



How Molly Cottontail Saw Santa Claus

BY THE NYCES.

It was the funniest thing! Though little Molly Cottontail didn't think so; indeed, she was pretty nigh scared out of a year's growth. But there, we'd better commence at the very beginning.

It was the night before Christmas and of course you know what that means; mysterious whisperings and hiding of knobby bundles—and everything. And Molly Cottontail and all her folks, and Aunty and Uncle Hopover and all the little Hopovers—

fine supper and plenty of it when the entertainment was over.

That touched Flattail's heart, for next to taking his ease he loved nothing better than a good meal; so he lost no time in getting the Hopovers and the Cottontails to the schoolhouse. It was such a cunning little place, all alight, and just buzzing with the voices of bunny folks. And there was a tree, festooned with strings of red and white pop-corn and hung with gingerbread men and candy canes.

grown-ups; then Daddy Tarfoot was called on to dance a hoe-down; next came games. Let's see—they played "Blind Man's Buff" and "Puss in the Corner," almost running down the ladies who were placing the most delicious supper on the table. But no one minded; the grown folks said they couldn't scold the children on Christmas Eve.

Flattail Beaver said he really enjoyed the supper more than anything else. And after everything had been cleared away Eben Corntassel disappeared—and Santa Claus appeared on the platform, and distributed presents, and stockings made of white tarleton, filled with candy. Flattail Beaver re-

"I didn't know it was that late—if we want to get home ahead of Santa we'd better hurry."

Then the Hopover bunnies and the Cottontail bunnies were bundled into the sleigh; Flattail called, "Are you ready?" and away he pelted.

Molly was in the back part and she soon fell asleep and dreamed she was playing blind man's buff. All at once the sleigh lurched round a fence corner, and Molly gave a leap right into a huge jimson weed, and there she hung, by her warm wooly coat, to a great prickly bur.

Poor little Molly! She wriggled and she twisted and she squeaked. But no one heard her and she couldn't lose

The Christ Child.

The snow was falling fast,
And the lights were dim and low,
When a small child wandered up and down
And had nowhere to go.

He saw a house illumined
And children merry and gay,
But when He knocked and waited
He was told to go away.

To-night was Christmas Eve,
And most every one was gay.
People were hurrying to and fro
With gifts for Christmas Day.

So He wandered on,
A small and lonely child.
Then He looked in a window and saw
A mother and children, sweet and mild.

He knocked at the door and waited
Until He heard the mother say:
"Children, some one is knocking;
Go see who it is, I pray."

The children came to the door
To let the poor child in.
He was very cold and chilly,
For his clothing was torn and thin.

This mother was reading her Bible
To her children bright and fair,
When she went to look for the boy,
Behold, He was not there.

The mother said: "My dears,
That boy so sweet and mild
Is not a little wanderer,
But the little Christ Child."

So if you are good and kind,
Live a good and noble life,
You will receive a grand reward
From our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

So when you pass from this world of ours,

If you have been good and true,
You will find in the Golden City
The gate standing open for you.
—Annie Wilson Podger.

"That sounds like some one in trouble!" exclaimed Santa Claus; and he pulled up close to the fence.

"If it isn't Molly Cottontail! and fastened to a big bur—why you poor little thing; little more'n you'd be frozen to death."

Molly was so thankful—and she wasn't one bit afraid of Santa. No, indeed; she told him exactly how it happened. And Santa said: "Never mind—I'll have you home in a jiffy; but first I must stop at Sammy Slow's house—it's right on my way."

"Oh!" exclaimed Molly, "we know Slow and we love him dearly."

"Do you?" exclaimed Santa with a twinkle. "Then you know a dear little boy"—and the words were scarce out of his mouth when they were on the roof of Sammy's house and in a moment down, down the chimney they slid—Molly in the pocket of Santa's big warm coat.

Of course Sammy Slow was in bed—but Tabitha Tabbycat was not and she was well acquainted with Molly Cottontail, and brought her a cup of nice warm milk, to take off the chill.

When they reached the home of the Cottontails, they found everything in confusion. Granny Wobblenose was sure Molly had fallen asleep in the schoolhouse and been left behind. Ma Cottontail was almost indignant at dear Granny, and she said: "Indeed Molly was not left at the school-house—I counted all my bunnies before I left the building."

Anyway Granny tucked all the bunnies into their little beds, and Pa and Ma had donned their warm wraps and rubber boots, and were just about to start in search of Molly when Santa Claus pulled up at the door. They could hardly believe their eyes when he took her out of his pocket and set her down beside them.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Ma. "Here's Santa, and Molly not in bed." And she rushed her inside and Pa ran to the woodpile for a few sticks to warm things up a bit. And when they returned to thank Santa, they found him gone—quite out of sight; but he had tucked candies and all kinds of cunning little presents inside their door. Then they heard his voice—way off in the distance: "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night."



The Man of the Hour

dressed in their best—were going to the Christmas entertainment, to be held in the tiny red schoolhouse at the extreme end of Bunny Hollow.

It was the snappiest kind of a cold night and the snow was just right for sleighing. So Uncle Hopover bundled them into his sleigh—and a good big one it was. The old-fashioned kind—with bells that tinkled beautifully. It held all the Hopover folks and all the Cottontail folks; also dear old Granny Wobblenose.

Uncle Hopover hired Flattail Beaver to pull the sleigh, but he had an awful time doing it, for Flattail was very lazy. And he would make no promise until Aunty Hopover and Ma Cottontail told him he should have a

After they had all greeted one another with "Merry Christmas," and "Same to you," and said how beautiful everything looked and what a smart man teacher was to plan it all, they sat on the tiny benches until the schoolmaster (his name was Eben Corntassel) stepped to the platform and announced that Molly Cottontail and Johnny Hopover would give a dialogue.

Johnny was very shy and scarce talked above a whisper, while Molly thought more of her new dress than she did of her dialogue. The dress was bright red and Granny Wobblenose had made it her very own self.

One after another the bunnies recited their pieces to the pride of the

ceived two stockings—one for his wife and one for himself. "I'm mighty glad I came," he said.

"Well," exclaimed Ma Cottontail, "I'll be glad to leave. Not that I didn't enjoy it; the entertainment was lovely and a great credit to the teacher; but I've lots of things to do before Santa comes to our house. Luckily the bunnies hung their stockings before we left home," she laughed.

So she hunted up Uncle Hopover and Pa Cottontail to tell them it was time to make tracks for home. They were sitting close to the fire talking to Daddy Tarfoot and Daddy Longears, about who raised the biggest crops.

"Goodness me!" Uncle Hopover said,

herself. And Ma and Pa and Aunty Hopover and the sleigh—all disappeared and left her quite alone.

She wasn't left alone many minutes though, for to her great joy another sleigh came flying swiftly along, much more swiftly than Flattail pulled them all to the schoolhouse. It was drawn by eight reindeer and driven by—whom do you think? Why, no other than Santa himself. And he lurched round the very same fence corner!

Dancer and Prancer were in the lead and in their haste they pretty nearly stumbled. So Santa had them rest for a moment. "Squeak, squeak, SQUEAK!" came from the jimson weed. Meaning: "Oh, Santa, please help me!"

A HAPPY NEW YEAR