



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 St. Nicholas soon would be there. The children were nestled all snug in their beds, **While visions of sugarplums danced in their heads.** And Mamma in her kerchief and I in my cap had just settled down for a long winter's nap. **When out on the lawn there arose 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 midday to objects below, 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 them by**

name: "**Now, Dasher! Now Dancer! Now Prancer & Vixen! On, Comet! On, Cupid! On Donner 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 housetop the coursers they flew **With a 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.** 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**

