



Tommy O'Dowd's Christmas.



HE shadows of Christmas eve were falling over the city as George Thomas, a New York city mechanic, stepped down on the sidewalk in Park place on his way homeward. His earning capacity was \$18 per week, but because of the prevailing hard times his income had been reduced to \$12. This sum, with some little change, comprised his cash capital. As he buttoned his coat about his neck he reflected ruefully that this was a very small sum with which to meet his expenses and to buy Christmas presents. The wind blew briskly down Park place as he walked toward Broadway, thinking of the coming rent day, the empty coal bin, and the new dress he had promised his wife. His thoughts were saddened as he remembered that his little boy would have been nearly five years old had he lived until Christmas. There was a sense of constriction in his throat as he thought of last year's Christmas tree, bright with spangles, irradiated with light and whitened with popcorn balls. Then against the walls of memory stood out clear and distinct the figure of his little boy standing in his white nightgown in the gay dawn of Christmas day, with flushed cheeks and eyes dancing with delight, looking at the marvelous Christmas tree.

On Park row, near the corner of Chambers street, there was a toy store of most wonderful variety. As Thomas came down the street, his mind intent on his own misery, his gaze fell upon one of the most pathetic figures he had ever seen. Before the window of the toy store stood a little boy, whose nose was flattened against the pane. His body shivered with the cold, but his soul was aflame with desire, which was expressed in his hungry eyes. Thomas estimated his age at 5 years. He wore an old coat, which had evidently been made for a boy twice his age. Pins usurped the place of buttons on the garment. His feet were thrust into a pair of yellow gaiters, assiduous wear affording excellent but aerial ventilation. His trousers, held up by pieces of string, were frayed and windowed in a manner suggestive of the fact that the boy had been dandled



"SAY, MISTER, LIF ME UP!" upon poverty's knee. Thomas took in all these details as he stopped beside the boy and watched him. The incandescent expression in the little face, the pinched nostrils, the blue circles under the eyes, and the wolfish look on the wan features faded away as the child turned to Thomas and said: "Say, mister, lif me up so I kin see 'andy cigarettes!" Thomas lifted the boy in his strong arm so that his range of vision included all the Tantalus delights of the shop.

Tommy O'Dowd's Christmas. A lot o' money, ain't it? Hully gee! Look at de dinky little tin sojer! Ain't he a corker! Mister, is your little boy goin' to hav' a Krismus tree?" "I'm afraid not this year sonny," Thomas replied. "My little boy is in Heaven."



"Where's dat? Across de river?" "Yes, it is across the river," replied Thomas, gravely, putting the little fellow down upon the sidewalk. "What is your name?" he continued. "Tommy O'Dowd," replied the boy, "and I live in Middle alley."

"THE LITTLE FELLOW SAT UP-RIGHT." "velt till ye gets to Cherry en den 'y are in Middle alley."

"I hope you will excuse me, Mrs. O'Dowd," said Thomas, "but I saw your little boy looking in a toy store window and thinking he might be lost I came home with him."

more mysterious whispering. Then Mrs. O'Dowd flew downstairs again to get a bundle of kindling wood. It was well that Tommy was a sound sleeper, as the feeble forms of shadowy figures and the rustle of papers would have disturbed him.

It was 11:30 when Thomas arrived at home and greeted his anxious wife. When they retired Thomas said: "Molly, set the alarm for 4 o'clock tomorrow, and get your wraps ready, for I intend to take you along to help play a joke on Tommy O'Dowd."

She plied him with questions, he gave her evasive replies. At 5 o'clock Thomas and his wife arrived at Middle alley. "Is he awake?" he asked anxiously of Mrs. O'Dowd, who met them at the door.

"No; the saints be praised, he's asleep in' like the dead. Come here at the dure and watch."

The door had been thrown wide open, but Mrs. O'Dowd had hung her Sunday shawl over the opening. Behind the folds of this garment the three persons watched and waited. The blinds had been carefully closed, so that not a ray of sunlight came into the room. Three kerosene lamps were blazing with light to their utmost capacity. It was painfully still in the room, and by listening intently Thomas thought he could hear the gentle breathing of the little boy.

At 9 o'clock Thomas was walking up Roosevelt street with eager footsteps. He stopped at a grocery store and made a purchase, then hurried up into Park Row again. The toy store man was putting up his shutters, but Thomas prevailed on him to go inside, and at 10 o'clock he was back in Middle alley again.

Freddie—I want a watch for Christmas. Colewigger—You are rather young to have a watch. Freddie—I'm as old as the little boy next door, and he can take his watch all to pieces.

THE HOPE OF THE CONTINENT. Western Canada the "Bread Basket of the Empire." The attention directed to the wheat fields of western Canada during the past year has caused thousands of settlers from different parts of the United States to make their homes there during the past few months.

The New York correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger says that a few days ago ex-Senator Hill dined with a friend in a public restaurant in Albany. During the meal seven demagogues from different parts of the state entered, and seeing the ex-senator, walked up to him and shook hands. In each instance Hill asked: "What was the matter with the democratic vote in your county?" and each time the reply came: "Too much Crokerism."

General Andrew T. Reynolds, who died recently at Grand Rapids, Mich., was the oldest Knight Templar in the world, and assisted in suppressing the nullification rebellion in South Carolina in 1832, afterward serving through both the Mexican and civil wars.

Matthew Arnold has recently been quoted as saying that Franklin's "triumphant common sense" failed him when he proposed to rewrite the Bible in a style better suited to modern tastes than the English of the King James version. But this was only one of the philosopher's pleasantries. Franklin the humorist stands out very plainly in the December installment of Mr. Paul L. Ford's Century papers on his "many-sidings"—not least in the drinking song reproduced in facsimile of his handwriting.

Why isn't a woman who makes balloon ascensions an air-ess?

Tarring and feathering was once a legal punishment for theft. It is said to be found in the statutes of both the World's Supply of Wheat. An English expert claims that the wheat producing soil of the world is unequal to the strain that will be put upon it. Even now when the food supply is ample, thousands die because their disordered stomachs fail to digest the food they take.

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