

great festival. It is in Rome, the Eternal City, however, that the anniversary of Christ's birth is celebrated with all religious splendor; it is essentially a day of holy fervor and thanksgiving.

Children, in a special manner, should be remembered on Christmas day, since they bear the nearest resemblance to Him, who was born as a little child. Fond parents must make their little ones happy. They tell them to hang up their stockings near the hearth, and during the night, Santa Claus, the spirit of Christmas, will descend the chimney and fill them with beautiful presents and other good things. It is very seldom that Santa fails to come. At break of day—sometimes before—the house is filled with shouts of joy and surprise as the treasures are brought to light. Happy child-hood days! How many of us did not feel a pang of regret, when we discovered who Santa really is, and wish that the truth had remained hidden from us? It is the first awakening to the cold reality of life.

In many households, the Christmas tree replaces the stockings. Its branches are dotted with numerous lighted candles, and a present is attached for each member of the family. Many interesting legends surround this form of celebration, but the German legend, ascribing the idea of the Christmas tree to St. Winfrid is the most beautiful, and most compatible with Christian belief. After he had finished preaching to a multitude of converts, he set about hewing down an immense oak tree, which in days of heathen worship had been adored by the Druids. "Then the sole wonder in Winfrid's life came to pass; for as the bright blade circled above his head and the flakes of wood flew from the deepening gash in the body of the tree, a whirling wind passed over the forest. It gripped the oak in its foundations. Backward it fell like a tower, groaning as it split asunder in four pieces. But just behind it, and unharmed by the ruin, stood a young fir tree pointing a green spire towards the stars. Winfrid let the axe drop and turned to speak to the people. 'This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of the fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ-Child. Gather about it, not in the cold wood, but in your own homes. There it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness.'"

The inhabitants of the British Isles celebrate the happy day with every evidence of joy. The Irish have surrounded Christ-