



OBED wore a striped tunic of orange and white somewhat ragged and dirty, though his mother, Lara, washed clothes for other families in order to keep herself and ten-year-old son from starving. Yet you seldom noticed Obed's ragged tunic because of his vivid face. His skin was smooth olive, his lips were red, and his dark eyes were the color of pools at midnight. Obed sang a great deal. If he heard a tune whistled on the street he ran home singing it all the way. If he heard music strummed in the bazaars, he'd linger near until he remembered every note of it. In fact, Obed's listening ears were boxed many times by people feeling too cross or too tired for merry melodies. Even Lara scolded him, "Have I not enough, my son, beating soiled clothes on hard cold stones day after day, without listening to your voice screeching in every corner?"

But the whole world was a song for Obed. The sweet twitter of birds on dewy mornings. The sound of water



lapping over sand, the very rumble of cart wheels over the cobblestones thundered out its own rough music for the pleasure of his ears.

"What help are you to a poor mother . . . be gone with you!" scolded Lara day after day. Obed laughed, never meaning to be thoughtless or disobedient, having ears only for the music about him.

One evening late in December the longing for the shepherd's songs overcame him, and he slipped away at dusk. He was gone all night and in the morning he looked a different boy. His cheeks were pale. His lips did not smile, but there was a new and somber light shining in his dark eyes. This time his mother gazed at him in sorrow. He saw how worn she was, and he kissed her. "I cannot say I'm sorry," he hesitated. "Not even now can I tell you." His tunic was worn and stained. He wore a raised sheepskin about his shoulders. On this he sank down in his own corner and went to sleep. When he woke his face was flushed and rosy. He knelt on the floor and looked at the busy street below. Then he opened his lips and a song of such joy and purity flowed out on the air as to make everyone stop and listen. Up and up soared the rapturous notes, seeming to possess a visible radiance of their own. Obed sang no words, but the music charmed every ear that heard it.

His mother stood behind him, her hands for once idle at their task. The tired lines on her face melted into peace. Her eyes looked far away. Clearer and clearer the exquisite melody continued, and died on a faint sweet note of ecstasy.

People listening below shook their heads and moved on as if awakened from a dream.

"When, my son, did you hear that song?" Lara spoke in a whisper.

"In the skies, my mother. It came with wings and trumpets."

"Do not tell falsehoods about such divine melody."

Obed's eyes shone, but he would say no more. He recalled the song in his heart. One evening, however, when the sky was clear and the stars shone like jewels, the boy was moved to sing again the beautiful, nameless music. When it was finished a knock came at



the door. Lara opened it to a black servant who bowed low. "My master, the Prince, desires to know who sang that song."

Lara, trembling with fear, pointed to Obed who stood near an open window. A tall figure dressed in rich furs and embroidered tunic pushed his servant aside.

"If the singer and his mother will honor my court with a visit, they shall be conducted hither with safety." The voice was deep. "I am a prince from a distant country, who came to pay homage to the new King born in a stable. On my way to that stable, his piercing eyes looked at Obed, and from afar off, I heard the song your son has just sung. It came dropping from the skies . . . angels' heavenly voices and trumpets. If my people could hear that music, his voice softened, "I'm sure they would all become faithful followers of the Babe Jesus. I promise you comfort, both of you, for all your years."

So Lara and Obed quickly prepared for the journey, and Obed sang the angels' song, as he remembered it, in the court of the prince, so that he and his kingdom became thereafter faithful followers of the Babe Jesus.

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Tabby Brought Kittens Into Christmas Manger

THE celebration with the Christmas tree that touched the ceiling and had a manger beneath it, was over, and a row of little stockings were hanging for Santa Claus. Mother had just tucked the happy children into bed and by the soft glow of the nursery Christmas tree was singing Christmas carols to them.

Father was about to turn off the lights below and lock the door for the evening when he heard a faint "meow" from the cold darkness without. Upon opening the door he saw a forlorn, bedraggled tabby cat almost frozen in the Christmas snow.

"Why, you poor creature," spoke father tenderly, "come in this very minute!" For some moments father was busy making tabby comfortable. He found some milk which he warmed, and plenty of holiday food. He served kitly with generous portions of Christmas repast and then provided a soft bed in the corner, with a cushion from his own easy chair. Tabby showed her appreciation by purring and purring louder than father had ever heard a cat purr before.

Satisfied and delighted with his Christmas guest, father retired, grinning and wondering what the family would say in the morning.

Christmas morning the happy family entered the living room—the children rushing ahead, bearing their bulging stockings and shouting with laughter.

"Oh, look at the manger!" cried mother with surprise.

"Merry Christmas!" retorted father, trying to keep from bursting out laughing.

Tabby had selected the soft straw of the manger as a fitting birthplace for her litter of Christmas kittens.—Alice R. Palmer.

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Her Christmas Present Was a Lovely Daughter

MRS. BURKE wept a little as she trimmed the Christmas tree. "This will be the last time," she thought. "Next Christmas I'll be all alone in the world."

Her son whistled as he shaved. "Getting dolled up," his mother thought. "All for that girl!" She held a bright bulb aloft as though she must dash it to the floor, thought better of it, and hung it on the tree.

"Ready, mother? I'll drop you at church on the way over to Dorothy's."

"In just a minute, son." Oh, my son, my son, why must you leave me? Your first Christmas seems only yesterday. The beautiful old anthems filled the church. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son—" The text: "More blessed to give than to receive." Sacrifice. I must give up my son. His happiness means more than mine.

They were waiting for her in front of the church, young and happy. "Say, mother, Dorothy—"

"I couldn't have you spending Christmas alone, Mrs. Burke. We're all going out and celebrate. You see—my brother got married last summer, and I know just how we felt; that we were losing him, and so forth. But I really gained a dear sister, and so I want you to be just my other mother, and think of us both as your children."

Joy swept back into Mrs. Burke's heart.

"Such a wonderful Christmas present!" she cried. "A daughter!"—Helen Galsford.

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TOYS CHILDREN LIKE

A COMPREHENSIVE survey leads to the conclusion that building blocks are the favorite toy for children up to the age of seven. Drawing and painting materials rank high. With little girls, dolls and housekeeping equipment are favorites. Sand and clay for modeling retain the interest of most children. Mechanical toys, on the other hand, are soon discarded. Adults usually enjoy the mechanical toys more than the children for whom they are purchased.

Carver's Language

Few people are aware that such a pleasant Yuletide task as carving has a language of its own, which has nothing to do with exasperation. Forgetting for a moment the ubiquitous turkey, which apparently is only "carved," an expert cites the following terms as appropriate to the occasion: Alay a pheasant, Chine a salmon, Mince a plover, Barb a lobster, Lift a swan, Spall a hen, Unbrace a duck, Disfigure a peacock, Dismember a heron, Thigh a woodcock, and Tame a crab. In the Middle Ages, when most of these picturesque terms were evolved, herons, being as common as starlings today, were a favorite Christmas dish amongst the poor; while the rich granted the peacock the place of honor at their banquets.—London Tit-Bits Magazine.

Blooms at Christmas Time

According to tradition the famous thorn at Glastonbury Cathedral was brought and planted there by Joseph of Arimathea and was part of the crown of thorns which was pressed upon the brow of Christ. According to tradition it blooms at Christmas time and the possession of a piece is said to insure good fortune through the year.

Lenoir Mail Carrier Is Fatally Wounded

Suicide Verdict Rendered in Death of Gene Coffey, 40, Whose Wife Had Left Him.

Lenoir.—Gene Coffey, 40-year-old rural mail carrier, last Friday committed suicide by blowing off the top of his head with a 12-gauge shotgun.

Coroner J. R. Swanson, who with Sheriff J. C. Tolbert conducted an investigation into the tragedy, pronounced it a suicide.

Coffey's wife left him yesterday, the coroner was informed, and that action was assigned as a possible motive for the deed. Coffey had been absent from his duties for three days, Postmaster N. Hunt Gwyn stated.

When the body was discovered it was lying across a bed with the shotgun clamped in both hands. Coffey roomed at the Frank Maynard residence, and a report was heard by members of the Maynard family shortly before 6 o'clock, but no investigation was made until a business caller came to see Coffey.

Surviving are his wife, a small child, his father, Finley Coffey, of Gamewell, and a number of brothers and sisters.

Unemployment Drops Compared With 1934

New York.—October unemployment totaled 9,196,000 which is a decrease of 235,000, or 2.5 per cent. from the preceding month and a drop of 861,000 or 8.6 per cent below October, 1934, according to the National Industrial Conference Board.

From September to October, 1935, the decreases in unemployment, by industrial groups, were: manufacturing and mechanical industries, 154,000; trade, 105,000; mining, 10,000; and miscellaneous industries, 7,000. Unemployment showed an increase of 15,000 in transportation.

Compared with October, 1934, unemployment in October, 1935, decreased 25.2 per cent. in manufacturing and mechanical industries; 6 per cent. in domestic and personal service; 6 per cent. in trade; 3.7 per cent. in transportation, and 6.8 per cent. in miscellaneous industries. Unemployment increased 1.1 per cent. in mining.



WHEN Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the lantern little did she know that the Chicago fire of 1871 would burn up 17,500 buildings . . . resulting in an estimated total fire loss of \$168,000,000 . . . and causing the death of 200 persons. You may not own a cow . . . yet some careless act may cause you a loss that seems as big to your pocketbook!

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Bisma-Rex neutralizes acid, relieves stomach of gas, soothes the irritated stomach membrane and aids digestion of foods that are most likely to ferment. **Bisma-Rex** is sold only at Rexall Drug Stores. Get a jar today at Boone Drug Store. Remember, **BISMA-REX**.



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FOR HIM . . .

Watches and Rings in white or yellow gold, Chains, Chain and Knife Sets, Belt Sets and Buckles, Bill Folds, Cigarette Cases, Lighters, Books, Flash Lights, Pocket Knives, Shaving Sets, etc.

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