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A Christmas Goblin

Susan Hartley Swett

There was a funny goblin
Who lived in the wood lane.
He goggles wore, and, though three-score,
Quite bald and sadly plain,
And not as nimble in his mind
As many a goblin one might find.

Much pleased with his own person
And his own wit was he;
And so he said, with lofty head:
"It would not Christmas be
Without *me* in the town to-night
To make the merry hours more bright!

"And though at home they'll miss me,
Unto the Squire's I'll speed,
To fill folk's dreams with magic gleams,
And in the dance to lead.
My presence always lends a grace
To holidays, in any place."

He rode a lop-eared rabbit;
He wore a coat of red;
His peaked hat this way and that
Bobbed when he moved his head.
The calm moon smiled — he looked so weird;
The old pine wagged its frosty beard.



He reached the Squire's at midnight,
And gaily entered in.
Before the fire a cricket choir
Sang to the violin;
But when they saw the goblin, they
All dropped their bows and swooned away!

Jack Frost, who stood there sketching
Upon the window-pane
Some pictures white for day's delight,
Became as limp as rain;
And all his drawings looked like O's,
Or like the goblin's funny nose!

While Santa Claus, who entered
Just then the chimney way,
Spilled half his pack, and cried, "Alack!"
And three small mice in gray,
Who danced a measure on the floor,
Fled, squeaking, by a private door!

The maid woke screaming from her sleep —
Such frightful dreams had she;
The watch-dogs howled, the poodle growled,
The parrot croaked "Dear me!"

The elves all up the chimney fled;
A spider, spinning, dropped her thread!

The noise awoke Grimalkin,
So wise and fierce and black,
Who, with a cry both loud and high,

Sprang at the goblin's back!
Home for his life the goblin flew;
Puss following — the watch-dog, too.

"I did my duty nobly,"
Next morn the goblin said.
"I made a great sensation,
And every rival fled!
You should have heard the wild applause!
Why, no one thought of Santa Claus!"

Then an old crow, who calmly
Was practising a caw
To aid the Christmas music,
Blinked twice, and said, "Haw-haw!"

The more conceited people grow,
The less they please — the less they know!"

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