

ECHOES OF CHRISTMAS.

HOW THE LITTLE ONES AT HAZEL BRAE SPENT CHRISTMAS.

FROM MISS GIBBS.

MY DEAR GIRLS,—As you could not all be at "Hazel Brae" on Christmas day, you will, I think, like to hear what we did, so I will try and tell you something about it, and I hope you all spent as happy a day as we did, for I think, at its close, we could all say we had, indeed, "a happy Christmas."

In the early morning we were awakened, as usual, by the sound of little voices singing sweet Christmas hymns, reminding us of our Saviour's birth, for this should ever be our first thought; and let the message of old come home to each one of us—"Unto you is born this day, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord."

After morning Church—for as many as could be spared, went—we dined all together, one big family of about fifty, on turkey and plum-pudding, the usual Christmas fare. But, do you know, girls, there is a little secret about our pudding which we do not always find in other people's, for some of us found something more than plums and currants, and, indeed, something that might have disturbed our digestive organs had we not been careful. And now can you guess? We, who were lucky, were five cents richer than when we commenced our dinner. Do you think Santa Claus had anything to do with this?

He paid us a visit, however, about 4 o'clock, for just as the children were singing "Santa Claus is coming to bring us lots of toys," etc., the curtain was drawn, and there he was, with a big Christmas tree, ready to distribute all sorts of good things—some prettily-dressed dolls for the little ones, handkerchief sachets, blotters, purses, and various other useful things, for the elder girls, and candies, of course, for all, for big and little alike are always ready for candies.

The grown-up people, too, were not forgotten, and you should have seen the funny little dolls they had given to them. I suppose Santa Claus wanted to remind them of their childhood.

After he had said "good-bye" to us, and tea over, the children, and indeed big girls too, enjoyed a great romp, and all the more so as Mr. Metcalf appeared on the scene and entered fully into their games. Mr. Metcalf, by the way, had been missing all the afternoon. I wonder where he was! Do you think Santa Claus would know?

By this time we were all rather tired, but before separating for the night, there remained one thing more to do, which always delights the hearts of the children—the pulling of bon-bons. Oh, the fun they had, especially as they adorned themselves with the many kinds of "head-gear" they found inside.

Of course, we remembered all absent friends, and gave three loud cheers, especially for Dr. Barnardo; and our dear friend, Miss Woodgate, you may be sure, was not forgotten either.

Another Christmas day has come and gone, to be held, I trust, in happy remembrance by each one present. And let us each, dear girls, endeavour, by God's help, to make the year upon which we have now entered, happier and better than the last, not only for ourselves, but for all with whom we come in contact.

With love and best wishes,

I am, your sincere friend,

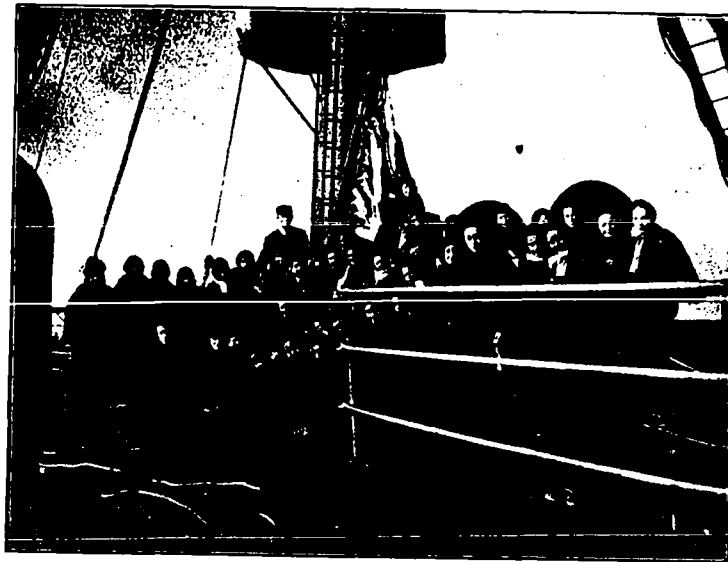
G. GIBBS.

AN EVENING WITH THE LITTLE ONES IN MUSKOKA.

When enjoying our pleasant Christmas gathering in Hazel Brae, we never forget our girls who are away, most of whom, we believe, share in the gladness and good times of the family with whom they are living, and we hope that not many spend a really *lonely* Christmas. This year our thoughts seemed to turn more especially to our little ones away north in Muskoka, and having a few "trifles" left over from our own Christmas Tree, it was suggested "could we not send them to our Boarders and give them a treat, too?" This suggestion met with general approval, and the idea grew and

took shape, and finally resulted in a very pleasant, happy gathering of little ones in Huntsville, with tea, games, Christmas tree, and all sorts of good things.

It is possible you may not all fully understand the term "Boarders." These are young children, all under twelve, who have been placed with farmers and others in Muskoka, that they may be brought up as members of the family, attend school regularly and get a fair education, and at the same time become accustomed to the Canadian climate and home ways, and learn to be smart and useful in little home duties, so that when their time comes to start life's battle in earnest and earn their own living, they may not feel as "strangers in a strange land," but may know to some extent what will be expected of them and how to set about it. It is, in short, the nursery and training ground from which we hope to produce good, capable "helps," both boys and girls.



MR. OWEN AND OUR LAST PARTY OF GIRLS ON BOARD THE "SCOTSMAN."
(Photo by a Lady Passenger.)

But to return to our "treat." In thinking this over the one great difficulty was, that the children were so scattered and lived at such distances from each other, as to make it impossible to gather them all. Our *hearts* were *large* enough, but the *miles* were *too long*.

Huntsville being the chief centre, it was decided to invite all boys and girls, who lived in and around that town, to meet Miss Loveday and Mr. Gaunt on Thursday evening, January 14th, at the Church Hall, which had been placed at our disposal by the kindness and courtesy of the Rev. Arch. Llywdd. Nothing was said in the invitation as to what was to be done at this gathering, but many and varied were the suppositions and expectations of the favoured little ones, several of whom thought it quite important enough for Dr. Barnardo to come himself and see them, and looked quite disappointed when told he was thousands of miles away in England, but when sharp, watchful eyes saw a kind friend in the neighbourhood drive up to the door and leave there a fine tall fir tree—the secret was out!

Well, 5 o'clock arrived in due time (almost too soon for those who were in charge and had preparations to make), and found gathered in the schoolroom a bright, merry party of children, 26 girls and 18 boys—44 in all. It did one good to look round at their eager, healthy, happy faces, and as far as outward appearance went they all, without exception, gave evidence of being well and kindly cared for. Tea was quickly disposed of and tables put aside, and then began those games that all children know and like. "Roman Soldiers," "Cock Robin," etc. A potato race caused great fun and excitement, being tried in various ways—by two girls, two boys, a little boy and girl, and coming to a climax when two of the "grown-up people" tried their speed and skill, and loud

and hearty were the cheers as the contest got pretty close. By this time even children's voices and throats were getting a little tired, so a bag of candies was handed round to each, and soon began the all-important business of "spoiling the tree." This seemed to give unbounded pleasure and satisfaction. There was something for everyone, and it seemed to be just the thing that each one liked, and any trouble that had been taken was amply repaid by the sight of the joy with which dolls were admired, mouth-organs tried, knives opened and shut, etc. The amusement of the evening was varied by songs, recitations, duets, etc., that had been learned at school or prepared for other entertainments. Of course there was the usual remembrance of absent friends. Three cheers for Dr. Barnardo, for friends in Peterborough and in Toronto (here the rival affections of the boys and the girls for their respective Home was decidedly marked), for Mr.

Shearer, their teacher, and others; closing with the singing of "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Many friends in the neighbourhood, including those who were not guardians of the children, very kindly offered help; and our thanks are specially due to the Rev. A. Llywdd for use of the room, to Mrs. Geo. Hutcheson for her contributions of cakes, milk and apples, to Mrs. Hollinshead and Mrs. Rumsey, who in addition to bringing cakes, etc., gave most valuable assistance in the preparation of the tea, and to Mrs. Early, Mrs. Winter and others, who sent various useful gifts.

We think that both children and visitors went home pleased and satisfied, and the latter, we trust, with increased

kindly feelings towards our work. This gathering gave us an opportunity of seeing the children free and unrestrained, and thus helping us to form a better estimate of their home life, and it was very evident that while they were, we hope, learning to *work*, they had not forgotten how to *play*, and for ourselves, we were quite ready to endorse a remark heard during the evening: "Well, they look to be a very promising lot of youngsters."

They all attend some church and Sunday school, and their education, in the more generally accepted sense of the word, is not overlooked. Half-yearly reports from this and other schools in the neighbourhood show a steady, regular attendance, a fair average of marks gained, and are free from any complaint either as to conduct or general appearance, though we cannot help wondering sometimes why some who are known and acknowledged to be quick and capable should remain so long in the low standards.

And now, if any "Boarders" who were not fortunate enough, for that evening at least, to live in or near Huntsville should read this paper, we want to send a loving message to them, to assure them that they were not forgotten, and to whisper that perhaps their turn may come some day. In the meantime, we hope all will work away steadily and well during the present school term, be *true* and *good*, and thus hold up their own and Dr. Barnardo's good name, and show Canadians how happy and useful little English children can be.

Good-bye one and all of you.

J. L.

If you are annoyed or vexed at people, just remember it is not the right time to speak. Close your mouth—shut your teeth together.—*Sel.*