

## Dressing a Christmas Tree.

A 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 colours 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 glistening frost powder upon the tree branches. Under a brilliant light the tree becomes a veritable creation of fairyland. Santa as a dispenser of candy-bags and bonbons is always welcomed by the little ones. If he has a fund of Christmas rhymes, stories and songs to mingle with his gifts, he is all the more welcome. —*Ladies' Home Journal.*

## Fourth Sunday in Advent.

## WATCHING.

What should you say a soldier ought to be, besides being brave, and besides being enduring?

Something else that is quite as needful. Being watchful.

You know what that means, don't you? Keeping a good look-out. And not looking out in one direction only, for that wouldn't be half enough. Nobody is in the least sure which way the enemy will come. It may be from north, south, east or west. The troops might creep round a hill, hide among brushwood, and so not be seen until they were quite close.

Or they might attack openly across a plain and be full in sight.

Or there's another thing an enemy might very likely do. That is, attack again, just after you think you have beaten him off. You would feel very safe just after you had got the better of him, and so, for that very reason, it would just be the best time to find you off your guard!

So you see it would never do for a soldier to rest quietly in his tent; to sit down at ease without thinking about the enemy at all. If he did so, perhaps at that very time when he supposes himself quite safe, then the attack would come.

He must have his weapons in order too, and close at hand. His sword bright and sharp, and his other arms rubbed up and ready for use.

He must be ready always, and not have to get ready when the alarm comes.

For nobody can be ready all in a moment. You can't collect your thoughts suddenly. Being surprised makes you feel shaky and upset, and not a bit like yourself. And so if a soldier is surprised, he is pretty sure to be beaten. Nobody can wonder at that.

Ready and watching!

Yes, that's what a soldier ought to be.

Now can you, as a Christian soldier, be ready and watching?

Yes, I am sure you can. Let us see why you really must always be on the look-out.

Because Sin, your enemy, is quite clever enough to come when you least expect him. He is very cunning about choosing his time. Just now I told you what is a very favourite time for the enemy to come. Do you remember?

Just after you have beaten him off.

Well, that is clever, isn't it? For just after you've beaten him off, you're most easy and comfortable. Pleased with yourself, and pretty sure of yourself too. Ah! that's just the time. And to make

more sure and throw you off your guard, he doesn't come back in the same form. Oh no. He takes a new and entirely different one; so different that it doesn't seem like an enemy at all. Which is very cunning indeed.

Here is an example.

Alick is a boy who has made up his mind to be a Christian soldier. He knows pretty well too what enemy is his especial one. That enemy is Idleness. And so he resolves, like a brave boy as he is, to fight him.

He remembers at his Morning Prayer to ask for grace to conquer. And the result is that he fights, and fights so well, that the enemy Idleness doesn't get the least advantage over him all day. Alick does his work capably, he doesn't give in to Idleness one bit, nor his twin brother Dawdling either.

He is quite pleased with himself when evening comes. He sits down after supper quite comfortable and easy in his mind.

Ah! that is just a little bit dangerous! Sin is on the alert if Alick is not. So he watches his opportunity, and takes quite a new form this time—an ugly form, and its name is Crossness.

Alick can't find a book he wants because his small brother has borrowed it, and in a moment he bursts out—

"I won't have my things touched. It's abominable to have to hunt about like this! I'll give it you well if you ever take my books again."

Why, is not that curious? He has gone down in a moment without striking a blow! I suppose he never thought of Sin attacking him in that form. He thought a good deal about Idleness, and resisted that sin bravely, which was quite right. But then he should have been on the look-out afterwards, just when Sin was worsted in one form, to see if he wouldn't come back in another.

For Crossness is Sin, just as much as Idleness, and a watchful wise soldier would see that plainly enough.

An enemy is an enemy if he is bent on destroying you, no matter whether he is an Arab, or a Zulu, or a Caffre, or a wild Indian.

So you see the great need of Watchfulness. Have your weapons always ready. The best weapon of all is Prayer—Prayer not only Morning and Evening, but at other times too.

Whenever there is fear of Sin, then there is need of Prayer.

If Alick had been a watchful soldier he would have recollected as he sat down by the fire that night that Sin might come. And then when that ugly Crossness rose up in his heart, he should have caught hold of that weapon Prayer.

"Lord, help me. Lord, make me strong." And so he would have been victorious.

There are three men we read about in the Bible who fell away through want of watchfulness. Their names were Peter, James, and John. They were with our Lord in the garden, when a troop of fierce men came to take Him prisoner.

It was sudden, and it was in the night, and something whispered to them—"Save yourselves, don't think of Him, or you'll get into trouble."

Wasn't it a sin called Cowardice that whispered that?

In a moment they gave way, made no fight, and fled!

It seemed strange, didn't it? for they were good men, and had been much with Jesus, and loved Him.

What was the reason they gave way all in a moment, when the enemy Cowardice attacked them?

Why this was the reason.

Some hours before they had had an opportunity of getting ready. The grandest opportunity men ever had! Watching and praying with Jesus Himself. What could be better than that? But instead of using that grand chance they had simply wasted it. They had let themselves go to sleep.

What a pity! They weren't ready, for they hadn't prayed, and so they miserably failed.

I dare say they would not have believed it if any one had told them beforehand that they would fail like that!

Ah, is not that a lesson? To "watch and pray."

Remember that, wherever you are. Holiday-

times, play-times, or just when you are most pleased with yourself, be especially careful.

Above all, do have that weapon Prayer ready and shining, that you may acquit yourself as a good and watchful soldier of Jesus Christ.

This is the last Sunday in Advent, and Advent is meant to teach us watchfulness. Do not forget that, when the season is past and over.

## Hints to Housekeepers.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.

ALMOND CAKE.—Beat sixteen eggs very light, whites and yolks separate. Cream one pound of butter, and beat into it one pound of soft white sugar. Have ready one pound of flour sifted and warmed. Stir the egg yolks into the sugar and butter, then add the egg white and flour alternately and one level tablespoonful of finely-pounded mace. Have two pounds of almonds blanched and pounded in a mortar with rose-water, two pounds of citron cut into small pieces. Mix well into the cake and bake slowly.

A HORRIBLE MURDER.—A horrible murder involving the loss of one life attracts greater attention than the thousands of deaths occurring annually from scrofula and bad blood. We want to attract attention to Burdock Blood Bitters, the proved and popular remedy for these forms of disease. It cures even old chronic obstinate cases which have defied all other treatment.

BOILED ICING FOR ALMOND CAKE.—To one pound of white sugar add one gill and a half of water. Boil it gently until it will fall in strings from the spoon. Beat the whites of three eggs very stiff. When done pour the syrup into a large bowl and beat it hard until it has a milky appearance. Then, by degrees, add the egg white. Continue to beat it until very thick and light, but not too thick to spread smoothly. Flavour with essence of lemon, and ice the cake at once. When smoothly iced set it in a warm oven for a few minutes to dry. Do not let it remain in the oven long or the icing will be discoloured.

SINCE CHILDHOOD'S DAYS.—Sirs,—I can highly recommend Hagyard's Pectoral Balsam. It cured my daughter of a cough she had been troubled with since childhood. She is now twelve years old. Mrs. M. Fairchild, Scotland, Ont.

CHRISTMAS CAKE.—Cream one pound of butter and add one pound of soft white sugar. Beat fourteen eggs very light, the yolks and whites separately. Sift and warm one pound of flour, and add it by the handful to the sugar and butter alternately with the egg yolks and whites. Stir in one tablespoonful of essence of lemon and one tablespoonful of mixed spices, beaten very fine and sifted. Have ready two pounds of stoned and chopped raisins; two of currants, picked, washed and dried; two of citron, cut small; two pounds of almonds, blanched and pounded with rose-water, and one gill of sweet cider. Mix the fruit and cider thoroughly into the cake, and bake it very slowly and carefully.

IN THE FAR WEST.—Away west in British Columbia, Hagyard's Yellow Oil is known and valued highly, as at home in Toronto. Miss Eleanor Pope, of Port Haney, B.C., says: "For sore throat, coughs, croup, bruises, etc., Hagyard's Yellow Oil is the best thing I have ever used."

ANGEL'S PUDDING.—Two ounces of flour, two ounces of sugar, two of butter, a pint of cream and the whites of three eggs. Bake in patty-pans, cover with icing, and serve without sauce.