

Santa Claus Secrets



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THE tradition of Santa Claus has always had its mystery, and it has always had its years when circumstances sought to push the mystery aside. "There ain't no Santa Claus!" has been a dreadful announcement in many a life, so dreadful that no one with a spark of human sentiment can fail to regard it as calamitous.

Yet no realism can utterly brush the traditions aside. Certain Santa Claus images may be shattered, but the mystery remains. Gifts are real, to be weighed and measured. But there are secrets behind them and the spirit of Christmas, by whatever name or sign it is known, carries its hidden sentiment, its obscured methods of evoking the magic that illuminates the festival of youth and friendship.

The children who wonder, who peer at the sky long in advance of the fateful hours, are not more in the dark as to sources than many a grown-up. Where do the wonders come from? Who evokes these resplendent dolls? Whose wizard work is reflected in these extraordinary locomotives and windmills and soldiers and inhabitants of far away jungles? Whose patient labor and astonishing ingenuity devises these delightful surprises—actually brings them into being for some one else to pick up for transfer to just the right final ownership?

The story never gets told. You may ask the gray-haired old man in one workshop, and the golden-haired young woman in another workshop, but none of them can tell you more than a bit of the story. A Sherlock Holmes might do a lot of tracing. He might even find the crippled soldiers—soldiers almost as much broken as some of the wooden ones will be a week after Christmas, and still miss half the romance of the great fact. Who shall tell the full history of the tens of thousands of hands that weave the tapestry of Christmas magic? Only a true poet, perhaps, could guess what mother hearts and hands, what sister and friend and fellow-worker have been doing and will be doing until the very brink of the great day, to bring a note of surprised pleasure where affectionate or kindly imagination chooses to have it struck. "To have it done by Christmas!" That sentence visualizes enough to convince any sour old skeptic that fashions may come and fashions may go, but that Christmas has an eternal youth.

Behind many a simple gift will lurk a pathos that may never be guessed. Behind many an acknowledgment of happiness will lie more than ever can be expressed.

