Tommy Tucker

BY RUTH SAWYER

PART I.

The new Deputy Commissioner for Placing Dependent Children stood outside the geranium-topped posts of the County Orphanage to consider.

There were many things to consider. First of all the Department: it was hers to run for the next month [illegible] she intended it should run to the continued honor of her chief, the Commissioner, and the complete confounding of the Superintendent and Boyd, the department secretary. The Commissioner believed in her—had since that late August afternoon when she had rained into the Courthouse with an abandoned baby, to take up her work. But the Superintendent of the Poor regarded her with suspicion; Boyd met her at every turn with a cool cynical amusement. It was plain neither of them thought she was worth a crooked sixpence. As for the County Board of Supervisors—whenever she chanced upon any of them they very nearly had apoplexy.

The new Deputy had powers of observation and the usual intuition of her sex. It had taken a very short time to find out that, barring the Commissioner, she was not wanted. Everyone on the Board had a friend or relative he wished to put in her place. Let her bungle a case now, fall down on her judgment, prove her self the young, irresponsible thing they all believed her and, at the end of her probation period, she would be sent packing. In other words, she had until the Commissioner's return from the first vacation she had taken in years to make solidly good. And no one knew better than herself how necessary it was to make good.

Meanwhile, there was the case in hand to consider. "Sara Goslin," she said to herself, looking hard on the Orphanage, "you've got to watch your step every foot of the way. If you stumble, even, they'll be on you like a pack of wolves and gobble you up with the greatest enjoyment."

She had come to the Orphanage to pick out a child for adoption; and she had telephoned ahead that she did not wish anyone to pay any attention to her. The children were not to be told who she was or why she had come. She did not wish to have all the brightest, most attractive children brought forward for conscious inspection. This was [illegible] first time of picking a child from an orphanage and instinctively she felt all the heartbreak that must come to those children who were looked over and rejected.

There should be no heartbreaks if she could help it. And she had a most exceptional chance to place a child. Taking a letter from her pocket she checked over for a last time the few requirements that had been specified. It must be a boy—somewhere between five and seven. They would take a delicate child—not too delicate, of course, but one who could be built up with farm life—good food and care. The main thing was they wished a lovable little boy, one who needed loving and could give love in return.

"We have been married for eleven years and both Mr. Graham and I have starved for children. There isn't a child in any branch of the family. And there are aunts and uncles and a grandfather hungry as well. So you see he must be a very lovable little boy; we need his affection and his need of us." So wrote the adopting mother.

No specifications as to hair or eyes, nationality, birth; even the usual health certificate was waived. There must be no known feeble mindedness or criminal taint in the stock that lay back of him—that was all. With a quick intake of breath Sara Goslin passed into the Orphanage grounds; it had come to her suddenly that moment just what her work meant. She was here to help build lives, as against all those possible agencies that tended to destroy them. It was a pitched battle for the rights of Humanity to live its best. A glow of something very close to happiness surged through her. Happiness was something she had not felt for months. Who knew but that in this process of building for others she might build for herself a new and beautiful house of life? "Heigho!" sang the new Deputy under her breath. "Now for a boy!"

She passed the circle of trim cottages and on to the vegetable plots where the older boys were working. It was September and the boys were harvesting their late corn. "New orphan?" one of them asked her. She chuckled inwardly, thinking of the Superintendent's or Boyd's open contempt if they had heard. For the new Deputy was small and wistful and looked well under her twenty-five intensely lived years.

The boys at the gardens were all too old so she went on down the driveway to the playground. Here were little children, swinging, roller-coasting and playing games. She sat herself down on a rock under a heavily foliaged tree and watched them play. There was a sturdy, live-faced youngster with a laugh that infected her funny-bone. He was pitching ball to a finely built [illegible] aller boy with a head shaped like a young Greek. She liked them both immensely. Any woman might be proud to adopt either of them. Nearer to her stood a quiet, honest-eyed boy about six, watching the game. He carried himself like a conqueror. So, her eyes travelled over the groups before her, slowly appraising each boy. She must make no mistake. Every case handled during the Commissioner's absence must be definitely on the credit side of her report. She could afford to have no failures.

A rustle in the branches over her head caused her to look up. Perched in a crotch between two limbs and almost hidden by leaves was a small figure in faded blue overalls. She made it out to be a boy and called up to him: "Hello, there!"

Two bird-like hands brushed the branches aside and a small transparent face peered at her, the head cocked like a bird's. "Hello!" chirped a voice as full of music and friendliness as a robin's.

"What are you doing up there?"

"Looking all about and watching."

"Why don't you come down and play?"

"I like this better."

"What's your name?"

"Tommy Tucker, please, ma'am."

"Not really?"

"Really and truly. What's yours?"

The Deputy laughed delightedly. "If yours is Tommy Tucker I guess mine must be Mother Goose."

"Not really?"

"Well, Tommy, it's so nearly that, let's play that's what it is. Haven't you ever wondered what Mother Goose was like?"

There came the sound of scraping against rough bark, followed by a scattering of leaves and the next moment Tommy Tucker stood beside her, rubbing chafed palms and looking her carefully over with a pair of serious eyes.

"I don't think you look like Mother Goose. You look more like an orphan."

The Deputy laughed again. "But Mother Goose was an orphan. Did you ever hear of her having a father or mother?"

The little boy shook his head. "You can be Mother Goose if you say so. What do you do?"

"Lots of things." The Deputy considered the frail little figure carefully, "This time I've come to play with you."

One of the groups of children had left their play and was gathering around the tree and the stranger. The Deputy turned to them for suggestions, "What does Tommy Tucker like best to play?"

"Oh, he don't ever play much."

"He gets tired awful easy."

"He ain't very strong, are you, Tommy?"

"Guess I'm strong enough for six." The Deputy detected aggression in the voice with fear back of it.

"Been sick much?" she asked.

"No. Never!" Tommy lied deliberately. Furthermore he knew that the person who had called herself Mother Goose was well aware that he lied. And yet he set his teeth together on that lie and stiffened his chin against all denying of it.

"Aw, Tommy!" One of his playfellows eyed him triumphantly. "What will Miss Dobb say when she knows you've been fibbing again?" The boy turned to the Deputy, eager to tell. "They've punished Tommy every way you could think for telling that fib. He's sick an awful lot—has colds and coughs his head 'most off sometimes."

The Deputy started to reach for one of Tommy's hands, whereupon he put them behind his back for safe keeping and looked straight at her with eyes that were hardly recognizable. "I ain't—hardly—ever sick!"

The children shouted with delight. This was great fun for them.

"Say, don't Tommy beat all?"

"Betcha he'd stick to it if Miss Dobb licked him for it."

"Tommy is just crazy to get adopted. That's why he sticks to it he ain't never sick. He knows nobody wants to adopt a sick little boy."

The Deputy turned her attention from Tommy to the children, "Look here, anyone know how to play Pom-pom-pull-away?"

No one did. She bundled them quickly into the centre of the playground and started them all at it. When the game was in full swing, she dropped out and came back to the tree. Tommy Tucker had climbed it again. "Hello, Tommy Tucker!" she called softly.

"Hello, Mother Goose, m'am," came in a sagging little voice.

"I believe I know someone who wants to adopt you, Tommy Tucker."

The effect of her announcement might have been fatal, had the Deputy not been standing where she was to break the fall. The little boy catapulted out of the tree and would have landed on his head with no uncertain force had he not been reversed in time and turned right side up. He stood blinking his eyes for a moment and looking skeptical. "'Dopted by a real mother?"

"And a real father."

Two thin arms fastened quickly about her like tentacles. All the urge that can go into a human voice spoke in his. "Let's go right now! Let's not wait for supper or sleeping or nothing!"

It took considerable tact and manœuvring to explain that not only must they sleep first but sleep twice. Also, there was a matter of shopping to be done—a new suit—and new boots and—a sweater.

"Go to a store?" questioned Tommy. The Deputy nodded.

Tommy nestled very close. "Could I buy something and have it all wrapped up?"

"What did you want to buy?"

"Something for a mother."

His eyes were flaming with excitement; even his cheeks caught a faint tinge. "When they come here they always brings things wrapped up. The aunts bring them sometimes—and the half-mothers. I want to bring a present, just like that."

While supper was being laid, the Deputy went into the Matron's office and collected facts about Tommy. They had discovered nothing seriously wrong with him. He was just sickly. He had had nothing and nobody belonging to him in all his six years. The Matron couldn't remember that anyone had come to see him or had brought him a present, except, of course, the regular presents that came every year on the Christmas tree. He had been as happy as "that kind" of a child could be, she thought, but he didn't care much about playing with other children.

"He's the good kind that's never any trouble and gets left alone," the Matron laughed good-naturedly. "Maybe that's what ails Tommy—his kind will take a lot of loving and fussing over."

Afterwards, standing in the dining-room and watching the children file in for supper, the Deputy looked eagerly for the frail little figure in its faded blue coveralls. Grace was said and before the "Amen" was out, one of the children piped up: "There's comp'ny. Ain't Tommy goin' to sing for his supper?"

(To be continued.)

Human Electric Waves.

Professor Skripsky, of the Leningrad Electro-Technical Institute, who has already proved that the human body is able to radiate electro-magnetic waves, has succeeded in constructing an apparatus for capturing and measuring these waves, which, according to Professor Skripsky, will enable scientists to give "electrical characteristics" to every individual.

"Electro-magnetic waves are peculiar to every human being, and a change in them depends on the state of health and the frame of mind," says Professor Skripsky. Details of his invention are as yet kept a great secret.

Leningrad scientists describe Professor Skripsky's invention as "the greatest service in the domain of biology and physiology."

Criminal Colds.

For a jury to acquit a prisoner on the ground that he was suffering from a cold when he committed a crime sounds ridiculous. But before long this may be accepted as a legitimate plea by even the sternest judge.

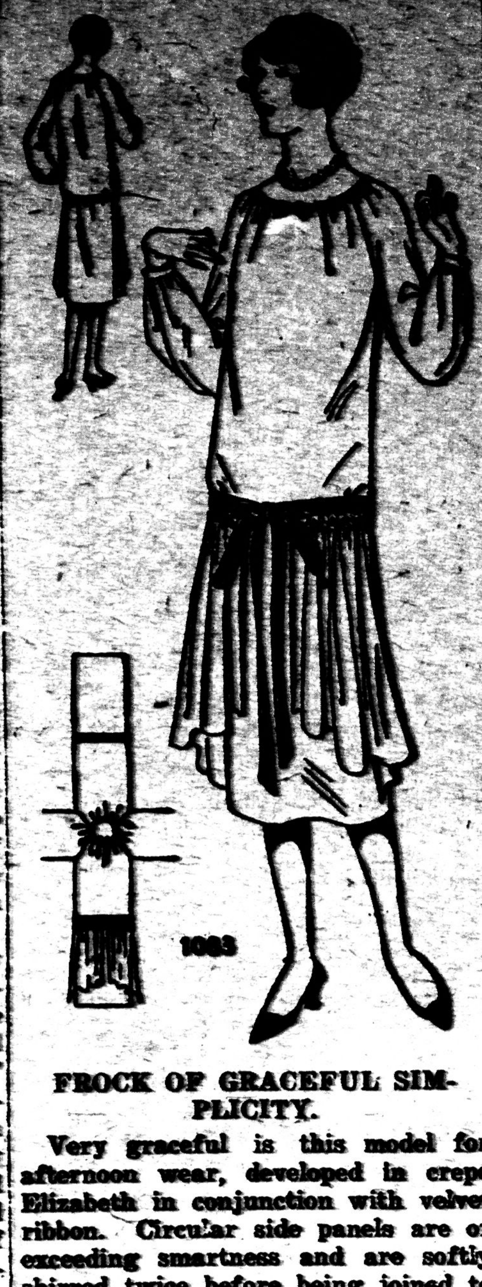
According to a famous doctor, infection of the nose and cavities of the skull by cold germs often results in confusion and lack of memory. Mental disturbances of this nature cause a person to act abnormally.

A woman stole a ring from a friend's dressing-table. Everyone thought she was a common thief. It was proved later that she was suffering from a severe cold and was incapable of distinguishing between her own and other people's property.

But His Guests Did.

"So you had a house full during the holidays? Did you have a fine time?"

"No; but our guests did."



FROCK OF GRACEFUL SIMPLICITY.

Very graceful is this model for afternoon wear, developed in crepe Elizabeth in conjunction with velvet ribbon. Circular side panels are of exceeding smartness and are softly shirred twice before being joined to the front. The peasant sleeves, a distinctly noteworthy style feature, have their soft fulness gathered in narrow bands at the wrists. The diagram pictures the simple design of pattern No. 1083, which is in sizes 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust. Size 38 bust requires 4⅝ yards 36 or 40 inch material. Price 20 cents.

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HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS.

Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully), for each number, and address your order to Pattern Dept., Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Patterns sent by return mail.

An Eerie Mountain.

Dr. J. Norman Collie, Professor of Organic Chemistry at University College, London, recently said that he had many adventures when mountaineering, but he experienced the most intense fear of his lifetime when, thirty-five years ago, he was climbing Ben Macdhui, Aberdeenshire, which is 4,296ft. high and the second highest mountain in Great Britain. He was returning from the summit in a mist when he heard as of footsteps behind him.

He listened and heard the noise again, but could see nothing. As he walked on and the eerie "crunch, crunch" sounded behind him, he was seized with terror. He took to his heels and ran staggering blindly among the boulders for four or five miles. On no account would he ever venture to the top of Ben Macdhui alone.

He had since learned that another climber once saw a man who looked to be almost 10ft. high wandering round the top of the mountain at midnight.

A man who lived on the slope of the mountain, when told the stories, replied that "it would have been the big grey man they had seen."

The Joy of Living.

It [illegible] a [illegible] to [illegible] any one [illegible] [illegible] that it is fun to live. [illegible] those inclined to take the dark and gloomy [illegible] have fortified themselves with an armory of reasons for their [illegible] philosophy.

Thoreau in "Walden" reminds us that the present is the meeting place of two eternities: the past and the future. To some the thought is inspiring. It is not so with the pessimist. For him, history and prophecy alike mean the interminable, lamentable progress from bad to worse. He tries to tell you that if you are cheerful and hopeful you dwell in a fool's paradise.

The sane, temperate, normal and laughter-loving bulk of the race must always carry a burden of the spiritually or physically enfeebled, those who are down on their luck, full of complaints and symptoms, hanging very heavily on the good health and blithe humor of natures more robust.

Because the chronic joy-dispellers and gloom-bringers who afflict society refuse to look up from the mire to the blue sky, that does not prove the sunlight nonexistent. It only shows that they are bound to be disconsolate and want to nurse their grievance. The chief indoor sport of certain folk is to qualify for leading roles in a perpetual enactment of "Les Miserables."

But it is perfectly obvious to any one willing to use his eyes that some of the most resolutely or naturally cheerful persons have the smallest number of artificial aids to happiness outside of their own dispositions.

Their joy of living has no relation to the income tax they pay. They are "as having nothing yet possessing all things." A symbol of happiness might be a field hand in the South with almost nothing save the gift of song and the sense of humor.

The Potato's Progress.

It is generally accepted witohut question that the potato was first introduced into Europe by Sir Walter Raleigh. There is a story, too, of how his gardener, to whom the tubers were given for experiment, disgusted by the sour fruit that appeared, gladly obeyed his order to dig the plants up, only to discover with surprise that where he had planted one tuber there were now several.

In Germany it is Sir Francis Drake who figures as the legendary discoverer of the potato. In Offenburg (Baden) there is an imposing statue in his honor, on which the nabigator appears holding in his hand a potato plant with tubers attached.

The value of the potato as a food was first recognized in Ireland, where soon after its introduction in the seventeenth century it became the main food crop of the poorer classes. Apparently the first county in England to adopt the cultivation of the potato extensively was Lancashire, but as late as 1770 it was not grown as a farm crop in the southwest of England.

The cultivation of the potato in Germany (according to the Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture) dates from 1774, when Frederick the Great set himself the task of imposing its use on his people. It was some years later that the cultivation was introduced into France.

Gold Ore by Air.

To reduce a journey of more than a month to one of only a few hours, and to save transport costs by so doing, is the object of an aerial expedition which has just been dispatched into the lonely regions of Eastern Siberia.

The scheme, which it is proposed shall be working early in 1926, is to operate a regular air-freight line, with multi-engined metal aeroplanes, between the Aldan goldfields and the Amur railway.

At present the carriage of ore in packs along forest-paths from the goldfields to the railway takes thirty-five days. By aeroplane the journey could be made in five hours, and the cost of aerial transport, it is reckoned, should be slightly less than that of the present method.

FAMOUS FUNERALS

The funeral of a King or Queen of England is always a grand and solemn occasion, but the crowd who, in spite of the weather, watched the funeral pageant of the late Queen Mother were drawn rather by real love and respect than by mere curiosity.

This was also the case when, fifteen years ago, King Edward passed to his rest. The lying-in-state had been arranged to afford the public an opportunity to pay the last tribute of affection, and a queue was formed along the Embankment westwards from Westminster.

Nine Miles Long.

So fast did it grow that in a little while it was no less than four miles long, the people being packed eight, ten, and even twelve deep. The crowds attending the funeral itself have never been numbered, but it is supposed that they approached two millions. They certainly exceeded the previous record for London, on the occasion of the great Duke of Wellington's funeral on November 18th, 1852. On that day a million and a half people thronged the streets along which the procession passed.

In Pall Mall alone one hundred and twenty thousand people were gathered. The funeral-car was dragged by twelve horses, and so great was the length of the procession that after the head started, it was an hour and a half before the car moved, and still another half-hour before the extreme rear moved.

The funeral of General Grant, President of the United States, was nine miles long, and fifty thousand people took part in it, thirty thousand being soldiers. Fully three million people looked on. The head of the procession reached the grave three and a half hours before the end arrived.

A Hero's Home-coming.

One of the greatest of funeral pageants and one of the most interesting was that of the great Nelson. His body was brought up the River Thames in a procession of seventeen barges, the one carrying the coffin being rowed by forty-six seamen from the Victory. The land procession from the Admiralty to St. Paul's included ten thousand soldiers.

In strong contrast to such great funerals was that of the late Prince Consort, who died in 1861. By his own wish, he was privately buried at Windsor.

In 1911 the great Lafayette, one of the bestknown of music-hall performers, was burned to death in the fire at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh. His funeral drew together a crowd such as has rarely been seen in the streets of the Scottish capital.

Tribute of the Trains.

One of the greatest railway ma[illegible] nates in American history was th[illegible] late E. H. Harriman. When [illegible] buried, in 1909, a preconcerted [illegible] was given, and every train [illegible] whole sixty-four thousand miles [illegible] which he had controlled came to a simultaneous stop. From the arid plains of Texas to the flowery slopes of California all railway traffic on a vast network of lines remained at rest for ten minutes.

The most expensive of all modern funerals was that of the Emperor Mutsu-hito of Japan. The grave was made on the top of a steep hill on the imperial estate near Kioto, and a special cableway had to be constructed to raise the enormously heavy coffin up the precipitous slope. The total cost of the many ceremonies involved was no less than $1,000,000.

This is more than four times the cost of any British funeral, of which the most costly was that of the late King Edward. This cost $202,500. The funeral of Queen Victoria cost $185,000.

A sum of $30,000 was spent in flowers alone for the funeral of the murdered French President Carnot, and probably nearly as much when the great Russian novelist, Tolstoy, was buried.

Easy.

Fish—"I don't see why they make all this fuss about swimming the English Channel. I could do that without half trying."

Grown-ups.

"Clara," said the mother of a little five-year-old miss, who was entertaining a couple of neighboring girls of her own age, "why don't you play something instead of sitting still and looking miserable?"

"Why, mamma, we is playin'," was the reply; "we's playin' that we's grown-up women."

Arrested Time.

Palmer—"Did you say you couldn't arrest the flight of time?"

Johnson—"No one can."

Palmer—"Well, this morning, when I was coming down town, I stopped a minute."

OTTAWA AVIATOR DECORATED FOR EXPLOITS AGAINST THE RIFFS

In the above photograph General Gouraud, the military Governor of Paris, is seen pinning the Cross of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor on the uniform of Major Sussan, the Ottawa airman, who fought with the American escadrille on the French side in Morocco. Others in the group of aviators are Major Granville Pollock, Capt. Cousins, Col. Kirkwood and Col. Sparks.