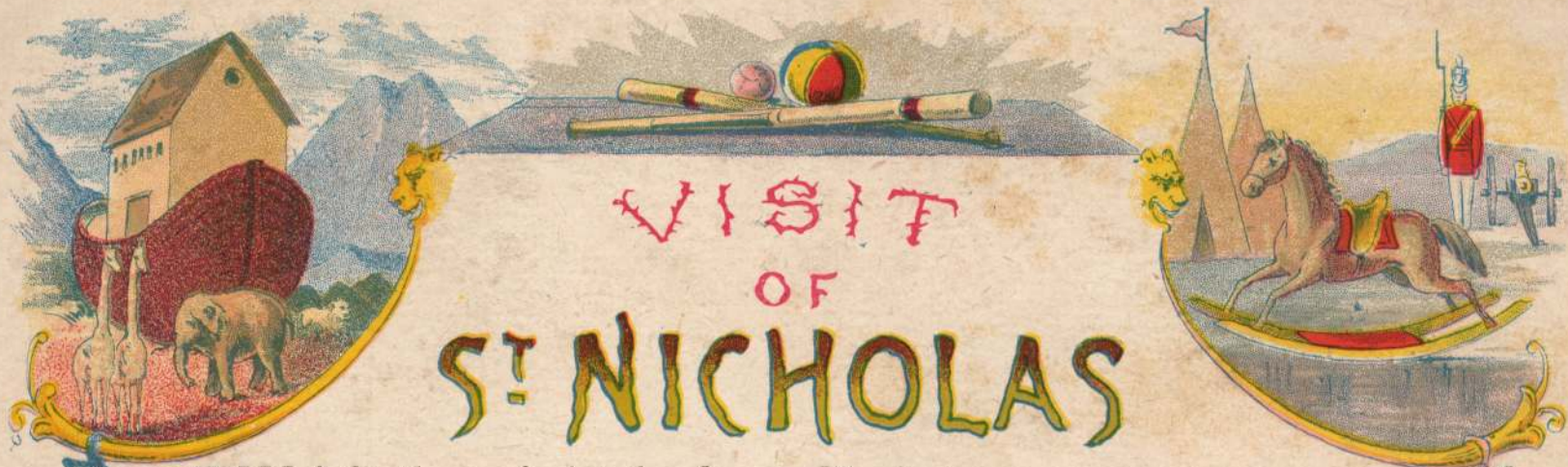
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OR A
VISIT
OF
ST. NICHOLAS



"THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS."



“TWAS 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;
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:





"ALL SNUG IN THEIR BEDS."



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 St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called some 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 St. Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof,
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof;
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.









“AND HE WHISTLED AND SHOUTED, AND CALLED SOME BY NAME—NOW, DASHER! NOW, DANCER! NOW, PRANCER AND VIXEN! ON! COMET, ON! CUPID, ON! DUNDER AND BLITZEN.”



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 peddler
Just opening his pack;
His eyes how they twinkled!
His dimples how merry---
His cheeks were like roses,
His nose like a cherry;
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 had a broad face
And a little round belly
That shook when he laughed,
Like a bowl full of jelly.



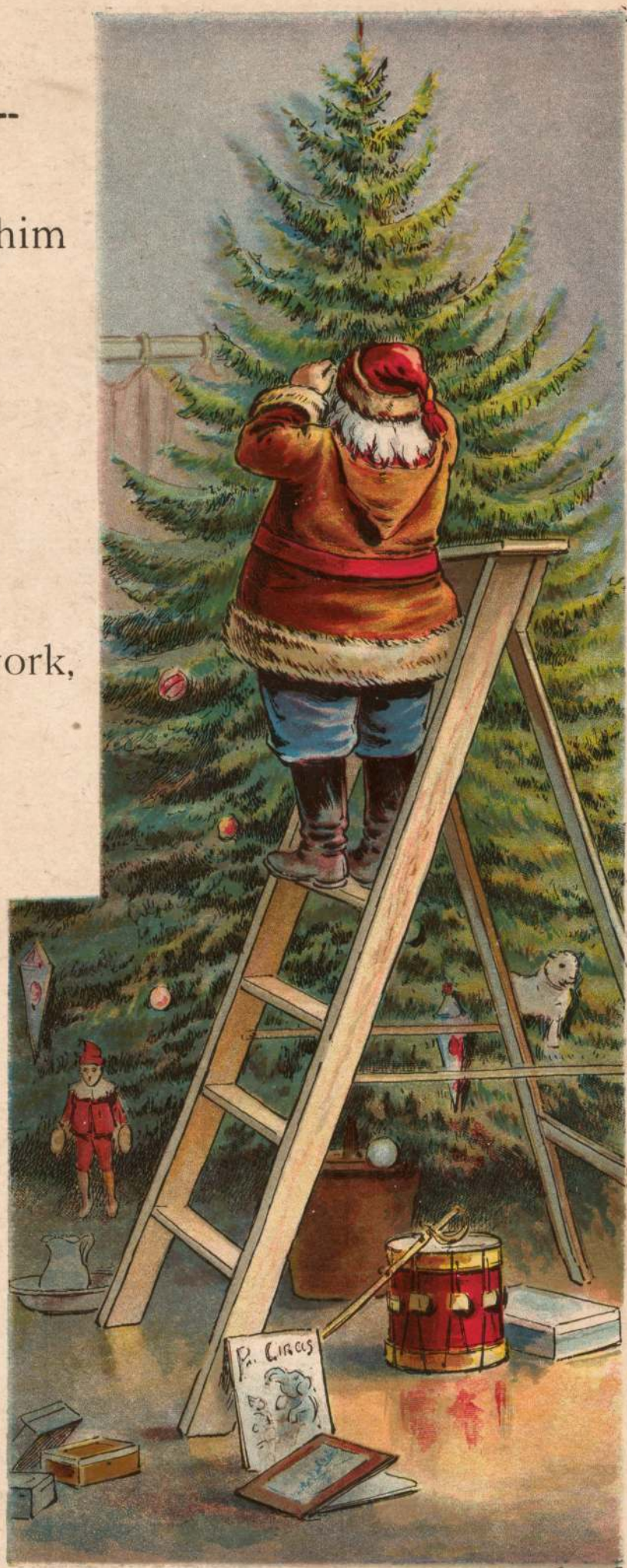




"DOWN THE CHIMNEY ST. NICHOLAS CAME."



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,
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."





"HE LOOKED LIKE A PEDDLER JUST OPENING HIS PACK."



"MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."

