

ended to the shore of the lake by a narrow winding path. When they drew near to the waiting host the old man stopped and the young leader stepped to his side. They gazed into each other's faces, and the old man weeping slowly continued his way. At the same moment through the silent air rang out the midnight chimes. The old man gathered his robes more closely round him and strove to hasten on more swiftly. The spirit-bands marched forward with glowing faces and with hearts elate, and ere the twelfth chime died away the old and the young were lost to sight and a new day woke bringing a glad new year.—H. B. T., in 'Great Thoughts.'

### Yule-Log Chips.

Nothing beautifies or makes a gift more welcome than to have it show thoughtfulness and discrimination.

Give everything in a Christmas way. No matter how practical its contents, the packages with a bit of holly tucked under a ribbon tie has added value in the eyes of nurse or kitchen maid, as surely as in those of your intimate friends.

You are too pinched to give at all? Oh, no, you are not. Hope, cheeriness, and courage are beyond price, and no one is too poor to give these.

Are you solitary? So was he who gave us the blessed day. Get outside of yourself, and if you can do no more than to say every 'Thank you' and 'Merry Christmas,' with a rising inflection and smile, it will lighten your load and honor him.

Has the year made a chair in the home circle vacant? Don't be selfish, and drape it with crepe, as though the loved voice were silenced for ever. On this day of all others, live your faith in life eternal by wreathing it with evergreens.

### A Giving Christmas.

[Each year the Sunday-school tries to make its Christmas treat brighter than the last, if possible. Perhaps this account of what proved to be the happiest ever known for one school will set loving hearts and busy brains at work in a way that will show itself next year in 'the very best Christmas we ever had.'—Ed.]

'Oh, for something new for our Christmas S. S.!' cried May Ford—a dream in blonde and blue, floating into one of the church committee rooms, where many of her Sunday-school co-workers were already assembled.

'That is new,' responded Alice Hart, "'S. S. S.'" for Sunday-school social is a great saving in time and breath. Thank you.'

'All appreciation gratefully received; but whom shall we thank for the much-sought-for new idea? A plan that we can carry out with success. Please take note that I said "we."'

'Mrs. Barton looks as if she had something on her mind,' suggested Tom Mather, who had grown up next door to that amiable lady, and in common with most of the young people present, had not graduated from the primary department of the Sunday-school of which she was superintendent until, like young birdlings, they had been crowded out of the much-loved home nest.

The little woman beaming upon them had in her very manner a promise of the solution of their problem, as she said:

'Of late I have been fearing that we were not making the most of our Christmas opportunities with the children. We have done what was easiest for ourselves and made it for them a receiving day instead of a giving.'

'Christmas should, of all things, teach un-

selfishness,' said the young pastor, who had come in and found a place very quietly.

'Of course, the spirit is all right,' cried May Ford, impetuously. 'But the idea of many in our Sunday-school giving is a novel one. What, pray, have they to give?'

'Trust them to find something.'

'But may not some give what it is their duty to keep?'

'There might be sacrifice even in that.'

'And those in better circumstances might follow in the same line, and with wholesome results.'

'Careful note should be taken that such cases of generosity were made good.'

'I am filled with dismay lest I shall not be able to inculcate a right spirit.'

'In some instances the right spirit might be as necessary in receiving as in giving.'

These remarks had run around the room in the delightfully informal manner that always characterized the committee meetings of these co-workers, until Willie Granger, who had come as an escort for his mother, weary of what he considered very preachy talk, asked:—

'How is this wholesale gift enterprise to be managed?'

'Of course, we look to Mrs. Barton for details.'

And thus appealed to that lady replied:

'Would it not be the simplest way to announce that every one who comes shall bring a gift as an admittance fee?'

'What sort of a gift, Mrs. Barton?'

'The giver is to decide. I have determined on my gift, but I will only say that it is a useful piece of furniture that has been crowded from room to room until it has at last arrived in the attic. I shall write out a description of it and the committee will decide upon some place where it will be acceptable.'

'How mysterious! Oh, I will give!' and May clapped her hands over her mouth, for fear the beneficent thought might escape.

'This is delightful,' laughed the superintendent, 'for the old saw that every lady likes a lover is no more true than the new one that many misses make a mystery.'

'I have fathomed Mrs. Barton's mystery,' said Tom; 'her gift is that dear old ugly sleepy hollow, leather covered arm-chair. I have missed it from the library for some time, and I suggest that it be given to Mr. Bird, who has asthma and never goes to bed. He and his family are all among our church people.'

'If all the mysteries are as nice as that and all the problems as easily solved, our happy Christmas is assured,' said the superintendent.

'Shall we have the usual gift tree?' asked Miss Carter, timidly, her even voice quieting the little ebullitions of enthusiasm.

'I think so,' replied Mrs. Barton. 'The children always vote for a tree. There is nothing prettier and the tinnest gift gains a charm from having grown on the Christmas tree.'

'That is true,' said May; 'I haven't outgrown the delusion. I have the books that year by year have come to me from the Christmas tree on a shelf by themselves and they are a little more precious than any other books that I have.'

Some of the girls smiled. Tom Mather, whose father owned the largest bookstore in the city, looked gratified, and May began once more, the pink in her cheeks turning to carmine, but before she could excuse or further confuse herself, Mrs. Barton had relieved the situation by saying:

'Now, who has a thought about the decorations?'

'Why not let every one have a hand in that also?' suggested the assistant superintendent.

'For instance, let us ask for round wreaths of evergreen and for paper decorations.'

'Of course, the whole thing is an experiment,' said the pastor, with more or less doubt in his voice.

'But I fancy it will be a successful one,' quickly added Mrs. Granger, lest Mrs. Barton might fancy that any one was throwing cold water. 'Just think of the bother and the litter to be escaped by having decorations all brought in ready-made—and there is no end to the possibilities of round wreaths and paper flowers, and chains, and all sorts of pretty and quaint devices.'

So that was settled and Mrs. Barton was solicited for further details.

'Of course,' she explained, 'there will be the usual candy, fruit, nuts, toys and fanciful gifts—'

'For, of course, we have no desire to turn our Sunday-school social into a charity fair,' cut in Mrs. Potter very coldly.

'Only in the way of that charity which is love,' replied Mrs. Barton, continuing. 'I know all you young people are to be trusted for the musical and literary entertainment, including a processional when all the children are to march around and deposit their gifts in a basket-like arrangement in the corner, front of the door, to the ladies' parlor, so that they may be removed without confusion, and made ready for distribution at the same time with the fruits of the tree.'

'The means and the methods to be settled at some future committee meeting. We always have such good times at committee meetings. We ought to arrange for an hour together somewhere every evening.'

'That's so,' replied Tom, who was helping May on with her wraps and anticipating the short walk home as her escort. 'There are sure to be new ideas brought out. Now that of a processional is fine, it gives every child a chance to be in it himself for all that he is worth.'

'There may not be as many children or as many gifts as you are planning for,' said an unbeliever in innovations.

'We certainly are hoping for an increased attendance that we may be so fortunate as to return,' said Mrs. Barton; 'and our plans should at once be made known to the children, for it is they who are to interest others. And now shall we adjourn to meet at my home to-morrow evening at eight o'clock? and there are yet three Sundays before Christmas.'

Recruits began to come in the very first Sunday, and Mrs. Barton was the recipient of many pretty and pathetic confidences in regard to the required admittance fee. No one rebelled at it as unjust, but Mrs. Barton gained many facts that would aid in the distribution of gifts.

The preparations went briskly forward; each Sunday brought recruits to the school, some of whom heard the story of the Christ child for the first time; joined in rehearsing Christmas hymns and wondered how even Christmas itself could be more delightful.

Willie Granger, walking home with his mother after the church service, asked with some hesitancy, if, instead of having a new overcoat, he could not use the money it would cost to buy a new suit for a schoolmate whose father was sick, so that the lad might be able to get work in some store at odd hours; and the mother, remembering what she had said about sacrifice in the boy's hearing at the committee meetings, consented. And the bright boy gained an experimental knowledge of the delights of helpfulness. The lad who was helped gained a permanent position, and the man who employed him became interested for