



***WALTER
CRANE***

***A WINTER
NOSEGAY:
BEING
TALES FOR
CHILDREN
AT CHRISTMASTIDE***

Walter Crane

A Winter Nosegay: Being Tales for Children at Christmastide

EAN 8596547314318

DigiCat, 2022

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THE MAN IN THE MOON.

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ONCE upon a time, long before people were able to learn what they wanted to know from printed books, long before children had pretty pictures to tell them tales, there lived an old student with his pupil. Together they spent all the day in poring over musty old books and papers, trying to find out why the sun was hot; and in the night-time they might always be seen gazing at the sky, counting how many stars there were there. They were very curious folk, and wanted to know the reasons for all sorts of out-of-the-way things that everybody else was content to know the mere facts of, such as why birds have two wings and not three, why crocodiles have no fins, seeing that they can swim in the water, and many other matters that would not interest sensible beings. They always had at their side a young owl, and a serpent, toothless and blind with age; for they thought that youthful observation and aged craftiness were most suitable companions for them in their labours. If at any time old Fusticus, for so the old student was named, got dispirited in his work, or felt inclined to give it up as a hopeless task, he had but to turn round in his chair, and there behind him sat his owl, who seemed to say, as he cocked his head on one side, "Never despair, success only comes after long perseverance!" Or if he stuck fast at any point, and could make no progress, one glance at the old serpent made him think, "Snakes wait whole days and nights on watch for their prey; why should I give in?" And,