

# SANTA CLAUS AND THE KAISER

*Written for Children, Little and Big*

By THE EDITOR

**W**HAT the kindest man ever known for the last 1800 years and more thinks of Kaiser Wilhelm on Christmas morning, 1917, ought to be found out. Almost all the editors and orators in the world, outside of Germany and Austria, have abused the Kaiser; and a good deal of the language has been set to work a great many times to invent some new way of telling the world how awful the German Emperor is. But after all, it is not a case for many words. If only we can find the right judge who knows more about people than anybody else, who has traveled and been kind to everybody and never angry or impatient with anybody, and know what he thinks about the Kaiser, we shall be quite sure what kind of man he is and what we should think about him at Christmas time, 1917.

Nobody should think evil of anybody at Christmas, even if he has to all the rest of the year. If there is a kind word to be said for this person who rules Germany, now is the time to say it. And if all the rest of the world outside of Germany feels backward about saying this kind word about the Kaiser, why, perhaps old Santa Claus, whose whole life is kindness and who knows the children of all the kings and princes in Europe, might step up and tell us—something good about this man. If he can't, then we may as well dismiss the case. And the silence of Santa Claus on this subject will be taken to indicate that he can think of no good thing at present that he wishes to say about the ruler of Germany.

No doubt Santa Claus remembers when this strange Emperor was a child; remembers the toys he used to fetch him. No doubt Santa Claus wishes the German Emperor had never grown up. And if the Kaiser were to echo the words of one of our poets and say, on Christmas Eve,

"Backward, turn backward, O time in thy flight,

Make me a child again just for to-night,"

Santa Claus would be puzzled to know just what to bring him for presents. The Kaiser has so many guns, so many drums, such a lot of horses and jumping jacks and different kinds of animals; he must be tired of them all. Dolls? No, William can't have any dolls this year. Dolls are made to look like babies and little children, and from what we have read in the newspapers, we don't think the Kaiser is very fond of children—except, perhaps, little Germans.

We know very little of this man as a child, when he was getting things at Christmas. But when he grew up to be a man and became the German Emperor, William Hohenzollern found out that millions upon millions of people all over the world had great faith in Santa Claus. So he hit on a bright scheme of going into partnership with the old Saint, just the way he did with the Sultan of Turkey and the King of Bulgaria. Santa Claus needed millions and millions of toys and somebody had to make them.

"Ah, yes," said William Emperor, smoothly rubbing his hands, "I'll make them—millions of them. All kinds. Tell me what you want."

So thousands of people, mostly women and girls and smaller folk, were set to work making the toys for Santa Claus. To make a really nice story, it should be said that the rich Emperor, knowing what a lot of good Santa Claus was doing in the world, especially to poor children, took the money out of his own royal treasure chests and paid for making these toys, which he handed over to his very good friend, Santa Claus. But of course that would have cost very much more than even Willie Emperor had. So he hit on the wise idea of charging old Santa for the toys and paying the people who made them just as little as he could. Which, of course, meant a fine fat profit for the country ruled by Emperor William.

And all this time the cunning Emperor was thinking up all sorts of things he would do to the world when his country got richer and more

powerful; how, when he had made the people pay by taxes all they could stand and more to raise a huge army and a navy and a lot of airships and submarines and terrible great guns, he would march out and fight the whole of Europe. And as everybody big enough remembers, that was what he did in 1914, about the time the people in Germany should have been extra busy making toys for Santa Claus at a fine fat profit. If anybody mentioned Santa Claus he just swelled out his chest and poofed and rattled his great sword under his cloak and said,

"**B**y the time Santa Claus begins to go over the world on Christmas Eve, 1914, our armies will be in Paris and St. Petersburg, and if the English don't jolly well look out we shall have another army in London. By Christmas Eve, 1915, we shall have soldiers in Ottawa and Washington and Winnipeg, and German sailors in Vancouver and Halifax. And we shall just hand Santa Claus a nice little map of the world, telling him where to go and what to take everybody; because Santa Claus is a foolish old fellow who doesn't always divide things up the way he should. Poof!"

And he called for his beer.

But all this, of course, as you know, never happened. We all know what has happened instead; how many millions of fathers and brothers and sons have been fighting in the trenches and on ships and in submarines and up in the air. We all know what terrible things have been in the countries where Santa Claus used to be so well known to everybody. There are great stacks of books containing all sorts of tales with photographs showing that the soldiers of this man who was supposed to be a great Emperor never was a friend of Santa Claus; that he hated the old saint because he was so kind; that he gave his officers orders to be as cruel as they knew how, more cruel than any savages ever known; gave them orders to burn towns and blow up houses and steal the peoples' wine and get drunk on it, to shoot down old men and cut beautiful girls to pieces and soak people in kerosene to set fire to them, and nail other people alive to crosses, and send over the trenches all kinds of poisonous gases to dry up peoples' lungs and burn their skins, and poison wells and spread awful diseases among the prisoners, and scatter white poison powder from bursting balloons over the snow so that when the Russian soldiers came to melt the snow for water they would be poisoned—and to send out crews of men in great blown-up Zeppelins to shoot bombs down upon England to kill women and children, the very children whom Santa Claus

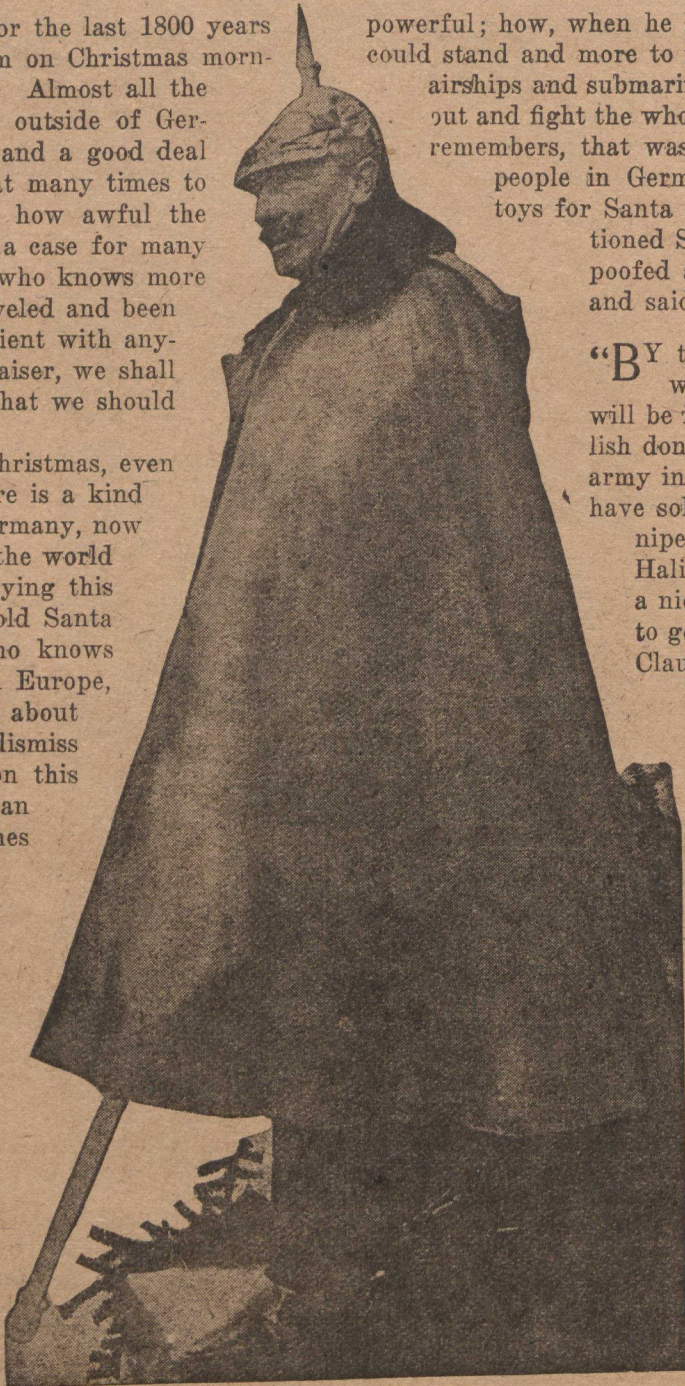
was to have visited, and with submarine torpedoes to sneak up from under the sea and sink ships with women and children on board.

All these things were done by order or by consent of this Emperor who, when he was a boy, was visited by Santa Claus.

Nobody has ever been able to explain how he was able to get so many officers and soldiers and sailors to do such awful things. But they say that for many, many years the people had been taught how some day their country would be at war with Europe and to defend themselves they would have to do such things to make the people afraid of them.

But the queer part of that story, as any boy knows, is that in all the three years and five months of this terrible war there never has been a shell burst, never a man killed, never a house burned in Germany except by now and then a bomb from an airship and long ago by one of the Russian armies over in East Prussia. So it's quite certain that the German people have not been fighting to defend their own country or they would be fighting in Germany instead of in other countries.

Santa Claus knows the whole story. He is one of the few who do know it. But ever since the war began he has been too sad at heart thinking of all the homes where death has come because of the war to tell any secrets out of court. Just at present the kindest man in the world shakes his great white-haired head and prefers to say nothing.



**B**y one of those happenings called coincidences the German Emperor is here seen standing by what looks to be the remains of a Christmas Tree. The spruce boughs were in the photograph and we left them there; hoping that the man did not intend us to believe that he had put his boot down on Christmas trees as well as upon all the other kindnesses of humanity.