

dainty decorations of moss, ferns and white hyacinths, so that eating and drinking might really have seemed too altogether ordinary an occupation for such a dinner table, but that cruel Fate, just as dinner was ready for the older people, and the tree all decked for the afternoon, when young, younger and youngest were expected, decreed that tree and table should be photographed. The photographer had been sent for, but apparently he peacefully and sensibly finished his dinner, reckless of our feelings, so we had to wait, and a more solemn, hungry and forlorn collection of faces than eventually appeared in those photographs could not have been found anywhere. When we were at last released, eating did not seem at all too prosaic for that lovely table, and fairy lamps were certainly not surrounded by fairy appetites. And among all the pleasure of cheerful conversation and happy laughter, the absent were not forgotten. Many loving thoughts were wafted to those who had been at this dinner last year or in many former years. One who went out into the wide world from the school shelter only since last midsummer, had kept her Christmas gift for her loved "school-mother" for this day, and we knew that many of the "old girls" were with us in thought, even as our thoughts reached out to them.

Then came the crowning delight of the tree; surely never was tree more prolific of pleasure. There were such beautiful dolls on it, and such fearful tin objects that squeaked and ran at you, and ducks that followed a magnet, and books and paint boxes, and, admired of all beholders, a complete laundry equipment, table, washtub, wringer, board, etc. etc. Oh! it was

a beautiful tree, like other Christmas trees, but for those who watched the family for whom it was decked as they came filing in, singing a joyous Christmas carol, the tree was not the most interesting sight. Our dear big girls, beaming with happy merriment, the "old babies" keenly alive with excitement and expectation, the "new babies" rather solemn, but gradually breaking into smiles these afforded the "grown-ups" joy, a joy so deep it was almost akin to tears in its intense thankfulness, as the contrast of what was and what might have been if some of these little ones had not been sent by their Heavenly Father into loving Christian care, flashed across the mind. Then what an interesting scene followed—pleasure rising to its highest pitch as each child who received her own gifts cut down the next. On all sides the wish was expressed that the kind friend who had provided all these treasures, could have seen and so shared the delights of the day.

Christmas is Christmas all the world over, but perhaps those who are privileged to leave home and kindred to convey help to Christ's little ones in far-off lands, can enter best into the true spirit of Christmas tide, when, for us men, and for our salvation, God's Almighty Word leaped down from Heaven out of His royal throne, to find His delights among the children of men, teaching those who have so freely received, the blessedness of freely giving, taking our little gifts, and turning them into the wine of true and childlike joy, and then, in His wonderful love, graciously accepting them in His own person: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."