

The Christmas Tree —and the Children

By J. W. F. Davies

(director, Winnetka Community House)

One of the thrilling moments of a child's life is when he is important enough to work with his father and mother. When I hear parents say that they have to work till 3 o'clock Christmas morning because they cannot begin to decorate the tree until the children are all in bed, I feel like saying, "What dumb fools!" Why? Because it is a piece of selfishness which appropriates two-thirds of the fun to the parents alone. Not that I do not want parents to have fun. I do. But their fun would be so increased for themselves and they would be sharing it with their children if all the family together would trim the tree.

What do we do? We get the tree. We set it up. We buy tinsel, baubles, and lights, unless we keep them over from last year, and proceed to cover the tree in an artistic manner, according to our, adult, taste. "Won't they be surprised when we open the doors in the morning!" No, they won't be surprised. They know it will be there. Why of course there will be a tree. Every kid of yours has known from the time he first saw such a tree. His interest is not in the tree but what is on the tree, or underneath it, for him. The thrill which he might have had is not there because he did not help create it.

The tree I remember with delight was the one we children helped decorate. I was fourteen. We couldn't get a pine tree so we got scrub oak. We spent two days covering the branches and twigs with cotton. It grew more wonderful every hour. For days before we popped corn and threaded it on long strings. We painted walnuts and hickory nuts and fastened strings to hang them by, and strings with bits of colored glass for tails. We made little stockings of muslin—the girls did this—and filled them with nuts and little candies. We tied strings around the oranges. They made a wonderful color against the white. I worked for two days cutting out a star from wood and painting it with gilt paint. We cut out round disks of wood and painted them different colors. We had collected the old paint cans from a paint shop up the street. Mother made some doll cookies and put sugar on them. We had to tie red string around their necks to hang them on the tree. Father had charge of the candles. They had to be wired so that they would not burn the tree.

It took us most of the day before Christmas to get these things on the tree. I have never seen a tree as wonderful as that. Why? Because I helped. During the evening and night each had tied his presents on to the tree so that in the morning it was a glorious sight. It was lighted when we children arrived. What a magnificent tree we had helped create! The only trees I ever thrilled over were the ones I helped trim.

That is true of every child. Give yours a chance, realizing that Christmas is a chance to do things with the children as well as for them and they for you.

Julian Woodward, professor of sociology at Cornell university, is arriving in Winnetka tomorrow to spend Christmas week with his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Woodward of 685 Ardsley road. Mr. and Mrs. Woodward also will have as their guest for the holidays, Miss Winifred Walz of New York City, who is arriving Sunday.

HOME FROM EAST

Mrs. John B. Guthrie of 730 Walden road has returned from the East, having spent Thanksgiving week with her daughter, Priscilla, in New York, and a week with Mrs. William P. MacCracken, Jr., in Washington, D. C. While there, Mrs. Guthrie attended a musicale at the White House. From Washington, Mrs. Guthrie went to Pittsburgh and visited a week with her many relatives and friends in that city.

Mrs. Sanford Scribner Holden of Kenilworth is giving a bridge tea the afternoon of Friday, December 30, for her daughter, Barbara.

What could be choicer as Christmas gifts than
MISS B'S

exclusive toilet preparations and real flower-essence perfumes in their holiday dress. These products, made by gentlewomen for gentlewomen, are on display at the home of Mrs. Ernest Fleischmann, 235 Leicester Road, Kenilworth, Telephone: Kenilworth 1573.

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Colorful plaids, softly rich colors, heavy silk cord girdle and trim—A real man's gift.

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A truly luxurious Gown. Beautiful brocaded pattern ideas, full silk lining, shawl collar, sash and trimmings. At lower left.

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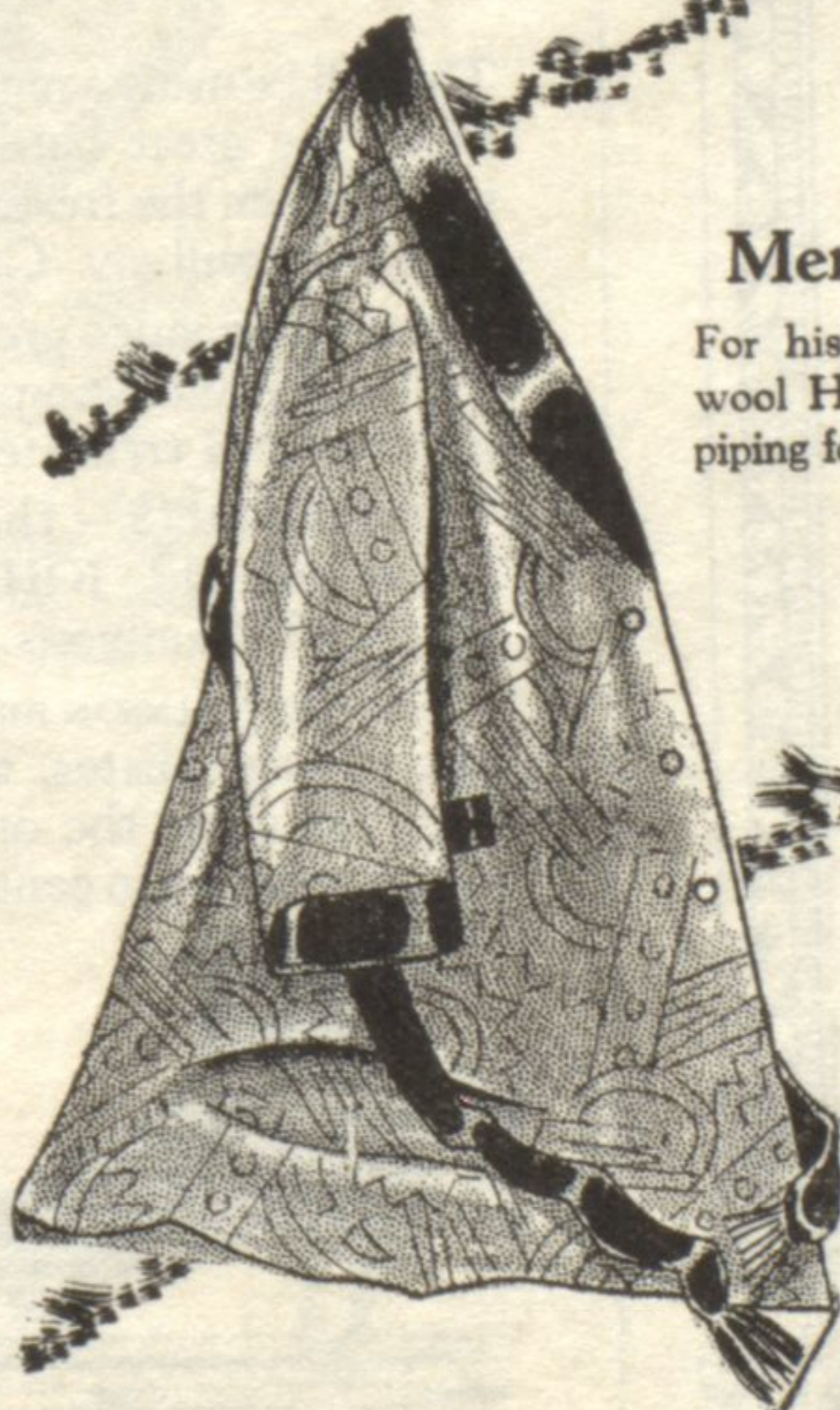
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For his leisure hours, this somberly rich wool House Coat. Plaid shawl collar and piping for contrast, silk braid.



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