

THE CHILDREN.

When the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And the school for the day is dismissed,
And the little ones gather around me
To bid me "good-night," and be kissed,
Oh, the little white arms that encircle
My neck in a tender embrace;
Oh, the smiles that are balms of heaven,
Shedding sunshine and joy on my face.

And when they are gone I sit dreaming
Of my childhood too lovely to last;
Of love that my heart will remember,
While it wakes to the pulse of the
past,
Ere the world and its wickedness madden
me
A partner of sorrow and sin.
When the glory of God was about me,
And the glory of gladness within.

Oh, my heart grows as weak as a woman's,
And the fountains of feeling will flow,
When I think of the paths steep and stony
Where the feet of the dear ones must
go;
Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er
them,
Of the tempests of fate blowing wild;
Oh, there's nothing on earth half so
holy
As the innocent heart of a child.

They are idols of hearts and of households;
They are angels of God in disguise;
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses;
His glory still gleams in their eyes.
Oh, those truants from home and from heaven,
They have made me more manly and
mild;
And I know now how Jesus could
like
The Kingdom of God to a child.

The twig is so easily bended,
I have banished the rule and the rod;
I have taught them the goodness of
knowledge,
They have taught me the goodness of
God,
My heart is a dungeon of darkness
When I shut them from breaking a
rule;
My frown is sufficient correction;
My love is the law of the school.

I shall leave the old house in the autumn,
To traverse its threshold no more;
Ah! how I shall sigh for the dear ones
That mustered each morn at the door;
I shall miss the "good-nights" and the
kisses,
And the gush of their innocent glee,
The group on the green, and the flow-
ers
That are brought every morning to
me.

I shall miss them at morn and at evening,
Their songs in the school and the
street,
I shall miss the low hum of their voices,
And the tramp of their delicate feet,
When the lessons and tasks are all end-
ed,
And Death says: "The school is dis-
missed."
May the little ones gather around me,
To bid me "good-night," and be kiss-
ed.

TO TRIM THE TREE.

Of all things for Christmas a Christ-
mas tree is indispensable in a house
where there are children. The explor-
ing of overflowing stockings will not
give half the pleasure that comes from
the discovery of a "real live" tree, with
a gray-bearded, snow-specked Santa
Claus peeping from its branches.

It matters not how small the tree if
it be prettily decorated. In this it is
chiefly the first cost which counts. The
same ornaments, with a few additions
will do you year after year.

As for the tree itself, there are five
different kinds, all beautiful in them-
selves—the pine, hemlock, spruce, cedar,

and balsam fir. The prettiest of all
and consequently the most expensive is
the cedar, covered with small gray
berries. The smallest of these trees
cost 75 cents and the largest as high
as \$1. Ordinary trees of good shape
and bright green color range according
to size from 50 cents to \$1.

It is most convenient to have the
tree placed at once in a holder, but the
price of this may be saved by mount-
ing the tree in a deep box well packed
with earth. The tree must be well
braced, and the box must be as nearly
square as possible. The box should
be painted with green enamel.

The decorations of a tree, unlike the
building of a house, begins at the top.
Custom has made it almost impera-
tive that a figure of Santa Claus occupy
thus, the most conspicuous position. The
figures sold in the shops for this pur-
pose are made of either cardboard or
plaster and cost from 15 cents to 75
cents. Except for very large trees the
35-cent size will answer admir-
ably. The figure may be held in place
with wire or strong black thread.

Stock should not be taken of all the
articles which are to be used for dec-
orations. Tinsel plays an important
part in this, for it gives a brightness
and glitter obtainable from nothing
else. Strings of popcorn are also use-
ful. Both white and red popcorn may
be procured already strung, or it may
be bought in bulk very cheaply. With
a needle and strong thread it is easily
strung. Each string should be from
three to four feet long. Cranberries
scattered at frequent intervals along
the strings add color to them.

Strings of silver and gilt balls, and
balls of raw cotton make pretty and
effective decorations. Shreds of raw
cotton may also be sprinkled over the
tree. This does very nicely to re-
present snow. English walnuts, either
natural or gilded, may be tied with
ribbon and added to the other mater-
ials. You cannot have too much.
Quantity rather than quality makes a
tree beautiful. A dozen or more dolls
made of bright-colored tissue paper,
should be added if there are any little
girls in the house. Candy canes and
sugar animals of every conceivable kind
are always appreciated by the young-
sters.

Little pasteboard boxes may be had
at any drug store, and when touched
up with gilt paint, filled with candy,
and tied with ribbon make very pretty
ornaments. Last of all, candles, if it
is intended that the tree be lighted. See
that these are very securely fixed in
their sockets, so that there can be no
possibility of their falling.

All these articles should be spread
out around the tree before the work
of decorating begins, so that a glance
will show just what material there is
to work with. Then commence at the
top and festoon the popcorn and strings
of glass balls in graceful loops, select-
ing the most prominent branches for
fastenings, and covering up as much as
possible any bare spots. The cotton
balls, walnuts, candy boxes, and fig-
ures come next. Tie the lighter arti-
cles at the tips of the branches and
the heavier further in.

The tinsel may represent icicles, and
the more thickly it is hung on branches
and twigs the better. Last of all add
the candles. Fasten the holders at
the forks of branches. This prevents
them slipping. See that the candles
are perfectly upright and have a clear
space above.

Small presents may be placed on the
tree and larger ones around its base.
The tree must, of course, be set, before
decorating, in the room in which it is
to remain, unless it is a very small
tree, in which case it may be decorat-
ed in a room to which the children sel-
dom go. On Christmas morning it
may be carried to the nursery while
the little ones are enjoying their break-
fast or exhibiting their toys in some
other part of the house. In this way
the sudden appearance of the tree will
seem all the more wonderful.

A PUZZLER.

I'd like to ask one thing, said the
cross boarder. What is it, please? asked
the landlady. How do you get this
steak cooked so hard without even get-
ting it hot?

CHANGED CONDITION.

Boxley, why is it that you never as-
sociate with the Roberts any more?
Gracious! man, Roberts is only a
plumber. I'm a bicycle repairer.

HOURS AND THE MAN.

The average man can do the most
work at 3 p. m., and the least at 9
a. m.

MORE THAN LIKELY.

Mamma, said Tommy, is this hair oil
in this bottle?
Mercy, no! That's mucilage.
Well, said Tommy, I guess that's why
I can't get my hat off.

SELF-RESPECT.

Mistress, from the parlor,—Bridget,
the front door bell has rung three
times. Why don't you answer it?

Bridget, from the kitchen,—Sure
mum, if Oi opened it the furst ring,
pap'e wud say Oi did nothing but tind
the dure, an' Oi wudn't have any wan
think me that lazy.

IN THE FRONT RANK.

Customer (trying on his new pantal-
oons)—Great snakes! These things
seem to be a bifurcated skirt. I'll
look like a guy if I wear these.

Conscientious Tailor—Can't help it,
sir. If fashion says men must look like
guys, they'll have to look like guys if
they deal with me.

A PRIZE.

Doctor—Just place this thermometer
under your tongue, Mrs. Peque, and
keep your lips closed tightly.

Mr. Henry Peque (after a few min-
utes of speechless delight)—What will
you take for that instrument, Doc?

GOOD FOR THE HEALTH.

Jenks (who has taken to horseback
riding, and bounces about ten inches
at every step)—Ah! How-dy-do, Blinks?
I think horseback riding is good for
the health, don't you?

Blinks—Yes, indeed. All who see you
will be benefited. "Laugh and grow
fat," you know.

ON THE WEDDING TRIP.

You can't both ride on a single tic-
ket, said the conductor sharply.

O, I guess we kin, answered Josh,
with perfect confidence, as he threw his
arm around his blushing companion. If
you'll look at this here dockament
you'll see that me and Martchy's jest
been made one.

VALUE OF EXPERIENCE.

Fond Mother—Why, my dear, what
is the matter?

Daughter, recently married,—Boo,
hoo! My husband doesn't—o-love me
any more. He didn't kiss me when
he came home, and he—he kept edg-
ing away from me whenever I went
near him; and—and now he's in the lib-
rary, and don't want—don't want to be
disturbed—boo, hoo, hoo!

Fond Mother—Calm yourself, my
dear. He loves you as much as ever,
but I suppose he has taken a drink and
doesn't want you to know it.

IN THE SAME CLASS.

I'm a plain, blunt man, Margaret and
can frame no honeyed speeches. Will
you marry me?

I'm a little on the plain, blunt order
myself. No!

FASTS IN THE RUSSIAN ARMY.

In the Russian army two days a week
are observed as fasts—Wednesdays and
Fridays—on which days all the soldier
gets in the way of food is lentil soup
and black bread, and a drink consisting
of water in which rye bread has been
absorbed.

Teacher—"Did you study this lesson?"
Pupil—"I looked over it." Teacher—
"Well, hereafter, just lower your gaze
a little."