

# ALIAS SANTA CLAUS

By  
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## Alias Santa Claus

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**H**IS second long term for burglary put the crimp in Jerry Gottlieb. His first term had been ten years, but his second had been twenty. When he left prison for the second time he was an old man, peniless and friendless. He was a large man and with big blue eyes. Had he been well fed and well groomed he might have been termed a handsome old man, for his physique was fine, and there was grave dignity suggested in his carriage. Gottlieb boarded a train and went to New York.

It was a fine June day and the old convict enjoyed every moment of it. The crush of the elevated trains overhead and the clang of trolley gongs were music to his ears.

He wondered as he trudged onward whether Cock Eye Garry McGarry would be still alive. Cock Eye kept a table d'hote in Chatham square, and if a man just out of jail went to his place without a cent in his pockets he might peel potatoes or scrub the floor for a good meal and perhaps the privilege of sleeping in the coal bin under the sidewalk. In due time he found that Cock Eye had been rather to his fathers, but that the place was still running. The new proprietor needed a man to help with the scullion work for a day and Jerry Gottlieb worked at the appointed task, filled his stomach and started forth at sunset to carry the banner, which phrase, in the jargon of the underworld, means to walk the streets during the night.

Jerry made his way farther south to Park row and then east to Oak street. Near the green lamps of Oak street police station was an old house with the windows lighted. Over the door was a large sign with this legend:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money. Come ye, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Jerry was pondering the marvel of wine and milk without price, when a little clean shaven man, shabbily clad and of his own age, started up the steps, turned, came back to him and then took him by the arm, saying: "Come along, brother. You belong here as much as I do." The stranger carried a battered Bible under his left arm, tucked close to his body.

Gottlieb entered the long meeting room with its sick benches and grimy wall paper, its Biblical texts offering the Lord's help tucked here and there, and its little stand at one end for the preacher. There were hardly a baker's dozen of men on the benches.

The old convict slipped into a seat, tired of body, but feeling at home among the tattered malions of society

the threshold of this genuine if dingy place of worship in Oak street. His beard grew until it reached his waist in a cascade of silver. He lost the prison pallor, and a flush of health came to his cheeks. Until his friend, the preacher, gave him the job as janitor of the mission he slept on the wharves, crawling between bales of freight of all sorts, like the Son of Man, uncertain anywhere that he might call his own for the casual slumber of the harried fox.

Remorseless mutation brought death to Gottlieb's preacher friend. He asked Jerry to take up his work.

"You see, sir," the old convict explained, "I'm a two timer, and the bulls always keep after me. I'd get the whole mission pinched if I did anything else but clean up the place. That's my job, sir, I'm the janitor."

It was in the late fall when this happened. Gottlieb felt the hands of his friend grow cold. He left the body as a nurse came and made a record for her report of the transition of the evangelist. He went to a window and looked out into the fleecy, tumbling sky. He told himself that he would meet his friend again some time, somewhere, somehow. He had come to believe in the promises of God.

"Well, Santa Claus!" a voice sounded in his ears. "Why not come downstairs with me and have a cup of tea?" The nurse had come to offer, as best she could, her sympathy.

A little, paunchy domine, with round cheeks and a diploma from a seminary institution, endeavored to take up the work.

One day the mission doors were locked, and Jerry Gottlieb stood on the

happy season, swept by the old man who held with strong stolidity to the idea that God was his friend and that his right hand would uphold him.

A finely dressed lady bought a pair of shoestrings and gave him 50 cents, bidding him keep the change. Here was a bonanza. On Christmas day he could lie in his lodging house bed and keep warm all day, and he figured out he could have two meals surely—real meals, 10 cent meals—bean soup, bread, coffee and hash!

A limousine came plowing through the snow and stopped on Gottlieb's side of the corner. A fine looking man of middle age in a fur lined broadcloth coat opened the door and beckoned to Gottlieb.

"Would you like to make \$10 a day during the holidays?" he asked.

"Ten dollars a day?" gasped Santa Claus.

"Yes, and easily," explained the rich man. "My little boy doesn't believe in Santa Claus any more, and I know that a mask doesn't fool him now. I want him to believe in Santa Claus just as long as possible, and if I rig you up tonight we'll put one over on that lad, by Jupiter we will! What do you say?"

"It's a godsend to me, sir," replied Gottlieb.

"Jump in." The big limousine forged ahead, hurling great gouts of snow to right and left. On the Jersey side of the river Santa Claus and the father of the little boy who didn't believe any longer took a parlor car, and the train

worn steps stroking his patriarchal beard thoughtfully. It was a sinister day for him, for his job was gone, and his only friend was gone. The Rev. T. Beverly Wainwright, the successor of the old evangelist, had received a call to a very snug parsonage in the upper west side.

There had been no salary attached to the job of Jerry Gottlieb, janitor of this closed house of God. But there had been a place to sleep and always a bite to eat, for the Oak street mission had managed a handout of soup or broth and bread along with its handout of salvation. Now the bread and the broth and the corner to sleep in were gone. A faith in God was his only remaining asset. There was one place for him to visit, Cock Eye's old place.

Gottlieb tried for any kind of work day after day, night after night and got nothing. His flowing Santa Claus beard was against him. The snow began to fly again, and when he was driven from doorways by the cops he would collect old newspapers, cover himself with them and sleep on a bench in one of the parks. The newspapers held in what warmth there was in his body, and the snow covered him and sealed his poor man's blanket.

Again and again he was compelled to resort to Cock Eye's place for a hand-out and a few moments of warmth. There he received many tempting offers. One was from a famous pick-pocket who wanted to use him as a stall—that is, as the man who gets in the way of a thief and gives the thief a chance to escape. He dignified appearance and a broad, beaming expression which had come with the faith his

dead friend of the mission had transmitted to him would serve the thief well. He was very hungry and very

cold, but one lesson had been driven into him along with the lesson of faith. It rang with hope, and his dead friend had ever had it on his lips. From the book of Isaiah it came:

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Another temptation came to him, this time from the sly, sandy mustached person who had been ever at his heels since his release from Sing Sing, the headquarters detective whose business it was to watch those who had sinned, had paid for their sin and who might be expected to sin again. The detective wanted him for a stool pigeon.

Gottlieb, alias Santa Claus, as he was now known to the police, refused, was arrested as a vagrant and sent to Blackwell's island for thirty days. "When you change your mind," his shadow informed him, "send me word."

There was no change of mind and Gottlieb served his thirty days, a month of somewhere to sleep and something to eat. He came out on the eve of Christmas and once again started his hunt for a corner to lie in and a chance to pay for it. He managed to earn a dime that morning by helping an overloaded home going shopper get aboard an elevated train with his bundles. He invested half of his capital in shoestrings—ten pairs. The retail price is 5 cents a pair.

(Continued next week.)

## GIFTS FOR HER

**T**HE ideal Christmas gift is a useful luxury—a luxurious necessity, as it were—something that one wants and needs, but hesitates to buy for oneself.

A unique gift is a samovar for lady's tea table. The cut shows a beautiful one in copper, but even rarer ones may be found in the brass and copper antique shops that thrive in



some places. Delectable goblets in metal on a matching tray come to serve tea in, along with samovars.

We have come to recognize the bayberry candle as typical of the Christmas season. It is made from the fruit of the bayberry bush and is a very lovely transparent green. This candle does not smoke when lighted and exudes a pungent odor, which is not unlike the breath of the pine trees.

Nothing could be more suggestive than a gift of Christmas candles, which could be accompanied with a pair of either silver or glass candlesticks in which burn the Christmas candle.

A box of silk stockings makes a fastidious gift. From the picture we get a hint of them in bright shades for



sports, others in striped effects and still more that aim to match the smart silk sweater which would also be ap-

preciated by any man's "best girl."

Here's a regular long list to pick from: Large silver hairpin, Dresden penholders, opera glass holders, silver glove buttoner, a wastepaper basket, bag for opera glasses, a silken chair drape or rug for chair, a leather shopping bag, silver shirt waist studs, glass or china puff box, two silver coffee spoons, sterling silver penholder, sweet grass workbasket, one silver strawberry fork (or more of them), a Dresden china table bell, Japanese bedroom slippers, belt of gold or



silver braid, elderdown dressing jackets, sterling silver heart brooch, sterling silver or gold trinkets.

Purses have a wide range. The one illustrated is rather elaborate and may be mounted on material like lady's afternoon frock. The embroidery in gold thread and jeweled clasp are in keeping with the choice fittings inside.

For the motor girl are a dinner basket, fur robes, rubber robes, foot warmer, leather coat, map measurer, set of road maps, "overnight" bag, compact mending outfit in case, small cushion, goggles, fur gloves, motor cap, automobile horn, knitted muffler, linen dust coat, tool kit, folding toilet case, automobile clock, automobile mirror, automobile flower holder and tour book.

## GIFTS FOR HIM

**F**OR men—and they are generally the stumbling block at Christmas time—there are a few new conceits. The "pipe holder" is a brand new idea.

Or try a copper chafing dish, book rack, half a dozen white dress ties, razor roll, box of favorite shaving soap and powder, bookcase, writing table fitted with assorted stationery, gloves, suit case, collar bag, Malacca cane, sapphire or opal scarfpin, bedroom slippers and seal ring.

If he travels a case fitted with toilet necessities, like the one illustrated, would be appreciated.

Handkerchiefs of pure linen with an embroidered initial are \$1.50 for a box



of half a dozen in some of the good shops.

Beautiful neckties are to be had for \$1.50 and quite magnificent affairs for \$3 and \$5.

Heavy gloves are \$1.50 and \$2 a pair. Dogskin and pigskin with one button are what the man of the moment likes.

Pictured are interesting fobs; others desirable may have college or more personal emblems attached.

More manly and serviceable are leather wallets or bill folders of pigskin, hand sewed, from 50 cents up; cardcases of pigskin for \$1, cigarette cases \$2, crystal and leather fasks from \$1.50; morocco tie, handkerchief or collar boxes, jewel boxes of pigskin, reindeer lined, \$1.75; razor rolls \$2.

There is one sort of handkerchief case that is useful in travelling. It has a case on each side like a pocketbook, and the back is lined with heavy pasteboard, padded. It shuts up and fastens with a clasp. A soiled collar bag, made of linen, is a good thing. It should not be constructed with a draw-



string at the top, but should have the back fastened straight on a brass rod or reed.

Or give him a gayly painted photograph frame to hold pictures.

More personal in their uses are a cane with handle of horn or ivory (in golf design if he is strictly up to date), a pipe of brier or meerschaum with mouthpiece of amber, a blanket bathrobe amply large for comfort, an umbrella with handle of hobsnails, carved ivory, sterling silver or natural wood. Or, if he is fond of dancing, a stunning pair of patent leather pumps like those illustrated might walk directly into his heart.



A humble shaving mug, to be used each morning, is often an affectionate reminder.

Or a small silver tipped cardcase which can be slipped into his inner waistcoat pocket.

Of if he is a university boy give him a huge red or blue silk muffler for his throat.

A set of books you have heard him express a wish for, and see, first of all, that the edition is a readable one.

Small boys like a watch, as suggest-



ed by the illustration, as well as pocket knives, tool chests, a bowl of gold fish, silk mufflers are from \$1 to \$12. For about \$2.75 are imported mufflers in dark colors.



He Talked Directly to the Old Gray Outcast in the Rear of the Room.

that had gathered to hear the shabby advocate of God among the miserables say what he had to say in his Master's behalf.

Out in the hall a little man with a cropped sandy mustache who had followed Jerry rolled a cigarette and sat at the foot of the stairs, a sinister thing in the yellow light of a flickering gas jet.

The mission worker began his preaching, and he talked directly to the old gray outcast in the rear of the room.

A great peace descended upon the soul of Gottlieb.

The old mission preacher talked the language of Gottlieb's own tribe. He, too, had done the wrong things in life and had come to know the sad and yet helpful lessons of regret. Something in the preacher's argument for righteousness shone forth above all possible forms of creed and dogma.

For five years Gottlieb hung about