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# THE SHADOW OF THE YULE-LOG

by

*Dr. Arthur B. Yolland*

**T**he last flicker of the Christmas fire set the hall dancing with grotesque figures that seemed like ghosts of a bloodless past come back to mock the hollowness of the hopeless present. Giles was sitting in a dark corner of the hall dreaming of the life that had been and cajoling himself into a belief that it had returned again. He was too absorbed in his thoughts to see the deepening of the shadows or hear the moaning of the yule-log as its massiveness shrank into insignificance on the gigantic hearth which had seen the glories of a brilliant past.

Suddenly there arose in his mind a vision of those glories, and he started at the thought of those Christmas Eves of yore when the family now scattered and dispersed by the arbitrary despotism of unthinking ignorance had gathered round the fireplace to celebrate the season of charity and goodwill and reconciliation.

He remembered that Christmas Eve when his uncle Robert had spoken sorrowfully of the coming cataclysm and had warned his father that human self-sufficiency had determined to defy the divine order of the world and tear into shreds the country so beloved of them all; he had discoursed of the need for patience and of the inevitability of the triumph of divine justice. He had reminded his hearers of the parable of the wise man who built his house upon a rock and of the foolish man who built his house upon sand; and he had told them that their house was built upon the rock of the unswerving loyalty of a much-afflicted people...

And, as he started from his dream, Giles saw the shadow of the yule-log lengthen out and move across the floor of the hall, till it paused a few inches from him and seemed to sigh.

And Giles shut his eyes; for he was afeared: and there was a sound as of a whirlwind sweeping over the hollowed flags which had witnessed the coming and going of so many generations of his kin. And as he timidly opened his eyes, the shadow of the yule-log was standing erect before the fire; and it seemed to Giles as if there were something human about the shadow, — as if it desired to speak to him and tell him that the house built upon the sand was being beaten by the wind and the rain and was shuddering in anticipation of its fall.

And the whirlwind was heard no more; and in its place Giles heard the sound of snowflakes pattering gently on the casement: and his heart rejoiced as he thought of the morrow with its message of re-union and reconciliation and faith and hope and charity.

And faintly, as if borne on the wings of a gentle west wind, there came the sound of an angelic choir singing the old-world song of goodwill and peace and gladness, —

*“He comes, the prisoners to release  
In Satan’s bondage held:  
The gates of brass before him burst,  
The iron fetters yield...”*

The shadow had grown and darkened; and through the casement the first dim promise of the dawning day was struggling to find a passage. Yet the shadow of the yule-log remained unmoved; and it seemed to the excited imagination of Giles that the glow creeping through the broken clouds in the East had charmed a smile into the face of the shadow and stiffened its shape with a conscious pride...

Of course it was all mere fancy: but the log suddenly collapsed; and the sparks that glanced from its fall faded in the bright light of a flame which heralded the coming of the end.

Yet the shadow was still there in all its motionless dignity; but it was no longer the shadow of the yule-log now blackening and faintly sputtering in a final effort to recover the show of life: it seemed to Giles as if the rising glow of the dawn had imperceptibly replaced the dying flicker of the evening fire.

And the shadow seemed to point to the casement, where the changing colours of the eastern sky played kaleidoscopic effects upon the inset emblems of the storied past. And the long watching had wearied Giles, who once more travelled in imagination to those days when he and his

kin had been united in a loving celebration of the great Christian season. Once more his uncle Robert appeared to be standing in his old familiar attitude in front of the blazing fire; he was talking to them all about the past and the future: and his eyes glowed with an unnatural fire as he told them how the wind and the rain had beaten upon that house and how that house had fallen and been swept away by the flood. And Giles saw the house which had been built upon sand fall and break to pieces; and the fall of that house was a grievous one. And it was all as clear as the Fata Morgana of the Great Lowlands; and the heart of Giles leaped within him: but he did not wake, for the vision was not yet accomplished.

For he dreamed on and in his dream he saw the place of the house that had been built upon sand taken by a house built upon a rock; and the house that was built upon a rock was surrounded by trees and streams of water: and there was a sound of laughter and rejoicing in that house and among the neighbours who flocked to see the miracle. And across the vista of Giles's vision there moved a shadow as of a figure erect and proud which looked eastwards and scanned the horizon in search of something which it expected to come from that direction. At first the shadow seemed that of an echo in search of its origin; then it assumed a heightened substance, until it appeared to Giles like the embodiment of the soul of the past. Then it loomed gigantic; and all around it shrank into insignificance: and Giles saw in his dream that the figure showed the reflection of a borrowed light; and that light was the light of the sun now rising to full glory above the haze which had so far rested upon the eastern fringe of the sky.

The house too loomed large and strong; and its inhabitants were singing a song of gladness and contentment, —

*"Glory to God in the Highest,  
Glory to God for His gift!"*

And Giles awoke from his dream: but his soul was filled with an assurance of its truth that will never die.

## POLITICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF HUNGARY'S ATTITUDE IN THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS

by

*"Observer"*

Budapest, December 23rd., 1935.

Nearly three months have passed since the outbreak of hostilities between Italy and Ethiopia; and today, as a consequence of the frustration of the British-French endeavours to secure peace, we are farther removed than ever from a rapid liquidation of the war.

We must admit that this turn of affairs has caused a certain disappointment in Hungarian public opinion. As its geographical situation in itself sufficiently explains, the Hungarian nation is unable to acquiesce in the idea that the campaign being carried on in distant Africa should let the furies of war loose in Europe too. Our nation cannot reconcile itself to that idea, particularly in view of the fact that such a war would result primarily in pitting against one another Great Britain and Italy, two countries for which the Hungarian people cherishes feelings of the sincerest sympathy and friendship, while it is anxious to retain and develop the friendship of those two countries. Hungary will never be able to forget the debt it owes to the eminent representatives of British public life who have so many times entered

the lists on behalf of a peaceful re-adjustment of the frontiers demarcated in the Treaty of Trianon; but it is equally unable to obliterate the memory of the fact that Mussolini was the first responsible statesman in Europe to take up a decided stand on behalf of Hungary's cause. Under such circumstances it is only natural that the public opinion of Hungary should desire a rapid liquidation of the Abyssinian conflict and a restoration of the traditional friendship and cordial relations always existing between Great Britain and Italy; and however serious the situation may be at present, it refuses to abandon the hope that the efforts of the diplomats of the three Great Powers of Western Europe and the intervention of the Committee of Thirteen of the League of Nations, will sooner or later succeed nevertheless in finding the means to formulate conditions which will induce a peaceful solution satisfactory alike to Italy and Abyssinia and to the League of Nations.

It gives us the greatest pleasure and gratification to be able to establish the fact that more than one unbiassed Britisher able to appreciate Hungary's delicate situation has displayed a