

A class of slightly older young ladies, who were a trifle bashful, prepared a standard with two or three barrel hoops fastened near the top, on which they hung several pair of good-sized (!) hosiery, stuffed with popcorn, nuts and other goodies. There were also other useful things too numerous to mention dangling from these self-same barrel-hoops. All were trimmed with gay-colored material, so that it made a nice ornament when brought in and left on the platform. (It should have been said before that all gifts were piled on the platform in full view of the audience.)

A class of little girls together bought a barrel of apples and rolled it down the centre aisle on a cart.

A class of larger boys decided to represent certain colored "gentry" of the South and so polished their faces, dressed in a ridiculous assortment of garments and marched in, each carrying a live chicken under his arm (for which each had paid his good money). After a little harmless, nonsensical imitation of colored talk each put his fowl in a box previously prepared and the next day it was expressed to the orphanage, where they killed and ate chickens for several days.

The young men's Bible class dressed as millers and the forty members present came in two by two, each carrying on his shoulder a twenty-five pound sack of flour. These were stacked up to form two pillars, one on each end of the platform. Then, as a male chorus, they sang an appropriate miller's song.

The young ladies' Bible class had decided to purchase sheets and pillow-cases for the Old People's Home, so they draped themselves with the sheets and with the pillow-cases as elevated head-gear they marched in, single file, led by their teacher (a young preacher), the organist the while playing a funeral dirge. The lights were all turned low and, after all had mounted the platform, they sang a spooky sort of song to

the air of "Swanee river." Then, as the lights were turned up suddenly, they threw off "the habiliments of the grave" and stood out before the audience in all their natural and familiar beauty.

The last number included the officers, who walked across the platform, each dropping some money into a small open box on a stand.

Perhaps it is not necessary to go further into detail; suffice it to say that the gifts, all told, amounted to over \$100 in value.

The primary department of the school had its entertainment on the afternoon preceding, and also brought gifts amounting to nearly \$40.

Nothing whatever was given by the school to any scholar in any department of the school.

On Christmas morning, after fixing up several boxes containing flour, butter, breakfast food, turkeys, vegetables, etc., for all the poor families that were known in the immediate vicinity, the balance of the supplies were divided among the three institutions before mentioned. The delivery charges were paid out of the money given.

The advantages to be gained and lessons to be learned from such an observation of Christmas by a Sunday-school over the old-time candy-box plan, will readily suggest themselves to the reader. Besides, it interests many in the preparation of a unique programme, and thoroughly proves the truth of the words of the Master quoted at the head of this article.

I trust that other schools will try this plan for their Christmas entertainment, for I am sure their verdict will be the same as was ours—"the best time we ever had"—so well pleased that a similar plan has been unanimously approved for this year.—*Northwestern Christian Advocate*.



FEEDING THE HORSE (CHRISTMAS MORNING)

The Christmas Tree and Its History

BY JANE A. STEWART

TO whom shall we credit the institution of the Christmas tree? The attempt to locate the original source of the idea is a fascinating bit of research, although when one endeavors seriously to trace the origin of this popular feature of the Christmas celebration, one soon finds one's self treading a bewildering maze of tradition.

Antiquarians are prolific in suggestion on the subject. But the clues afforded immediately lead back to the dubious land of fable and legend.

Some would have us believe that it may be St. Winfrid who deserves the primary honor of giving the Christmas tree to the world, as narrated in a charming, suggestive story illustrative of the displacement of heathenism by Christianity. St. Winfrid, it may be recalled, levelled a majestic oak, which

had been worshipped by his Druidic converts, and there immediately sprang up a stalwart young fir to take its place. Addressing the company of newly-enlisted Christians, St. Winfrid said:

"This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree to night. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ child. Gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes. There it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness."

That is an interesting story, too, which attributes to Martin Luther the inauguration of the Christmas tree. On the walls of countless German homes there hangs a favorite engraving