

A Christmas Tide Meeting in the "Lift-Up" League.

Written expressly for the Recorder.

by GRANDMA SMITH.

Well, here I am at home again, and I can tell you I'm glad to be in my own quiet village once more; not but what I had a nice visit and I'm real glad I went, but I don't see how anyone can be satisfied to stay very long in a large town. Why, I nearly went wild the first few days, with the tram cars rushing past, the delivery wagons flying here and there and trains and steamboats and mills whistling all day long. I had one ride in the street car myself. Yes, I really did, but I don't want another, one is plenty for me. It put me in mind of that verse in Revelations about the earth and the heavens fleeing away, and I thought every minute something dreadful would happen.

You see, when Jane's husband died ten years ago, and she moved to Brayton with the children, it was a small place, not much bigger than this; but the woollen mills started up on one side, and a furniture factory on the other, and now it is quite a town. It did not seem like the same place at all to me for even the house has been enlarged and the children have grown up since I saw them last.

But what I want to tell you about is a meeting I went to—a meeting of the Epworth League. I did not know much about what that was when I went there, but I know more now.

The first Friday night I was there the girls hurried up tea, because they said it was League night, and Jennie was the secretary and had to be there a little early. Now, of course, in my day girls didn't run around to League meetings. They went to paring-bees, and quiltings and singing school and sewing society; but business meetings, and committees, and secretary's seemed to belong to the men folks. But I didn't say anything, for I remembered how anxious Jane was three years ago because Rob was getting into bad company, and thinks I, "I guess she's glad to have him go where the girls can go with him."

They came home a little after nine, and Grace—that's the youngest, came dancing into the room. "Well, mammy," says she, "we're going to have a new kind of mince pie at our Christmas meeting I said I didn't think they could improve on the mince pie their mother made from the recipe that my great aunt gave my mother when I was a girl at home. 'Mother's mince-meat is good, sure enough,'" said Grace, "but wait till I tell you about ours." Then she told how at first they thought they would turn their Christmas meeting into a kind of social, but they got talking about the mill hands over in the west side, who have been having a hard time

since the fire in the mill, which stopped work for a good many of them. At last they decided to have what would look like a large pie, having in it the provisions they would have used for the social and as much more as they could get and give the things to those who were too poor to make Christmas for themselves.

"Well," thinks I, "I've sometimes heard it said that all these young people's societies think of is a good time for themselves, but this doesn't look like it."

Rob and the girls seemed to have a good many committee meetings and practices to attend to, but I must confess they did not neglect their home work, nor their mother and I don't know, but I'd rather they'd have their heads full of meetings than of dresses and beads. One day I said to Grace: "I don't know child whether your new recipe for mince-meat calls for chocolate drops and caramels or not, but I'd like the little children in the West Side to have some in their stockings, so here's a dollar you can spend that way." She just gave me a big hug and said, "Yes, indeed, Grandma, that pie takes in anything eatable, from potatoes to lemon jelly, and its lovely of you to think of candy."

When the Friday before Christmas came it was stormy and cold, and I said at dinner that there would not likely be many out to the meeting. But Rob said: "O, we never stay away from the meetings for weather, Grandma. You see there's a clause in our pledge about not staying away unless excusable to the master, and we'd be ashamed to stay 'O Lord, I can't go to meeting because it is raining, or snowing, or cold,' when He knows that we don't stay away from our work on account of weather." "Well," said I, "I think we need some such pledge in our church at home, for its mostly women who come out on a bad night. The men can go anywhere else in the rain, but they'd get wet sure if they went to meeting." After dinner Jennie went down to the church, for she said people would be bringing things for the pie, and she was one of the committee to receive them and get the pie made. I began to think I wouldn't be able to go, for it showed worse than ever, but when Rob came in to tea he said: "Well, Grandma, have you your best bib and tucker on? There's a cab coming for you and mother at seven." At first I felt as if that was an awful expense for the boy to go to, but then I thought if he smoked or chewed or went to theatres or card parties, to say nothing of wine parties, it wouldn't take him long to spend more than that, so I felt better about it. I was a little ner-

vous, too, for I'm afraid of horses; but when the cab came it was on a sleigh, and that did not feel half so dangerous as the wheeled ones.

The choir were to sing while the people were gathering, and we came in just as they were taking their seats behind the organ. The meeting was held in the large Sunday school room, and my! The decoration committee had made it look nice. There were flowers in pots all around the platform and texts done in evergreens on the walls: "Glory to God in the highest" over the choir, "I am come that ye might have life" on one side, and "Behold the Lamb of God" on the other, and in one corner was the pie. It must have been four or five feet across and seemed to be full of small parcels, while all round it on the floor were boxes of apples, sacks of potatoes and flour and other things. The pie was made of pasteboard and covered with paper, and trimmed around the edge with colored tissue-paper. It really looked quite real.

"The choir began with 'Brightest and Best.' The tune was not the one I've been used to, but I must say it was almost as pretty. Then a young fellow called Seth Brown sang a lovely piece named 'Nazareth.' While he was singing I was thinking of what Jennie had told me about him—how he used to sing soon songs down in one of the saloons. He wasn't a bad fellow though, only he was a stranger and got in with the wrong set. The lookout committee heard of him and agreed to pray for him. Then the social committee asked him to sing at one of their parlor meetings; then he was asked to join the church choir. Soon after that the minister started special meetings and asked the choir as a favor to help with the singing. Before the meetings closed Seth was converted along with a good many others, and now—but you mustn't let this go any further—it looks as if I might be his grandma some day.

Well, they went on singing one piece after another, some new and some old till about half-past seven the president and minister came together and sat on the platform, and presently the mayor of the town, a good old Methodist, came in and was taken up there too.

The president said it was now time to begin, and that the next piece would be a solo and chorus in which the audience was asked to join softly. Then a tiny tot of five or six, all dressed in white, with yellow curls about her face, came to the front and sang in a sweet clear voice, "Who is He in Yonder Stall?" The room was full by this time, but it was so still we could hear every word and when they all joined in "Tis the Lord, O Wondrous Story," the effect was lovely. I think everyone must have felt that the Lord was there. Then the minister prayed just a few sentences as if he was talking to someone very close, thanking the Lord for His presence there and asking His blessing on the whole meeting. They sang another hymn, and then the president called on the mayor for a few remarks. He began by saying some very nice things about the League and its influence for good over the young people of the town, and spoke of the happiness that would come into many a home of poverty as a result of this Christmas meeting. Then he told about the temptations of his own early life and said he believed many a young man went wrong just for want of some