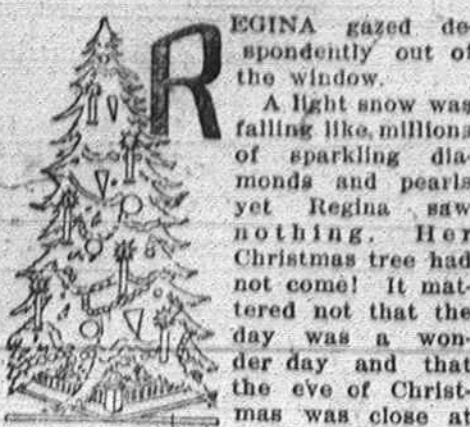


REGINA'S CHRISTMAS TREE



BY MOLLY McMASTER

REGINA gazed despondently out of the window. A light snow was falling like millions of sparkling diamonds and pearls yet Regina saw nothing. Her Christmas tree had not come! It mattered not that the day was a wonder day and that the eve of Christmas was close at hand. Nothing that she had promised her Sunday school class a glorious tree and that now there was no tree for them. Tears welled slowly into Regina's eyes and blurred the glittering landscape.

She argued with herself that she might have known that the New York shops could not be relied upon to send a tree to the suburbs at so short a notice, but that did not help the situation.

Regina shrank from facing those twelve little girls whose smiles would vanish in childish disappointment when they learned that the tree they had been promised was not to be theirs.

The tears brimmed over and fell. Regina's vision was cleared and in the clearing she gazed directly at the miniature fir tree in the vacant lot next door. A sense of keen delight swept over Regina. After all, her children would have a tree!

Some fifteen minutes later Regina appeared in outdoor costume. She had put on her gymnasium suit, high rubber boots and her father's great top coat. Over a plot of curls her snug fur cap fitted closely.

"You look for all the world as if you deserved your nickname," expostulated Regina's mother. "Regina, I do hope no one will see you."

"There's no one for miles around," Regina laughed and shouldered an ax. "Unless the people who live in the bungalow turn up—I will have the world to myself." She picked up a big tub with her free hand and trudged off toward the fir tree in the vacant lot.

Regina's eyes were too intent on her mission to see that a thin curl of smoke was twisting from the chimney of the bungalow that rambled in the lot beyond the vacant one.

Regina drew near the coveted tree and her heart expanded lovingly. "What a little beauty!" she exclaimed half aloud.

The little tree was of special origin and stood not much higher than Regina. Over its branches a veil of smoke seemed to linger. After a moment spent in admiration, the girl put down her big tub and began to clear away the light fall of snow from about the roots of the tree. Her cheeks were gloriously red and the sparkle in her eyes rivaled the day itself.

When the snow was cleared Regina swung the great ax into the frozen earth. The ground scarcely responded to her strength. She swung again. "Hey! What are you doing to that tree?"

Regina dropped her ax and gazed in the direction of the deep, gruff voice. A man was standing on the veranda of the bungalow. Regina picked up her ax and with dignity swung it again. "I say there, you—that tree belongs to me!" The man was coming toward her. Regina stopped and turned. "This is a vacant lot," she called out with asperity.

The approaching male whistled. His speed quickened. He made an involuntary movement to raise a cap that in his haste he had forgotten to put on. "I beg your pardon," his voice had lost the gruff quality. "I thought you were a man—but—that tree is mine. I brought it up from my father's garden in the south." David Langhorn spoke rapidly. Regina's face was rather startling in its beauty and he had a desire to cover her embarrassment. "I have taken very special care of that tree."

...it sees why you leave your poor little trees around in vacant lots," Regina put in hurriedly because she felt like crying, now that her precious tree was taken from her. "This is my lot," Langhorn told her. "If you had chopped down—" "I wasn't chopping it down!" Regina cried indignantly. "I was going to put it very carefully into this tub."



She stumbled over her words, but determined to tell this very good-looking man with the red hair that she was not a George Washington. "I ordered a Christmas tree by express and it didn't come. My Sunday school class—twelve little girls—are expecting a tree to-night in my house and now—" Words failed Regina. She bit her lip and looked appealingly up at Langhorn.

The man laughed because it was the safest thing to do for the present. "And I have brought down twelve little settlement boys with the same promise—and nary a tree have I got. I reckoned on getting one in the village."

Regina laughed and the whole world seemed to echo the laugh. "I have tried even the department store!" She gazed into David Langhorn's eyes. "I am sorry for the poor little souls whom we are disappointing—my class worked so faithfully all last summer."

"By Jove," David said. "I read once of some people who had a Christmas tree out of doors! They had great bonfires and the tree was lit by a thousand candles as well as the stars and a Santa Claus drove up over the real snow! Couldn't we do something like that?"

"With this tree! How perfectly glorious!" Regina, beside herself with joy, began to shovel away a greater clearing. David took the shovel away from her.

"My kiddies will do that—it will be the treat of their lives." David looked seriously at Regina. "Now go home and get warmed up. This afternoon I will call properly and, in the evening—Christmas Eve—" He did not finish with words for the hearts of both David and Regina were overflowing with good tidings of great joy.

That evening Santa Claus drove up through the crisp snow and opened his great bags before the little tree. It was a wonder tree there in the vacant lot and it was hung with a hundred electric bulbs. Six bonfires reared their flames skyward and around and about danced and capered twenty-four joyous children.

And when the moon was high in the heavens and the spirit of Christ mas had entered into each heart David and Regina drew the band of children about them and led the young voices in carols.

Still later when one tiny girl had cuddled herself into Regina's arms and two more had fallen asleep in David's there was only a duet of voices. David and Regina sang all the old English carols until twenty little kiddies had fallen into a happy sleep.

"For unto you is born this day. 'In the city of David, A Savior!' The voices of David and Regina trailed into silence and they only looked at each other. Regina was the first to speak, the mother instinct prompting her.

"Perhaps we had better waken them now—the fires might get low." David was silent a long moment, then he said slowly and reverently, "The fires will never burn low—Regina. This is the night when the Great Spirit of Love was born into our world."

BEST TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS

They Should Suggest Action and Set the Mind of the Child at Work.

In selecting toys for the children's Christmas, remember they should be such as to suggest action, and bring the imagination into play, as it is the child who plays, not the toy, and imagination is the soul of the play. The best toys are those which set the mind to work, and give the little brain scope for expansion. This is one of the strongest recommendations for the simpler toys. The wonderful mechanical toys sold in the shops are complete in themselves, and leave the child nothing to do but to wind them up and start them going. In this case, it is the toy that plays, not the child. Children soon weary of having nothing to do, and, losing interest in the monotonous repetitions, the little inquisitive mind sets about investigating the internal mechanism, greatly to the damage of the toy, which is soon ruined and thrown away, while the child turns for amusement to the old toys that are so hopelessly undone that everything they are supposed to do must come from the play-spirit in the child.

SCRAPS OF HUMOR



Feminine Diplomacy.
"Yes, I finally got rid of him," she said, "without having to tell him in so many words that I never could learn to love him. I didn't want to do that, because he's an awfully nice fellow, and I should have been very sorry to cause him pain."
"How did you manage it?" her friend asked.
"Why, you see, he's subject to hay fever, so I decorated the house with golden rod whenever he sent word that he was coming."

An Explanation.
The steamboat came splashing along her course, at full speed, and the first thing the passengers knew had crashed head-on into the pier.
"Mercy," cried a passenger, as the bow crashed and the splinters flew.
"I wonder what is the matter?"
"Nothin'," said Pat, one of the deckhands. "Nothin', ma'am—ut looks to me as if the captain just forgot that we shtop here."—Harper's Weekly.

He Begins to See.
"When I first hit town," remarked Farmer Heck, "I uster stand on a corner and wonder how all these city people managed to live."
"Well?"
"Well, seeing as they have got \$38 out of me in four days, it ain't such a mystery after all."

Borrowed Fame.
"I see that a New York editor is accused of insisting on attaching his name to poems that were written by paid contributors."
"What of it? I know a rich corset maker who puts his name on a corset that was invented by another man."

SOME DIFFERENCE.



Mr. Saphead—I certainly admire an athletic girl.
Miss Pert—But you married just the opposite.
Mr. Saphead—Oh! I didn't say I'd marry an athletic girl.

Vindictive.
The comical boarder is fond of his joke; His landlady hopes, In her heart, he will choke.

Lesson From the Past.
The nymph Egeria, on learning that King Numa Pompilius was dead, melted away in tears and was changed into a fountain.
"This is better," she said—or the fountain murmured—"than committing hara-kiri!"

Would Miss Himself So.
"It does a man good to get away from himself occasionally."
"Every man, perhaps, except a profound egotist. He never gets away from himself because he knows that if he ever did he would die of loneliness."

Serious Accident.
"What's the matter, Tommy?"
"Jack fell into the water when he went to buy some candles."
"Well, never mind; he got out all right."
"Yes, but without the candles."—Pele Mele.

In Plunkville.
"Bill, why on earth did you want to buy that second-hand fire escape?"
"Oh, I thought maybe I could get somebody to build a hotel to fit it, or perhaps open an opy house."

Enjoyable.
Miss Quiz—Have you ridden in Charley's new auto?
Mrs. Malaprop—Yes; it was lovely. There was some osculation, but it didn't bother me a bit.

The Cause.
"I saw Jennie in a violent fit yesterday."
"Good gracious! What caused it?"
"Her effort to get into a skin-tight waist."

BORROWING AS A FINE ART

Proof That This Bad Habit Is Impossible to Eradicate in Some People.

Day by day, as Mrs. Worth's household and kitchen furniture and groceries slowly disappeared, she saw that the moment approached when a final stand must be made. One morning, when Jimmy, son of the borrower, appeared at the back door with the statement, "Ma wants the wash-boller," Mrs. Worth determined to act.

"You tell your ma that when she brings back what she has already borrowed, I will lend her the boiler." In a little while Jimmy reappeared. "Ma wants to know what she borrowed."

"There is a quart of flour," began Mrs. Worth, "a peck of potatoes, a cup of sugar, a can of coffee, a half-pound of lard, some onions, and butter and spices; the screw-driver, the hatchet, a pair of scissors"—she paused, recollecting—"three spools of thread, a paper of needles, and—"

But Jimmy was gone. Presently he rapped on the back door again. "Ma says for you to write 'em down. I forgot some of 'em."

Mrs. Worth sat down with pencil and patiently made an alphabetical list of all the articles she could remember. Jimmy took the list and disappeared. A half-hour later he once more reappeared at the back door and announced:

"Ma says if you'll lend her the wash-boller to carry 'em in, she'll bring 'em home."—Youth's Companion.

POETRY IN PAGAN LEGEND

According to This, Woman Is Made Up of a Compound of Many Contradictory Things.

"Our fable of the creation of woman is more poetical than your Christian one, which forms woman out of a man's rib," said a Hindu. "Listen, and see if you don't agree with me. 'Twashtri, at the beginning of time, created the universe and man, but when he came to create woman he found that he had exhausted his materials and no solid elements remained."

"Twashtri mused a while. Then an idea came to him, and in order to make the first woman he took moonlight and the undulations of the serpent, the slenderness of reeds and the soft movement in the wind, the tears of a raincloud, the velvet of flower petals, the grace of a roe, the tremor of grasses, the vanity of the peacock, the softness of the down on a dove's breast, the hardness of diamonds and the sweetness of honey, the cruelty of the tiger and the warmth of fire, the cold of snow, the chatter of a jay and the coo of a dove—and out of these things Twashtri created woman."

Glass Over Paintings.
Yielding to the criticism of artists and art experts, the authorities at the galleries of the Louvre have removed the glass that covered and was supposed to protect some famous pictures. A few, however, are yet inclosed in glass, and among these are 'Antiope of Correggio, the Laura Dianti of Titian and the Concert Champetre of Giorgio. It is held that for all purposes of art, for study, for admiration, the canvasses should be naked, as under glass all the fine qualities of these great paintings are lost. Examination of the paintings from which the glass has been removed shows that a number of them, among which is Titian's famous Man With the Torn Glove, have been injured by moisture that formed under the glass; others are the Antiope of Correggio, the Country Concert of Giorgio and the Virgin on the Rocks, of Leonardo da Vinci. "All these deteriorations," says a critic, "have been without doubt accelerated by moisture inclosed by glass."

In Simple Language.
Beware of the habit of using big words. Like other habits, it grows upon its victim. A horrible example is instanced by the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

The superintendent of a Sunday school in Philadelphia recently called upon a visitor to "say a few words" to the school, the members of which are mostly children of tender age.

The visitor, a speaker well known for his verbose and circumlocutory manner of speech, began his address as follows:

"This morning, children, I purpose to offer you an epitome of the life of Saint Paul. It may be, perhaps, that there are among you some too young to grasp the meaning of the word 'epitome.' 'Epitome,' children, is in its significance synonymous with synopsis."

Bite of a Centipede.
Jeff Fitch has had about the closest call of his life the last few days. About one week ago, while sleeping in his bachelor quarters, he felt something bite him and after applying some turpentine he thought no more of it.

A day or two later the wound began to swell and in a short time Fitch was a very sick man. He was removed to the home of Chris Powell, where for a time it was feared he would not recover. A search of the room where Fitch had been sleeping revealed a dead centipede upon the floor back of the bed, where it had fallen when the half-awakened man had crushed his tormentor. Fitch is now said to be out of danger, although far from recovered.—Arizona Republican.

FOR SALE

For Sale, or Rent: 8 room house on Lyttleton street (formerly occupied by T. C. DuBose) lot 100x250. Barn and stables on premises, easy terms; price on application.
For Sale—One lot on Chestnut street (between Reel house No. 2, and Dr. S. C. Zemp's residence.)
One lot on Fair street, 100x250, a bargain for quick sale.

111 acres of land on Adams Mill road 7 miles East of Camden. Two horse farm open and under cultivation, balance of tract in wood and pine timber. One 4 room dwelling, barn and stables, also cotton house. All new buildings. For quick sale we offer this at a bargain.

75 acres of land 9 miles Southeast of Camden on Camden-Darlington public road; 25 acres open and under cultivation; 20 acres of long and short leaf timber, balance in wood land; one 3 room dwelling, barn and stables; good running water through place. This is a good small farm and can be bought for \$1500.

185 acres of land 7 miles from Camden on Darlington-Camden road, 30 acres open and under cultivation, balance in wood with some pine timber. 12 acres in pasture, under wire. One four room dwelling, barn and stables, also small cotton house. Price \$8.00 per acre.

Farm of J. R. and S. H. Truesdale, 11 miles north of Camden, S. C. This tract contains 131 acres; 75 acres open land, mostly level; 1 4-room dwelling, 2 tenant houses, 2 good springs of water.

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