

Tommie's Christmas

It was Christmas Eve. The moon had just appeared above the eastern horizon, when little Tommy Hayes set out for his home some six miles distant. He had been working at a country house trying to help his widowed mother but had secured permission to spend the feast-day at his home. As he proceeded on his way sometimes walking, sometimes running his mind was ever busy thinking on the coming day and the happiness of his mother and little sister at having him with them. The keen frost pinched his ears but he kept them from freezing by covering them occasionally with his bare hands; his toes also he felt grow numb and the thought that possibly they might freeze roused him from his Christmas dreams and caused him to quicken his then slow pace. In the clear still night the crunch of his foot in the frosty snow sounded loud in his ears and his dark shadow moved on before him like an accompanying Christmas fairy. Not a breath stirred the wayside trees which seemed to act as sentinels guarding the great forest which he was approaching.

Suddenly the report of a gun broke the tranquility of the night. He stopped but could hear only the beat of his own heart thumping violently as if dissatisfied with its limited play-room. Then he remembered having heard that the frost causes the trees and sheets of ice to crack like cannons so he moved on again at a slow run. His mind soon ceased to be troubled about the shot but was soon busily engaged thinking about a present for his mother, but all that suggested themselves were far beyond his means. At last an idea came to him.

"I'll sell this watch the old man gave me," he said, and although the thought of parting with the little treasure pained him, still he decided to do so. While he proceeded on his way, thinking what he would do with the money thus obtained something on the road ahead attracted his attention.

He slowed his pace to a walk. Terrifying thoughts

came to his mind one after another and he began to feel frightened. A low groan or growl seemed to issue from some object on the road before him and his heart stood still. His mind was filled with alarm as he thought of the wild animals in that forest, perhaps waiting to devour him. He paused to think. The object whatever it was lay motionless on the ground. "There is no use in running back" he said to himself. He knew his mother and little sister were waiting for him, very likely thinking of him at the present time so summoning all his courage he moved step by step toward the object which although partly covered with snow he soon saw to be the figure of a man.

"Somebody drunk" said Tommy to himself and when he came up close to see whether he knew the man or not, the face of a stranger was turned up toward him. His fears did not by any means grow less as he noticed blood on the stranger's cheek and on the snow beside his head; but the indistinct movements of the prostrate man told Tommy that at least he still lived. Conditions looked frightful to Tom, as he thought of himself in the middle of a forest with a life depending on him and no help within two miles. However he determined to carry him to the edge of the forest, if it were possible at all, where help might be summoned. But as he was endeavoring to raise the man, an impossible task for him, a very welcome sound reached Tommie's ears,—the sound of approaching bells.

While Tommy waited he tried to reason what happened to the man and when he remembered the shot all seemed plain to him. But he did not shoot himself thought Tommy; for no gun was to be seen. By this time the help he was waiting for came along and Tommy was delighted to find it was a doctor, returning to his home in the town, after visiting some patient. They placed the almost helpless man in the sleigh and wrapping him up drove toward the town. Tommy was soon pouring his story of the supposed murder into the ears of the doctor. When he had finished, the stranger who had recovered somewhat, spoke for the first time. He explained how he had been thrown from his horse, while traveling

toward the town, to visit his sister whom he had not seen for thirty years. The doctor who was of a genial nature, questioned the stranger as to his identity and what was Tommie's surprise to find that the man whom he had just assisted was his own uncle! Tommie's joy knew no bounds. His uncle playfully assisted him to secure beautiful presents for his mother, and little sister; and we may be sure there was no boy in all the town spent a happier Christmas than Tommy Hayes, in the bosom of his family with his new-found friend.

ALEX. MCINTYRE, '17.

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 * **The Funny Man** *
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AT THE BALL GAME.

Fans—Boost it, Oweny, boost it!

Oweny—(from beneath a pile of men) At the present juncture of affairs, it is utterly impossible for me to extricate, from this conglomeration of human forms, my pedal appendage in order to apply it to yon piece of inflated pigskin.

Ray—(to Conductor on Western train) What is the matter with this train anyhow?

Conductor—If you don't like the way this train is going you can get off and walk.

Ray—Really I would like to, but my trunk is on and I may as well wait here as at the station.

Fitz—I was once walking through a factory when a huge mass weighing a ton struck my hat.

Heck—Nonsenses, that would have killed you.

Fitz—Well you see I had left my hat at the entrance.