

Christmas ain't what it used to be



MR. S. CLAUS, sometimes known as Christopher Kringle, the directing genius of the greatest distributing house in the world, was sitting at his desk, a worn look upon his bearded face.

He was running frenziedly through an avalanche of mail, always heaviest the last two weeks before Christmas. He seemed harassed and depressed. There was an air of disillusionment about him. He seemed, in fact, to have aged two or three hundred years since last December.

"Take another letter," he was saying to one of his several thousand stenographers, a little woman who had evidently bobbed her hair on a bet she could look like "Tammany" Young if she wanted to.

"Mr. Wallace Ikk . . . put two t's in the Ikk . . . general manager manufacturing department comma My Dear Ikk semicolon please cut out at once production of any and all gifts worth less than \$50 and greatly reduce our estimated production of goods costing less than \$200 period. Returns from our field forces show that American little boys and girls will not even consider cheaper presents period. Practically every request is for most expensive products period. Very truly and so forth."

"Yeth, thir," lisped the stenographer.

Go on. Ask for a Sedan

"**T**AKE another," went on Santa. "Master Willie Jones, 65 Maple Street, Syracuse, N. Y. Dear Master Jones colon. Your letter of the 6th inst. received and in reply beg to state that it is the only refreshing note in an exasperating morning's mail period."

"New paragraph. It gratifies me beyond words to hear that there is one little boy left in the United States who will be satisfied on Christmas morning with a jackknife comma a game of parchesi comma and a Noah's ark period. I had come to think such gifts would be regarded as an insult period. Rest assured you shall have your requests honored period. Your dear friend and so forth."

"Uhuh," mumbled the stenographer, shifting her gum.

"Another," continued Mr. Claus. "Mrs. Minnie Whoops, 465 Sylvan Lane, Rochester, N. Y. Dear madam colon. I have your letter saying that you are a widow lady and the mother of six little children and that you would like a seven-passenger sedan with two spares period. To give the kiddies the comforts to which other children are accustomed period."

"New paragraph. The demand for automobiles for Christmas has become so general that I have been compelled to build 65 new shops and turn over to this work all the forces formerly employed in the parlor magic comma rag doll comma water color sets comma air rifle comma and doll house departments period."

"New paragraph. In addition it might interest you to know that we have practically closed down the departments manufacturing iron fire engines and that our 356-acre plant, which was kept busy for so many years manufacturing skates, musical tops, harmonicas and blackboards, is now entirely devoted to the production of roadsters and runabouts period. As there are millions of other poor families suffering from the lack of sedans too comma it will be impossible to gratify the wishes of all but I will do what I can period. Very sincerely and et cetera."

"A gentleman to see you," announced a secretary.

"That will be all for now, Miss Abercrombie," said Mr. Claus, wearily dismissing his stenographer.

"Where are you from?" he asked as the gentleman entered.

"Collier's Weekly," replied the visitor.

"I remember the name, but your front-page covers are snappier," replied Santa, mopping his brow. "What can I do for you? Please don't tell me you have a little daughter Gladys, aged eleven years, who wants a mink coat."

"Not at all," assured the Collier's man. "Her tastes run to sable, but that's another matter. I've come up to interview you on your business. It

has been suggested that it has changed tremendously during the past decade."

"You said a mouthful," declared Mr. Claus. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Probably not."

"Very good. Then listen: If I had my life to live all over again, this gift business is the last thing in the world I'd go in for!"

The reporter was quite moved, and Santa sensed it.

"I mean it," he declared, rising and

tory front yards were not full of closed cars belonging to the laborers.

"A little gift like a set of wooden soldiers, a pair of mittens or a copy of Mother Goose Rhymes went a long ways in those days. If I give the average American boy a set of wooden soldiers to-day, he is off me for life. It's very discouraging."

"Why don't you give up?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said Mr. Claus. "I'm getting along in years and it's the only game I know. It's pretty hard at the age of one thousand nine hundred and twenty-six years to ask a feller to take up insurance selling, cartooning at home or Belgian hare raising."

"You really are disheartened?"

"Awfully," said Mr. Claus.

You Have to be Good to Get It

HE SAID it sadly. He went on: "It's almost impossible to please people with the means at my command. You take churches, for example. It used to be the custom for the Sunday school teachers to distribute gifts. You just try to hold a boy in church to-day with the prospect of a bone-handled knife or a girl with hair ribbons. The old-fashioned custom has practically disappeared from church life. Any present the kids would consider acceptable to-day would represent a sum sufficient to pay the pastor's salary for a year."

"Are the wants of the really poor people exorbitant?" asked the Collier's man.

"The really poor people have practically disappeared in America," declared Mr. Claus. "I really know comparatively few destitute families that haven't a touring car. Years ago I could have delighted 'em by dropping around with a basket of groceries. To-day nothing will tickle 'em short of a couple of balloon tires or a new top. Believe it or not, this is a typical letter to Santa:

"Dear Santa Claus:

"Daddy wants me to write you and tell you what we want for Christmas. I am 12 years old and have a sister who is 10. We haven't much money and so sister would like you to bring her a



"No gift business for me—if I had my life to live over again"

pacing the floor. "I would be a great doctor or a lawyer or a journalist or a Henry Ford efficiency man, or something, but never a combination of a male Pollyanna and Sears-Roebuck. It used to be all right when the great rank and file of people had to make the piece of corned beef go three days, when Little Dora's muff of dyed cat had to last seven seasons, when a good sled was considered a luxury by the average small boy, and when the mill and fac-

By H. I. PHILLIPS

Almost sorry he didn't take up some other line, confesses Mr. Claus in remarkable interview with Collier's representative.



"I'm shot at dozens of times every trip—the police are so fidgety"

pair of diamond ear rings, a dozen pairs of silk stockings and some silk nightgowns. I would be satisfied with an eight-tube cabinet radio set, a canoe with outboard motor, a motorcycle and a raccoon coat for the winter sporting events. Daddy told me I would have to be good to get these things.

"With love,

"HAROLD HASKINS.

"P. S. Bring Mother a player piano and Daddy a cruisette.

"Can you beat it?" asked Mr. Claus. "But I'll say one thing: Daddy was right when he told Harold he would have to be good to get them."

Here Mr. Claus chuckled and amused himself by yanking out hairs from his long beard and cutting them with a razor blade.

He resumed: "I used to be able to cover my entire territory without encountering any obstacles."

"Do you meet with annoyances today?" asked the Collier's man.

"Don't be a sill," rebuked Mr. Claus. "By the time I get back home on the morning of the 25th I'm a wreck. In the first place, there is the parking problem. If I came into an American community to-day with a team of deers, I would cause a sensation. So I come by automobile. Well, I waste half the night trying to find a space big enough to back into and part of the other half trying to convince hard-boiled policemen that I've got nothing to do with the crime wave. I'm shot at dozens of times on every trip."

"Shot at!" exclaimed the interviewer. "You?"

"Absolutely. The police of your country are very fidgety. When they see a man furtively moving about the rooftops and coming out of alleys dragging a bag they assume anything but that he is a public benefactor and companionable old philanthropist. Naturally I can't stop to reason things out or I'd never get through, and the people would be getting their Christmas gifts on Lincoln's birthday. So I just hop into the car and step on the gas. It's got so that I ask myself, 'What is Christmas Eve without a few dozen bullets?'"

"It's incredible!" sighed the reporter.

"I'm accused of everything," continued Mr. Claus. "I expect this Christmas to see by the papers that I am suspected of being a member of the Notorious Bum Rodgers Gang. Look at this clipping from last year."

NEARLY CAPTURE MYSTERIOUS MARAUDER
Police Discover Robber Entering Skylights. Open Fire and Believe They Have Wounded Him.

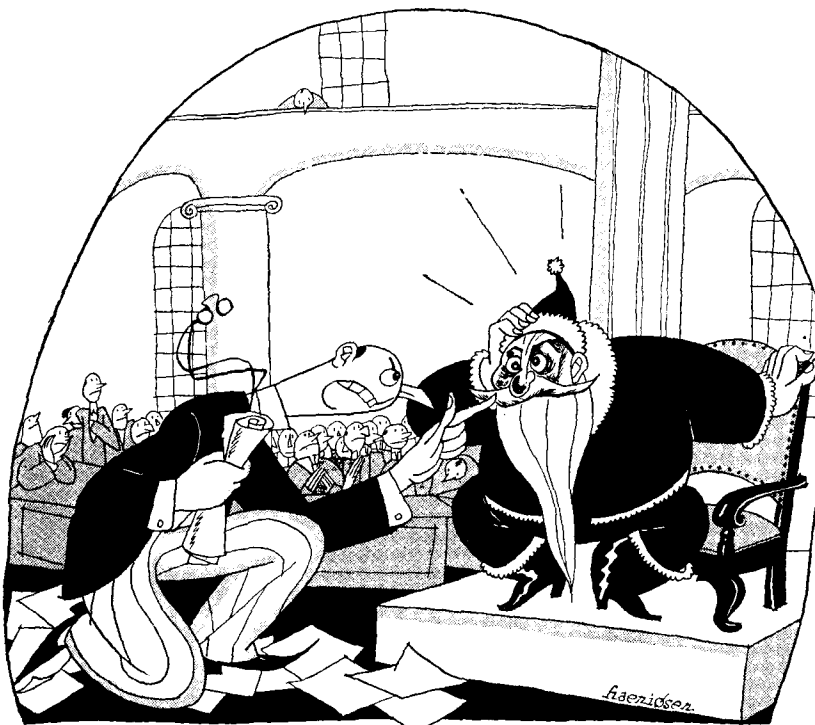
While Patrolmen Maurice Dennehy and Thomas B. McGinty were patrolling their beats in the vicinity of Hollyhock Terrace and Old Slip Road at an early hour yesterday morning they were informed by occupants of the apartment house at 786 Spruce Street that some intruder on the roof had stumbled over all the radio aërials, tearing them

down and shutting off a special Christmas Eve musical program.

Losing no time and taking their lives in their hands, the brave officers hurried to the roof in time to see the prowler disappearing down the fire escape of the house next door. They fired several shots and believe they hit him.

The men hurried to the street, but the man had made his get-away. He is described as about six feet tall, stout, weighing well over 200 pounds, ruddy-complexioned and wearing a long white beard which was probably a disguise. He had on a suit of bright red which the police believe was stolen from the dressing-room of some cabaret. The city is being scoured.

"Did it ever occur to you that you might do better to come more openly, announcing the time of your arrival and doing away with all secrecy?"



"If I made my visits openly, I'd be hauled up before Congress or some other investigating body in no time"

"Nothing in that," said Mr. Claus. "If I did that, it would mean an even further delay. I'd have to go through one of those terrible welcoming ceremonies. I'd be met by the mayor's committee, escorted into town, made to listen to a lot of speeches and given the keys to the city and all that bunk. Besides, I'd get my eyes all full of confetti. Secrecy and covered movements are essential."

"Americans don't take anything on faith any more. They don't trust anybody. If I made my visits openly, I'd be hauled up before Congress or some other investigating body in no time."

"On what grounds?"

Has Mr. Claus Turned Cute on Us?

"OH, THERE'D be a demand to know how I could afford to make so many gifts, where all the money came from, and so on. There would be charges of a slush fund, and probably before they got through with me they would have big headlines in the papers saying that I had become involved with a Grand Kleagle or Klonecilium. In your country they investigate everybody who does anything without fully advertising all the details. I'm a mysterious character. I have to be. It's more than likely that if I came openly this year I'd be pinched as a suspect in that New Brunswick murder case or seized as knowing something about Aimee McPherson."

Santa paused a moment to confer with a secretary on a new batch of letters.

"Then, too, I'd be bothered by all sorts of requests. They'd want me to talk over the radio to my great unseen audience, indorse a lot of patent medicines, go into vaudeville for a few weeks and probably say a few hundred words for some shaving soap," he resumed heavily.

"Every man knows his own game best," agreed the Collier's man. "Well, I'm glad I met you, Mr. Claus."

"I'm glad I met you too."

"Merry Christmas," exclaimed the Collier's man as he left.

"So is your old man!" said Mr. Claus, dipping into his pile of correspondence again and pressing 87 buzzers summoning the night shift of stenographers.

A Woman

By EDWARD W. BOK

Here's an article strong enough to make the "modern" woman take notice. Its famous author was for many years the editor of the Ladies' Home Journal



Pardoe

The greatest and truest of all womanly self-expression—motherhood

THE intelligent American woman, in growing numbers, confesses, in her moments of confidence, that she has allowed her sense of relations, once so clear, to become a maze of jumbled confusion and her life a tangled web from which a clear outlook now is becoming increasingly difficult.

She is beginning to realize that her clamor for "freedom" from this, "her rights" to that—an acquirement of what she believed to be "equality of power"—is not what it was painted for her, and that the excitement of the chase befuddled the emptiness of the reality. And this is putting it far more lightly than many a woman puts it herself.

"In point of fact," said a once ardent reformer of her sex recently (and I was amazed at the admission, considering her previous views and activities), "a goodly number of women are beginning to realize that it is so much easier to start something than it is to stop it, once momentum is gained."

Then she continued, "We are wondering whether we are not upsetting some fundamental underpinnings of the social fabric, and I have to confess that some of our ideas which we thought were constructive are proving actually destructive—in fact, menacing. In short, we cannot see that we have gained any-

thing worth while, and we have lost much."

"Worse than all else, we see no logical stopping place ahead," said another woman sitting by. "We have let go of our anchorage and are drifting with no healthy solution in view. I confess to a large share in starting something that has outstripped any similar effort too far to stop. The road which we honestly believed we were helping to widen is actually narrowing and closing us in—and on a lower plane."

"Is this state of doubt widely prevalent or limited to a few?" was asked.

"It is already a settled state of mind among thinking women, and the circle is widening all the time. I am referring now to the woman who has the mind with which to think," was the answer.

"And the remedy?" this woman was asked.

"None—in view," was the definite reply.

In-Law and in-Love

THE thought comes whether this type of woman is not of a mind to look back and ponder a bit over the greatest story of a woman that has come down the lanes of time. And, like all the greatest things of the world, it is the simplest of stories. Yet so forceful is it in the mightiest of all solutions of

the most intricate problems—simplicity—that the story has swept down the ages as the most complete fulfillment in all history of the potentiality of true womanhood.

I mean the story of Ruth.

Here is at once the simplest and yet the most forceful picture of human relations: in particular that of the relation of a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law. Ruth made no tangled web of that relation. She harbored no breeding thoughts of discontent: no suspicion, no mistrust. She did a very simple thing: she gave her heart and the love that was in it. For ten years she wove a beautiful and enduring bond of friendship and love with her mother of marriage.

She made her mother-in-law her mother-in-love.

Then when the mother, bereaved of husband and sons, came to return to her land and people whom she had left as Naomi and who she asked should receive her back as Mara, because she had left them full and returned empty, there came from her daughter-in-law a declaration of fidelity which has sanctified all womanly relations and glorified the literature of womanhood.

Even in those primitive days Ruth could so easily have been a pioneer in woman's "independence" and found some unfitted task in the outer world. But the "self-expression" which has led so many women that have come after her into her worlds they know not—to places which they adorn not, and to tasks unfitted and thus unfulfilled—was not in Ruth's mind.

She looked closer. She hewed to the line.

She found her "self-expression" in the place close at hand: in the simple business of being a daughter—a place and a duty which seem so foreign to the minds of thousands of daughters and is becoming a tragically lost art in so many homes.

Nor was there any holding back with Ruth: no giving of herself in part. Gloriously full and spiritually complete came the giving. Down the thousands of years have come those golden words—among the most beautiful in all the Bible; clear as God's sunshine; all-embracing as God's love. The most wonderful words ever uttered by a woman, revealing the simplicity of a woman's affection, higher than which, short of God's love, nothing can rise!

Marvelously simple and present was that quality in Ruth which is so equally marvelously absent in the woman of today: concentration.

No mental turmoil tormented Ruth; no confusion of argument; no weighing of advantage and disadvantage; not a vestige of that changefulness of mind which is so wrongfully conceded as the right of woman.

The peace of inner quiet was hers. She saw only one road—that of duty—and she saw it through the eyes of love. Simple and direct, Ruth voiced the true womanly instinct that senses steadily

and speaks clearly: that concentrates and then stands steadfast.

In other words, the daughter stood by.

Weigh these words of starlike clearness and fullness of love, these words of a daughter to her mother:

"Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

"Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."

Then come those brief but tremendously significant four words: "So they two went": not divided by feminine jealousy or self-love, which has wrecked so many sacred relations. But "they two went" wedded not alone by marriage, but also by love.

We hear much, in these days, of the "self-expression of woman": of the development of "the individuality of woman"—phrases so misunderstood that they have led, in countless instances, to ashes of roses and vacant hearthstones.

As against such unintelligent chatter, how stimulating and refreshing is Ruth's glorious analysis of women's real self-expression and individuality!

The Ideal Daughter-Wife-Mother

RUTH sought not those worlds beyond her ken and sex. She remained within that citadel which woman has ever adorned and where she has reigned supreme. She sought her self-expression in that marvel of nature before which the greatest of men have ever stood in awe and to which the genius of mankind has ever paid deferential obeisance.

She fulfilled.

She began a child.

And by that greatest and truest of all womanly self-expression she became the ancestress of a king of the people and the King of all mankind, from whom untold millions of women for ages to come were to receive peace in travail, courage in sorrow and endurance in stress.

If ever the highest self-expression, the truest individualism in woman was reached and revealed, it was in that achievement of Ruth: a picture for all time of the unswerving adherence to sex and the mighty potentiality of motherhood.

Ruth didn't do much IN the world, as goes the saying now, but what a contribution she made TO the world!

"Now," they said when Lincoln's soul left the tired body, "he belongs to the ages."

But, thousands of years before, Ruth, by a declaration of fidelity that reached the highest pinnacle of a true self-expression of womanhood, won a place that was to be hers all down the ages—her motherhood the heritage of the world: a picture reverently cherished in the heart of every man of his mother:

Daughter, wife, mother:

A woman.