

THE SOB WRITER IMBIBED FESTIVE SPIRIT— ANYWAY, SHE CALLED IT THAT

The city editor had been regarding the sob writer rather speculatively as she put on her out-of-door wraps, stuffed copy paper in her muff and sauntered toward his desk. His brows were knitted in a frown.

"This is the time of the year when there should be some festive spirit in the dope you turn in," he said. "It has been lacking, not only the spirit, but the dope. Have you been crochetting your Christmas presents at night that your brains are asleep during the day, or just what is the trouble? Your news instinct should tell you the time is ripe for festive spirit."

"There is no trouble," said the s. w. meekly. "Had you a festive idea in mind or do you wish me to seek one?"

"The emergency is too great to send you out hunting an idea, so I'll give you one, one I've had in mind for more than a week waiting for you to tumble to it. Go into the loop, into any old store, follow around some women who are shopping and imbibe festive spirit. Then write about it."

The s. w. selected the store nearest the car line because it was too cold to roam out-of-doors, and after much suspicious lurking around that she feared would bring a descending hand on her shoulder and a trip to superintendent's office as a suspicious person, she discovered two women who looked as though they might be in the store intent on selecting gifts and not just "hunting ideas," so the s. w. trailed them.

Up to the department in which is displayed lingerie went the two shoppers and with them went the s. w. They stopped at a counter piled with crepe de chine lingerie and the s. w. did likewise. They fingered the lingerie near that portion where the price tag is attached, and so did the s. w.

A salesgirl waited patiently after

being snubbed by both the shoppers and the s. w. with the statement that they "were merely looking to see if there was anything they might fancy," then she moved away and the first shopper said to the second:

"I really don't believe I'll get crepe de chine. I wanted it for Milly. She is crazy over crepe de chine and waists are too expensive. I thought I might get something in lingerie more reasonable, but unless one gets something that looks trifling everything else is as high as the sky. If I just knew what she would give me!"

"Nobody expects expensive gifts this year," consoled the other. "You can get some perfectly darling nainsook things ever so much cheaper if you want lingerie. Let's go to that section. I have to look at flannelette nightdresses, anyway. You know Margaret is so practical that she really tells us, that is, her own family, what she wants, so we will not get her something useless. I really started the habit, but she carries it to extremes. She told me the only thing she really would need that I could give her would be a couple of flannelette nightdresses."

Meanwhile they had been wandering to another counter, the s. w. trailing.

"What perfectly hideous things flannelette nightdresses are," said the second one, as she dug through piles of them from the lowest to the highest price at which they were sold. "There isn't a single one, even these high-priced ones, that aren't hideous. I don't believe I'll get them any way. It would be just like Margaret to believe anything so hideous must have been cheap. I think I'll get something that will show the value of the money more."

"These are dandy kitchen aprons, aren't they?" said the first, stopping on a side aisle. "I could give one to the maid and it would be useful as