

**CHURCH DECORATION.**

What happens at almost every festival season, suggests another thought. On the day or days preceding the Great Feasts, will communicants gather in greater or less numbers to prepare decorations, for the church and altar. Before this end has been reached, the conversation is apt to fall into the tittle-tattle of gossip, criticism degenerates into witticism, and the whole place becomes vitiated with the most secular spirit. The entire affair smacks of a gathering for the decorations of a parlor for a party rather than of the House of God in honor of the Incarnate Son.

Why could not church decorators adopt two simple rules?

First, of silence throughout their work when speech is not necessary.

Second, to begin their work with a collect

This is no more than they ought to do, if they would retain the feeling that they are doing something for the glory of God and not merely collecting decorations for the entertainment of men.—*Michigan Church Life.*

**Children's Department.****FIVE SHILLINGS REWARD.**

"Then you won't let me have the skates, mother?" Jack said, turning a disappointed face away.

"I can't Jack," answered Mrs. Martin. "If I could, I would, you know; but I'm very pressed just now; there's the baker's bill to pay, and Annie's boots want mending. Don't bother me just now."

"I haven't bothered you this whole long year," said Jack. "And every fellow's got a pair of skates this time. The marsh up Preston

Road is frozen over, as smooth as glass. Jim Johnson's got a pair of skates. So's Harry Blake."

"Jim Johnson's got a father, Jack, to work for him; his mother's not a widow woman like poor me. And Mrs. Blake has got her lodgings full—she always has. Don't bother!"

Jack gave a disappointed snort, and flung himself away. "It was very hard," he thought. He had done without a lot of things that Blake and Johnson had, but the skates he really wanted very much, and had set his heart on them. Here were the Christmas holidays going so fast, and this last week a splendid frost had come. Everyone had a pair of skates except poor Jack himself.

The streets were full of people hurrying on, all going in the direction of the marsh; young men in top-coats, ladies dressed in fur, sailors in their loose blue jackets, school girls and boys of every class in life! And nearly everybody was carrying a pair of skates!

"Bother the baker's bill," thought Jack, "and bother Annie's boots!"

He went along with the stream of people till the swans under the bridge in the backwater attracted his attention. He had told Jim he would meet him on the marsh—it was no use now. He stopped to look at the swans instead, and watched them for a while.

Soon the greater number of people had gone by, the road was quieter now, and beginning to feel rather cold, Jack ran to warm himself. He had not gone very far when something caught his eye. He stopped at once to have a closer look. "Hillo!" he said, "what's this?"

It was something in the gutter between the pathway and the road