

shot up tall green hemlock boughs. What it was no one knew, and they forgot to guess, as Miss Marion brought out a box of games borrowed from Mrs. Storrs for the occasion, and commenced to teach the elders to play them with her, after giving the younger ones a box of blocks with which to build houses and castles. After a few merry games with Miss Richards, Mrs. Storrs invited them into the kitchen, where was a table set with cakes, oranges, sandwiches and milk, and in the centre an enormous frosted cake, which had come to Marion in the box from her mother the day before, and on the top, in raised sugar letters, were the words, "Merry Christmas."

The delighted children sat down, and any one who knows children need not be told whither the cakes and oranges went. Then the lovely pink letters were taken off, and one given to each child, "to be kept to remember me by," Miss Marion said, giving one also to Mrs. Storrs and laying one by for herself. The cake was cut, a great part of it eaten, and then they went back to the parlour again. Mrs. Storrs had slipped quietly away a few moments before, and lo! the curtain was gone, and in the corner stood a small but beautiful tree, bright with coloured horns of plenty and strings of popped corn, with a great gilt star on top and numerous bundles hanging amid its branches.

Lu whispered to Joe, "I told you folks had trees. That is Miss Richards'. Isn't she good to show it to us?"

Joe assented with a nod, and with the secret wish that he had a tree like it.

But Miss Richards stepped to the tree, and taking off a parcel, read the name "Ann Jones." Ann stood bewildered; but with a smile and the words, "That is yours to keep, Ann, with a Merry Christmas," the bundle was placed in her hands. That was a fruitful tree. There was a present for every one (including Mrs. Storrs and Marion, who had each placed a gift for the other, secretly, on the tree), with a large horn of plenty full of mixed candy, a string of popped corn, and an orange apiece besides.

Then when the tree was empty there came a quiet hour of story-telling by Miss Richards, beginning with Evangeline and ending with the wonderful story of the manger at Bethlehem. Then Mrs. Storrs and Marion tied on little hoods, and buttoned sacques, and hunted up caps and overcoats, and with a kiss for the girls and a hearty hand-shake for the boys, Christmas Day at Wood's Hollow was over. Joe lingered to the last, and as he raised his eyes at parting, with a suspicious moisture in them, he said, holding up the precious knife,—

"Miss Richards, I won't—never—be bad no more, to pay for this;" and though the grammar was poor, the unmistakable look of decision on the freckled face showed that he meant

what he said; and whatever Joe Stone meant to do, he usually did.

Many years afterwards, Marion, no longer Marion Richards, met in a large gathering a tall, keen-looking man, who, after cordially shaking hands, said to her, "Miss Marion, do you remember the knife you gave me years ago? I have it still. I won to-day my first law case, and I want to tell you that my first desire to be somebody, and my first knowledge of Christ, came from you as you sat telling the children of Wood's Hollow the story of Christian love of which you had just given us an example in our first Christmas tree.

And Marion answered him softly, "Ah, Joe; loving and doing are the only powers that shall yet conquer the world for Christ."

The Children's Day.

Yes! Christmas is the children's day.  
Tho' all the world is blessed;  
Twas little children Jesus took,  
And in his arms caressed.

He loves the little children best,  
To them his care is given;  
He blessed some of us on earth,  
And some in his sweet heaven.

We may not understand it now,  
His life of love and duty,  
But we shall know it when we see  
The King in all his beauty.

So we will love the precious gift  
Sent down to us from heaven,  
And try to do his blessed will,  
To whom all praise be given.

O Christmas day, O children's day,  
O precious, precious story;  
For them we'll sing the Saviour's praise,  
Till we shall sing in glory.

—J. R. Murray.

SANTA CLAUS.

SANTA CLAUS was one of the oldest ideas of the Celtic West in Pagan times, as he was of the Pagan East before. In Christian times he was still regarded with religious reverence, sitting, as he had sat for ages in Egypt and elsewhere, in the arms of his mother. Santa Claus was, in fact, the child Jesus in the middle ages; and throughout that period the festive creed of Germany and all Celtic Europe was that he visited all family dwellings of good Christians on the eve of his anniversary, and brought with him gifts and presents for the children. The truth of this original belief is plainly enough indicated by the word "claus," which, in the Gothic or ancient German, means "child" and "son." Santa Claus formerly meant the Holy Child.—Selected

We are not done yet with that "cent a day" idea; there is too much in it to let it die. According to the Report of the Committee on Statistics, presented to the General Conference, the membership of the Methodist Church now aggregate 197,000. Let some of our juvenile readers figure out what a cent a day from each of those will amount to in the course of a year.—Outlook.

CHRISTMAS TREES.

EVERY well-regulated family should have a Christmas tree. Children take delight in it, young people are to be pitied who do not enjoy it, and old people always love to watch the happy company about it. Next to the satisfaction of sitting under your own "vine and fig-tree" is the pleasure of gathering around the brightly lighted, wonderfully laden Christmas tree. Long may this green tree, with its marvellous fruits, flourish in our American homes, the centre of a merry throng, and of happy recollections! Because our churches and Sunday-schools have Christmas trees, do not think the home tree unnecessary. Cling to the old custom, and make the home circle the brightest, jolliest, dearest spot in all the world.

Christmas trees cause some trouble, to be sure. They usually insist on shedding their foliage, and then weep candle-grease in penitence, but "with all their faults we love them still," and would not banish them for these little frailties. The tree once admitted, how shall we deck it for the festive rites of Christmas-tide? A very pretty and at the same time inexpensive tree is what we may call

THE ARCTIC TREE.

A well-shaped hemlock shrub is best suited for this purpose. Fix it firmly in a broad low box. The idea is to give the shrub the appearance of a tree heavily loaded down with snow and ice. The snow effect is secured by tearing (not cutting) cotton batting into long narrow strips, and fastening them with thread or fine wire along the top of each branch. When this has been done, the tree will begin to look quite wintry. Now for the ice. Almost all large toy stores in cities have glass icicles in stock. Suspend these icicles along the snow-covered branches. The weight of the glass will cause them to droop quite naturally. Then over the whole tree sprinkle "diamond dust," a preparation of mica, to be had at almost any drug store, which will make the snow glisten and give the green of the tree a frosty look. Tinsel shreds also may be used to advantage. About the base of the tree an Arctic scene may be introduced. Cover the box with cotton to represent the snow-clad earth. Snow-houses may be made of the same material, and skilful fingers will find little difficulty in fashioning a few Esquimaux. A sledge and a half-dozen toy dogs will complete the scene. Over all sprinkle the magic powder. Pure white candles should be used to light the tree, which with its contrasts of dark green and snow white will make a fairy-like picture. If the glass icicles cannot be obtained a substitute may easily be found in small cylindrical glass beads, which are to be bought almost anywhere. Make strings of these on white thread four or five inches long, and hang them on the branches. Instead of the diamond dust, isinglass may be powdered very

fine in a mortar, but it is better if possible to obtain it already prepared. Tinsel may be bought in sheets and cut up into very narrow strips, but this too is better when made for the purpose. Give the "Arctic Tree" a trial. We are sure you will like it. Remember that it will appear to best advantage only when the room is darkened and the candles lighted.

Making Christmas Presents.

There's a subtle air of mystery about the house to-day;  
There are whisperings and hidings, but not in merry play;  
There's a sound of shutting boxes; there's a noise of scampering feet;  
Then the children come with sober steps, with faces grave and sweet.

There are breakings up of savings banks, odd pennies from papa;  
There are earnest consultations with aunt and mamma;  
There are calls for scraps of satin, skeins of zephyr, shreds of floss;  
There are searchings in thick foliage for autumn leaves and moss.

The artists, too, are busy painting horse-shoes, tiles and shells;  
I hear half-whispered comments, "Those lovely lily bells!"  
"What colour is a Jessamine?" "I want a lighter blue,"  
"I think I'd put a darker shade in that if I were you."

What quets all the busy tongues? they hardly dare reply  
To the simplest of questions, but hesitate and try  
To be strictly non-committal. "Hush-ah-ah! be careful now, don't tell."  
There are smiles and words half spoken, but they keep their secrets well.

Lo! the mystery's unravelled, for upon the Christmas tree,  
By the light of coloured tapers, fair and beautiful to see,  
Books and statues, toys and vases, but the dearest gift of all  
Are the work of tiny fingers, planned and made by children small.

See! cushions, book marks, pen wipers, of every size and sort,  
And what if grandma's footstool has a leg a trifle short?  
It is covered with a patch-work of a very crazy kind,  
And the rick rack's very crooked—well! they tell me love is blind!

Here are lovely glowing pictures; can it be the leaves and fern  
That we gathered in the autumn to such gems of art could turn?  
Those "coloured outdoos" might not do for the French Academy,  
But they hold the place of honour upon the Christmas tree.

No diamonds ever shone as bright as mother's eyes to-night,  
And no gifts with money purchased could give such rare delight,  
Though the stitches were uneven and the blunders not a few,  
We only see the perfect work our children tried to do.

—Kate Llewellyn.

THE Lord Jesus is a jealous God. He is jealous of thy love, thy confidence, and thy company; therefore love him, trust him, and abide with him; be suspicious of all that would lead thee from him.