

THE FIR TREE'S GIFT

By Browne Sampsell

Nineteen hundred years ago, outside the manger which cradled a King, there stood three trees--the palm, the olive and the fir. These three trees saw men bring gifts to the Holy Child--gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Sensing the great gift of redemption that the Christ-child would give to the world, they began to consider what they could give him as a token of their appreciation.

"I", said the proud palm, "will give Him my tallest branch to place beside His manger. Its large leaves will fan His divine brow with pure, fresh air."

"From me He will receive the precious gift of soothing oil," promised the olive. The eager, warm-hearted little fir could think of nothing that it had worthy to present to the world's Redeemer.

"Tell me," it implored the other two, "what I can give Him."

"Why, you have nothing fit to give Him," cried the palm and olive in unison. "You have only sharp needles and they would tear His tender flesh. They are not to be considered at all."

"It is the truth--I've nothing to give the Christ-child," mourned the fir tree. And he bowed his branches to hide his hurt and humiliation.

At that very moment an angel watching over the manger saw the love in the heart of the fir tree and the longing to express its sincere and deep devotion. Immediately the angel sent brightly gleaming stars from the heavens to the earth to help the fir tree. They stationed themselves at the top of the tree and their golden beams transformed the drab fir tree into a thing of beauty and splendor. The Christ-child, we are told, smiled when he saw the lovely, shining fir--the first Christmas tree.

This touching Scandinavian legend aptly illustrates an understanding characteristic of the Christian religion--that one has his particular niche to fill in the Kingdom of God. No one is too great or too small. The gates of the Kingdom of God are open wide. All who will may enter. No one is denied.

This is the blessedness of the Christian Gospel.

(Submitted by Alice Flake, P. G. M.)