

leaned forward, deep in thought. There were tears upon his cheeks.

The voices in the next room had ceased. The tree was ready for the morrow.

His wife called to him from the doorway. "Come, see the tree!" she invited.

"Not now, my dear. I have some work to do."

"Work! On Christmas Eve?"

"Yes, dear. Important business."

"Business! On Christmas Eve?"

"Yes, dear. It's Christmas business. I have to begin giving back some Christmas presents."

"You're joking," said Mrs. Briggs.

"But if you really must work, do telephone for somebody to help you."

"I shall," he said. "I shall telegraph for my brother Thomas."

"Glad to see him. But what does Tom know about business?"