

Tommy Tucker

BY RUTH SAWYER.

PART III.

She left at daybreak, so it was noon when she drove into the long driveway and found Tommy watching for her, a comical rag doll clasped tightly in his two hands. The dog was at his feet, the flock of geese circling in friendly fashion about him. So much a part of the whole happy normal home scene did he look that the Deputy groaned aloud when she thought of what she had come to do. He had recognized the county car and was over with a bound.

"Mother Goose! Mother Goose! I'm awful glad you've come!" He tucked the doll under one arm and gripped her hand. "Dad's gone fishing and Mother's gone somewhere. And you're to stay and have lunch with me. They'll be back sometime." Then as if for the reason for her coming had suddenly dawned on him, "They'll be back in plenty of time for the doption."

She let him pull her over to the barn, chattering every minute. "This is my barn—Dad's taken the car. This dog's mine—his name's Jock. The geese are mine too—they've all got names. I named 'em."

Never had the Deputy seen a barn of such absolute possession. The state conquered, he pulled her on; passed the house towards another and smaller house nearby. "Come and see my Grandpa and Uncle Bob and Aunt Alice. Aunt Alice made me this clown-doll. He's funny, isn't he? Boys don't like dolls—ever—but this one's different. His name's Cho-cho. He tells me what to eat so I'll get to be a big, strong boy."

They had reached the steps of the next-door house. Tommy threw back his head, cupped his hands about his mouth and called—for all the world as the big man had called that day—he had arrived. "Grandpa! . . . Aunt Alice! . . . Here's Mother Goose and me come to see you!"

But no one came. . . The little boy rushed ahead into the house. The Deputy could hear his feet pattering up and down stairs and the voice growing shriller and shriller. . . He came back to her at last, shaking his head like an old person. "Where do you s'pose they've all gone?" he asked plaintively.

How she ever got him into the county car at last she never quite knew. She was conscious of saying something about a picnic, dangling it as bait before his unsuspecting mind, and the next thing, there he was beside her and the car was pointed towards the city—and the Orphanage.

It was a very lame picnic, although Tommy did not appear to notice that it was. He was bubbling with things to tell. It was not until the crumbs from the last cookie were scattered to the birds that homesickness took him of a sudden and he turned beseeching eyes to the Deputy. "I want to go home now, Mother Goose. I want to see Mother."

She lifted him into the car but she did not turn the wheel. The county car kept straight to its appointed way and the eyes of the little boy questioned her—before his lips framed the words, "Why don't you take me home? This isn't the way home!"

"I'm taking you home with me." She tried to say it quietly, but the words sounded to her as if they had been shot from a gun, straight at a little boy's heart.

The Deputy did not dare to trust herself to look at Tommy but without looking she knew that he was swallowing great choking swallows. At last he managed a few words: "Isn't Mother going to keep me?"

The Deputy shook her head. "Doesn't Dad want me?"

Another shake. "Grandpa and Aunt Alice haven't any other little boy." He offered this as a very faint ray of hope.

"They all went away, you remember. . . She hated herself for reminding him of the two empty houses—those five great strong healthy grown-ups running away from a little boy's grief! And yet to stay and watch him go, to endure agonized good-byes and embraces, that would have been more intolerable. She hated them for their

desertion; it was a case of sheer abandonment despite all the excellent reasons for doing it. One could not play with a spirit like Tommy's—warm it and gadden it and then throw it back on its own pitiful resources without making tragedy. The Deputy knew it and grew sick as she thought ahead.

Tommy broke the silence. They were the last words he said on that interminable trip back: "Nobody wants a sick little boy." He had heard them repeated so often in those forsaken years at the Orphanage that they had been written on his mind for all time.

Sara Goslin took him to the county sanatorium and put him in the preventive ward. She smiled bitterly to herself as she tucked him into his cot on the wide sleeping pavilion with Cho-cho in his arm, trying to say reassuring things. "Sleep and eat all you can, for Mother Goose. You're still her little boy, remember! Just as soon as you're well I'm going to find you another lovely home."

But Tommy Tucker turned mutely away. He was too wise to be fooled. There was no other home as far as he was concerned; no other mother. The game was up. He did not even want to lie any more for his chance.

The next day the nurse in charge telephoned he was running a slight fever, the following day that he was really ill. The third day the Deputy hurried out as fast as the county car could carry her, and for the next few days there was little work done at the Courthouse. Tommy Tucker was very ill. She spent as much of the day beside his cot as she could, and dozed beside him at night, trying every conceivable way to rally his spirit. But nothing reached him. Nothing stirred the faintest response.

A night came when she did not go to bed and the young doctor shared her vigil with her. "I'm afraid it's no use—nothing to fight with or for. Better make up your mind that he's slipping fast." He said it as kindly as he could.

But Sara Goslin clenched her fists and her eyes kindled with a fire that never had burned there before. "I'm not going to lose Tommy! We're not going to give up! If he can't fight, we'll fight for him. Think of his going this way—just starved out! It's terrible. What sort of human beings do you think God would take us for if we sent a heart-broken little boy into Heaven like this?"

It was a new idea to the young doctor and he smiled whimsically. "Never thought of it that way—about these kids. Pretty tough I call it. But what can we do?"

"Pray!" the word dropped out as if it burned the Deputy's lips. She saw astonishment and discomfort grow in the young doctor's face and she met it squarely. Her great black eyes gave him no quarter. "Look here! I don't suppose I've prayed any more times in my life than you have. We younger generation haven't bothered much that way; we've thought ourselves too wise and too efficient to lean much on God—as the old saying goes. I know I thought I could run my life for myself—no help wanted. But I couldn't. Made an awful mess of it. And here's Tommy—we're no good to him."

The doctor mumbled something unintelligible and the Deputy went on: "If our voices can carry thousands of miles to each other with nothing but wave lengths to carry them, it doesn't seem so impossible for prayers to reach a divine consciousness. You wouldn't have to say it aloud—just think it. Ask for another chance for Tommy! I'm going to. Two prayers are better than one." She spoke with conviction.

What prayers, if any, were said that night only God Himself could have told. They sat on either side of Tommy's cot, those two capable, honest young people and silence wrapped them apart like a cloak. It was not until a feeble gray dawn struggled in under the pavilion roof that they moved. Then mechanically they rose and stretched, cramped muscles and the doctor leaned over and felt Tommy's pulse.

"Can't get it—it's so low." He put his cheek to the small lips for a sign of breathing. "Just alive—that's about all." And a moment later he waved off the nurse coming to take early temperatures. "No use. Don't fuss the little fellow," and then, to the Deputy: "Sorry—wish it had worked."

He was moving off to wash up and get some coffee when the night nurse hurried towards the cot. She spoke to Sara Goslin. "You're wanted on the telephone. Long distance."

With a word to the doctor to stay until she returned, the Deputy fled hotfoot. She was back in three minutes, her face transfigured. The doctor who had called her in his mind "a plain little thing," wondered that any woman could look so angelically beautiful. She was quite breathless. "It has worked! That was Mr. Graham on the wire. They've worried about Tommy ever since they let him go. It got worse and worse and last night Mrs. Graham couldn't sleep thinking about him. She got to the point where she knew something must be wrong with Tommy—waked up Mr. Graham and made him telephone. He's still holding the wire. Know what I'm going to do!"

She did not stop to tell him. She bundled Tommy into his arms and made him carry the little boy to the telephone. There, in a deep, low chair she held him, put the receiver to his ear and spoke into the transmitter, herself.

"All ready, Mr. Graham. Put his mother on the phone. If any one can reach Tommy now, she can."

Not a sound or movement broke the hush that held them while over the wire came the challenge to Tommy to live. The Deputy watched the small white face, the deep shut eyes, for the slightest response. After an interminable time it came. The lids fluttered, half opened and closed again. The Deputy put her lips to the other ear: "Listen! Can you hear Mother? She wants her little-boy back again."

Again the challenge came. Again the lids fluttered half-open then shut. This time the lips framed the one word, "Mother."

The Deputy was crying softly. She took down the transmitter and spoke: "Try his father. Put him on the wire."

Again a hush. Tommy opened his eyes at last and kept them open. His lips were puckered into a wan smile. "Dad. . . Grandpa. . . Aunt Alice?" And with a final sigh of contentment, "Mother!"

Tommy Tucker was tucked into his cot at last. The Deputy, dropped, on her knees beside him and squeezed him tight. "You've got to get well fast now. They are all coming to-day in your great big car to take you home."

"Home!" The little boy reached out for Cho-cho who had lain limp and unnoticed for days. He snuggled him down under the clothes and was off to sleep in a moment.

Sara Goslin turned to the doctor for confirmation. "It's all right now, isn't it? No question of his getting well?"

The doctor laughed like a boy. "Not a question, I guess. Even a scientist has to bow before miracles when they happen." Then he sobered and looked down at the small hollow-eyed figure still on the floor beside the cot—there was a very deep concern in the look. "You're the one I'm worried about now. I'm going to take you home and have your landlady put you to bed."

He pulled her to her feet and for the first time since they had met on their common ground gave her a careful scrutiny. "How long have you been working without any let up?"

"Oh, about two months—in this work."

"Had any fun? Gone out any? Seen a good show or anything?"

Sara Goslin shook her head. "I haven't wanted to. I haven't needed anything but the work. You don't understand."

"Fiddlesticks. I'm the best little specialist at understanding that you ever saw. You're to sleep all day. And at six-thirty I'm coming round to take you out for the best dinner you've eaten and the first hours of real fun you've had since you struck this country. Understand!"

(The End.)

My Grate Fire.

Against the cold, wet days my fire gleams bright,
A beacon leading on to joys of home,
To books I love, rare volumes of delight,
More to my heart than some more richly guarded tome

To sit and read there in the firelight glow
Some simple verse long of myself a part,
And dream and think—this is indeed to know
A happiness that warms the restless heart.

In all the rush and strain of life to-day,
When most the world seeks joys much money buys,
To value true real happiness, I pray,
And those dear joys of heart and home most prized.

—George Elliston.

—Frances S. Larkin.

More ghosts
Dim water lilies float like stars,
While skyscrapers, as they pause and peer
at them,
Silently wonder why they do not
Twinkle.

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About Dance Music.

Those who sneeringly look down on dance music are to be pitied. To be sure, much of the dance music played in public is bad and devoid of originality of any kind. One often wonders why some bands play such awful trash. Do you know why they do it? Because Bandmaster "A" plays the pieces composed, or rather perpetrated, by Bandmaster "B," who in turn plays the products of Bandmaster "A's" pen. In politics this sort of thing is known as "log rolling."

Dance music as such is not necessarily of a low order. Many of Bach's gems are dances of the kind in vogue in his day. And think of the dance specialist, Johann Strauss! His finest waltzes rank with the best music in existence—in melody, harmony, modulation and orchestral loveliness of coloring. His worst waltzes are not really bad music. They are simply uninspired, unoriginal, as compared with the others.

Bad music is music which is ungrammatical or vapid, flabby, vulgar, catch penny, written deliberately to tickle the ears of those who have a minimum of musical knowledge and taste.

It would be unfair to compare bad music to the colored comic supplements in some of the Sunday papers. Those are not the highest art, but often the cartoons are cleverly drawn, and the jokes are not at all bad. The bad music with which the country is flooded is far worse than the colored comics as a rule.

—Minard's Liniment for sore throat.

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David.
There on the hills,
While the bright stars show down,
Do you suppose he dreamed
Of Saul's great court?
Of foolish pomp,
Of bitter, lonely days,
Of kingly duties,
Exile, trust betrayed?

In the still watches
Of the Eastern night,
David, alone upon those distant hills,
Lifted his heart in praise,
His voice in song
Until the throbbing notes
Of his crude harp
Floated out gently
On the silent night—
"Try me, oh God,
And see that I am true.
Dark though the hours may be
I will lift up mine eyes
Unto the hills—
"Thy everlasting hills,
And find my Light."

Thus David sang
Throughout the long night-watch.
Into the court of Saul
The shepherd-lad
Serenely walked,
Knowing that always
Out upon the hills,
The ancient, everlasting hills,
He could be silent
And commune with God.
—Eleanor G. R. Young.

Amsterdam, a City of the Waters.

Amsterdam, no less than Venice, is a city of the waters. Giesbrecht III. founded it some seven hundred years ago by building the "dam of the Amstel," from which the city takes its name, at the spot where that river joins the IJ, a broad arm of the Zuyder Zee that is now the port of Amsterdam; and even to-day its great buildings stand upon piles driven deep into the marsh beneath the city. Several times during the centuries the citizens have built a canal to run from the IJ beside the city ramparts to join the IJ again on the other side. But always the city has expanded beyond the canal until in time they have built another one parallel to the last, so that now there are several rings of waterways in the city, with shady trees and dignified old houses looking down upon them, and other canals running outward from the centre to join them.

A chain of huge islands has been built out into the IJ to carry the railway station and the docks; three ship canals have been cut to join it with the North Sea and the Rhine; and through the centre of the city runs the Broad Amstel. Upon it, all day long, pass the endless traffic of the city.

Here you see gayly painted sailing barges from all parts of Holland and all the varied shapes and rigs that that nurse of sailing craft has produced, with their unique curved gaffs and tapering pennants; huge modern Rhine-schiffs, iron barges fifty yards long with steering wheels six feet across and a diminutive tug overshadowed by the huge bows; tugs with strings of lighters miraculously negotiating the bridge arches; single lighters laboriously quanted along; smart motor launches; racing skiffs.

Amsterdam has fine squares and broad streets, but the city and its commerce are still founded upon the water; on the canals and the Amstel, where all day long the quaysides are busy with the unloading of many cargoes and the air is thick with the beat of engine, and upon the IJ, where the little river steamers lie to load their queer mixture of passengers and cargo, and the great liners start upon their journeys.

Canny Scot.

A Scotsman was about to start a round of golf and was looking for a caddy. At length he picked out one who seemed to have the qualities he required, and he asked him, "Are ye guid at findin' balls?"

"Yes," answered the boy.
"Then find one, an' we'll begin," commanded the Scot.

Ruskin Was Surprised.

John Ruskin was wont to attack all and sundry with a savage meritism which even his best friends at times resented. Once he wrote a friend hoping that a fierce criticism written by him of his friend's picture would make no difference to their friendship. To which the friend had the wit to reply:

"Dear Ruskin—Next time I meet you I shall knock you down, but I hope it will make no difference to our friendship."

Minard's Liniment relieves headache.

Valuable Collection of Pearls.

Queen Margherita left a collection of pearls to her son, the Italian King, said to be the second most valuable in the world. Twenty years ago they were appraised at \$45,000,000.

The collection consists of thirty-two ropes with a total length of 220 1/4 yards. King Umberto, during his married life, gave her a rope every year, and the Queen herself bought many more.

The Maharajah Claputele, an Indian potentate, has a slightly larger collection. The pearls of Queen Victoria, of England, have been divided into three parts, and the Russian imperial pearls dispersed, so that the collection of Queen Margherita is the finest in Europe.

The Duke of Genoa, her favorite brother, inherits many beautiful stones. To Queen Elena, the late Queen Mother left her largest diadem and her emeralds. The present Queen already has the finest collection of these gems owned by any royalty. Each of the King's four daughters also receives a magnificent diadem.

Synthetic Gasoline.

Synthetic gasoline is being invented in nearly every civilized country in the world. The largest contribution is a new fuel invented by a Norwegian civil engineer. It is known as "Norsk Kraft Olje." The process under which it is made has been patented.

Where Moon Beats Sun.
The sun has only onesixteenth the effect of the moon in tide attraction.

Christian Science Lecture by Radio.

A Lecture by Salem A. Hart, Jr., C.S. of Cleveland, Ohio, a member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ Scientist, in Boston, Mass., will be radiocast from the Parkdale Theatre, Toronto, on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 31st, at 3:15 p.m., by Station CKCL, 357 meters wave length. You are cordially invited to "Hasten in!"

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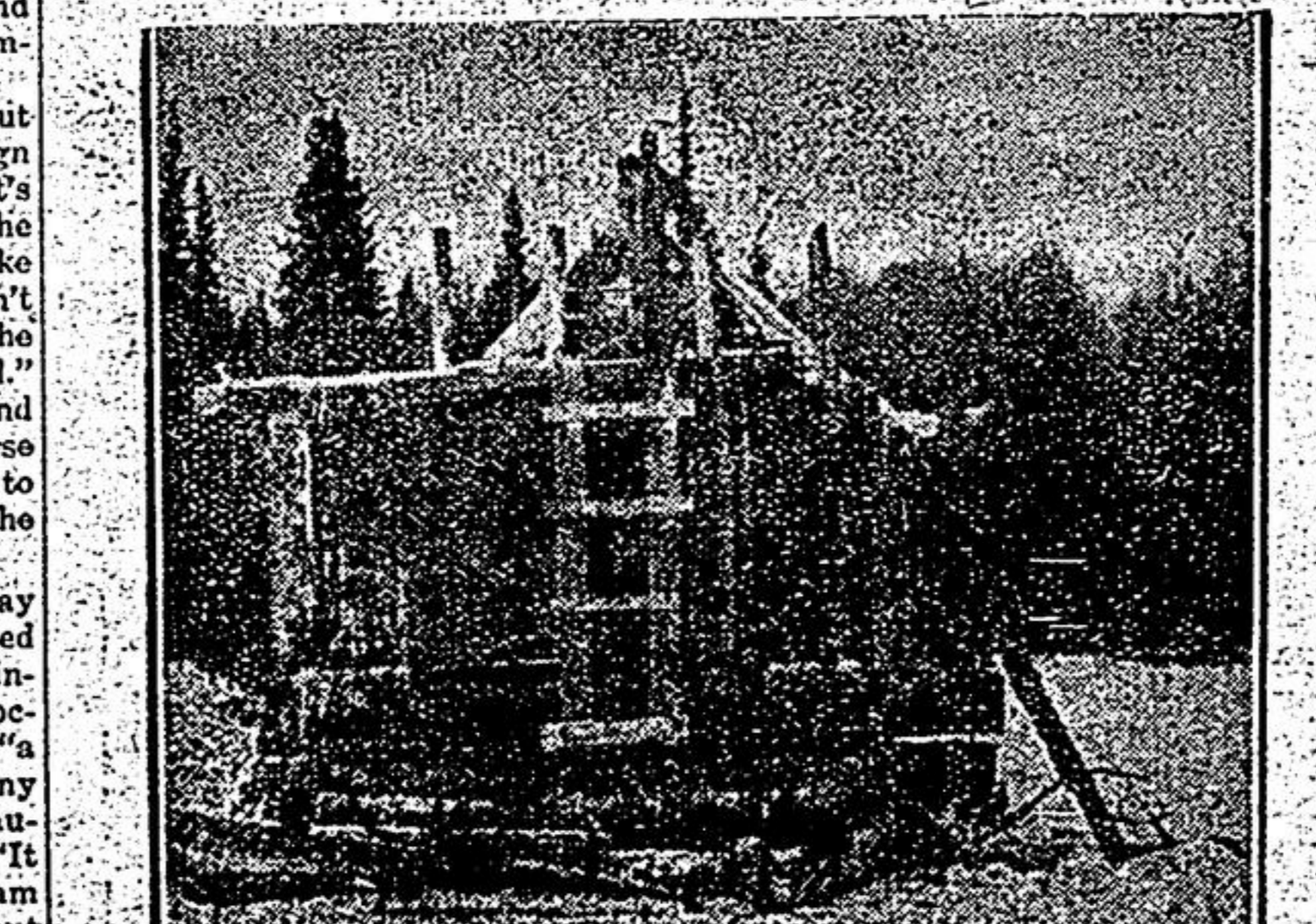
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NO ICE ROADS: MAKE THEM
With very little snow to date this year in the woods of Northern Saskatchewan, lumber companies are building ice roads. The tank shown above holds 104 barrels of water and sprays on a 12-foot road.