

Woman's Sphere in Life and Labor

A YULETIDE RETROSPECT

Heart Story of the Beneficence of one family, which has come to light.

The regulation Xmas Tree and accompanying festivities is an old story among all orthodox westerners, at the end of December; but the tree arranged by a whole-souled philanthropical family for the benefit of the poor foreign element in the "North End" of Winnipeg, one fine crisp afternoon, stands in a class by itself. The gifts upon the tree were not sent in by fond relatives or perfunctory friends, but all came from the same source, and were distributed so as to give the most pleasure or benefit to the happy recipient.

By some means unknown to the uninitiated, the separate units of this curious throng (some half dozen men, about thirty women and two hundred and fifty children from the infant stage up) assembled in the early morning at the regular foreign mission station. Some sort of lunch was provided for them there at noon, and at half past two o'clock word was sent them that "the tree was ready" in a building loaned for the purpose some two blocks away. Strict injunctions were issued as to the order of precedence: The mothers with babies were to be admitted first, then the smaller girls, then the larger girls, then the smaller boys, then the larger boys and lastly the men. What wonder that the wearied patient crowd in the densely packed mission station waited no second bidding, but rushed into the street, and literally ran better-skelter to "the tree."

The genius of the festivity met them at the doors. By request, the Russian members detached themselves from the crowd and filed into the section reserved for them; the Polesanders to their section; the Ruthenians to theirs and the Germans to theirs and so on. Across the front of the room and next the tree were rows of small low chairs for the little ones. All the large boys stood packed in the middle aisle. Among the mingled odors that such a throng exhales, the inevitable pungent garlic held pre-eminent sway. But the crowd was not all bad looking. Here and there was seen a face that caught and held the eye. While the mind roamed off into vague conjectures of the future's hidden plans, aimlessly wondering what good or ill awaited the subject.

Good nature reigned supreme. There were no sour faces; no apparent jealousies; no strife for the best places. When the boys grew tired standing, they simply squeezed down till they reached the floor and sat there. This perhaps would be no particular hardship in plenty of space, for the Japanese squat or sit upon their heels from choice, at all their entertainments, whether it be the theatre, where the plays last out eight or ten hours and lunch is eaten meanwhile or at afternoon receptions or other functions, but the small Jap never crowds himself, he always has plenty of room which our young North Enders did not have.

Of course the chief attraction was the "tree," decked out in the customary tinsel-trappings, and highly decorated toys and burning tapers and mosquito netting bags of toothsome sweets. In due time, the presiding genius, fortunately master of several languages, explained to the various nationalities in their respective tongues, that the hymn, "Hark the Herald Angels" would be sung and all were invited to join. The organist played and sang in English as did a few other voices. The leader sang in Russian and led that section; another sang German and led his section, all having the same tune. And the time! Well—one can hear the same any Sabbath in almost any English congregation.

"Shall we gather at the river" was next rendered in similar fashion. After this the German element sang in their own tongue, "Gott ist Liev." Every German voice (even the very little ones) tuneful and resonant, sang with earnest appreciative hope, this splendid hymn. How very differently worldly ambitions

range themselves in the mind's perspective when seen through the medium of well-sung sacred music! How very small and mean they seem! How promptly fixed decisions are reversed—only to be re-reversed as we straightway go our way and resume the old beaten track, now wondering that we ever could have left it. Surely the German nation has an Eldorado of happiness in its music.

The next number on the program was apples and candy. These were handed about, great care being taken that none were missed, for heads were "very frequent" and one couldn't move about among them. Often the apples were lightly tossed from hand to hand, till the remote recipient got his share. Once an apple landed on the crown of one small urchin, bouncing off to a second and third head and round the floor, creating great merriment in that little circle, till a capture was finally made.

One little boy with an "all-day-sucker" in his cheek mumbled "I has no apple." The inevitable, ubiquitous maid next him promptly interposed "he has two now one in each pocket," which, being investigated, proved true. But the look he gave her could have annihilated anything except such a maid.

By the time short addresses were given in the different languages, the apple

SYMPATHY.
 * The thoughts that come from a *
 * heart of gold *
 * From the peace of a perfect *
 * mind, *
 * And the priceless tear in pity's *
 * name *
 * For the miseries of mankind. *
 * The thoughtful act or the kind- *
 * ly smile *
 * For some loved one's under- *
 * taking, *
 * Are worth all the priceless gems *
 * of earth *
 * When the heart is well-nigh *
 * breaking! *
 * —M. Estelle Deeley. *

and candy course had not a fragment left. Everybody was now ready for that popular children's hymn "Jesus loves me," and strangely enough all the children and quite a few of the grown-ups, sang in English lustily, heartily, rather than reverentially (as they did "Gott ist Liev") this Sunday-School favorite. Why was there a difference? Do Canadian parents teach Canadian children the spirit of reverence? Perhaps not. Is it Canadian teaching that has changed the foreigner? In an inverse way the proceedings reminded one of the building of the "Tower of Babel." There they began with the same tongue and ended with diverse languages. Here we began with many tongues and ended with one. Is it I wonder, symbolical of us as a unified nation, that is to be?

But why dally peering into the future, when all the presents are still on the tree, or in bag paste-board boxes, ready labelled for distribution, or piled miscellaneous in large baskets, or strewn over the great tables, all waiting to give joy and comfort to eager little hearts and bodies.

The master or rather mistress of ceremonies had forgotten nothing or no one. How could she with a heart the size of hers? Many a one, known to her, both child and woman, was unable to appear through sickness and lack of clothing. For these, the best gifts, or really supplies, were reserved and carried afterward to their homes.

Of those present, every one received some useful gift according to his need, and the toys were made to go as far as

they would. For instance, a very large dolly nicely dressed was given to one family (not to one child) where were six little girls. This, of course, made six little hearts radiantly happy. A call at this home later, revealed the dolly hung on the wall, without scratch or blemish or indeed clothing, for its clothing had formed the only wardrobe



Monument to Sir Wm. Wallace
Near Stirling, Scotland

of a very new infant brother. However, the little girls were already full of plans, for more clothes for dolly and who shall say, that in the plans and hopes as much pleasure will not be had as from the realized clothes.

How hard it is to finish telling about this wonderful tree, but it really was stripped at last and the last gift given from table and box and basket. And these poor people, strangers in our midst, from far-off foreign lands, how little gives them happiness! Animated by what hopes of future plenty and promise of reward for toil, did they leave their bleak, rude penury behind and seek our western wealth and progress and freedom, one can only guess, and wish whatever it be, that time will grant them sure fulfilment.

I. B. G.

EXIT MAX AND FLORIBEL

Home Made Proposals Best

This Breery Letter in Response to an Invitation Given to Discuss what shall be Published on this Page, is Self Explanatory.

I have just read the Women's Page of December 29th, and am in such a hurry to put in my protest against the "Serial Story" or the "Short Story" proposition, that I will not stop to find the pen and ink, but take the first pencil I can find, with which to make known my most emphatic No, No, No, for the story business.

What care we of this grand northwest, whether Max ever succeeded in proposing to Floribel. What concerns us most is that some Max, John or Willie, succeeded in proposing to us, and we and our families are living and acting monuments to that proposal. We have no right to waste our time, opportunity and mental power over such unhelpful matters, when there are so many live questions to be agitated, so that the future Max', Johns and Willies and Claras, Kates and Fannies will have a much better path to travel, than ever we have had, here in this our fair land.

And then again, Dear Editor, would it be right for us who are enduring so much and willing to endure more, to be pining over such silly stuff, when our husbands and brothers are working with might and main to bring about the much needed reform, for our benefit as well as for our children.

If it shall be put to a vote, as to what shall appear on the Women's Page of THE GUIDE, please do not let the votes

of a few, give to the world the idea that the farm women of the great west, are willing to give the few precious moments they have in reading worthless matter. But rather let them think that we are ready to help in this great fight for equity and let us prove M. A. Townsend's words, of which, only the first half are true: "One half of woman's life is hope, and one half resignation."

Dear Editor, it seems that I must be voicing the desires of many, when I pray for another chance to help show the world our aim and purpose, and above all the stuff we are made of, quite worthy to be called the "Help-mates of our grand farmers who are putting up a good fight and will win."

LOUISE LANGSTON.

Wetaskiwin, Alta.

Ed. Note.—Here is "Louise Langston's" view of fiction for THE GUIDE. We only regret that she did not express an opinion on "Homesteads for Women" and the "Revolt of Women."

"Miss" or "Mrs." Langston hints at "live questions to be agitated" in this column. Will she kindly name them? The page is still open, will others send in their opinions now?

A WOMAN'S LOVE

I never knew a worthless man with all the faults that you can name. A shiftless, idle, ne'er-do-well, deserving nothing but our blame. A man who'd lost all self-respect, whose sense of decency seemed dim. But what there was a woman who could see a deal of good in him.

The meanest man I ever knew, who seemed to be a pest in life. A woman, sweet and lovable, had somehow won to be his wife. His fellow-men detested him, his ways were sour and always grim. I've often wondered what on earth it was that woman saw in him.

No man so low, no man so base, no man so wicked or so vile. But what there is a woman who, when he is coming, wears a smile. No matter what a man may do, though steeped in vices to the brim, Somewhere a woman you will find who still has all her faith in him.

THE KING'S JOKE

The King, as everyone knows, is a humorist who quickly sees a joke and can perpetrate one with keen relish. Not long since a well known politician who has developed in recent years remarkable evidence of the malady recognized as "swollen head," visited his Majesty at Sandringham, and bored his Royal host by his colossal self-importance, says M.A.P.

Shortly afterwards the King was entertaining some personal friends and gave them the following amusing object lesson: Whilst in the smoking-room, the King remarked in an impressive whisper, "Gentlemen, I have something important to show you. Follow me, but tread softly."

Greatly wondering, the guests marched off after the King, and, imitating his example, walked on tiptoe noiselessly out of the room, up the broad staircase, and along the corridors leading to the bedrooms.

"Not a word," said the King, holding up a warning finger and looking especially solemn. Then, stopping outside a bedroom, he opened the door quietly, and, still on tiptoe, entered. Switching on the electric light, he waited until all his guests had passed the door. Then, closing it softly, he pointed to an easy-chair drawn up to the fire.

"Hush! Gentlemen," he remarked, in a stage whisper. "Do you see that chair? Last week the great Blank sat in that seat. Do you see that bed? The great Blank rested his noble form there. Do you observe that wash-basin? The distinguished statesman Blank obliterated all marks of sleep from his eagle eyes by water in that basin! Tread softly, gentlemen! Remember who has trod the carpet of this room. Hush, we will descend!"

Leading the party outside, His Majesty closed the door with due solemnity, and then convulsed the company by his hearty laughter.