
ACCOUNT OF A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

By Clement Clarke Moore (published anonymously in the *Troy Sentinel* on December 23, 1823)

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Introduction from the *Troy Sentinel*:

“We know not to whom we are indebted for the following description of that unwearied patron of children — that homely, but delightful personification of parental kindness — Sante (sic) Claus, his costume and his equipage, as he goes about visiting the fire-sides 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 proof of our unfeigned good will toward them — as a token of our warmest wish that they may have many a merry Christmas; that they may long retain their beautiful relish 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 gainsay, the types of such as shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.”

'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 danc'd in their heads;
And Mama 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 coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and call'd them by name;
“Now! Dasher, now! Dancer, now! Prancer and Vixen,
“On! Comet, on! Cupid, on! Dunder and Blixem;
“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 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 dress'd all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys was flung on his back,
And he look'd like a peddler 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 tight 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 laugh'd, like a bowlful of jelly:
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laugh'd 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 filled all the stockings; then turn'd with a jirk (sic),
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.

Note: spelling and punctuation matches the original.

Source: the Troy Public Library website

<https://www.thetroylibrary.org/>

<https://www.thetroylibrary.org/pdf/1823TroySentinel.pdf>

Instructions:

1. Print out page at 100% scale and cut out newspapers.
2. Fold each newspaper in half at arrows, carefully matching corners, and crease sharply.
3. Spread glue stick over entire back of each newspaper and glue the folded pages together.
4. Once dry, fold in half so that the poem is on the inside.
5. Fold again from top to bottom, then unfold to make a crease in the middle.

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