

FOR TOM'S SAKE A Tree Which Bore Good Fruit

By OTHO B. SENGAL

[Copyright, 1904, by Otho B. Sengal.] MOST wonderful and gorgeous Christmas tree stood in the window of the great store of Warden & Joyce. All day a constantly changing throng of small admirers exclaimed at its magnificence and registered extravagant wishes before it.

Children richly clad and full of joyous anticipations, children in comfortless rags, who knew Christmas only by the sight of the happiness of others, stood side by side and gazed with longing eyes at the bewildering array of costly gifts and brilliant decorations. A small girl of twelve or fourteen, with face unnaturally old and sharp, unsmiling eyes, critically examined the tree in silence. Up and down, from side to side, her keen gaze wandered.

"I bet it's empty at the back," she finally muttered. Poor child! Her brief experience had already taught her the unreality and falsity of many glittering things. She stepped quickly into the vestibule where she could see that part of the tree away from the window. A sudden joy flashed into her face.

"It's true—that tree is true," she whispered eagerly. "The back is as good as the front."

She hesitated an instant and then raised her clasped hands beseechingly. "God," she cried, "send me a tree for Tommy!"

Her intense longing made her voice sharply imperative, and the first word struck harshly on the ear of a richly dressed young lady who was passing close to her.

"You mustn't swear, child!" she exclaimed hurriedly.

"I wasn't swearing," the girl answered calmly, without resentment. "I was praying for a tree for Tommy."

An elegant carriage waited at the curb, and as the young lady stepped to



MISS STANHOPE GAVE ONE LOOK AT THE TALL MAN.

the sidewalk the footman threw open the door. She stood for an instant, as if thinking, and then, turning quickly, she went back into the vestibule, where the child was still standing.

"Will you come with me a minute? Out of the crowd," she added hastily as the girl faced her with surprised eyes and an unchildlike, repelling look on her thin face.

"Will you step into the carriage? Please do. I want you to tell me something, and it is so very cold." The girl seated herself on the luxurious cushions, the young lady followed, and the inwardly disgusted footman closed the door.

"Will you tell me your name and where you live?" the lady questioned gently.

The child regarded her earnestly. "Depends on who you are and what you want. You ain't a charity worker nor a slum visitor?"

The young lady smiled understandingly. "My name is Margaret Stanhope, and I live on Commonwealth avenue. You—you spoke of Tommy."

The girl's face softened. "Yes; he's my brother. My name is Maggie Taylor, and I live on Burnham street," adding with a return of her former manner, "but it ain't a slum street, and I don't want no charity."

Miss Stanhope smiled radiantly. "But I do, Maggie. I am so glad our names are the same. I need just what you do not—charity. Tell me something about Tommy." She lingered lovingly over the name. "Why did you pray for a tree for him?"

"Because he's sick. He's only twelve, and he works in an office, and his boss is away, and Tommy took sick after he'd gone. Tommy feels sure that if he was here he'd send his wages to him just the same, for he's a good boss and awfully kind to everybody, but the other man—his partner—is different."

"Maggie," said Miss Stanhope earnestly, "I wish you'd help me to have a happy Christmas. I am all alone in the world, without any one to care for me, and I want to do something for some one—because six months ago I did a wrong and cruel thing to some one by that name. It would help make my Christmas happy if you would let me arrange a tree for your Tommy. Will you?"

The girl drew a long breath. "It ain't charity?" she asked doubtfully.

"Not to you nor to Tommy," answered

be to me."

"For Tommy's sake," murmured the girl assentingly.

"For Tom's sake," echoed Miss Stanhope tenderly.

The unbending footman was still more disgusted when he was directed to make another round of the stores, and his bearing was absolutely frigid when he was required to carry a most unbecoming load of bundles up the stairs to the little home on Burnham street. That the indignity of a good sized tree was laid upon him also required the concentration of all his thoughts upon the generous wages Miss Stanhope paid to enable him to endure the present situation.

"I keep house for father and Tommy," whispered Maggie, leading the way. "Tommy's in the kitchen. I left him there in the big chair 'cause it's warmer. We'll take all these things in here—opening the door of a neat sitting room—and when we get the tree fixed I'll push him in the chair."

Surely never before was a tree so quickly made to blossom and bring forth fruit, and it was a "true" tree, with gifts on every side.

Maggie surveyed it with joyful pride, her thin face losing its careworn look and becoming almost childlike with the flush of happy excitement.

"Miss Stanhope," she whispered positively, "prayers are answered—I know it now."

Always, in the way he thinks best," answered Miss Stanhope earnestly, adding in her heart, "Lord, I believe—help thou mine unbelief!"

"I'll bring Tommy in now," Maggie said, and went softly out to the kitchen.

She returned almost immediately. "His boss is there!" she exclaimed excitedly. "He got back yesterday. Ain't he awfully good to come so soon to see Tommy? Tommy looks better already! The boss 'll push him in."

They both turned toward the door as it was opened, and a big armchair with the sick boy in it was pushed carefully over the threshold.

Miss Stanhope gave one look at the tall man behind the chair and started forward.

"This is Tommy's boss," began Maggie, mindful of her duties as hostess, but the greeting of her two guests quite disconcerted her, for Tommy's boss caught the aristocratic Miss Stanhope in a close embrace, while Miss Stanhope cried penitently, "Oh, Tom, Tom, I have been so sorry, and I have wanted you so!"

The Origin of Santa Claus. Santa Claus is of German origin. This is true if only because that is the German name for St. Nicholas. That he is an old man is because in the ancient pagan feasts in celebration of the decay of the old year and the birth of the new an old man played the principal part. Among the Greeks and Romans it was Saturn, the father of all the gods, and among the Norsemen it was Thor, who was long bearded and white haired. That the saint is St. Nicholas is due to the fact that that venerable personage's feast day was celebrated at about that period. St. Nicholas was a bishop of Myra, who flourished early in the fourth century. He is the patron saint of children and schoolboys, and hence it was natural that he should be a part of a celebration when the children received gifts and when they were allowed to be "heard as well as seen."—New York Mail and Express.

Christmas in Rome. A characteristic sight which precedes a Roman Christmas is the so called cottole, or sale of fish by auction, which is held at San Teodoro, near the forum. In the small hours of the morning, and every year attracts large crowds of buyers and sightseers. It is a sight worth seeing, the vast circular market literally packed with row upon row of baskets, in which the scaly fry are carefully arranged, the light glancing off their many colored scales in a thousand prismatic reflections, while the owner of each stall shouts at the top of his voice and the merry crowd goes round laughing and bargaining and trying to cheapen the fish, for at Christmastide it often reaches fabulous prices, and one is reminded of the extravagance of the ancient Romans, one of whom is said to have paid 20,000 sesterces for a single gray mullet.—London Mail.

Going Too Far. At a school exhibition a juvenile elocutionist got up to recite the first piece of his life. He was ambitious. He wished to make a great success of his piece, and he had been told by his teacher that the secret of elocution was the gesture—for every phrase its fitting gesture. The opening line of the boy's selection was, "The comet lifts its tail of fire." The overzealous boy, to fit its proper gesture to this line, lifted up the tail of his coat and held it out in a horizontal position.

Inconsistent. Brown—It's curious about people's beliefs. They will give entire credence to the most absurd things and put no faith whatever in the most obvious truths. Black—Yes, I've noticed it. There's Greene, now. He hasn't the least confidence in hash, but he'll eat all the croquettes and mince pie you can set before him.—Exchange.

Poor Excuse. "Before we were married you said you'd lay down your life for me," she sobbed. "I know it," he returned solemnly, "but this confounded flat is so thin there's no place to lay anything down."—Harper's Bazar.

Humor and Philosophy By DUNCAN M. SMITH

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PERT PARAGRAPHS.

The things that a man is going to do are signs that speak very fluently of the work he isn't doing now.

A good resolution is a mighty good thing to have—if you have a good man to introduce it and sufficient influence to get it passed.

Some men never flirt at all—unless there is a beautiful woman handy.

It may be silly to be suspicious; but, then, sometimes it is safe to be silly.

Next to being able to deliver the goods ranks in ordinary competitive life the ability to keep the other fellow from making delivery.

You may retire an old horse after long service without its costing much, but it is another thing to retire an automobile.

Notice that most of the men who are standing pat have comfortable seats.

There are people who will take anything, and if nothing more substantial is lying about they are sure to take offense.

People who are always trying to look smart sometimes get so busy about it that they forget it.

You never know a man until you have started him talking upon the subject of his pet enemy.

Beauty pushes out of poetry in great jobs when you see the author, lacking a shave, stowing away corned beef and cabbage.

If there is a difference between a good thing and an easy mark it takes his wife to point it out.

Every tainted dollar knows where to get an immunity bath and how to become respectable.

A good deal of nerve is to be chosen rather than great riches.

Realistic. "They say she has a wonderful voice."

"It is marvelous."

"You have heard her, then?"

"Oh, yes!"

"How does it affect you?"

"When she sings in high C you instinctively look around for a life preserver."

Unusual. "You had a talk with the candidate?"

"Yes."

"What did you think of him?"

"He is a great man. He impressed me as being even smarter than his private secretary."

Doubtful. "Think the people of Cuba are capable of self government?"

"Just as much as we are."

"Come, now. There is no occasion for such gratuitous insinuations as that on a people who have never done you any harm."

Earthly Star. He wanted to hitch his cart to a star, but he poured some liquor down his throat, and then he exceeded his hopes by far, but the star was on a policeman's coat.

No Terminal Facilities. "What is all that noise in the other room?"

"Jane at the piano."

"I thought they couldn't get her to sing!"

"They couldn't without coaxing and begging for half an hour. Now they cannot get her to stop without using force."

Satisfactory. "Is your young man to call tonight, father?"

"He said he might drop around."

"I looked up his commercial rating today."

"How was it?"

"Well, I gave James orders to chain the bulldog."

Brain Rest. "He never goes with a girl but once."

"I didn't suppose he was fickle as all that."

"It isn't that. He has a reason."

"What is it?"

"He has only one line of talk."

Shiftless. "Say, Bill."

"What?"

"Dad has gone to work."

"Break the news gently to mother. You know she has a weak heart."

Husbands to Do It.

The elderly spinster in the rear of the drawing room car had no more than settled in her seat when her attention was attracted to a woman a little farther front who was garbed in the deepest mourning. As Miss Spinster adjusted her nose-glasses for a better inspection of the one in widow's weeds she saw the conductor lean over and converse with her earnestly for several minutes.

When the conductor got back to her seat taking the passenger's tickets Miss Spinster was consumed with curiosity about the woman in mourning.

"Conductor," she asked in her sweetest tones, "what's the trouble with the lady up there in widow's weeds?"

"Oh, that's Mrs. Gettem!" replied the obliging conductor. "She's just taking her third husband out to a crematory."

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed Miss Spinster. And then in a faraway voice she added:

"And just think of it! Here I am past fifty and never had a husband in my life, while that woman up there has them to burn!"—New York Times.

Strong Monosyllables. Instructors in the art of literary composition usually condemn a string of monosyllables, but in the well known hymn "Lead, Kindly Light," written by a master of the English language, you may count thirty consecutive words of one syllable only. They offend neither the eye nor the ear.

Milton often uses a series of monosyllables. In the second book of "Paradise Lost" we have:

The fiend O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense or rare,

With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way And swims or sinks or wades or creeps or flies.

Such lines are not uncommon in the book: Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death.

And again: Of neither sea nor shore nor air nor fire.—London Notes and Queries.

Courtship in Ireland. An Irish boy marries when he has a rid house and an Irish girl just when she pleases. Sometimes she so pleases while yet her years are few; at other times she is content to wait upon wisdom. In the latter case, of course, she makes a wise choice, but in the former almost always a lucky one, for luck is the guardian angel of the Irish.

"You're too young to marry yet, Mary," the mother said when Mary pleaded that she should grant Laurence O'Mahony a particular boon.

"If you only have patience, mother, I'll cure myself of that fault," was Mary's reply.

"And she's never been used to work, Laurence," the mother said to the suitor discouragingly.

"If you only have patience, ma'am," was Laurence's reply to this, "I'll cure her of that fault." And he did too.—Seumas MacManus in Lippincott's.

The Nervous Mother. An Aitchison woman who is very nervous and inclined to worry is the mother of a boy. She recently read of a boy who was killed while roller skating and immediately put her son's roller skates in the fire. Another newspaper told of a boy who was killed riding the street cars, and as boys are frequently killed while walking by street cars running over them she chained her boy to the front door.

Then she read of a boy who died of blood poisoning caused by his shoe rubbing his heel, and her boy's shoes and stockings came off. The story of a boy who bit off a button on his wrist and choked to death resulted in her taking off her boy's clothes. He had left only a flannel shirt, and she is reading now that wearing flannel shirts is the cause of great mortality and is thinking of removing that.—Aitchison Globe.

The Bloom on the Egg. "I know these eggs at least are fresh," said the young housewife. "As I took them from the basket a white bloom, like the down of a peach, came off on my hands."

Her husband, a food expert, gave a sneering laugh.

"In that case," he said, "I'll forego my usual morning omelette. That bloom, my dear, proves your eggs to be a year or so old—maybe four or five years old."

"The bloom, as you so poetically call it, is lime dust. It shows that the eggs are pickled. Lime dust, which rubs off like flour, is the surest test we have for pickled eggs—a not unwholesome article, but not to be compared with the new laid sort."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The Riddle. Here is a strange riddle which we have never met before. It is sent us by a friend from Jhans, India: Divide 150 by 0. Add two-thirds of 10. So ends the riddle.

Here is the answer: COLENSO. C—100. L—50. EN—two-thirds of TEN. SO—ends the riddle.—London Scraps.

Changeable Names. Tom—Belle is a strange girl. She doesn't know the names of some of her best friends. Maud—That's nothing. Why, I don't even know what my own will be a year from now.—Boston Transcript.

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