

CHRISTMAS IN HIGHWOOD.

When Highwood was created into a village with corporate name and powers, some dozen years ago, 300 inhabitants were necessary. We did not help take the preliminary census, but we stood up in the big "old Haanshuus house" and were counted as many times as the enumerator's conscience would allow! It was said by some envious Parkites, that we went down to the depot and held the trains of "Jim" Knight, "Dan" Roberts, "Mike" Whalen, and others while their passengers were counted, to make up our quota of 300 people. but of course that was an "unmitigated, malicious l—," or rather "prevarication" as they used to say down east. Highwood to-day has several times her old quota; she writes her population now with four figures, and her good deeds in letters of gold.

President W. F. Hogan and several other substantial citizens had become tired of the old stereotype Christmas tree affair, where a few were kindly remembered and many left out in the cold. So they put their heads together and the result was a plan for a genuine Highwood non-sectarian, all-the-people's tree. First a canvass made of the place, house to house, and some 350 children found. The four fraternal organisations, the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Red Men, and Rebeccas united to provide the sinews of war and make it a success. After the census of the children, a place for the festival was necessary and on bringing the matter to Mr. Frost's notice, he gave them the use of the Electric Railroad Co's fine Pavilion 48 x 120 feet floor space, all seated for 600, lighted and warmed, and then added his personal check for \$25.00. Under such stimulus the managers had no difficulty in raising all the money they needed. There being nothing sectarian or exclusive about it, all alike rich and poor, black and white Yankee, Dutch, Scandinavian, English, Irish and Vermonters—all on the same floor alike—everybody worked with a will.

Two big evergreen trees were set up in the centre of the pavilion, neatly trimmed under big, brilliant elect-

ric lights. Of course to make provision for 350 children was no child's play and hence they bought supplies as follows :

Choice mixed candies.....	350 lbs.
Packages cracker jack.....	300 "
Mixed nuts.....	50 "
Bananas.....	350
Oranges.....	400
Apples.....	1 bbl.
Fz. cakes.....	50 lbs.

Hence there was put up for every one of the 350 children a pound of choice candy, none of your cheap stuff, for we showed a box to an expert, and he pronounced it "fine;" a paper of cracker jack, mixed nuts, a banana, an orange, an apple and a lot of cakes in a big paper bag. These were piled on the big tables and around the trees.

From 3:30 till 4:30 the children's parents and friends came into the pavilion and just about dusk the fine band from Fort Sheridan came in, and how the Fillipinos, Rear Admiral Dewey and his brave "tars" will gaze on those musciaus, when they first hear them nextspring in Manila. There were three rows of chairs and settees on three sides and one row across one end of that immense pavilion and all were filled.

At 4:30 when everybody had come in, President Hogan asked a former resident of Highwood, and one who has a warm spot in his heart for his old neighbors up there, to sort of manage the oratorical part of the program. First came a fine selection by the band: then a few words by the manager, who called out Santa Claus who came in via the Electric railroad, through a back door down off the stage and up to one of the big center tables, amid the cheers of scores and hundreds of wideawake happy children, where during the further exercises he shook hands with such of the little ones as ventured to look closely on his hoary locks and trembling frame. Then came a capital, brief and opportune speech by Chaplain Gavitt from the Fort, which was followed by a most timely and in every way fitting speech by Mr. Mauck, treasurer of the electric road, followed by a few remarks by the editor of the News, when all joined in one verse of America and a brief

Sunday school exercise in which the children all learned and recited in concert the "Snow Prayer" "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

Then under the direction of Messrs. Hogan and Marshal Gordon and others, the children formed in procession, two abreast marching slowly around the room, till the cry of "Halt" brought all to a stand-still. About six women and as many men then took the head of the procession and gave each child its filled bag, a pound box of candy and the cracker jack. This occupied from twenty to thirty minutes, and by six o'clock, every child had his arms full on his way home, and wherever a sick or detained child was at home, packages were sent to them.

When Christ fed the five thousand there were twelve baskets of fragments left. We surmise that a dozen rather small baskets would have held all there was left, after those 335 children present and sick ones at home were supplied. With the 225 to 275 adults present, there were very near, if not quite, 600 persons present in that hall, at that new Highwood Christmas Festival, and 335 happier children, with their parents and friends, we have not seen these many years. Everybody was there, all classes and conditions with a few hungry ones from the Park and Lake Forest crept in. There were a few colored ones, Chaplain Gavitt's little Cuban lad in his military uniform.

It was, all told, the biggest and best kind of a success and reflects great credit on all concerned.

Mr. Frost of the Electric road could not be there as he planned and sent the following letter of regrets.

"HON. W. F. HOGAN—

Dear Sir—It is with great disappointment that I am obliged to send you my regrets over my inability to attend your Christmas exercises this afternoon. I returned from a trying trip to northern Wisconsin this Sunday morning and am obliged to leave again this evening and fear I could not return in time to catch my train.

"Please give the children my Christmas greeting, and impress upon them the blessings and joy of a true appreciation and acceptance of the message: 'Peace on earth good will toward men.'

"Wishing you all a merry Christmas, and regretting that I cannot be with you to enjoy the festivities, I am, very sincerely,

A. C. FROST.

Chicago, Dec. 25, 1898."