

Sacrificed Christmas Trees

Will the children in 1925 have Christmas trees? This question is being asked by thousands of people throughout the United States. Indications point to the supposition that within the next 15 years the supply of the evergreen trees with which we deck our living rooms annually at the feast of St. Nicholas will be so small that folk in the ordinary walks of life will not be able to afford a tree.

Year after year the forests have been denuded. New England, a generation ago, was thought to have an almost inexhaustible supply. Today her hills are bare. Nearly all her immense forests of spruce and fir have been sacrificed to the sentiment of Yuletide.

The middle states have been ransacked for their treasures. The farmer, although he receives but two cents apiece for the trees, is afraid to look the future in the face and wait until the tree is full grown. Neither does he show any discretion in cutting, but every year he rushes to the woods and cuts everything that he can lay his hands on in order that some one may have a night's pleasure by defacing nature's work with cheap tinsel and candles. After that, what would have been the forest of the future is discarded forever, beyond the power of man to restore and the work of nature for years to replace.

The bulk of the trees now come from Canada. More than 300,000 are used annually in Philadelphia alone. New York, Chicago, Baltimore and a hundred towns between them use three times that number every year.

In the wild hills of the Canadian provinces the trees are still plentiful. But it is only a question of a few years' time, with the increased demand for them, when their price will soar. No attempt is made, apparently, to rejuvenate the forests.

In a few scattered places throughout the country, it is true, one or two men have started nurseries in Christmas trees. Intelligent planting and cutting within three generations may make them useful patches from which to glean hardy trees.

But elsewhere, in spite of the talk of conservation which we hear so much about nowadays, the trees are stripped ruthlessly from the hills and valleys and no attempt is made by the greedy marketer to replace them.

This has resulted in the present dearth of the much-desired spruce trees. Vermont already charges an additional stumpage of five cents, upon trees which are shipped out of the state.

Let us consider the Christmas tree situation in Philadelphia. Each year more than 1,000 flat freight cars, loaded with the trees, which are piled in double tiers, reach the city. The capacity of the flat car averages 300 trees.

Therefore, approximately 300,000 trees are used in Philadelphia annually. Sentimentally apart, this is an enormous waste of material, when it is recalled that the trees serve no economic purpose, and the majority of them furnish fuel for bonfires on vacant lots two weeks after the holiday.

It is an expensive proposition considered in any light. First comes the cost of sending men into regions where the trees grow. They are experts. They are able to size up the marketable value of a patch of woods after a day's tramp through them. Then comes the cost of cutting, stumpage, hauling and shipping to destination. After that, it is mainly a matter for the retail dealers, who buy trees either as they stand in the forests, or at the freight yards in the cities to which they are consigned.

The small dealer must make his profit. He tacks on an extra price which the consumer must pay. Then comes the expense of decorating the greenwood with tinsel and glistening ornaments. This costs a little fortune in itself. Finally, it is usual to pay the ashman to cart the tree away, after the holidays are over.

It has been estimated that from first to last, from the time that the seedling is planted in the soft, friable soil, to the moment it returns to its primal element, the dust, as a handful of embers on the city lot, a Christmas tree represents a money valuation of \$25.

This is a total expenditure of \$7,500,000 annually. Of course, this figure is purely imaginary. The trees do not actually cause that amount of money to change hands in a simple buying and selling transaction. But there is actually that much loss to the regions which supply trees.

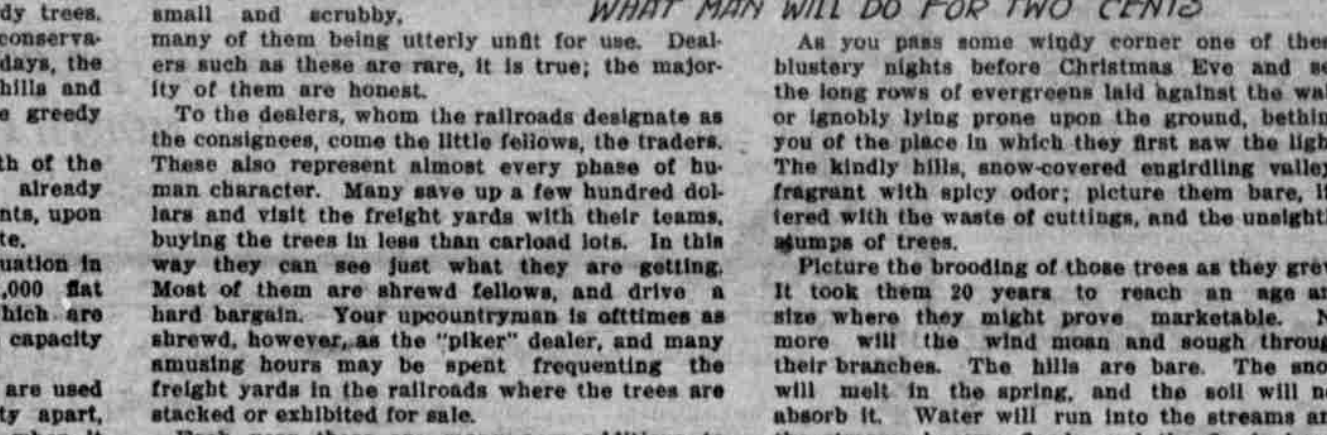
If all the trees in an average loaded flat car were to be stood upon their butts, in the natural way in which they would grow, they would cover a ten-acre lot. Multiply this by 1,000 and the amount of timber stripped annually from the hills will become apparent at once.

Just at this time of the year the Christmas tree industry is in its most flourishing condition. All of the trees for this year's market have been cut. Many of them are in transit, but some of them are even now standing in the freight yards of the railroads, waiting for the retail dealers to purchase them.

Dealers are gradually awakening to the fact that it is better to ship their trees early, sell them all at a low price, and save the trouble and expense of remaining a long time in the city bartering their wares.

The dealers in Christmas trees are types. They are all queer characters. You cannot pick out one that has not some peculiarity. As in all trades, there are tricks to the business of buying and selling Christmas trees.

You would think that the disposal of a car load of railroad ties, with a layer of trees piled on top, to an unwary customer, would bar the deal-



DEFACING NATURE FOR A NIGHT'S PLEASURE

A SAMPLE OF THE DESTRUCTION

WHAT MAN WILL DO FOR TWO CENTS

ers from coming again to the spot where they had practiced such deception. Yet it never does. Year after year they practice the most dishonest tricks upon their patrons. One man last year got a high price for 20 of the finest trees ever seen in Philadelphia. He told the buyer that the rest of the car on which the 20 were loaded was just like them, but when they were unloaded and placed for sale, they proved to be small and scrubby, many of them being utterly unfit for use. Dealers such as these are rare, it is true; the majority of them are honest.

To the dealers, whom the railroads designate as the consignees, come the little fellows, the traders. These also represent almost every phase of human character. Many save up a few hundred dollars and visit the freight yards with their teams, buying the trees in less than carload lots. In this way they can see just what they are getting. Most of them are shrewd fellows, and drive a hard bargain. Your upcountryman is oftentimes as shrewd, however, as the "piker" dealer, and many amusing hours may be spent frequenting the freight yards in the railroads where the trees are stacked or exhibited for sale.

Each year there are many new additions to the company of dealers. The lure of the adventure, the chance to realize money upon an investment that is practically certain to bring a 50 per cent. return, attracts many to the business. Trees can be purchased in half carload lots, or even in hundred lots for about 60 cents apiece. If they can be sold for a dollar, or perhaps more, the chance to make money quickly is irresistible to many investors.

Not always does the investor succeed. His fingers are sometimes pretty badly burned. The market may be glutted, he may have a rival on the next corner, or perhaps his trees are not sufficiently attractive to cause the public to patronize him. Perhaps he has held off, waiting for better prices, till the last moment, and finds himself with half a hundred spruce on his hands, which he must dispose of as best he may.

Usually, however, the business is lucrative. The wise dealer buys trees in hundred lots, peddles them out quickly, and comes back for more. He does not wait for high prices, but sells his trees for what he can get.

As you pass some windy corner one of these blustery nights before Christmas Eve and see the long rows of evergreens laid against the wall, or ignobly lying prone upon the ground, bethink you of the place in which they first saw the light. The kindly hills, snow-covered engraving valleys fragrant with spicy odor; picture them bare, littered with the waste of cuttings, and the unlighted stumps of trees.

Picture the brooding of those trees as they grow. It took them 20 years to reach an age and size where they might prove marketable. No more will the wind moan and sigh through their branches. The hills are bare. The snow will melt in the spring, and the soil will not absorb it. Water will run into the streams and the streams become floods, and the floods breed calamities.

The trees, noble fellows all of them, will have their tops hacked off to accommodate them to the stuffiness of our little box-like homes. As the heat of our rooms dries up their sap, their lives will go out, slowly, day by day. They will end on the bonfire.

Yes, buy a tree. Buy one and take it home to your children. When it is bravely decked out in all its gala finery, gather your family about its spreading branches, which are exhaling their last breaths for you, and tell them the story of the life and death of the tree.

THE SPIRIT OF THE DAY.

Have you time for a little sermon? It will take but a few minutes, and today, if ever, our thoughts should be turned toward inward to the heart of things. To you, whose hands rock the cradles of humanity and indirectly rule the world, let us ask a question: Are you forgetting the real spirit of the day? Gift giving on this anniversary of the Nativity is in danger of losing its loving purpose. It has degenerated in many cases to a mercenary exchange—a gift for a gift. The spirit is frequently absent.

This should not be. Women represent the greater number of gift-givers. Let us then revert to the underlying love and reverence that prompted the Wise Men to lay their offerings at the feet of the Holy Baby. Let us give a little of our hearts with each present, and if we cannot give a tangible expression of our love, let us give a heart's wish instead.

In your hands lies great power for good or for evil. A woman influences thought and action. It is your duty, then, to discountenance the heartless offer and to smile your approval of the spirit of the day.

Then, indeed, Christmas will mean all that he would approve. The guiding star of love and good will that shone so clearly in the blue night long ago should never be lost in our minds, and the love to which it pointed should epitomize our efforts to honor this great day.

A SURPRISE BOX.

Something which would delight any little invalid is a "surprise box." This may be planned to last a week or any length of time one wishes and should contain a package for each day, with the date on which it is to be opened written plainly on each one. Dolls, toys, books and many other things dear to the childish heart may be put in these packages and the little one will surely rejoice to have his "Merry Christmas" last so many days.

Christmas in Old Time.



Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill. But let it whistle as it will, We'll keep our Christmas merry still.

Each age has deem'd the newborn year The fittest time for festive cheer; And well our Christian sires of old Loved when the year its course had roll'd And brought blithe Christmas back again, With all his hospitable train. Domestic and religious rite Gave honor to the holy night; On Christmas eve the bells were rung; On Christmas eve the mass was sung; That Christmas night in all the year Saw the stoled priest the chaile rear. The damsel donn'd her kirtle shoon, The hall was dress'd with holly green; Forth to the wood did merry men go To gather in the mistletoe, Then open'd wide the baron's hall To vassal, tenant, serf and all; Power laid his rod of rule aside

And Ceremony doff'd his pride. The heir, with roses in his shoes, That night might vilgals partner choose; The lord, underrating, share The vulgar game of "post and pair," All hail'd, with uncontrol'd delight And general voice, the happy night, That to the cottage as the crown Brought tidings of salvation down. The fire, with well-dried logs supplied, Went roaring up the chimney wide; The huge hall table's oaken face, Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace, Bore then upon its massive board No mark to part the squire and lord, Then was brought in the lusty brawn By old blue-coated serving man; Then the grim boar's head grown'd on high, Created with bays and rosemary. Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell How, when and where the monster fell, What dogs before his death he tore And all the bawling of the boar. The wassail round, in good brown bowls Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls; There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by Plum porridge stood and Christmas pie; Nor fall'd old Scotland to produce At such high tide her savory goose. Then came the merry maskers in, And carols roar'd with blithesome din; If unmelodious was the song, It was a hearty note and strong. Who lists may in their mumming see Traces of ancient mystery. White shifts supplied the masquerade And smutted cheeks the visors made; But, Of what maskers, richly dight, Can boast of bosoms half so light! England was merry England, when Old Christmas brought his sports again; 'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale. 'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale; A Christmas gambol oft could cheer The poor man's heart through half the year.

—Sir Walter Scott.

IN THE LIMELIGHT

ARREST OF GENERAL REYES



The arrest by United States Federal authorities of Gen. Bernardo Reyes, a former member of the Diaz regime in Mexico, on the charge of violating the neutrality laws of the United States has brought prominently before the public the efforts which are being made by Mexican refugees in this country to precipitate civil war across the border. Ever since Gen. and President Madero succeeded in ridding Mexico of Diaz and ending the close corporation which stood around him and which had been exploiting the country for its own interests there has been a conspiracy on foot to oust Madero and restore the old Diaz regime to power.

The center of this conspiracy apparently has been in El Paso, Tex., while another junta was established in San Antonio, where Gen. Reyes had taken up his quarters and where he was placed under arrest. Soldiers of fortune gathered in these places, dynamite in large quantities was purchased and stores of arms and ammunition accumulated. It has been a well-known fact that a plot against Madero has been brewing and that an attack upon Juarez was contemplated.

The arrest of Gen. Reyes, who, however, asserts that he is not concerned in the movement, has aroused the Mexican government and troops are being massed to deal with the revolution should it break out. What Mexico chiefly needs is rest and it will be the aim of the United States to head off any revolution which seeks to establish a base on American soil.

MOVER IN A NEW SHIP LINE

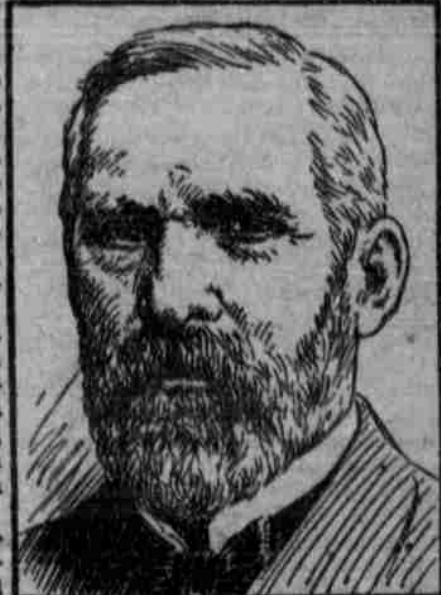
As a result of H. G. Haugan's trip to Norway last summer, from which he returned to Chicago recently, the first steamship company to run a line of ships between Norway and the United States was organized. At a banquet of ship owners in Christiania some time ago Mr. Haugan showed so plainly the profits that could be made by such a steamship line as the Norwegian-American Steamship company, with a capital of \$2,700,000, was organized.

Mr. Haugan's family always has been active in Norwegian affairs. His brother, H. A. Haugan, former president of the State Bank of Chicago, was made a knight of the Order of St. Olaf, the highest order of Knighthood in Norway, shortly before his death in 1909.

The formation of a shipping company to take care of the trade between the Scandinavian countries and the United States without the vexatious transshipping at an English or German port had been under consideration for a long time. It needed only the indorsement of Mr. Haugan, whose experience as a railroad official gave his opinion weight, to make the company a fact.

Many of the foremost men in official circles in Norway are financially interested in the company. The prime minister of the kingdom, Gunnar Knudsen, and Christian Michalsen, ex-prime minister, are among the largest stock owners.

Mr. Haugan, while not nominally in control, has consented to take charge of the affairs of the new steamship line in this country, and will devote his time largely to this.



LATE DOMINICAN PRESIDENT



The assassination of President Ramon Caceres of the Dominican Republic by political malcontents in San Domingo city as he was leaving the house of a friend where he had made a call, is the climax to a series of political tragedies with which he had been intimately connected. The first of these occurred in 1884, when Caceres' father was put to death by the order of President Heurieux because of his supposed sympathy with political dissenters.

Caceres, then a boy of ten, vowed vengeance. His father left a large estate and, with unlimited means at his disposal, young Caceres came to the United States, where he attended and graduated from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, at Troy, N. Y. Here he met and married Lillian, the adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Hakes, of that city. Upon the death of Mr. and Mrs. Hakes, a few years later, Mrs. Caceres converted

the property left by her parents into cash and accompanied her husband to Santo Domingo.

The political career of Caceres began when he avenged the death of his father by assassinating President Heurieux on July 28, 1899. He was a partisan of Gen. Jimenez and by killing Heurieux made it possible for Jimenez to obtain the presidency. Later Caceres became vice-president under President Morales and in 1905, when Morales fled the country, Caceres was installed in the presidency.

PRESENT VICEROY OF INDIA

Lord Hardinge, the present viceroy of India, being the direct representative of the crown in the eastern empire, with his young and charming wife, took rank next to their majesties in the splendid ceremonies and festivities which graced the coronation celebration at the Delhi Durbar.

The whole of his active career has been spent in the diplomatic service. He was born in 1859, became a foreign office clerk in 1880, and three years afterward was appointed third secretary at Madrid. He served five years in St. Petersburg, to which court he was appointed in 1886. After two years at Constantinople, he was for a time charge d'affaires at Bucharest. He saw further service at Cairo and Zanzibar, and was minister at Teheran from 1900 to 1905.

From Teheran he went to Brussels, and from there was appointed viceroy in succession to the Earl of Minto.

He went to India with the prestige of a great name, being a descendant of a former governor general under the East India company, who was rewarded by a viscounty and a handsome pension for most distinguished services in the Great Sikh war.

