

CONDUCTING CHRISTMAS FESTIVALS

By Mrs. A.G. Lewis



F a Christmas festival is given for schools in large towns or cities, the attendance ought to be limited by tickets; and teachers ought to make sure that every

scholar receive a present upon the tree.

This may be easily arranged for by consulting with parents to find out if they intend to send gifts for their children. Any scholar not thus provided for, must, without fail, be remembered by the teacher. If the fruits of the tree are to be free to the children, great care must be taken that no child is omitted from the list.

In many Sunday - schools -- and it is a beautiful idea - a "scholar's tree" is prepared, upon which the regular pupils of the school hang one or more gifts which they have specially chosen as suited to certain poor children whom they are privileged to invite. A pleasing entertainment, games and a generous supper are provided, besides a "real live Santa," who presides over the festivities and distributes the presents personally.

In country towns where there are fewer poor children than in city districts, but more old and invalid people living in solitary places where the winter's cold and snow shuts them away from the outside world, sometimes the young folks, in well - to - do families, provide a tree in some hall or vestry. Old and young are invited, and a general season of gift - making is enjoyed. The aged and feeble ones who cannot be present at the festival, are most generously remembered, their gifts being hung upon the tree with the rest, to indicate that they are reckoned as part of the general life of the neighborhood.

Among the various devices to represent the downcoming of Santa Claus from the roof through the chimney, bringing his well-laden pack upon his back, that of arranging a fireplace upon the stage or platform near the tree, is usually most satisfactory to the little people. This may be easily prepared thus:

Take a one - inch board, five feet long and one foot wide, for the shelf of the mantel. Nail this at each end upon two other boards eight inches wide and five feet long, to form the supports of the mantel, also the sides of the front part of the fireplace; paint the whole brick color. Then, when dry, mark it in oblong squares in proper shape to represent bricks, with white paint or chalk. Place this frame before an open door and fasten it there firmly. Hang a large picture above the mantel to cover the upper space of the door.

Tack turkey - red cloth to the inner edge of the mantel - supports to cover the lower space, three feet upward from the floor; draw it back smoothly, and tack the same to the casing of the door, also across the lower part of the door. Mark the cloth to represent bricks; the cloth and lines should be somewhat blackened in the centre of the fireplace where the heat is usually greatest.

Quite a realistic effect may be obtained of a fire in the grate, thus: Make a light framework of wood. Tack upon this a strip of red cloth, say five inches wide. Set this around the fireplace in the shape of a grate, and place inside a burning lamp -- out of sight, of course -- and the appearance of a cheerfully glowing fire is gained. A gas - log, where it can be obtained, is, of course, better than a lamp.

Santa has plenty of room to enter by the door with a good - sized pack on his shoulders. He must take time, however, before descending, to arrange for the conventional clatter of reindeer hoofs upon the roof, the jingle of sleigh - bells and the wheezing and sneezing that necessarily attend the descent of a corpulent, old fellow through a smoky and sooty chimney. Little people have very little faith in a Santa who arrives by any other way than the chimney route.



"YES, VIRGINIA"

...Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

From an editorial in the
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Frank Church



DRESSING A CHRISTMAS TREE

By Mrs. A.G. Lewis



CHRISTMAS tree ought to be selected with special reference to the space it is to occupy; one with branches firm, not too broad, and quite tall is best. The upper

branches should be decorated before the tree is set up, in case they are too tall to be reached by step - ladders. This can be managed by undoing the strands that confine the upper branches of trees as prepared for market, then tying upon the tips of the boughs white cotton - batting snow - balls, short loops of popped-corn, strings of cranberries, glittering ornaments, etc., etc. The decoration of the tree may be more or less elaborate, as desired. To save expense, yet at the same time to insure a brilliant effect, it is a good plan to hang the gifts so that bright, contrasting colors may set off the tree. Bundles done up in brown paper are never pretty; but dolls, bright covered books, gayly painted toys, bright silk handkerchiefs and white scarfs, sleds, wagons, etc., should be placed in prominent view.

When the gifts are all nicely arranged, take a liberal quantity of frost powder and a dozen, more or less, packages of gilt and silver fringe, (these are sold at one dollar per dozen). Spread the fringe to ornament as much space as possible, and cover lightly the front and sides of the tree with it. Then sprinkle the glittering frost powder upon the tree branches.