



My First and Latest Christmas Trees.

By S. P., Calgary.

"We simply must have a Christmas tree for baby."

It was "mummie" that thus expressed her commands to dear old Dad. (He wasn't old then; in fact he is not old yet, although his hair is at the pepper-and-salt stage—probably more salt than pepper).

"I know you will object and say there are no other children, nor any snow; not even the proper kind of tree. But I must have a Christmas tree for baby all the same."

That was "many years ago." I, the baby referred to, am now a sturdy lass of sixteen, but was just then cooing and crowing in the verandah beside my good old ayah.

"Very well, dear," my father replied, "I will go and see what substitute for a fir-tree I can find in the jungle."

"I like to hear 'mummie' tell the story of 'Nora's first Christmas tree.' We were then in what father calls 'the foothills of the Himalayas.' There were no Europeans within riding distance of our bungalow. But all the same a sal-tree was brought in and loaded with pretty things and mica, gathered from the neighboring hills, glittered among the little candles. I was carried round my tree, and our humble guests—mostly our own servants—"wah-wahed" in great astonishment and glee.

Tempora mutantur! We are now in the foothills of the Rockies, with no servants to fetch and carry for us, but with plenty of snow and fir-trees and the other conventional "properties" of a genuine Christmas festivity. A few days before last Christmas my brother, David, hitched up a team and he and Dad drove off in the sleigh to fetch home a choice young fir-tree they had spotted in the Fall when out after prairie chicken. It was one of our nasty days—a biting north wind and a dull sky; but in the service of Santa Claus no one grudges roughing it a bit. We watched them as they skinned along in a bee-line over the bush and across "heaven dars," till they disappeared in the brush down by the river. The next two days were given over entirely to putting the house in order for Santa Claus' eagerly looked-for visit. Baby (not me this time, but Marjorie

Daw, "the sixth in succession") wondered how dear old Santa could possibly come down an American stove-pipe.

At last the day and hour arrived, and our neighbors, too. People think nothing of a ten-mile drive here! While the guests were having something warm to drink around the stove in the entrance hall, my sister, "little Alice," stood up and addressed the audience thus:

"Good evening, friends!
Thrice welcome, all,
To join the mirth at Strath Pine Hall.
We are a colony of five—
A roisterous, boisterous, doisterous hive.
First comes our eldest sister, Nora,
So amiable—we all adore her;
Next Dave—more brain than brawn, they say;
Born tired—that is, of work—not play;
Then sweet, angelic Al—that's me—
Blythe, debonnaire and free.
Our brother Jock comes next in train.
Then last of all, but not the least,
Sweet Marjorie, Queen of this feast.
Our programme is a simple one—
From Alpha on to Omega, 'tis fun;
There's Mr. Snowman to be shot at,
Then Snowball's prizes to be got at;
The magic lantern's pictured treasures
Will add much to the evening's pleasures.
Then, supper done, sweet Marjorie
Will lead us to her Christmas tree.
Hark! There's the signal to begin—
Come, try your skill, and see who'll win."

Mr. Snowman, leaning against the

far end of the lobby, was an artistic production! Two sacks, stuffed and placed on end, one on top of the other, draped, daubed and figured to represent a jolly old fellow; pipe in mouth and, rakishly on his head, my best "tile" hat, which I last wore at a fashionable wedding in Calcutta. The excitement of the youngsters in trying to hit the pipe was intense. The snow-ball was in lieu of the popular khoi-bag of our Indian days. Instead of khoi (parched rice) we had popped corn in the snow-ball, along with all manner of "prizes." The ball was hung in the centre of our largest room and each child had a poke at it with a long stick. Soon the delicate workmanship of the snow-ball yielded to the sturdy blows, and down poured the pop-corn and bags of candies and all the other contents. Then began a royal scramble on the floor. It was indeed a "roisterous hive." Our worthy minister had, in the meantime, got his magic lantern ready and while others were busy preparing the supper table he amused the children with his "picture treasures." All too soon the carnival came to an end. The last candle on the tree has been extinguished; furs have been donned; good rights have been said. We can still

hear the jingling of the sleigh-bells away beyond the gate as we shut the door, thus bringing to a close one more happy Christmas.

A Chinese Story.

This pretty little story is told of a spelling-class in China:

The youngest of the children had by hard study contrived to keep his place so long that he seemed to claim it by right of possession. Growing self-confident, he missed a word, which was immediately spelled by the boy standing next to him. The face of the victor expressed the triumph he felt, yet he made no move toward taking the place, and when urged to do so, firmly refused, saying: "No, me not go; me not make Ah Fun's heart sorry."

That little act displayed great self-denial, yet it was done so thoughtfully and kindly that spontaneously came the quick remark: "He do all same as Jesus."—Golden Rule.

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Mr. H. Hutchinson, of Chatham, buyer for one of Canada's big mercantile houses, who crosses the ocean several times each year, says:

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"WHY FEAR, WITH A MOTHER SO BIG AND BRAVE?"