

"Quick!" cried Antoinette happily, donning an apron and going behind the bar. "Arouse yourself, Poehard!"

Papa Poehard forgot his troubles instantly, busy with the orders, carrying glasses of beer and white wine, dashing in and out of the wine-shop.

"Two books, little one!" he cried. "But it is a fine tree, now that it has come. Observe its size, little chicken."

"It is a little pet of a tree," said Antoinette happily. She seemed to have quite forgotten her jealousy, and Papa Poehard had no intention of reminding her of it.

It was an event in the *rue des Anges*, the coming of Papa Poehard's tree. Every one had heard Papa Poehard declaim against the government that withheld his tree, and the planting of a tree is, in itself, a great event. The shopkeepers' wives came from behind their desks to have a look at the planting; heads and shoulders protruded from windows, and around the dead tree itself a crowd gathered, with Caffiard — important, stern and yet kind — urging one and all to give the laborers a chance.

Up must first come the grating that surrounded the dead tree — an iron grating in three segments — and the moment it was up, Caffiard had his hands full; for forty gamins dived for the soft soil. One found sou pieces there, sometimes. When Caffiard had driven the little rascals away, the workmen with their long handled spades began scooping out great cores of earth, which they deposited carefully on the tarpaulin spread on the walk. When the roots were reached and a mass of mould discovered clinging to them, the excitement was intense. "There, you see? That's what did it!" "Rotting! The subsoil is like iron. The water could not run off." "The poor tree was drowned." "The foresters should put a bag of charcoal in the hole. That stops decay." "On the contrary, they will mix sand with the earth."

Wrapped in sacking, root and stem, the tree was lowered into the place prepared for it, as if it were something precious, as indeed it was, until its roots rested on the soft bed of straw and manure. Like a precious thing, the tree was carefully bedded with soft soil, each root being carefully placed in a comfortable position. The workmen knew the value of the tree, as indeed all Parisians know; for the law throws a hundred protecting arms around a tree, until tree-slaughter has become as terrible as man-slaughter. Wetting the earth as they filled it in, the workmen planted the tree, and the bagging from the roots was thrown

upon the truck. The spades were stowed away, the grating replaced, the tarpaulin rolled up, the dead tree hoisted upon the truck, the pavement swept, and the last workman unwound the sacking from the trunk of the tree. The gamins departed, the crowd dispersed, the shopkeepers returned to their work, heads and shoulders disappeared from the upper windows, the gentleman with the silky beard paid his account and walked on, and the *rue des Anges* was quiet again.

"Little chicken," said Papa Poehard, "already our tree is bringing custom. Five francs, forty centimes, hey? Not bad."

"You can thank me, Poehard," said Antoinette, and volubly she explained how she had gone directly to the manager of the municipal nurseries. She related every word she had said, and every word he had said. "And there was our tree on the truck, ready to be sent who knows where. 'Very well, M'sieu!' I said, 'that is the tree I want. You do not wish me to remain here for ever, I suppose? Then give me that tree.' And, not wanting me to remain for ever, he gave orders. I walked beside our tree all the way home."

"You are a remarkable woman, Antoinette," Papa Poehard said. "And such a tree! But step outside a moment. It is a glorious tree."

Antoinette leaned across the bar and patted Papa Poehard on the cheek, and then came from behind the bar and stood in the doorway, looking up into the green branches. Papa Poehard stood beside her.

"Hey?" he said. "What's that, then? Has some infernal rascal already—"

He crossed the walk in the gathering dusk and stared at the trunk of the tree.

Antoinette took one step to follow him; but he turned.

"It is nothing!" he said hastily. "Mere imagination. I imagined a scar. Hah! I am starving. Let us have dinner, my pet."

"But what did you think you saw?" asked Antoinette, refusing to be dragged into the shop. She put Papa Poehard aside with one strong arm. He was too agitated, too incoherent, to have seen nothing. She walked straight to the tree and bent down and looked. There, cut into the tender bark, was a heart, in outline, and in the heart were carved the initials "H-P." But this was not all. Papa Poehard's initials did not stand alone. Beneath them Antoinette saw this: "& R-D."

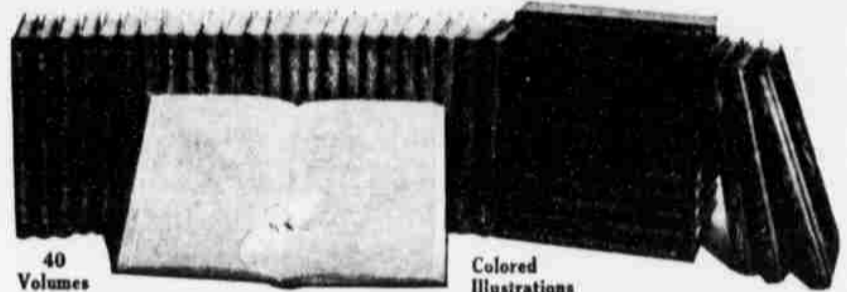
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THE LORD of ALL

by Edwin Markham

Milton, you did them wrong the hour you sang
The Lord's Nativity: the fair young gods,
Scorched by your scorn and stricken by your rods,
Were loved of Him who took the mortal pang.
He knew their cliffs that shone, their wells that sprang,
And all the wonder of their purple clime;
And as his feet descended into Time,
Their voices on the hills and sea-reefs rang.

So the young gods of Hellas knew the hour
When life's bough was to break in sudden flower;
And in the hush they knelt without a word
Beside the Stall; for in the little one
They saw Apollo come again, and heard
His name cried in the porches of the sun.