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## ACCOUNT OF A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS, OR SANTA CLAUS (Racconto di una visita di S. Nicola, o Babbo Natale)

di **Clement Clarke Moore**, pubblicata anonima sul *Daily Troy Sentinel* (NY) del **23 dicembre 1823** [v. in basso immagine della pubblicazione originale]

"Era la vigilia di Natale, quando in giro per casa non c'è anima viva, neppure un topo; le calze erano appese con cura al camino nella speranza che San Nicola presto sarebbe passato di lì. I bambini erano tutti accoccolati comodamente nei loro letti mentre le visioni di prugne zuccherate danzavano nelle loro teste. La mamma con la sua cuffia, io col mio berretto ci eravamo appena sistemati per un lungo sonno invernale quando dal giardino s'udì un fracasso tale che mi alzai dal letto per vedere cosa fosse successo.

Mi fiondai alla finestra come un lampo, aprii le imposte quasi strappandole e alzai la serranda. La luna riflessa sulla neve appena caduta dava una lucentezza meridiana a ogni cosa circostante, quando ai miei occhi meravigliati apparve una minuscola slitta con otto piccole renne ed un vecchio nocchiero così vivace e veloce che in un attimo capii trattarsi di San Nicola.

Più veloci delle aquile arrivarono i suoi corrieri che fischiando e urlando chiamò per nome a uno a uno: "Dai Scattante, forza Ballerino, forza Civettuolo e Volpina! Su Cometa, su Cupido! Su Tuono e Fulmine! Là, sopra il portico, sulla cima del muro! Scattate, scattate, scattate tutti!

Come foglie secche che prima di un selvaggio uragano volano e salgono verso il cielo quando incontrano un ostacolo, così i corrieri e San Nicola salirono fino in cima alla casa trascinando la slitta piena di giocattoli. Poi, in un batter d'occhio, sentii l'andirivieni e lo scalpitare dei loro piccoli zoccoli. Non feci in tempo a muovermi e a girarmi che già San Nicola era arrivato giù con un balzo.

Era tutto vestito di pelliccia, dalla testa ai piedi, e i suoi vestiti erano imbrattati di cenere e fuliggine. Un sacco pieno di giocattoli gli pendeva lungo la schiena, sembrava un venditore ambulante pronto ad aprire il suo bagaglio con le merci. E come brillavano i suoi occhi! Com'erano allegre le sue fossette! Le sue guance erano rosee e il suo naso sembrava una ciliegia! La sua piccola buffa bocca era disegnata come un arco e la barba sul suo mento era bianca come la neve. Fra i denti teneva il bocchino di una pipa mentre il fumo circondava la sua testa come una ghirlanda. Aveva un viso ampio e una piccola pancia rotonda che quando egli rideva tremava come una scodella di gelatina. Era tondo e paffuto, un elfo vecchio e giusto, e quando lo vidi sorrisi mio malgrado. Una strizzatina d'occhio e un gesto della testa mi fecero capire che non avevo nulla da temere.

Non disse parola e, concentrato nel suo lavoro, riempì tutte le calze. Poi si voltò di scatto e poggiando il dito al proprio naso fece un cenno di saluto col capo e risalì lungo il camino. Balzò in sella alla sua slitta, fece un fischio alla sua squadra e tutti volarono via come un piumino di cardo. Ma prima di allontanarsi, l'ho sentito esclamare "Buon Natale a tutti, e a tutti voi una buonanotte!"

**trad. dall'originale a cura di Famedisud.it**



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We know not to whom we are indebted for the following description of that unwearied patron of children—that hoarse and delightful personage of parental kindness—SANTA CLAUS, his costume and his equipage, as he goes about visiting the fireplaces of this happy land, laden with Christmas bounties; but from whomsoever it may have come, we give thanks for it.—There is, to our apprehension, a spirit of cordial goodness in it, a playfulness of fancy, and a benevolent alacrity to enter into the feelings and promote the simple pleasures of children, which are altogether charming. We hope our little patrons, both lads and lasses, will accept it as a proof of our unfeigned good-will towards them—as a token of our warmest wish that they may have many a merry Christmas; that they may long retain their beautiful reliq for those unbought homebred joys, which derive their flavor from filial piety and fraternal love, and which they may be assured are the least alloyed that time can furnish them; and that they may never part with that simplicity of character, which is their own fairest ornament, and for the sake of which they have been pronounced, by Authority which none can gain-say, the types of such as shall inherit the Kingdom of heaven.—*Troy Sent.*

#### ACCOUNT OF A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS, OR SANTA CLAUS.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all thro' 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 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 arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the 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 the lustre of mid-day to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny rein-deer,  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his courses they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! now, 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 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 the 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 was slung on his back,  
And he look'd like a pedlar 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 of his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held just 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 bowlful of jelly.  
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 fill'd 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,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

*Account of a visit from St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus*, from Daily Troy Sentinel (New York), December 23, 1823