

A CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL.

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In November "Popular Educator." Author of "How to Produce Children's Plays," etc.

The festival stage is hung with dark green denim curtains. At first these curtains represent a forest, and next the interior of a home. The protagonist or leading actor in this festival is the *Christmas Tree*. This part will have to be played by one of the tallest boys dressed in dark green. His face is hidden by a green mask, with two slits cut for eyes. Two small fir trees about three feet high, are strapped with dark green canvas straps to his waist or with brown leather straps. They are so firmly fastened that they cannot slip. Each tree must be eight inches, or six inches, from the floor, to allow the wearer's legs and feet to move with comparative freedom.

The *Winter Winds* in gray and white dance about the *Tree*. The *Tree* waves its branches in answer to their wild greeting. Then the *Snow Flakes* whirl about the *Tree* in a swirling dance, pelting him with snowflakes. (Cotton batting snowflakes.) Some of the snowflakes thus thrown lodge in the branches of the *Tree*. Then *Snowflakes* and *Winter Winds* dance madly together, till all end their dance breathlessly.

A tall boy dressed as a peasant, with red coat and navy blue bloomers, now appears. Two other tall boys follow him. All carry axes. The *Winter Winds* perceive these newcomers, and dance about them, trying to impede their progress. The *Snow Flakes* swirl against them, pelting them with snow. But the men keep on till they reach the *Tree*. They look at it, making gestures of surprise and pleasure, the *Tree* stands very still. The men make motions of cutting it down. Two of them then carry the *Tree* between them. The *Snow Flakes* and *Winter Winds* make farewell gestures as the *Tree*, with sorrowful drooping of branch, is borne from their midst.

The next scene in the festival is the man's home. His wife is played by a tall girl in a bright peasant costume. She is watching for the return of the wayfarers. The men come in, bringing the *Tree* with them. The two neighbors leave, and the man and his wife hang a few simple gifts on the tree, gilded gingerbread and nuts. They put presents wrapped in white and brown paper at the foot of the *Tree*. Then they yawn, rub their eyes as if sleepy, and go off to bed.

As soon as they are gone a bell chimes, and in

come the *Christmas Tree Fairies* dressed in green tarlatan, made long—that is, ankle length. Each fairy robe floats unhemmed. Each *Fairy* carries a glittering Christmas tree bauble. They all dance, waving their arms so that the baubles they hold glint and glimmer. As soon as their dance ends they decorate the *Tree* with their baubles.

Again the bell strikes. This time the *Star Fairy* enters, a lovely sprite all in white tarlatan, flecked with silver stars. She wears a silver girdle and a crown of stars. She dances with the *Christmas Fairies* and then places a large silver star on the top of the *Christmas Tree*. Then, in a fantastic march, she leads the *Fairies* from the scene.

A pause of a quarter of a minute.

The man and his wife come in and look about them with wonder. Before they can make up their minds what has happened, in come the children. They clap their hands at sight of the *Tree*, and begin to sing a Christmas Carol as the curtain falls. They continue singing, hidden behind the stage curtain, as the audience puts on its wraps and goes out.

Use the "Kiss Waltz," by Arditi for the first dance, and Dvorak's "Humoresque," for the second dance. For the Christmas Carol use "Holy Night, Silent Night." For the march of the fairies from the scene use Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," or the march from "Aida."

TERRIBLE FOREST FIRES FROM TRIFLING CAUSES.

A man dropped a lighted match on the shore of Kalamalka Lake, British Columbia, on July 8th last. Within an hour a hot fire was racing through the underbrush. For three weeks after that there raged a series of forest fires, defying the organized efforts of hundreds of men.

At one time, twenty-six fire fighters were ringed about with flames while their relatives, shut off from them and helpless to aid, awaited news in terrorized suspense. Only after severe suffering from exhaustion, thirst and hunger did the band of workers force their way through to safety.

That experience is a big price to pay for one person's foolish act in handling matches in a forest. The court fined the careless man \$50 but that does not help the province to bear the enormous loss.

One lighted match dropped on one inch of inflammable ground expanded into fifteen miles of ruin.