

The Christmas Tree.

There are several legends about the Christmas tree. A French romance of the thirteenth century tells how a knight discovered an immense tree with many candles burning upon it, some of them inverted. At the very top he saw a child with a halo around its head. The pope, questioned as to the meaning of this strange sight, said that the tree represented mankind, the child the Saviour, and the candles good and bad human beings. A German legend relates that one Christmas Eve, as Martin Luther was walking home, the beauty of the starry night so deeply moved him that when he reached his cottage he could think of nothing else. In vain he tried to describe to his family how it impressed him, and finally, as an illustration, he went out into the yard, cut down a small fir-tree and, bringing it into the house, placed lighted candles on its branches. Still another legend in the same language attributes the rearing of the first Christmas tree to St. Winfred, a missionary. Surrounded by a multitude of his converts and some unbelievers, he was about to hew down one of the great oak-trees which for so long had been objects of their worship. Just at this point a great wind arose, felling to the ground this and many other large trees. A tiny fir remained standing alone, unharmed. St. Winfred seized this golden opportunity for sending a sermon straight to the hearts of his listeners, and, raising his voice to its fullest volume, he said: "This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree to-night. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ-child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness." Dr. Henry Van Dyke has used this legend as the foundation for his beautiful little "Story of the First Christmas-tree."



Be a Hustler.

Give me a hustler every time—one who is not afraid of work, who goes ahead and just plows right on without hesitating one moment.

Give me the fellow who wants to accomplish something, who says boldly, I *will* do that, and then does it.

If you lack forwardness in this way, start right *now* and do it. You envy the man who accomplishes results, but did you ever stop to

consider that the same possibility lies within your power? In your very hands? In your very head?

Once we get started we are all right, for we soon find out that the task is not as difficult as we at first supposed, and it is surprising to learn how much easier it becomes as we go onward.

Many of us need a push, and some an extra hard one.—R. F. Whitcomb, in Chat.



A Joyous Season.

Christmas is not only the mile-mark of another year, moving us to thoughts of self-examination; it is a season, from all its associations, whether domestic or religious, suggesting thoughts of joy. A man dissatisfied with his endeavors is a man tempted to sadness. And in the midst of the winter, when his life runs lowest and he is reminded of the empty chairs of his beloved, it is well he should be condemned to this fashion of the smiling face. Noble disappointment, noble self-denial, are not to be admired, not even to be pardoned, if they bring bitterness. It is one thing to enter the kingdom of heaven maimed; another to maim yourself and stay without. And the kingdom of heaven is of the childlike, of those who are easy to please, of those who love and give pleasure. Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties. There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbors good. One person I have to make good—myself. But my duty to my neighbor is much more clearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may. To be honest, to be kind—to earn a little and to spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary, and not to be embittered, to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation—above all, on the same grim condition, to keep friends with himself—here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy. He has an ambitious soul who would ask more.—Robert Louis Stevenson.



There Are Others.

Mifkins—"You have used the word 'donkey' several times in the last ten minutes; am I to understand that you mean anything of a personal nature?"

Bifkins—"Certainly not. There are lots of donkeys in the world besides you."—Chicago News.