

Tommy Tucker

BY RUTH SAWYER.

PART II.

The House Mother in charge of the cottage where Tommy lived, pulled Tommy from his chair. From far across the room the Deputy could make out the look of unutterable protest that showed on the pale little face. He crossed his hands in front of him, interlacing the fingers with great precision and then broke into a voice so virgin clear and lovely that the Deputy found herself biting her lips to keep them from trembling. "Little Tommy Tucker, Sing for your supper. What shall I sing for? Brown bread and butter. How shall I cut it without any knife? How shall I marry without any wife?" Tommy broke on the last line. He had looked across the room and seen the Deputy and out of the eternal grind had flashed the remembrance that he was singing, maybe, for the last time. He was going to be adopted. A dazzling smile spread over the face and was gone as quickly as it had come. Then the House Mother pulled him down and he disappeared behind the backs of the bigger children. An older girl, sitting close to the Deputy, turned with an air of importance.

"Something must have come over Tommy. He never smiles when he sings. Always looks so solemn—that's what makes it cute." Two days later, as appointed, the Deputy in the county car took the road past the Orphanage, leading out of the city. Tommy was beside her, clutching fast to a brown paper parcel "all wrapped up." It was a wonderful day—even the county car felt it. It swung the curves and raced the hills and purred steadily under its hood like a nice old cat. And about every so often the Deputy would laugh and gather the little boy closer to her, saying: "Tommy Tucker, isn't this the day of all days to get adopted?"

Any misgivings the Deputy might have had in the beginning as to the ability of Tommy to fill the requirements of adoption, had long since vanished. The Grahams had stressed loveliness and Tommy was as saturated with it as the ocean with salt. And so all was well in the mind of the Deputy.

As for Tommy he spoke little and when he did it was generally to ask the same question: "How many more miles to Mother?"

They became very gay on the way—these two who for so long had not touched closely on happiness. A new wholly unheard-of giggle found a place in Tommy's voice. He giggled now when he asked his questions: "Is she a big mother or a little mother?"

"A middling-sized mother, I guess." "I like middling-sized mothers. Is her hair cut off like yours or scooped round like the Matron's?"

"I believe it's scooped." "I like it scooped best. Does her face crinkle all over when she laughs—like yours?"

"Tommy Tucker, she's the crinkliest mother you ever saw in all the world." "I knew she was!" And then back to the old question, "How many more miles to Mother?"

To make it a day of all days they picked at noon. There was a small luncheon box for Tommy's own and each sandwich and cookie was wrapped separately, each a surprise to be discovered and exclaimed over. Tommy was biting into his first sandwich when he stopped half-way and turned horrified eyes upon the Deputy.

"Mother Goose, please ma'am, do I have to sing for it?"

"Don't you dare!" It was said with so much fierceness that Tommy was reduced to giggles and the rest of the picnic went off with abandoned gaiety.

An hour before supper time the county car swung into a long shaded driveway running up to a great red barn; swung there and landed beside an equally great white house. The barn was so red and the house so white and the tall elms which sheltered it and the green lawn that hemmed it in were all so green that the Deputy fairly shouted as she brought the car to a standstill: "Tommy Tucker! Isn't this the jolliest home you ever saw?"

There was a great touring car in front of the barn and from under it emerged a big man covered with grease. There was a long streak of it down one cheek and as he came running towards them he rubbed hard at it and grinned. "Hello, Tommy Tucker! Glad to get here?" Tommy nodded. "Who are you?"

"Your new dad."

Tommy flew across what space was left between them and threw his arms

tight around his legs. "How-d'you-where's Mother?"

The big man laughed. "Pon my soul, where is Mother?" He cupped his hand about his mouth and fairly bellowed: "Mother! Mother! Here's Tommy Tucker asking for you!" And he swung Tommy on his shoulder.

Then there was a hubbub. A dog came running from the back of the house. A gander and a whole flock of geese came waddling from the back of the barn. A screen door slammed and out ran a woman in a pink-and-white print dress and in another instant Tommy was transferred from towering heights to comfortable depths—arms were about him that held all the snuggles and squeezes that a little boy's hungry heart could ask. Tommy looked her over quickly and turned to the Deputy, tickled to the point of ecstasy.

"She's just the kind of mother you said." Then he shoved the brown paper parcel he had held fast to ever since he had left the Orphanage into the new mother's hand. "Here's a present—it's all yours," he said it exactly as he had heard it said a hundred times. To wait until it was unwrapped was too much for any six-year-old. Before the second layer was off the secret was out: "It's a fish—a red-and-yellow fish. It swims in the bath tub."

So did Tommy Tucker come into his adoption. But before the Deputy left him early the next morning—he unburdened his mind of three very important things: "Do I ever have to sing again for my supper?"

"Never for your supper. Now you'll sing just for fun."

"Is the 'doption all right? Did it take?" The Deputy hesitated. "It takes a month, Tommy, to really take. You've come on trial—to see if you're the little boy they want. I'll be back in a month and then I guess it will take for ever and ever."

The little boy's face fell. "I wish I'd brought a present for Dad, too." "I'll send you one to give him. What shall it be? It can be anything—nearly."

"Another fish."

Time goes quickly at the Court-house. Along Fiddler's Alley every body kept busy from nine until five and the Deputy often for long afterwards. With the Commissioner away, Sara Goslin worked as she had never worked before; settling those cases that had to be settled; putting off those that could stand putting off till the Commissioner's return; checking up on orphans bonded out; visiting babies in new homes. Twice she went to the home of the William Wallace Kentons and watched Mary Louise asleep in her little white enamel crib with bunnies painted all over it. She was growing as fast and pretty as a baby girl can grow and Mrs. Kenton hung over her in a state of perpetual admiration.

"Isn't she adorable? There isn't going to be a scar on the arm. You were right. She laughed right out yesterday—wish you could have seen Bill's face when he heard her!"

Incredible as it may seem the new Deputy and the society woman were growing to be great friends.

When every corner of her mind was not filled with new cases, Sara Goslin thought about Tommy. She pictured him growing fat and even more lovable on the mothering and fathering and good food he was getting. Four weeks went like magic—all but two days of it and then came a letter from the Commissioner and a long-distance call from the Graham farm. The Commissioner was staying another month. The doctors said she needed it and the Superintendent had written that the department was running smoothly.

The Deputy put down the letter with a little sigh. So—her probation was extended—she had four weeks more to prove herself. She was glad, too, that for all his suspicion, the Superintendent had given the Commissioner good reports of the work. She ought to feel elated but somehow she did not. Turning to the filing papers she had on her desk she took up the blanks to make out for Tommy's adoption. It was at that moment that the long-distance call came through.

The Deputy listened, answered a question or two and hung up the receiver. Her small face had gone grey in that minute and a half—she thought she understood now why there had been no sense of rejoicing over the Commissioner's letter. The Grahams were not going to keep Tommy!

They had put all the reasons in a nutshell. Tommy had been examined by their family doctor and found to be an incipient case of tuberculosis. The chances were he might not live to grow up. They wanted a child they could raise and enjoy in their old age, not one whom they would grow to love and have to lose in five-ten years. They had considered the question of keeping Tommy for the present and returning him after he was built up and stronger, but they didn't think they could do it. They had grown too attached to him already; it would be harder for everyone if they kept him any longer. Would the Deputy Commissioner please come at once—the next day if possible—and take Tommy away? There was a final request.

Would she please do it without letting Tommy know he was going for good? All the next day Sara Goslin, with a heart of lead, drove towards the Graham farm. If tuberculosis was proven, no one would take Tommy and his one chance at life was in a home—to love and be loved. Take that away and there would be left no reason for pushing on his frail, precarious existence. It took little imagination to picture the end.

"One more for the scrap heap!" She said it bitterly, her spirit rising up in agonized protest. Why couldn't they keep Tommy and take another— a healthier boy? Why couldn't they try it out for a year? Tommy might improve so wonderfully that the possibility of T.B. might be almost negligible.

(To be continued.)

Pink Chimneys.

Roseate in the dawn, the chimneys show the first signs of the day's awakening. How busy they are these winter-mornings! All summer long they loafed, staring upward vacantly at the heavens. Now their sombre mouths, lapsing from the thin whispering during the sleepy night when their scarcely perceptible vapor merged with the shades of evening, are filled to overflowing and are speaking volumes.

The squat, truncated chimney talks in puffs. Taller, slenderer and more graceful ones are sending up spirals and wavering fingers of smoke. Each is speaking in character. Each of the little pink chimneys in the neighborhood huddled in the trough of the two hills is growing articulate. They seem to greet the other in a kindred tongue. "Good morning" and "How do you do" are said in smoke. Some use high, trembling voices from slender throats, while others respond with black billows, denoting bass tones.

Within each painted house of wood, day has begun in earnest. The pink chimneys give this signal over mountain side and valley. Mrs. Pulsifer is up. Her chimney has spoken. Everywhere is seen the writing of the sky. But one must be a neighbor and know the ways of chimneys to read this writing. Each has a separate story to tell the experienced reader.

A vaporous veil ascends from the rose-tinted chimney etched with noise that is solidly set on the sloping green roof of Mrs. Farnham's house. Its contribution to the fast mantling blue of morning is spreading over Omar's inverted bowl. This wavering pyramid of almost transparent smoke betokens a tasty but slight breakfast.

Other roaring fires sending thick billows rolling from chimneys may connote oatmeal and pancakes and other heavy matutinal fare.

But off ambles the smoke in the sky, crumbling and disappearing quickly into the crowded air, having told its story.

Trial by Water.

Among the tribes of the hilly regions of Orissa, in India, trial by water is still employed to settle disputes.

A sacred tank called Phulbani, is used in such trials, and its waters are considered holy. In a trial by water the residents of two or three villages sit round the tank, and the two contesting parties, accompanied by their seconds, each armed with a long pole, wait a short distance away. The priest then chants this prayer to the sun: "The giver of Light and Strength, the mast of Truth has been covered by a mist of gold; send down your shafts of Wisdom and remove the veil obscuring the reality."

To insure the non-interference of demons of the underworld who may be lurking in the pool beneath the holy waters, a chicken is fed and watered and offered to the demons. This done, the contesting parties walk into the water followed by their seconds. When the water reaches their armpits they take the poles and, having fixed them in the bed of the tank, stand holding them for a minute whilst they turn to the east and mutter a prayer to the sun. Then slowly their heads are immersed in water. The man whose head comes up first is the loser.

This age-old custom, has such a hold on the imagination of the natives that often the party who knows he is in the wrong will come up first of his own accord, lest injury in the shape of cramp or drowning is done to him by the powers concealed in the water.

Iodine Doses for the Fat.

Iodine taken internally is the latest strange and dangerous method adopted by women to reduce their weight.

It is said to be far more effective than exhausting exercises and semi-starvation.

The theory is that iodine has a direct effect on the thyroid gland, thus stimulating its action and reducing superfluous fat by natural processes.

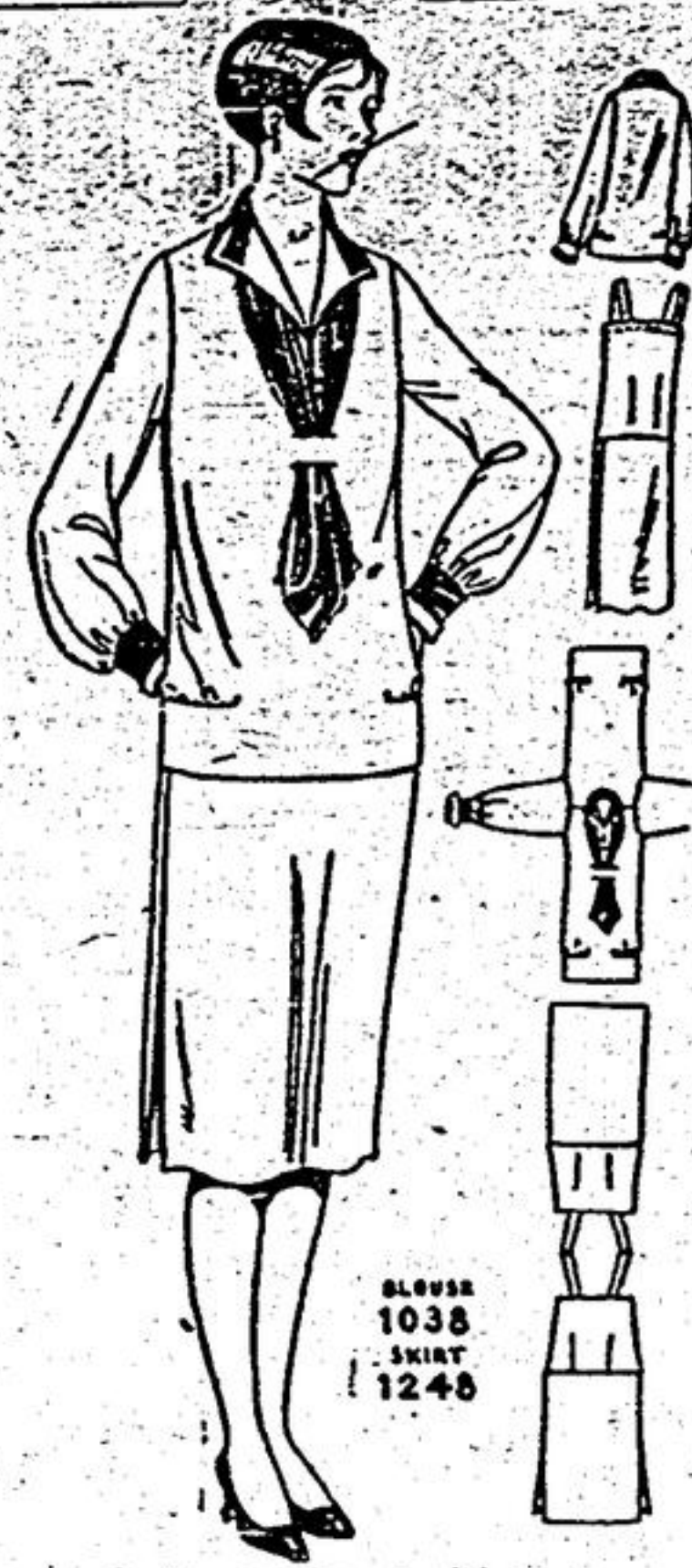
Medical opinion, however, is dubious about the use, and probable abuse, of this strong and dangerous disinfectant.

"The human system," said a physician, "cannot stand more than two drops at a time, and if women must take it they should be careful to dilute it liberally with milk."

"For some time past iodine has been administered internally to chronic cases of ache and boils, and the results have been satisfactory, but it is a form of treatment best followed only under a doctor's directions."

Costly Robes.

Robes for the lord mayor cost the city of London nearly \$1,000 a year. Minard's Liniment relieves headache.



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Word Weeds.

The German Language Society has set itself the task of eliminating as many foreign words and idioms from German as possible. During the war the Germans began to write the word "telephone" with an "I" (telefon), before that, the English word "cakes," used for biscuits, was spelled "keks."

One of the most extraordinary suggestions made by the Language Society is to replace the word electricity by "bernkraft," said to mean "amber power." But in commenting on the suggestion one German newspaper points out that to-day electricity is produced neither from amber nor by friction.

Incidentally, both "telephone" and "electricity" are not French or English words, both coming from the Greek. Nor is the "I" peculiarly German, as it is used in "telefon" in several European languages, and also in "telegrafo," and "son on," in Italian and Spanish.

Finger-Ring Lamp.

A tiny electric lamp in a finger-ring is designed for writers, travellers, and patients in hospital wards. The lamp throws light directly upon a sheet of paper or a page of a book, sufficient to write or read by.

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A White Night.

The snow had come to transform the earth. The hills about were mantled in whiteness. "Winter," says Alexander Smith, "is like a Red Indian, noble in his forests and civilities, deteriorated by cities and civilizations." Here was winter in all its nobility, without stain. The entire landscape shares in the enlarging, purifying, quieting work of the snow. Stone walls, trees, bushes, hedgerows, houses, fields, undergoing a snow change, become part of a new and mystic earth.

The snow hides. It also reveals. Old landmarks are obliterated. The divisions between thine and mine are no longer visible on the earth's surface. On the other hand far off hills and fields gain distinctiveness. Even a sprinkling of snow on the larger hills make them stand out more clearly. They reflect more light and the light makes a difference. It seems a larger world, this world of snow. It is a quieter world. Sounds are muffled. There is something wonderfully impressive in the vast solitude of the snow, especially by night, beneath moon and stars.

On such a white night take an upland road, on to the hills. A steep way through the village with its handful of cottages, with their rough York-bluely, yet have kindly hearts, bluntly, yet have kindly hearts.

On such a white night wonder is stirred. The snow is full of wonder. Just a fall of temperature and there arrives this loveliness. Where the thermometer never falls to freezing point, there is no such revelation. The stars on such a night are also full of wonder. They seem at their maximum brilliance and mystery. "There is no speech or language, their voice is not heard." Yet how long these stars have guided the goings and watchings over the doings of men! By their light men from of old have come to their desired haven. They knew where they were, by the aid of those constant lights. They shine over us with the same constancy and beauty as they shone over ancient Egypt or Babylon. They are the revelation of the night. But for the darkness we had not seen the stars, as but for the winter cold we had not seen the snow.

Denial.

There is no loneliness. Save poverty of soul. That begs a passing prayer. To make it full and whole.

There is no loneliness. A pale narcissus bloom. Makes glorious company. In a deserted room.

There is no loneliness. The rain's lute reaches far. And wind songs' melodies. Are echoed from each star.

There is no loneliness. With beauty all about. Only the eyes that see. Not and the ears that doubt.

Thriftiest English Town?

Plymouth claims to be the thriftiest town in England. Its people have purchased 1,675,000 Savings Certificates in four years, an average of two per head per year, as compared with one and a half for the rest of the country.



SUCCEEDS FORMER MONTREALER

Lord Buckmaster, English jurist, who replaces Sir Edward Mackay Edgar as head of a huge oil concern which has vast concessions all over the world. American newspapers now refer to him as the John D. Rockefeller of England. He was in Canada last summer for the bar association meeting.

Chilblains Need Good Care.

What can I put on chilblains that will cure them?" asks a reader. It depends upon your own general condition. If you are strong and hearty, with good circulation, you can get rid of them by using any local application that stimulates. Turpentine is a favorite with some, iodine with others. The last time I mentioned chilblains in an article, some fifty people wrote in to give favorite prescriptions, all different. You can guess from this that almost anything will cure the kind of chilblain that goes away of itself.

Chilblains are somewhat akin to burns in their course. They are sections of devitalized tissue. When they ulcerate, a process of tissue building must take place before repair is complete. In persons who are old, sickly, or weak, this may take a long time. The ulcer must be cleaned up. Peroxide of hydrogen will usually do this. Then it must be kept clean and the circulation encouraged while healing occurs. Iodine is usually a good application.

Many chilblains do not ulcerate, but none the less, there is a spot of irritable tissue that itches and burns in cold weather at the least provocation. This is because there has been enough frostbite to destroy some of the finer blood vessels. Eventually, there will be other vessels to do the work, but the building up process is slow. Sufferers must protect their feet by wearing warm hose, and shoes that are roomy and stout. Anything tight hinders recovery. On coming in from the cold, bathe the feet five or ten minutes in cool water, then dry with rough towel and rub the feet until they glow. This will prevent much of the itching, and will hasten repair.

Those who have much trouble with chilblains often are poorly nourished. They should eat the foods that build up and supply heat. Cream, butter, and eggs are among the best of these foods. Children may need cod liver oil. When they put on a few pounds in weight and improve the quality of the blood, the chilblains leave.

I haven't said much about what you should put on, because that is the question of least importance. In getting rid of chilblains, the great thing is to build up the body, and this can only be done by proper nutrition and protection.—Dr. C. H. Lorrigo.

Schoolboy Howlers.

"Geometry teaches us to bless angels; an oxygen has eight sides."

The above are two gems from a rich mine of schoolboy howlers explored by Mr. R. Weldon Finn in the "Education Outlook."

"A circle is a rounded straight line bent so that the ends meet," writes another youthful mathematician, while another humorist, on being asked how many times 19 could be subtracted from a million, replied that he could do it as often as he was asked to!

Here are other delightful specimens:

"An insect can be killed by pinching its borax."

"A demagogue is a vessel from which one drinks beer."

"Essays of Ella"—the attempts of Elijah to get food.

"The Pyramids divide France and Spain."

"Henry I. died from a surfeit of pal-freys."

"Under Henry VIII, the Bible was translated into Latin by Titus Oates, whom the king ordered to be chained up in church for greater security," writes one youthful essayist.

"Prince Henry was drowned in the Wash. The story goes that he never smiled again," writes another.

The reader, at least, is likely to smile again—and again.

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