

## Unique Christmas Entertainment

("It is more blessed to give than to receive.")

BY GEORGE W. YORK, SUPERINTENDENT RAVENSWOOD SUNDAY-SCHOOL, CHICAGO.

HAVING had several requests lately for information regarding our Sunday-school Christmas entertainment of last year, I thought it might possibly be of some service to other superintendents if I should give a short sketch of what our school did in order to have what was generally conceded to be "the best Christmas occasion we ever had."

The suggestion first came to us through that excellent periodical, the *Sunday-School Times*. It was that the Sunday-school give instead of receive. Our committee, which had previously been appointed by the Sunday-school Board, met and, after discussing the matter, agreed unanimously that they would recommend to the Board that, for once at least, the members of all classes should be invited to bring gifts for

simply overwhelmed with the alertness of every member of the class.

The evening of the entertainment came, and with it a crowd, sure enough. For was not the whole arrangement that night "something new under the sun"—or moon?

The admission ticket was a potato. An empty barrel was placed conveniently near the entrance so that each person could drop in his potato. Several bushels were thus secured.

It had been previously decided that the total gifts would be divided among the Methodist Deaconess Orphanage at Lake Bluff, Ill., the Old People's Home at 975 Foster Avenue, Chicago, and the Chicago Deaconess Home at 227 East Ohio Street, Chicago.



TRYING THE TOOLS LEFT BY SANTA CLAUS

others, rather than receive themselves; for we had found that it was utterly impossible to give anything of value to each member in a school whose enrolment was over 600.

The recommendation of the committee was adopted and all details of plans and the execution thereof were left in their hands. The time of the entertainment was fixed as Christmas eve.

The following Sunday, which was about four weeks before Christmas, the superintendent announced from the platform that, instead of receiving the usual box of cheap candy and an orange, each member of the school was requested to bring some gift on the evening of the entertainment. Giving by classes was urged, and also that each class should have a meeting with its teacher and agree as to what they would give and the manner of presentation. The utmost secrecy was urged upon each class, except the superintendent alone be informed, so that duplicates might be prevented.

Talk about the buzzing within a beehive! Why, the greatest interest and excitement began to be manifested. And the younger the classes the more the enthusiasm. Such whisperings and knowing looks! The teachers of some classes were

At the appointed hour the "programme" began. The first part consisted of songs and recitations by a few boys and girls from the orphanage. One or two of the helpers brought the children and returned with them after the entertainment was concluded. Their carfare was paid out of the money given during the evening.

The classes were then called in order, beginning with No. 1, naming the teacher only. Among the gifts presented and the manner in which it was done, were the following (as it would be too long to describe all, only a few samples are here given):

A class of boys, perhaps ten years of age, marched in dressed as farmers, with straw hats, overalls, etc., carrying shovels, rakes and hoes. Their teacher was clad as any hard-working farmer's wife might be expected to appear, especially if she had a large family of boys. One of the boys recited a farm poem. Their gifts were squashes, beets and other vegetables.

A class of young ladies in their teens were dressed as milkmaids and carried milk-pails in which they had rolls of butter, cans of condensed milk, etc. They sang a milkmaid's song, then passed back to their seats.