

and draped around with cloth or crepe paper. Then the delightful task of decorating it! The gay glass balls and ornaments of various colors, stars, hearts and angels resplendant in gilt and silver! Wondrous fruits and flowers grew upon its branches, while the cornucopias weighed them down with their bulging loads of sweetness.

How mammas and aunties and elder sisters worked with feverish haste through the late hours of 'the night before Christmas,' and even papas and uncles mounted a step ladder to lend a hand; and when at last the task was completed, the tiny tapers all in place, the popcorn and cranberry chains looped gracefully around, the gifts tied on or set beneath, and the tinsel scattered in a glittering shower over the whole, the faithful workers viewed with satisfaction the beautiful tree, and, tired but happy, went to seek their well-earned rest.

But when it was lighted, and the eager children caught their first glimpse of its glittering glory and gazed awe-struck upon its many wonders, then King Christmas-tree reigned supreme. Young and old alike yielded him their homage, and shouts of joy announced his triumph. He was the centre of interest for the entire household, and none cared to dispute his sovereign sway. Even the holly and the mistletoe were forgotten, and the ground pine and laurel wreaths hung dejectedly from the picture frames, unnoticed and neglected, while their brilliant rival outshone them all.

All through the holiday week, the tree was yet the ruler, although shorn somewhat of its first transcendent glory, and its branches lightened of their load of presents. The neighbors' children came in to admire, and perhaps receive some small gift of candy or toy still hanging from the upper boughs. On New Year's Eve there was a revival of interest. The tree was again lighted up, and all once more sat around and admired, though in a milder degree, more out of compliment than from genuine enthusiasm. When the candles burned down to the last flicker, and papa blew them out one by one, then the Christmas tree's reign was over. It might be allowed to stand a day or two longer, but no one took much notice of it, and as the little needles began to drop from the branches, littering the floor, mamma thought it high time to get it out of the way and the muss cleaned up. So the king was deposed. His crown and sceptre were taken from him, and his glittering jewels put away carefully 'until next year,' when they will decorate his successor.

Alas, for earthly greatness! He has had his brief triumph, and must now be cast aside as rubbish, must make way for life's bread and butter interests. And so we come back to the question, What becomes of the Christmas trees when they have served their purpose, and have been stripped of their glory?

Some answers to this query may be found by any one who walks with open eyes about the city during the first weeks of January. The aftermath of the Christmas season blossoms mournfully in the withered garlands and wreaths, the dry and broken holly and mistletoe that litter the areas and thrust their faded green from the dusty depths of the ash can, while their comrade of that joyous time, the Christmas tree, shivers in their melancholy company as they wait for the coming of the rubbish

cart. Poor, forlorn tree! No longer is it an object of respect, and admiration for the small boy, who now gratifies his native propensity to vandalism as he irreverently breaks off its branches to do rough duty as swords or guns, and ornaments his hat with the twigs that he has stripped from them.

Sometimes you will see a whole tree doing service as a sled, one or two small children sitting on the outspread branches, while a bigger boy, or it may be two, drag it along by the stem. In the vacant lots of the outlying districts, where the children can play without interference from a policeman, the discarded tree is made to serve for their amusement in a variety of ways.

A row of them set close together to form a stockade, guarded a miniature fort in a lot where sand dumped there for building purposes had been utilized for amateur military operations.

Some little girls playing house in a recess of the rocks near High Bridge, had two fir trees stuck in the ground, which they were 'supposin' was their front yard, as the space was enclosed by a row of sticks which did duty for a picket fence. The illusion of a cottage in the country was perfect to their minds, no doubt.

But no matter how they may amuse themselves with it at first, the tree at last goes to make a bonfire. Thus it ends in a blaze of glory which delights the small men and women almost as much as when they first gazed upon its taper-lighted beauty. The boys gather all the old trees in the neighborhood, to make as big a blaze as possible. It is great fun, too, to snatch out branches all afire at one end, and chase the girls with them, or whirl them around to make circles and fiery snakes. When the fire dies down, and the smouldering embers have been scattered or stamped out, the tree, which glowed in beauty even on its funeral pyre, has reached its end. Only a few charred fragments, and the memory of its glory remain.

Not always, though, do Christmas trees end in ignominious fashion; some are destined for nobler uses. Parents with a practicable mind, particularly in the tenement house districts, have grasped the fact that their dry resinous wood which makes such a beautiful bonfire, will burn equally well in the kitchen stove, and use it to start the fire for breakfast. So Jimmy or Patsy is set to work with a hatchet, and the wood box is soon filled with the finest kind of kindling wood.

One ingenious boy used his new jack-knife to advantage in making a useful article of furniture from his tree. After cutting away all the small branches he trimmed to a proper length those that remained and capped each one with a spool shaped down to form a knob. The trunk was set firmly into cross-pieces to form a base. The bark was left on, but the entire surface was rubbed smooth and varnished, and now the clever youngster has a novel and artistic hat tree upon which he hangs everything it will hold.

A lady, who had often during her summer vacation, hired a man to go into the woods and gather balsam for her to make a pillow, suddenly awakened to the fact that her Christmas tree was of the same balsam fir, and she promptly set to work cutting off the needles and tender twigs and filled a cushion with them.

Another lady successfully combined benevolence with economy by sending to the mission school of her church the Christmas tree which had served her own family.

Most of the Sunday-schools have their Christmas tree celebrations a day or two after Christmas, so that it is easy to utilize a tree again in this way, and it is often done.

The hemlock tree has delicate branches with a ridgy surface that is very pretty after the leaves drop off, and the stems turn brown. One mother who noticed this, pointed out to her children how they could put their kindergarten training to practical use, and set them to work making photograph frames and a variety of small articles out of the twigs of their hemlock Christmas tree. Fine wire was used for tying them together, and the finished article was varnished to bring out the color.

Thus, even after its glory is past, the Christmas tree can still be made to yield pleasure and serve for use or ornament; furnishing work for clever fingers, and ending in something that shall remind us throughout the year of the happy Christmas time.

'Good-Bye.'

Good-bye, Old Year! must you really go?
It's like parting with a friend;
You've had so much that was good to show,
I wish that you never would end.

You've brought me pleasure, you dear Old Year,
With gifts from the Father above;
Brought so many blessings, so seldom a tear,
That I've learned your name to love.

You have brought me days when the earth was bright,
And others of cold and snow;
But whatever the weather my heart has been light—
There's so much to enjoy, you know.

'Good-bye, Old Year! Are you very sad?
To think that your life is done?
Mamma says—I am sure this will make you glad—
That I'm better than when you began.
—Maggie Jessup.

Stay yet, my friends, a moment stay—
Stay till the good old year,
So long companion of our way,
Shakes hands and leaves us here.
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One little hour, and then away.

The year whose hopes were high and strong,
Has now no hopes to wake;
Yet one hour more of mirth and song
For his familiar sake.
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One mirthful hour and then away.

'The kindly year! his liberal hands,
Have lavished all his store,
And shall we turn from where he stands
Because he gives no more?
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One grateful hour and then away.

Days brightly came and calmly went,
While yet he was our guest;
How cheerfully the week was spent!
How sweet the seventh day's rest!
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One golden hour and then away.

Dear friends were with us, some who sleep
Beneath the coffin-lid;
What pleasant memories we keep
Of all they said and did!
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One tender hour and then away.

Even while we sing, he smiles his last,
And leaves our sphere behind.
The good old year is with the past;
Oh, be the new as kind!
Oh, stay! Oh, stay!
One parting strain, and then away.
—William Cullen Bryant, in 'Christian Herald.'