

# Station Boss Plays Santa To Little Girl—And How!

## Youngster Who Sent Her Letter to "Union Station, City," Had a Peculiar Inspiration—But Read How "Union Station, City," is Responding

Any one would say that wherever Santa Claus really does dwell or have his office—and the exact location is a matter of some dispute—it was probably not in a large modern railroad station, with its army of busy people engaged in switching trains, selling tickets, directing passengers, and loading and unloading mountainous stacks of mail and express. But for once the obvious answer would be wrong. A letter for Santa Claus was delivered at the Springfield Union station the other day, and there is every reason to believe that it was sent to the right address.

One morning about a week ago when Station Master C. Raymond Welch was looking over his mail he found an envelope addressed in a child's hand with the mere words, "Union station, city." There was nothing outside to indicate the elusive but kindly personage for whom the message was intended. The envelope looked as though it might contain the information that an umbrella or some other article had been inadvertently left in one of the waiting rooms: But the letter was no such everyday, commonplace affair. Mr Welch found that it began with the words, "Dear Santa Claus."

The writer told "Dear Santa Claus" that she was a little girl of 12 and that she hoped on his coming visit to Springfield he would be able to bring her "a pair of stockings," and "some games, nuts and candy." "I have too brothers and too sisters," she added. "They want some candy, nuts and games and some things to wear." Ac-

companying this communication was another missive, in unformed childish scrawl, carrying a similar petition from one of the "too brothers," a youngster seven years old.

Mr Welch noted that the little girl had appealed for clothing as well as the things which make up Christmas cheer and began considering what could be done about the letter. He showed it to William A. Barry, the day telegraph operator, and Mr Barry suggested that perhaps something could be done about it right there. During the day he consulted Mrs Lydia G. Sikes, station attendant of the Travelers' Aid society, and asked her if she could make inquiries about the family. Mrs Sikes visited the home, which is in the Watershops section, and reported that the father was working on part time, with earnings of \$18 to \$20 a week. The little girl who had written the letter was found to be the oldest of the five children, and another child had recently died.

On receiving this information, Mr Barry circulated a subscription paper among station employes. Up to yesterday 75 persons had contributed small sums, and nearly \$20 had been raised. When Saturday night comes, a collection of food, candy and little presents will be sent to the house in the Watershops section, and the bulk of the money will be turned over to the father and mother to permit them to buy clothing that the children need. The little girl who sent her Santa Clause letter to "Union station, city" had a peculiar inspiration. But "Union station, city" is responding.

## Notes of The Theaters