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CHRISTMAS LENDING.

BY EMILY CLEMENS PEARSON.

"Everybody in every clime, Should be happy at Christmas time!" So said the merchant, well-fed, sleek, Discouraging to his "woman" meek, To whom the wife then made reply, Prefacing with a gentle sigh: "Yes, father, but not half the race Have yet of Christmas any trace."

HUSBAND. "The fault is theirs, I boldly say! To send them light I largely pay, I pay as much as for my horse, And they can have the light, of course."

WIFE. "If others gave as much, my dear, The light would shine both far and near. But one thing now is troubling me— So many hear us off we see Who've scarce the comforts of a home, To whom our joy, sure, cannot come."

HUSBAND. "Well, they should make the best of it, Earn what they can and dress them neat, And ask the Lord, and He will send What's needed by some faithful friend."

WIFE. "Christ has His people, too, who're poor, Some live not far from our own door; And what is given to one of these The dear Lord's kind heart well doth please. It is as if to Himself given, It gains His welcome home to heaven, If thus we give, for His dear sake, This greatest joy we shall partake."

HUSBAND. "Yes, yes, I wish they all had bread; If I had millions, they'd be fed. The town should see to them, no doubt; What are the poor-house men about?"

WIFE. "But, husband, we've abundant store Of riches, and I ask once more By giving make hearts joyful chime At this most blessed Christmas time!"

HUSBAND. "We must be prudent, wife, you know, Or all our property will go; If once begun, 'twill never end, To this and that we'll always send."

WIFE. "But just this once let's lend the Lord. You know 'tis written in His Word That He that giveth to the poor The Lord will pay—His word is sure. Banks on the earth quite often break, And riches wings as often take, But heaven's bank is so secure, To endless ages 'twill endure. Come, let us store our treasures there, And for the endless life prepare."

HUSBAND. "O wife, I'm weak, and to my gold I myself almost a slave have sold; My every generous impulse chilled. Scarce ever have I lent the Lord, I have preferred for self to hoard. Take what you will. Let's see that all We know have need have cheering call. One hundred turkeys I'll dispense, And teach myself a little sense. I'll give as many in this clime As I can reach, a happy time!"

HOW TO HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

BY MRS. D. B. WELLS.

Christmas is coming, and the children all over the land are looking forward to it, and wishing for this and for that; giving very broad hints to parent and grand-parents and indulging uncles and aunts; and planning the merry gatherings of that day with their games and social, happy converse. I want to tell you a way in which the children of our Sunday school made a Christmas very much happier for themselves, and besides made all the brightness of the day for over a hundred and fifty children. Three or four of us, with the aid of the children, set about carrying it out. We were to have a tree and a big dinner from two to six o'clock on Christmas day; the children were to give it all, instead of having it given to them; then we were to gather in all the poor children we could find in the city to receive and enjoy. Two of the larger boys, one of whom could have the use of his father's team, went into the country for a tree. I guess they thought there were going to be a great many poor children by the size of the tree they brought us. Others of the boys fastened the tree up in position in the large lecture room of the church. On the morning of Christmas Day, some of the teachers went to the room to receive the children's donations, and trim the tree. With faces made bright by gifts received, and others now bestowed they came to us bringing things, which were nearly all old,—old books, old pictures, old toys, which had lost their value to them, because replaced by new ones. Fond mothers brought us "Jennie," and "Rose" and "Victoria," with noses a little snubbed, limbs dislocated and missing, and "bangs" a thing of the past, yet still dollies to do any little girl's heart good to fondle and mother; bits from dolls' wardrobes; Noah's arks, with mismatched pairs of disjointed "birds of the air and beasts of the fields," bright picture-cards; jack-straws and letter-blocks

and then the mittens, and the hoods, and the warm jackets, the shoes, and the comfortable underwear. One brought a box of tapers to light the tree; another a bushel-basket of popcorn, and the bags to put it in, which four little girls spent an afternoon in making. Another brought a well-used jack-knife with the request that it be given to the poorest looking child who came, 'cause, he said, it had been such a good knife he wanted he wanted some other "fellow" to have some fun with it. There came, too, a quantity of new clothing, warm and serviceable, which a thoughtful elder friend had sent; our tree began to groan beneath its weight, and to look as tempting as many a one of far greater value.

About eleven o'clock the provisions for the dinner came pouring in; these we had asked the fathers and mothers to give us. Turkeys, chickens, hams, bread and butter, pies, cakes, candies, nuts and oranges,—all the good things which belong to a Christmas dinner. We set four long tables in the dining-room of the church, and still had enough and to spare. At two o'clock we opened the door of the dining-room, and from that time until nearly five admitted a steady stream of children, real "poor children," not tramps or impostors; how their eyes glistened as they saw the tables! Some had their mothers with them, who waited while they ate; for we could not feed adults until the children had had enough. Oh, what a busy, cheery, happy roomful of people that was! Some lingered outside, and had to be coaxed to come in; two young lads said if they could do anything for us to pay for their dinners, they would be glad to have something to eat, and were reluctant to take it as a Christmas-gift. (Just the way some of us want to pay for God's Christmas Gift to us.) Seeing the children enjoying their dinners, loosed the tongues of the mothers, and we heard some sad stories of suffering and want. When the children had eaten all they could, we filled a hundred and fifty good-sized paper bags with provisions, and gave one to each child to take home. Then we fed the mothers, and still we had left; so we sent out baskets of food to poor families that were known to some of our teachers.

After the eating was over, all went into the room where the tree was. The windows had been darkened, and the tapers on the tree lighted. We thought the children looked happy while eating, but now they were rapturous; and their comments! I cannot take the space to write them, but I doubt if Aladdin with his wonderful lamp ever saw anything half as beautiful or enchanting, as this Christmas tree of discarded playthings seemed to those children.

We let them sit down to look at it a little while, and meantime sang to them the familiar gospel hymns and Christmas melodies.

The distribution was the hard part; for as the distributor cut the different articles from the tree, every eye seemed focused on that object with an appealing power almost irresistible even the boys wanted the dolls, and the girls the jack-knives. Yet with it all there was no rudeness nor contention, and all seemed pleased with what came to them; and every one received something, besides candy and popcorn.

When the tree had been stripped of all its load, the story was told of how they came to have their dinner and gifts, which was received with orthodox cheers and hand-clapping. Then a short prayer was said, and at six o'clock the company were sent home, a much happier looking troop of children than came into the room. Gathering around the stove, the little group of workers pronounced it a success; and in spite of fatigue and the time given up to it, voted it the most satisfactory Christmas for many years.

Christ says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Are there not other Sunday-schools that can and will have such a Christmas tree and dinner this year? In making others happy, dear boys and girls, you will be sure to have a Merry Christmas. — Condensed from S. S. Times.

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