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AVOID CHRISTMAS TREE FIRE

Utmost Care Should Be Used in Trimming, Thus Preventing Fatalities in the Homes.



PEOPLE cannot be too careful in guarding against fire when trimming a Christmas tree, says a correspondent in Good Housekeeping. There have been scores of Christmas tree fatalities in homes and in Sunday schools which a little care might have prevented. The writer once set a tree in a blaze, consuming nearly half of it, tinsel ornaments going with the green branches. A tiny candle had been wired too high, and it took only a few minutes of its brisk heat to char a branch above it and start a flame. A thick portiere was torn from its pole and thrown over the blaze. If it had not been at hand the light window curtains would have caught fire in another minute. Since that Christmas our tree has always been placed in the center of the room, and we have eschewed cotton wool, tissue-paper angels, and celluloid ornaments. First of all, we wire each candle securely in place at the furthest end of a branch which has nothing above it, either fir tree or tinsel. Then as the tree is decorated we watch carefully the fast-disappearing candles. Sometimes one of them, nearly burned down, will topple over or be merely a spark of flame, but near to something inflammable and be a menace.

GOOD TURNS ON CHRISTMAS

Chance for All to Aid the Friendless in Having Happy Yuletide Season.

REAL purveyors of Christmas cheer may often find a market for their precious wares outside the pale of charity, for all homeless people are not necessarily poor, and neither are all childless homes necessarily unhappy. Housekeepers who are short on homes may combine these two lackings and make Christmas day a merry delight for the grown-ups in spite of these unfortunate conditions.

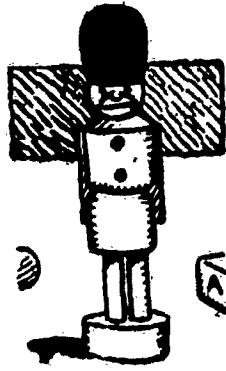
There is always something peculiarly pitiable in the idea of any one "flocking alone" which should appeal to the house-maker without a family, so that this should be the occasion for her to gather in all the bachelor maids and homeless men of her acquaintance and give them a joyful opportunity to "flock together." Even the Scrooges, if she knows any, should be rescued from their lonely bowls of gruel and persuaded to open their shut-up hearts and wear them outside for general inspection, as Dickens says, "For Christmas days to peck at." Therefore, collect six or eight of these birds of a feather who are destitute of near-by kith and kin and make your Christmas feast a center of good cheer for all the charming solitaires agreeable to draw within its radius.—Woman's Home Companion.

Good Year for Violets.

Sweet peas have been forced for the Christmas market only for many years past. They must be started blooming before the cold weather begins. Then they will bloom all winter. Daffodils do not get in until February, but almost all the rest of the spring flowers, hyacinths, narcissuses, bavrardia, and so on, are on the Christmas counters. Easter lilies, too, though rather cold and white for Christmas, are sold. Violets, are fine this winter, deeply, darkly, beautifully blue. Some mignonette now comes in enormous sprays. There are carnations, but the bright red Christmas carnation is the favorite. Holly comes from the hills of Maryland and the south. The wild holly supplies the market and there has never seemed to be any perceptible diminution of the supply. Great quantities of it are purchased by all sorts of dealers, who decorate their stores with it and send out a sprig attached to every Christmas parcel.

SAD FATE

Wooden Soldier: After faithful service in the nursery for a year, I will be cast aside for a new toy this Christmas.



Dumb Animals Remembered.

The noblest observances of Christmas are its charities. In all ages and among all peoples the poor have always been bountifully remembered on that day, and in many parts of England and Scotland even the lower animals are given an extra feeding that they, too, may have cause for rejoicing when all mankind are glad. Many readers will remember Burns' address of the auld farmer to his mare when presenting her with an extra feed of corn on New Year's day. "A guld New Year I wish thee, Maggie, Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie."

To Avoid the Rush.

Soldier, just back from his harvest furlough, to the sergeant—"My father wants to know if I'll get another furlough at Christmas. Here is the picture of the pig that is going to be killed."—Fleegende Blätter.

The Doctor's Wife

By Mary Graham Besser



HE HAD married her in the first place of all because of her lovely, low voice. There had been other reasons too—her good looks, her smile, her common sense, but mainly and chiefly the attraction which had drawn him to her had been her voice. It had seemed during those first years of his practicing and trying to make headway in a seemingly unresponsive city, that voices would drive him mad, wailing, complaining, whimpering always discontented. Even when he met women socially he felt they refrained from telling him anything but a sorrowful tale of themselves.

As for his wife—she understood. She smiled at the poor excuses they made to come and see him, of the jealousy they showed of each other, of the gifts they sent him, of senseless reasons they had for telephoning.

Sometimes they would both be invited out to dinner at some patient's house. The doctor's wife chuckled as she thought of how little she was wanted. Usually they looked at her, she knew, rather pityingly, and at times, the bolder of the sympathizers would say to her:

"It must be awful to be a doctor's wife. I'd never have a moment's peace if I were you with so many women caring for my husband!"

"We get used to it," the doctor's wife said so as not to be disappointing, smiling to herself. What fun it was to be a doctor's wife. How much pity one got one didn't deserve, how much wasted sympathy, how many deliciously jealous thoughts one inspired.

It was Christmas Eve. The doctor had promised his wife that he would help her in those many pleasant, engrossing night-before-Christmas tasks.

She went upstairs to see that the children were quite asleep when she heard the telephone ring. She answered it, and then heard her husband's voice who was already answering it from below.

Something, some curious something, made her listen.

"Oh doctor," she heard a voice say, the voice of the one woman who had lately caused her her first pang of jealousy, "I can't wait another moment. I must see you. I'm sorry, on Christmas Eve too, but I must! Please, doctor, can you come at once?"

"That's all right, little lady," she heard her husband answer, "I'll be up at once."

"I'm going out for awhile," the doctor called up the stairs. And was gone without a word of regret and with no effort at an excuse.

Late that evening she went out of the house. She would see this other woman. She called a taxi and hurried off. "I'm sorry," the maid told her, "but Madame can see no one." And the door was shut abruptly.

What would she do? What could she do? Finally, exhausted after walking about the streets, she went home, her heart full of dry, choking sobs.

At last she heard the doctor's key. He came in. He looked tired. But she was worn out.

"You've been to—" she began.

"Yes," he answered wearily, as he lighted a cigarette. "I have been there all this time. But she has the finest boy you could hope to see; they're simply delighted."

"Boy?" she shrieked.

"Yes," the doctor nodded. He was too tired to notice her quick change of expression.

"Oh," he said after a moment. "I'm so glad you didn't finish the Christmas things without me. No matter how late it is, we must always get ready for Christmas together, mustn't we?" He kissed her lightly.

"After I had left the house," he added, "I remembered I hadn't asked you to wait, and I wanted you to wait no matter how long I'd be! Selfish of me, perhaps, but we must have our Christmas Eve together and get ready for the children's Christmas together, mustn't we, wife of my heart?"

"We most assuredly must," she answered him, and added to herself: "What fools these women are who pity the doctor's wife. I'm the happiest woman in the whole world."

And the doctor was saying: "My dear, do you know that it is Christmas morning and that I'm wishing you a Merry Christmas?"

"Merry Christmas," she returned, and in her heart rang the merriest and happiest of Christmas bells!



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