



Little Hans' Christmas Tree

Translated from the Swedish of Jenny Brown

UP ON the hill, a short distance from the hut stood a lonely pine tree, that father had promised to cut down on Christmas eve. It was so beautiful, where it stood, and stretched its dark green branches out over the white snow. Hans walked round and round it and looked at it from all sides. It had grown so even, and was just high enough to find room under the low roof of the hut. In his imagination the little six-year-old saw it in all its beauty, with gilt paper stars, ginger bread hearts, rosy-cheeked apples and lighted candles.

"Poor as I am, Hans," father had said, "you shall have a Christmas tree, and fine it shall be, that I promise you."

And how the little child's heart palpitated with pleasure and expectation! Father had gone into town and was not expected to return before noon. Would he be long in bringing back all the beautiful things he was to buy at the same time he was getting the other Christmas things for mother? Time and again Hans went out on the doorsteps and looked down the long, snowy road. At length father was seen in the distance. Hans started to meet him, and was permitted to carry the package father said was his.

But how tired and pale father looked. He did not feel well, he said, but Hans must not worry over that. It was only a result of the hard labor that he now began to feel. It would soon pass away. And Hans believed that, too.

"Mother, father has come," cried Hans, and pushed the door wide open. The noontide meal was ready. But father could not eat anything, and laid himself down on the wooden bench and complained of pains in his chest. Mother laid aside the bag of rice and the coffee and sugar father had brought home. Father was ill! He had to admit it; he was suffering more pain than he would tell. Mother compelled him to go to bed and prepared a flannel saturated with turpentine that she spread on the chest. It was too bad that he should be taken sick, and on Christmas eve, but there was no help for it. In his rejoicing over the beautiful things for the Christmas tree, little Hans for a few moments did not think of father. But when he looked to the bed where father was lying, moaning with pain, Hans did as mother had done. He pushed aside the beautiful Christmas tree things and knelt down by the bed.

"Poor father!" and with his little hands he stroked the bearded cheeks. "Don't worry, my boy; you shall have your Christmas tree. Speak to Neighbor Jerker, and he will help you."

This was all well and good, but father was ill, and the Christmas pleasure spoiled. And such a Christmas that they had expected! Last year they had no means to provide for a Christmas tree or any extra pleasure. "I am going to the doctor," said mother, as she tied the shawl over her head. "You stay with father, Hans; I will hurry back soon."

The doctor did not live very far away. He did not like to be disturbed on Christmas eve, but he wrote out a prescription after finding out from the

woman what the symptoms were. To visit the sick man was not to be expected of the doctor on Christmas eve. "Give him this every two hours and the pain will soon pass away. It'm, well, as it is Christmas eve, I will only charge fifty ore"—he had the right to demand a crown, but he felt charitable, and the poor woman's last silver piece landed in the doctor's pocket. He did not inquire if she had any money left for the medicine, and she did not care to tell him that it was her last piece of money, and that father had spent his last crown for the things to decorate little Hans' Christmas tree. She also had her pride, and she knew what remarks would be made. Poor men's children have no right to pleasure or luxuries. The gingerbread and candles and apples would be considered an awful waste and extravagance. To the doctor's children it would have looked a poor pleasure, but for her own little boy it was a sinful luxury. How different God provided for the people in this world, was the poor woman's thought, as, heavy hearted, she walked home with the prescription in her hand. Had the poor no right to have



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a heart that could feel and suffer! "The doctor gave me this prescription," said mother, "and the turpentine cloth was to remain, and you will soon be well, father."

"Oh, I don't believe the medicine will do me any good, and we will just let it alone."

The mother understood, and she could not keep her tears. Father had no money left for the medicine. "Don't cry, mother, don't cry," exclaimed little Hans, as he tried to pull the mother down to him by her dress. "Father should not have bought the things for the Christmas tree, then he could have got the medicine. I understand that well enough," remarked little Hans, with a precocious mien.

"No, no, Hans, it would not have helped me," interrupted father from his place in the bed. "But thank you for your kind heart. You shall have your Christmas tree as I promised you."

Little Hans went out of the hut and ran to his tree on the hill. He walked around it, and the tears came in his eyes. But he wiped them away with the back of his hand. No, he must not cry; he must not feel or show any sorrow over the sacrifice that would bring gladness and blessing to the home. He put his hands in his pockets and tried to look glad and free from care when he entered the neighbor's hut. The children had for weeks heard him brag

about his Christmas tree, and he had promised them that they should see it in all its beauty and splendor on Christmas eve. Now he would affect indifference and pretend that he did not care for a Christmas tree, but would sell it in town so father could get money for medicine.

Jerker, the eldest of the neighbor's children, cut down the tree. Hans was crying, but stoutly swallowed his tears and made Jerker promise him to tell his mother that Hans had gone to town to buy a Christmas present. The mother was very much surprised. Where could Hans have got the money. She could not understand it. Jerker did not know. He only told her what Hans had told him, and that he would not return before evening, and they must not worry about him.

How cold little Hans felt, and how that little heart of his felt heavy and sorrowful. Young as he was, he had already learned a lesson from life's story—the lesson of self-denial. He felt cold, his coat was short and threadbare, the shoes in poor condition and his mittens full of holes. But he knew that Christmas eve would bring him a new pair of mittens. From his bed in the hut at night he had seen mother knitting a pair of mittens that were too small for father. So, surely, they must be for him.

But with all his sorrow there was a warm glow at his heart. Was he not wealthy? He had sold his Christmas tree for two large silver crowns. Had brought the medicine for father and had a large silver crown left as a Christmas gift for mother. God had helped him. Had not mother said that God watches over little children, and had he not sent a wealthy lady that had given him two large silver crowns for his tree, notwithstanding he had been told it was not worth fifty ore?

A little golden-haired girl had met him in the beautiful richly furnished room where he had brought the tree. It was placed on a table, and the little girl was greatly pleased over the tree. He wondered if the little girl had known why he had sold his tree, and that all of his Christmas pleasure was lost, would she have been just as highly pleased? He followed her with

other child had his tree. He thought of his tree as a living being, and that it felt the separation as much as he. But now he was home. Father slept and mother was at the hearth preparing the evening meal. "Hans, where have you been?" inquired mother.

"Into town, mother, and I have a Christmas present for father."

"You? Where did you get it? Have you money, Hans?" inquired the mother in her astonishment as Hans placed the bottle of medicine on the table. "Where did you get it, boy?"

Hans inclined his head, and smilingly pushed his mother toward the window. He drew away the curtain and pointed to the hill. Mother could look out in the starlight night and at once noticed that the tree was gone. Yes, she saw plainly that little Hans' Christmas tree was not there. She understood it all; she could read it in the big blue eyes that sparkled up toward her. She lifted the child in her arms and pressed him toward her, too deeply moved to find words for her feelings. But she felt so happy, so proud that this was her child, and the poor mother in all her poverty and humility would not have exchanged her lot for a queen's coronet.

"Mother, I have a Christmas present for you also," whispered Hans, and placed the silver crown in her hand. Hans had renounced much, had denied himself all, and therefore his gift was above ordinary value.

CHRISTMAS IN DAWSON CITY.



Klondike Ike—"Vot did yer find in yer stockin' this mornin'?" Chillikot Pete—"Frost-bitten toes."

A Funny Dream.
I had a funny dream last night, As strange as strange could be I dreamed that I was Santa Claus And Santa Claus was me. And when I came to Santa's house (Where we live now, you know) I took out near a hundred things And laid them in a row; A bicycle with level-gear, A gun that shoots real shot; A pair of skates, a new canoe, Were some things that I brought. And then I said, "For fear I've missed A little thing or two, I'll leave this pocketbook well filled, That's just what I will do." Of course it only was a dream, But still I think 'twould be Just great if I was Santa Claus And Santa Claus was me. —Johnstone Murray.

A Christmas Cross.
No fir-tree in the forest dark But humbly bears its cross; No human heart in God's wide world But mourns its bitter loss. Yet Christmas-tide can clothe the fir In splendors all unguessed, And bring to every suffering heart Its joy, its peace, its rest. God rest you, then, my gentle friend, And take your cross away, Or clothe it with a radiance new, On this glad Christmas Day. —Willis Boyd Allen, in Youth's Companion.

CHRISTMAS GIFT.



AN ARTISTIC PLANT STAND.

Gran'mother's Talk.
Gran'mother says, while she's sittin' there, At the fireside, in her old armchair: "Ain't no Christmas now, my dear, Like the ones of long ago! When I was a girl there was more of light An' song in the world a Christmas night; The green just blossomed over the white In the Christmas long ago." She talks that way, 'cause she's old, you know, An' her hair is whiter than whitest snow, An' she thinks that her time is come to go To a Christmas in the skies. But my arms around her neck I throw, An' say: "Gran'mother, in the long ago, Did you have anybody to love you so?" An' she smiles, an' wipes her eyes. —F. L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.



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The Tendency to Shorten Presidential Campaigns

By a Political Seer.

PROBABLY the National Conventions of 1908 will be held in September. The tendency of the times is to abbreviate long campaigns. The contests of the present year show that there is nothing to be gained by holding conventions in June or July, and waiting for six or eight weeks in which to notify the nominees.

Sooner or later the whole business will be done in the fall. This will give the politicians time to have their vacations and return in better condition to make up the tickets. Of course the candidates will have to hustle a bit to get out their letters of acceptance. All the better. They will cut them short. The notification committees will probably go from the convention halls direct to the homes of nominees and deliver the goods officially. The candidates will get down to their letters at once and the campaign will begin in October.

The country will welcome the change. It won't be kept on the political split for two or three months. And, what is more to be desired than anything else, the cost of conducting a presidential campaign will be considerably diminished.

This arrangement would not conflict with state conventions. They could meet the week before national conventions, or the week after, as seemed most desirable, and the whole political business of the year could be bunched and done with.

If you will look up the history of national conventions you will see that the tendency to shorter campaigns has been gathering imperceptibly for many years.

Away back in 1824, which was before conventions were known as they are now known, the candidates were before the public for a year and a half. The first convention was held in December, and the opposing party held theirs in the May following. Subsequent conventions were held in February, and then May became the popular month. Then one party, the Whigs, fell back to December, but after that candidates were nominated in the same year as that in which the election occurred.

I believe the Democrats were the first to shorten up the campaign by holding a convention in June. That was the year Pierce was nominated. The Whigs met a few weeks later.

If I am correct there was one national convention that met as late as September. That was the Whig convention in 1856. The celebrated Charleston convention of 1860 met in April, but the country was more interested in politics that year than it had ever been before or ever has been since. The campaign began within a fortnight.

The Republicans met in 1868 in May, and the Democrats met July 4. The campaigns were under hot headway by the middle of August or soon after. The conventions which named Garfield, Blaine, Cleveland, Harrison and McKinley met in June; Bryan was nominated both times in July, and this year the Republicans did not meet until almost the last of June, while the Democrats went over again to July. The McKinley-Bryan campaign of 1896 was under headway in August. The organizations were further along in their work that month than the organization of either party is now. But that was an exceptional campaign.

The country now sees that it is possible to have a short presidential campaign, and everybody is just as well satisfied. The conventions of the future will be held later than ever. Those of 1908 may not be held in the fall, but those of 1912 will come mighty near it. Make a note of the prediction.

BUSINESS CARDS.
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Resident dentist, 10 the Hoover building, Main street.
DR. L. L. MEANS, DENTIST.
Office on second floor of First National bank building, Main street.
DR. R. DEVERE KING, DENTIST.
Office on second floor Reynoldsville Real Estate Building, Main street, Reynoldsville, Pa.
E. NEFF, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.
And Real Estate Agent.
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You will find Sash, Doors, Frames and Finish of all kinds, Rough and Dressed Lumber, High Grade Varnishes, Lead and Oil Colors in all shades. And also an overstock of Nails which I will sell cheap.
J. V. YOUNG, Prop.

The Westmoreland county commissioners have appointed William J. Potts, of Lioniger, mercantile appraiser. The appointment was made at the instance of George M. Earnest, the oldest member of the board.
Paul Blair, of Latrobe, was killed by a train within a short distance of the home of his parents at Beauty station, and the body was taken to Derry. He was a well-known foot ball player.
Shortage of water has caused a shutdown of the three blast furnaces of the Carnegie Steel company at South Sharon. Six hundred men are affected.

MARKETS.

PITTSBURG.
Grain, Flour and Feed.
Wheat—No. 2 red..... \$1.05 1.09
Rye—No. 2..... .50 .51
Corn—No. 2 yellow, ear..... .50 .51
No. 2 yellow, shelled..... .48 .49
Mixed ears..... .47 .48
Oats—No. 2 white..... .36 .36
No. 2 white..... .35 .35
Flour—Winter patent..... 6.20 6.30
Straight winters..... 5.70 5.85
Hay—No. 1 timothy..... 12.00 12.50
Clerk No. 1..... 12.00 12.50
Feed—No. 1 white mid. ton..... 25.00 25.50
Brown middlings..... 19.50 19.50
Bran..... 7.00 7.25
Straw—Wheat..... 7.00 7.25
Oat..... 7.00 7.25

Dairy Products.
Butter—Eggs creamery..... 28 .28
Ohio creamery..... 18 18
Fancy country roll..... 13 14
Cheese—Ohio, new..... 11 12
New York, new..... 11 12

Poultry, Etc.
Hens—per lb..... 12 13
Chickens—dressed..... 15 17
Turkeys, live..... 25 27
Eggs—No. 1, and Ohio, fresh..... 25 34

Fruits and Vegetables.
Potatoes—New per bu..... 53 53
Cabbage—per bbl..... 73 1.00
Onions—per barrel..... 1.75 1.85
Apples—per barrel..... 1.50 2.25

BALTIMORE.
Flour—Winter Patent..... \$1.55 5.80
Wheat—No. 2 red..... 1.24 1.26
Corn—No. 2 white..... .62 .63
Eggs—Ohio, new..... 24 .36
Butter—Creamery..... 25 .36

PHILADELPHIA.
Flour—Winter Patent..... \$1.45 5.75
Wheat—No. 2 red..... 1.19 1.11
Corn—No. 2 mixed..... .58 .59
Oats—No. 2 white..... .36 .37
Butter—Creamery, extra..... 25 .36
Eggs—Pennsylvania firsts..... 24 .35

NEW YORK.
Flour—Patent..... \$6.00 6.20
Wheat—No. 2 red..... 1.15 1.19
Corn—No. 2 white..... .60 .61
Oats—No. 2 white..... .36 .37
Butter—Creamery..... 25 .36
Eggs..... 24 .35

Does the Human Family Eat Too Much

By the Editor of What-to-Eat.

IT last there seems to be common agreement among scientific investigators that the human family eats too much. This, of course, does not apply to every individual, for there is no dispute about the fact that thousands of people are poorly fed and improperly nourished; and singularly enough, these do not belong always among the poorer classes. As a matter of fact, the middle classes are the well-to-do classes when it comes to the question of the adequate nourishment of the human body to fit it for the daily and mental demands that are made upon it. People who are well off in the world's goods are not always the ones who adopt the most liberal and most rational policy in the matter of selecting a diet that will contribute to their highest physical welfare and their greatest personal enjoyment. The table of the poor is not only the table of intelligence and the table of plenty, but it is quite often the table of hygienic and dietetic selection; for it is deprived of many of the vile culinary concoctions which are dangerous and deleterious and which only the well-filled purse supplies. Moreover, the employments of the poor are better calculated to bring about perfect alimentation and assimilation; and the penuriousness of the rich quite often makes them scanty providers, depriving themselves of the more nourishing edibles that are to be found in the markets; but taking the general average of the human family, it may be stated as a well-proven proposition that the diet of civilized people is too ample, too hearty. In other words, we all eat too much.

Americans are undoubtedly the great meat eaters of the world, notwithstanding the fact that we have the most bountiful supply of all the most nourishing foods that are the products of widely diversified climate and many varieties of soil. The British soldiers in Africa, instead of being fed on rare roast beef, as we might naturally suppose from our notions of British diet, were given a moderate allotment of vegetable and cereal foods with an occasional touch of jam to sweeten their rations and cheer their flagging spirits after the long march. The Japanese soldiers who are fighting in the far east live chiefly on rice and dried fish, while the Russian infantry and cavalry have a somewhat harder diet because of the rigors of the climate in which they have to conduct their campaign. It will be remembered that many hundred tons of candy were shipped to our own soldiers in the Philippines during the campaign of occupation which followed the raising of our flag in the Archipelago. Since it has been found that mixing a moderate amount of sweets with a limited diet of vegetables and other nourishing foods is good for the soldiers, who can contend that it is not good for the man in the ordinary walks of life?

When Gossip is Harmless

By Agnes Repplier.

GOSSIP, after all, is fairly harmless, provided it is sensible and innocent. The chief thing is that you receive it for what it is worth, and not magnify your friend's prattle or give idle words a terrible significance. All of us like to talk about our friends; all of us do talk about them, and we will to the end of time; but that doesn't mean that we like them less or have the less confidence in them. You must take into consideration the spirit of gossip, not the letter. I tell you in privacy that my Uncle Joseph is a cranky old gentleman, very pertickety in his ways. Are you, then, justified in going to Uncle Joseph and telling him that I said he was a crank? If you have a bit of sense you know very well that his crankiness is what particularly endears him to me, and that he has a thousand other virtues which outweigh that fault. Uncle Joseph, on the other hand, might tell you that I am a thoughtless fellow, given to taking the world lightly. It is just to repeat to me that Uncle Joseph thinks me light-minded and brainless? You forget that Uncle Joseph would be the first to combat you if you said aught against me, and that down in his heart he thinks I am one of the most promising lads of his acquaintance. Gossip, then, is rarely evil in intention when it deals with friends. We speak of friends, but in our hearts are a thousand reservations and the memory of many virtues. Knowing our own feelings, we hesitate less to criticize. The great thing we must learn is that gossip is to be heard in the same kindly spirit, and that it is not to be repeated. Whoever hears wrongly, or whoever carries ill words wilfully, is in the devil's service. Gossip you will if you are human, but be above carrying it, and be above misinterpreting a thing that has been said about yourself. Laugh at the criticisms of your friends if they meet your ears; smile indulgently and be nice to your critics, for you can assure yourself that if they talk of your faults, they also appreciate your virtues. Gossip so received is robbed of chance venom, and the person who receives it cheerfully is doubly armed against the stings of fortune.—Woman's Home Companion.



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