

# Tom and the High Cost of Christmas Gifts

by De Lysle Ferree Cass

WHEN Tom left the farm to go to the city to make his fortune he did it contrary to the ominous head-shaking and prophecies of disaster of all the neighbors. Even his father and mother, with past years of toil rapidly beginning to tell upon them, were pessimistic of his chances of success, nor could they resist expressing their forebodings.

The old folks loved their boy too well to reproach him for his desertion now in the first flush of his young manhood, but their hearts did ache at thought of the separation.

"You'll soon get tired of all that hurly-burly there in the city, Tom," his old father told him. "And when you do, I want you always to remember that we've still got a place for you back here at the old homestead. It mayn't be as fine and showy as lots you'll see there in the city, but it's more the sort that the good Lord intended you for. Ma and I are hoping the best for you, son, but when you do find out that your fortune's not away off there—just pocket your pride and come back here to us who love you."

So young Tom left the farm with shining eyes and a high heart and adventured into the great, far-away city in quest of fame and fortune.

How he fared there and all the sorry disappointments that repeatedly overtook him during that year of absence would be a long and harrowing story to tell. He chased his rainbow to its end, yet found the fabled pot of gold not there as he had so confidently and blatantly expected.

Tom made applications for all sorts of office positions only to find himself quickly rejected because of his lack of experience in those specific lines.

"Well, anyway, I'm young and husky and used to hard manual labor," Tom consoled himself. "I can at least get a job with a contracting gang, as a painter, or plumber's assistant, or teamster. That will suffice to keep me going for a while until the sort of position I want turns up."

But even in those lines of work the green country boy found himself suddenly brought up short against a blank wall. He had no references as to past city employment and nobody would hire him after once finding out that he had no union card.

Huddled in his shabby overcoat on a street corner in the squalid section of the city—the icy wind whistling around him and biting through his threadbare garments—poor Tom stood on the evening before Christmas, wondering where he might find a shelter in which to sleep that night without freezing.

Just how long he had stood there, shivering in the chill wind on the street corner—bitterness against the great, unfeeling city rankling in his heart—Tom did not know. He was startled from his moody reverie by hearing a hoarse, wheedling voice at his very elbow, saying what was intended as a confidential tone:

"How'd y'like a nice hot feed and some coin to jingle in yer pants, bo? Ain't hungry, are ya?"

Whirling about, Tom saw that his accoster was an under-sized, burly fellow with a tough, truculent visage and hands shoved deep into the side pockets of his coat. He wore a battered cap with the visor pulled low down over his eyes and spat malevolently upon the sidewalk each time before he spoke.

"How'd y'like the idea, huh?" he reiterated in his raucous, grating voice, sidling closer as he spoke and casting a wary eye up and down the nearly deserted, gloomy, wind-swept street.

Tom regarded him with distaste and undisguised mistrust. He looked like a typical thug. But misery cannot be too fastidious about the company it keeps. Finally Tom scowled blackly and answered:

"What's that to you, anyway?" "Well, you're outta luck, ain't cha, pal? Yer on yer uppers, stony broke and maybe with an empty belly, too, huh, bo? Well, I guessed that much. I ain't blind yet, I ain't! Well, I need a pal for a little job tonight and we both can make a lotta jack out of it, see?"

"You—you mean—burglary?" Tom muttered hesitantly, with an involuntary contraction of his heart.

"Humph! Not anything like safe-cracking or breaking into a house. I don't. Too many people staying up with the kids over Christmas trees tonight. I ain't keen on takin' fool chances like that, I'm tellin' ya! Naw, this I wantcha for is something soft; safe and easy as falling off a log. You know the big prices people are willing to pay for real booze since the count went dry, don't cha? Well, right here I know a certain warehouse 's got 20 cases of whiskey stored in 'em. Real bonded stuff! Reckman is an old pal o' mine willing to let us swipe it if

we'll split on the coin we get afterwards. I've got another guy with a flivver that's ready to meet us about 2 o'clock this morning to haul away the stuff as fast as we pass it up to him through the alley windows. We've got it all framed for a fake capture and tying up of our other pal, the night watchman, so that the bulls can't get wise to him. We're willing to split four ways on the swag if y' wanta go in on it with us. Whatcha say now, bo, huh? Safe and easy as falling off a log!"

The sinister appearance of the ruffian repelled Tom, and the very thought of the crime they contemplated struck him with fright. It meant jail, disgrace, if they were caught.

"But I—I never have done anything like that in my life," he stammered weakly, teeth chattering in the biting wind. "It would be criminal. The whisky doesn't belong to us. It would be illegal for us even to try to sell it afterwards."

"Pah!" spat the ugly-visaged man, sneeringly. "You look pretty, a bird like youse, talking that way about what's lawful and all that! Lots that these rich guys have cared how you got along since you came to town, from the looks of you! They've got fine, warm homes and coin and everything. Wotta they care whether poor bums like us have to go hungry or freeze in the gutter on Christmas eve? Why should you care about them when they don't give a rap about you? You've got to go on living, ain't cha, huh?"

Tom hunched his shuddering shoulders against the wind, trembling as much because of his own moral irresolution as from the terrible cold.

"Well, bo, how about it? Are y' on or are y' still so almighty particular



"How'd Y'Like the Idea, Huh?"

about how y' handle the stuff belonging to all them rich guys?"

"God!" groaned poor Tom in the abyss of his wretchedness. "Yes, I'll do it! I will! I will!"

The other clapped him roughly on the shoulder with a saturnine leer and attempt at jocular fellowship.

"Well, I thought cha would," he rasped hoarsely. "We'll meet cha at the corner by the lumber yard at 1:30. Don't you fall to be there now!"

"I won't! I'll be there all right!" Tom muttered brokenly. Already in his cringing soul he felt like the thief he had pledged himself to become. Oh heaven, if only—

To kill time until the appointed hour, he dug his numb hands deeper down into his pockets and wandered aimlessly on. He had no particular objective in mind save only the need to keep moving lest he freeze or go mad with the strain of waiting. He shrank from letting himself think of the deed to which he was about to be party.

Involuntarily his dragging footsteps took him back into the more brilliantly lighted retail shopping district, where the crowds already had thinned, hurrying home to their families and happy, expectant kiddies with the holiday celebration in mind.

The hours dragged slowly by. It came near the hour for the stores to close. But still there was time, if poor Tom had only had money, to have rushed in, bought the presents he wanted for the old folks and children, and caught the midnight train back to the country. He easily could reach there by morning and appear as a joyous surprise to them—

But ah! Why drive himself to distraction by thinking of that when there was no chance that—

And right then, suddenly, he espied it lying there, almost at his very feet—a big, fat wallet, with not a person nearer than a hundred yards of him. Plainly someone had lost it in their mad haste to get home.

Tom stopped and scooped it up like a flash. Around the corner he surreptitiously examined it. Bills—both green and yellow, of large denominations—they fairly stuffed it! There were seven hundred dollars or more!—a small fortune to the miserable boy who had not even eaten for fourteen hours. Money! Money! Money! Far more than he possibly could need even in his most extravagant dreams. With a gurgling cry, Tom stuffed the wad of bills into his trousers pocket, threw away the fine leather purse and made a mad dash for the nearest department store.

No need now to keep his sinister, criminal appointment—no more necessity for—

But the most gladome feature of young Tom's homecoming that next day was his blushing announcement to the old folks that he had had enough of the big city; that he had come home to stay, as they had prayed he would.

# BOY SCOUTS



(Conducted by National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.)

## SCOUTS MEET VERDUN HERO

The Boy Scouts of America were honored by being selected to greet Gen. Robert Georges Nivelles, former commander-in-chief of the French army and famous hero of Verdun, upon his arrival in this country recently to attend the Pilgrim Tercentenary celebration. A hundred and thirty scouts took part in the reception.

At the French line pier five picked Eagle Scouts met the general as he came off the steamer which brought him to New York. They were with Dr. Charles S. MacFarland, field scout commissioner, who is the general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, on whose invitation Gen. Nivelles came to this country. From the pier he was escorted to the Waldorf hotel where five troops of boy scouts, a troop from each of the boroughs of Greater New York, carrying American flags and a French flag fifteen feet long, were lined up at salute and were reviewed by General Nivelles.

The scouts were greatly interested in the blazing star of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor which the gray-haired general wore on his army uniform. His eighteen military honors other than the Legion of Honor were represented simply by five rows of ribbon bars across his left breast.

A diminutive thirteen-year-old Manhattan scout, Frank Tobin, who wore a tri-color ribbon was singled out by General Nivelles, who had him come forward to shake hands while in very good English he told the assembled scouts how pleased he was to be welcomed by representatives of this great organization whose Jamboree party of 300 picked scouts last summer gave an exhibition of scouting in Paris which opened his eyes and those of many other men of affairs there as to the great value of scout training in the formation of sturdy and useful manhood.

## GEN. WOOD PRAISES SCOUTS.

In the recent Boy Scouts of America essay contest on the subject of, fire prevention Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, commander of the central division of the army, acted as chairman of the board of judges. He took keen interest in reading the essays, which, because he was unable to leave Fort Sheridan, Ill., were taken to him from New York by a representative of the National Board of Fire Underwriters, under whose auspices the contest was conducted among the entire membership of the boy scouts in the United States and its possessions. At the conclusion of his work Major General Wood issued the following statement:

"I cannot tell you with how much interest and appreciation I read the essays from the boy scouts' contest with reference to fire prevention. The idea of this contest was a fine one. It served to bring to the attention of the boy scouts throughout the country a most important field of effort, namely, that of vigilance in measures looking to fire prevention and the dissemination of information concerning the sources of danger and what can be done to prevent. The fundamental cause of fires is carelessness, combined with a certain amount of ignorance. If the boy scouts take up the campaign in behalf of fire prevention and speak as intelligently as they have written I feel that we shall soon reduce the danger from fire."

## PUPILS WRITE SCOUT ESSAYS.

Great interest is being manifested in all large cities in the experiment made by the board of education of New York city in making the writing of an essay on the subject "What Boy Scouts Can Do for Greater New York" a part of the regular classroom work on one day for the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades of all elementary public schools. To make the preparation of the material and the writing, and especially the study of the purposes of scouting more effective and attractive, the work was made competitive, with the following prizes:

For the best essay in each school in Greater New York a bronze medal, for the best in each school district, a silver medal, for the best in each of the five boroughs, a gold medal, with a special grand prize for the best essay in the entire city, all prizes given by the Boy Scouts of America.

"This will give an admirable opportunity for the principals to discover the effectiveness of the teaching of practical civics in practical ways, and will focus fresh interest on the vital essentials of good citizenship."

## GOOD TURNS FOR BOY SCOUTS.

Camp Kiwanis, built by the Kiwanis club of Saginaw, Mich., for the boy scouts of that city, has one of the finest log cabins in the country, plans for which are being sought from many cities by other clubs who want to boom this big boy movement.

Troop 12, Spokane, Wash., provided clothes and food as needed by two poor families, gave \$10 to Near East relief and furnished two scouts daily for two weeks to run errands for the Social Service bureau.

# The Kitchen Cabinet

(© 1920, Western Newspaper Union.)  
(© 1920, Western Newspaper Union.)

"The memories dear that come to us at quiet hour,  
The dreams we have that do not all come true,  
The songs we love, a book in shaded bower,  
These priceless gifts are all for me, for you."

## SEASONABLE FOODS.

The following is a different way of serving ham, making a dish which is a whole meal, served in one dish.



**Baked Ham With Vegetables.**—Take a slice of ham cut an inch thick; place in a casserole and around it place two Bermuda onions sliced, five tomatoes sliced on the same amount of cooked tomato, one-half cupful of water. Cover and bake in a moderate oven one hour.

**Spiced Bread-Crumb Pudding.**—Take one cupful each of bread crumbs, sour milk and brown sugar, one-fourth of a cupful of shortening, one-half cupful of flour, one-half teaspoonful of cinnamon, one-fourth teaspoonful of cloves, two tablespoonfuls of molasses, one teaspoonful of soda and three-fourths of a cupful of raisins. Soak the bread crumbs in the sour milk one-half hour. Cream the shortening and sugar together and add the molasses and flour sifted with the spices and soda. Add the raisins, then add to the bread crumbs and milk. Pour into a buttered baking dish and bake in a slow oven 45 minutes. Serve hot or cold. This recipe will serve eight.

**Chestnut Salad.**—Shell one pound of chestnuts, boil until tender and remove the skins, being careful not to break the nuts. While hot pour over the nuts one-fourth of a cupful of French dressing and set away to marinate for two hours. Add one tablespoonful of pate de foies gras to one-half cupful of mayonnaise. Mix with the chestnuts and serve on lettuce. Serve very cold.

**Potato Dumplings.**—Grate potatoes and drain in a cheesecloth; squeeze out the liquid and let it settle. Drain off carefully and add the starch which has settled to the grated potato. Season; make into balls the size of walnuts; cook in boiling water 15 minutes. Serve with hot bacon fat or browned butter poured over them. These may be served with crisped rolls of bacon as a garnish for a luncheon dish.

## GOOD THINGS FOR THE FAMILY TABLE.

It is so easy to prepare some good conserve from a can or two of left-over fruit such as peaches and pineapple, and the combination of flavor makes something very attractive to the palate. Of course this conserve may be made of the fresh fruit and be still better. Take three pounds of peaches, one small pineapple or the equivalent in canned fruit, one orange, one pint of water. Cook together until well blended. Pare the peaches and cook until soft, if fresh are used. Mash or rub through the colander, add pineapple, cut in bits, the orange, rind and pulp, discarding seeds, and cook until thickened slightly. Add three-quarters as much sugar as fruit and cook as thick as marmalade. If canned fruit is used the sugar can be lessened.

**Hungarian Cauliflower.**—Cook a cauliflower whole in boiling salted water until tender. Lift out carefully, place in a deep dish, sprinkle with buttered crumbs and pour over a cupful of rich sour cream. Bake in a moderate oven until the crumbs are brown.

**Cranberry Punch.**—Take one pint of cranberries, one and one-half quarts of water, one and one-half cupfuls of sugar, four oranges and two lemons. Cook the cranberries, water and sugar until the berries are soft; strain and cool. When cold add the strained orange and lemon juice and freeze until partly stiff.

**Ham Pie.**—Take five large potatoes, sliced, one pound of ham, uncooked, two medium sized carrots. Place a layer of the sliced potatoes in the bottom of a baking dish, grate one carrot over the potatoes, cover with one-half of the ham, cut in serving-sized pieces; place another layer of the potatoes and grated carrot; cover with the ham. Pour boiling water to half fill the dish. Cover and bake until the potatoes are soft. It will take about one hour in a hot oven. The last fifteen minutes uncover and add more water if needed.

**Cheese Cake.**—Take one cupful of sweet fat, two and one-half cupfuls of flour, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, four egg yolks, one-half cupful of sugar, and one-half cupful of rich American cheese, grated. Mix the flour and butter with the baking powder until like fine meal; add the grated cheese; beat the egg yolks into the cottage cheese and add the flour mixture to this, then fold in the whites of the eggs and the sugar. Bake in shallow pan in a moderate oven or in muffin pans.

*Nellie Maxwell*

# STANDARDS IN COAT STYLES



NOW is the season when merchants find it good business to turn whatever ready-to-wear garments they have on hand into cash, rather than to carry them over to another season. The woman or girl who is not yet provided with a coat can buy now to advantage, for in coats, and even in hats, there are good, standard styles that vary only a little from year to year and may be relied upon to give at least three seasons' service. When they have done good service for this length of time they are still promising material for making over into children's wraps or even remodeling and taking another lease on life for the use of their original wearers. It pays to buy good quality in cloth, and to choose conservative styles.

Answering all the demands of the far-sighted buyer, coats of heavy wool fabric cut in such loose and ample manner and on such simple lines as those shown above may be depended upon to give satisfactory wear and a well-dressed look for this and two or more succeeding winters. They are long and full, which gives opportunity to change them a little. Like nearly all of this year's coats, they are becoming and look the part of comfort. The coat at the left has a pocket so conspicuous that it matches up with the general amplex of the garment, and it is ornamented with a little member trimming of braid. Its short panel yoke at the back is not a transient style point, and its full muffer collar of fur appears to have come to stay. Even simpler than its companion, the straight coat at the right of the group depends upon a simulated panel at the sides to give it special interest, and this is not going to go unnoted, for it is adorned with six handsome and large buttons, joined by cords of the cloth, that call attention to it.

# Inviting Comparison



OCCASIONALLY there is a woman who can undertake to choose the superb in her apparel, and much more occasionally there is one who can afford to be daring. To do these things requires a personality that is re-enforced and expressed by such attire. But these are the exceptional women—the rare blossoms, greatly admired, but less loved, than sweet, familiar ones.

Two evening dresses are shown here, one of them deserving to be called superb and acknowledged to be daring. Being in black, it carries off its eccentricities better than it would in color. A full draped skirt of supple panne velvet and a draped bodice that leaves the body uncovered to the waist line, under the arms, make a foundation for an overskirt of beaded net. Above the waist, a long scarf of malines veils the back and arms, an insert of malines just above the waist line saves the day for modesty, in a bodice which chooses to conceal more of the back than its predecessors have. For ornamentation there are large rosettes of flitter jet and they are in black, also. From head to foot, this costume relies upon shimmering black, revealing no color except a virile green that faces the train. The superb feathers in the fan and head-dress match the costume in distinction, and one imagines them in green also.

Such a costume makes a fall against which simpler dresses are more sweet by comparison. Georgette and silver tissue make the pretty five-tiered frock that presumes to dare comparison with its splendid rival. The bodice is a mere wide band of silver tissue, with narrow straps over the shoulders, veiled back and front with georgette placements edged with a little frill. There is a girle of silver tissue with frills of georgette beneath, and finished off with sprays of flowers and ends of ribbons. A bit of georgette drapery is caught to the hand on the shoulder. Color in this frock is a matter of personal choice; it is pretty in any light tone.

*Julia Bottomley*