

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC!

In order to enable us to take care of the present crush of Christmas business and give prompt and efficient service, we will keep open evenings till Christmas.

The Going & Harvey Company

Toys and Complete House Furnishers



BY ROBERTUS LOVE

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NEW conditions have developed a new sort of Santa Claus in the United States. His initials are R. F. D. He is the rural free delivery mail carrier. Mail hauler is the fitter way to describe him, for as a rule he hauls the mail in a light spring wagon. At Christmas time many rural carriers require an extra spring wagon or buggy and an extra driver to handle the rush of Santa Claus mail both going and coming.

The rural free delivery system, which started but a few years ago, has grown to great proportions. It is said that there are now in the United States half as many rural mail carriers as there were men in the regular army at the beginning of our war against Spain. But not all of these carriers are men. There are many women driving rural routes. Whether man or woman, the rural mail agent must serve as Santa Claus to scores of families at Christmas. Maybe he (or she) likes it, and maybe he doesn't. All that depends. Frequently the farmers and their wives and daughters become Santa Clauses to the carrier, and that

up. There is the pair of thick warm socks which mother has knit for the boy away at college or trying to become famous in the city. There are presents also for the schoolteaching daughter, for Brother John and Aunt Mary and for the little ones who must be remembered. The mail wagon is heaped with outgoing packages.

But this is not all. Santa Claus, R. F. D., would be glad if it were. Nowadays the rural free deliverer is empowered to write money orders and to register letters. That means lots of work for the farmers' Santa Claus. Many persons send money through the mails as Christmas presents. Many also buy presents through the mail order houses in the big cities. The carrier must stop and write the money orders. Sometimes he may find in a rural delivery box tacked to the side of a tree a note to the effect that the folks up at the house want him to register a letter. The house may be a mile off the regular route. Up to the house this hard worked Santa Claus drives, or if the road is very bad he may have to walk. The same side trip must be taken when he has

Hello, Santa Claus!



"Hello! Hello! Is this Santa Claus? Well, this is Marjorie Brown. Oo, I just knew you'd remember me. Awfully nice of you to bring all those things last Christmas. What do I want this year? Ever and ever so many things. Four dolls with real wake up eyes, an' a set o' dishes, an' a sled, an' one—no, I want two, three story books, an' games, an', oo, ever so much candy, an' an'—"

There, you old eavesdropper! Been listening, have you? Well, perhaps you have a right to, for it just happens that in this case you are Santa Claus. Get all the order? This little girl trusts you to bring these things. Then there are the boys and the folks and your friends. Better go right out now and stock up while it is fresh on your mind and while the goods in the stores are fresh. Remember little Marjorie or Esther or Mary or Helen, as the case may be.

Also remember to shop early, relieve the tired shop-girl and get the best.

Two big cylinder presses are kept busy turning out from 3,500,000 to 4,000,000 postal cards a day in the Government Printing Office at Washington to meet the demand of the American people.

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MEN of Ideas, who have some inventive ability, please write SHELLEY & MELVILLE, Patent Attorneys, Washington, D. C.



helps the R. F. D. Santa Claus to get over his vexation when he finds that he has sixteen hours of delivery to do in eight hours' work.

A few days before Christmas the incoming bundles begin to pile up in the carrier's wagon bed. They are presents from the farmer's son who has gone to the city and grown rich or from the daughter who married the Hon. Mr. Blank and lives in the Clover Cliff mansion. Or perhaps Mary Susanna, who is teaching school in the next state and can't afford to come home for the holidays, has spent some of her little hoard of money for Christmas gifts for the home folks. Wherever they come from, all those packages and bundles must be delivered. The R. F. D. man or woman must be the general Santa Claus of the route traveled.

On the trip back to town bundles for the outgoing mails are gathered

a registered letter to deliver to a farmer whose home is off the route. Registered letters must be delivered and "signed for," as the mail box nailed to the black oak tree at the roadside can't sign.

On Christmas day or perhaps the day before the carrier who has been a real good Santa Claus and hasn't grumbled because his work has taken him far into the night for some days back gets his reward. The farmers' boys or girls meet him at the gate as he drives along, presenting him with the choicest pumpkins raised during the season, with a big chicken or turkey or perhaps with a warm muffler made by the motherly housewife who has watched the R. F. D. man driving past day by day in the chilly air. Thus Santa Claus, R. F. D., who may have children of his own at home, gets presents to carry down his own chimney.

The Times' Want Ads bring results



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