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A Christmas Fable.

The Roots of the old sycamore tree, which extended deep into the ground beside the Brook, were disposed to make merry with it.

"You have no Christmas," said the Roots jeeringly. "You may have a good time in summer, when you can see and talk with the birds and trees and flowers, but in winter you are imprisoned in darkness under the ice, and of Christmas you know nothing. With us it is quite different. We are part of the great tree, and up above we can see the sun flashed back by the frost and the smoke rising in great curls from the chimneys and the white, furry mantle of ormino earth is wearing, and we can hear the twitter of the snow-birds and the tinkle of the sleighbells and the shouts of happy people. Oh, it is fine outside. But you, poor Brook, in your dark prison, you hear nothing and see nothing and know nothing."

But the Brook only laughed. "You are very much mistaken," it said. "if you think I have no Christmas. On the contrary, Christmas time down here is one of joy and brilliancy. It is neither dark nor lonely beneath the ice. There is a strange phosphorescent light which is sometimes wonderful, and I frolic among the stones and caresses in winter just as I did in summer. There is a jolly group of acquaintances here too. The great pickeral splash about, and the muskrats come down out of their homes, and the minck dives to drift from one haunt to another in the bank, and the crawfish are as sociable as ever. I gurgle and dance among them and sing a Christmas carol when the time comes, and we are very happy."

"But that is not all, the Brook continued. "You forget the air-holes. Through them I look up and see the stars because I look at them with nothing earthly in sight. Ah, but they are bright on Christmas eve! They shine then with a radiance never seen at any other time, and we gather about the air-holes, all the company of us, and watch them and their glory. It seems then as if each star were a Star of Bethlehem, telling of the coming of the Christ child. It is wonderful and beautiful, and we are glad. Do not tell me that there is no Christmas beneath the ice."

And the Brook gurgled by joyously.—

The Children's Day.

In every household special pains should be taken to insure a "good time" for the little ones of the family, and in homes where there are no children the opportunity is afforded to make it a pleasant day for some less fortunate little ones whose parents have not the means of providing gifts and a good dinner for them.

Perhaps during the year that is nearly gone death has taken from your home the child God had given you and you mournfully sit at your lonely hearth brooding over your grief, refusing to be comforted. It may cost an effort, and perhaps you feel that you cannot now endure the sound of childish voices in your silent rooms, yet it will surely bring comfort to you if you throw off this feeling and invite some children to spend the day with you.

In memory of your own little one, who now needs them no more, prepare a few gifts for your guests. Whatever these may be, toys or useful articles of which they stand in need, they will not fail to give pleasure to the recipients. Let the dinner be as good as you can prepare it, and the memory of it will linger long years in the little hearts of those who partake of it. It may be as bread upon the waters—who knows?

As far as possible let the gifts be suited to the needs of the recipient. The boy whose toes ache with cold will appreciate warm shoes, and to the little girl who has no other head covering than a summer hat a new hood will be welcome.

A lady once remarked in my hearing that she thought it a mistake to make only gifts of wearing apparel to poor children, even if it was needed. Children, she said, appreciate toys, candies and nuts, or even ornamental gifts more than they do clothes, and that a child would get more enjoyment out of such things, even if he went with cold feet and bare hands.

Be that as it may, each of us is able to give pleasure of some sort to some child at Christmas time. Let not this joyous season pass while we selfishly lavish gifts upon those whom we have every reason to expect will return the compliment and leave unnoticed those to whom Christmas means so little more than the name.

300 Offertory Envelopes printed for \$1.00, at the SOCOCM PRESS Springhill, N. S.

A Lamb in Church.

She sat on the sliding cushion,
The deer, wee woman of four:
Her feet, in their shiny slippers,
Hung dangling over the floor.
She meant to be good; she had promised;

And, so with her big brown eyes;
She stared at the meeting-house windows,
And counted the crawling flies.

She looked far up at the preacher,
But she thought of the honey bees
Droning away at the blossoms
That whitened the cherry trees.

She thought of a broken basket,
Where curled in a dusky heap,
Three sleek, round puppies with fringy ears,
Lay snuggled and fast asleep.

Such soft, warm bodies to cuddle,
Such queer little hearts to beat,
Such swift round tongues to kiss,
Such sprawling, cushiony feet;
She could feel in her clasping fingers,

The touch of the satiny skin,
And a cold, wet nose exploring
The dimples under her chin.

Then a sudden ripple of laughter
Ran over the parted lips
So quick that she could not catch it
With her rosy finger tips.

The people whispered, "Bless the child,"

As each one waked from a nap,
But the dear, wee woman hid her face
For shame in her mother's lap.

England's Smallest Church.

Situated in one of the most picturesque parts of Sussex, some nine miles to the south-east of Lewes and six miles north-west of Eastbourne, the little village of Lullington claims proud possession—if such an adjective is applicable—of what is locally believed to be the smallest church in England. The village itself is on so small a scale that the miniature church, some 16 feet square, is quite large enough to supply its needs. Built in mediæval times upon a slight eminence within a short distance of Alfriston, famous for its sixteenth-century hostelry, the church is reached by a path which passes through charming scenery. The present structure stands upon the site of the chancel of the building destroyed during the Cromwellian struggles, and at the same time the church records disappeared, so that even the name of its patron saint is not now known. Inside the small sanctuary the

large pulpit completely dwarfs the scanty sitting accommodation. The belfry is more for ornament than use, since the birds, by whom it has been used for nesting purposes during several seasons, are allowed to retain undisturbed possession of the turret of the interesting little structure.

Kind Words for Rev. J. G. Waller.

The Reverend J. G. Waller, with Mrs. Waller and their four children, sailed for Canada on July the 30th, on a well earned furlough after nearly eight years service in Japan. Mr. Waller, as our readers know, was the first missionary of the Canadian Church to be sent into the foreign mission-field, and no one, who is at all acquainted with the course of his life and with his labours for Christ in Japan, can fail to acknowledge that the Church has been most fully justified and fortunate in the choice of its first missionary. An able and wise theologian, endowed with a strong physique and a fine spirit of perseverance, he has succeeded in the face of more than ordinary difficulties in establishing, in one of the most antagonistic cities of the Empire and a very hotbed of Buddhist opposition, a firm centre of Christian influence, and has gathered around him a band of loyal and well-trained workers. In the town of Nagano itself he has been enabled recently to crown his work by the opening of a small but handsome Church, the first building of brick in that part of the country, and destined, we believe to be in the future the permanent centre of an ever-widening circle of Christian effort in this portion of God's Field. It is needless to say that in every work undertaken for CHRIST he has ever found a most sympathetic and ready helper in Mrs. Waller. The respect and affection which they have both won for themselves among all classes was amply shown by the demonstration which took place on their departure from Nagano, and in which an almost equal share was taken by the non-Christian part of the community. We trust that a year's stay in their native country may fully restore Mrs. Waller to health and strength, and we can assure them of a warm welcome from both missionaries and converts on their return.

A. C. S.
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