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HOLIDAY EDITION-UNION PRESS-COURIER.

Thursday, December 14, 1939.

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THE town hall was wreathed with holly and mistletoe. Bright red bells hung from the old-fashioned chandeliers. Christmas candles sent their soft glow into the night. The whole place cried out welcome to the crowd who thronged through the doors.

By eight o'clock every seat was occupied. Small gossip and mur-murs of expectancy ran through the crowd. The little town was proud of the boy who was taking the leading part in the play. They had known Ted Rawlings all their lives. Known him as an easy-going lad, interested in nothing more than fish-ing and hunting around the country, and later as an astonishingly changed ambitious fellow. No one seemed to understand how the quick transition occurred.

All eyes turned to the stage as the heavy curtain rolled upward. Three hundred pairs of eyes fastened themselves upon the moving, speak-ing figures. "Isn't Ted wonderful," young girls whispered breathlessly to each other. Between acts, thun-



"Ted, you were perfectly wonderful," Sally was saying.

derous bursts of applause filled the Hands clapped with vehe-Small boys made their aproom. mence. proval known by shrill whistling. Ted carried the audience with him, every step of the way. He seemed to enter, to merge himself completely in the character he por-trayed. His make-believe was so intense in the last act, that there was a deep silence for a moment when the final curtain fell.

FOR the time it was no makebelieve to Ted. He was living again all the agony of parting, of seeing Sally Howard go away with-out a word. He had been sure until her train pulled out that she would come and say how sorry she was for the bitter, reproachful words she had hurled at him. Words that had left their mark upon his soulthat had stung him into a mad, bitious desire to show her what he could do.

He found no real satisfaction in the tumultuous applause that fol-lowed. In this hour of his triumph,

heart cried out for Sally. II only she was here! If only she had cared! He scarcely knew what he 也然近在這些這些強化的也不能不能在此的 was saying in answer to the lavish congratulations. Suddenly small hands pressed tightly around his arm, and a re-membered voice spoke in his ear.

"Ted, you were perfectly wonder ful," Sally was saying. "wonderful, wonderful. I'm so proud-so proud of you." "But, Sally, I don't understand. I

thought you were in New York." "I was, until last night. I've been keeping track of you. I knew all about the play, and—and the way you have been working lately. I wouldn't have missed this for any-thing in the world."

"But the things you said, Sally? They hurt-they still do." "I wanted them to hurt, Ted. I

know-I know it was cruel, but there seemed no other way. Someone had to give you the right kind of push to get you going. You know you were really lazy? But now, well, you've really put on speed." "Nothing like the speed I'm go-NAN ANA two any like the speed I'm go-ing to show in getting ready for a Christmas wedding. There's just two days left. We've got to make it a really big event. Let's give out the announcement now-while the crowd is still in the hall."

The First Santa Claus The first Santa Claus was St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, who started mysterious midnight gift-bearing journeys. In the Fourth century he was famous because he was a rich man who enjoyed giving secret gifts to the poor. One of his tricks was to throw purses of gold into cottage windows and run away.

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From Europe's Christmas Menu Take your choice of Christmas eats: Plum pudding in England, Pfeffernuesse in Germany, Vier-knack in Denmark, Fatigman's Bakkels in Norway, Horse-shoe cake in Hungary, Speculaas in Holland, and Lutfisk in Sweden.

## Getting a Shoeful in Holland

Not on reindeer but on a white horse, St. Nicholas arrives in some parts of Holland, and instead of looking for stockings he searches for wooden shoes to fill them with gifts. Equal parts of ammonia and turpentine will remove indelible ink marks.

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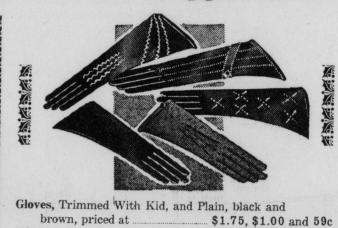
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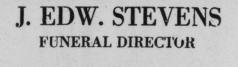
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