MISTLETOE TALES

OR

LEGENDS ABOUT THE FLORAL EMBLEM

MISTLETOE, associated with both comedy and tragedy, owes its elevation to the glory of a prominent Christmas decoration to the relics of Druid pet superstition and again, even further back, to traditions of Norse mythology, in which it played an important part.

Long before kissing was invented or ballads were made and sung the mistletoe was a sort of fetich and is as capricious as most heathen deities, inasmuch as it has a marked preference in the choice of a tree to grow upon, the oak, the birch and the pear being the least favored, while it loves the poplar, hawthorn, lime, maple, mountain ash and, first and foremost of all, the apple tree. It roots firmly, grows slowly, gradually stifles the tree it embraces and then dies itself! In ancient lore it had rare medicinal virtues, but these have found children with the lapse of time.

Norse fables tell us that Baldur, the delight and the beautiful, the god of light, was regarded with jealousy by some of the other deities, and Frigg, to protect him, made everything in heaven and earth swear to do him no harm. But disregarding the mistletoe as being so slight and weak she omitted her precaution in its case. Loki, the malevolent fire god, seizing this chance, bewitched a twig of mistletoe till it yielded to the size of a spear and, slyly giving it to blind Hodur, told him to throw it among the gods when they were at play.

It struck Baldur and killed him, but Frigg miraculously restored him to life and thereafter guarded the mistletoe, which the gods at her pleading decided should be unable to do any mischief again unless it touched the earth. For this reason it always hung on high, and the vigilant goddess was propitiated by a kiss of amity and good will.

Many of the most important rites of the Druids were performed in connection with it and today men and maidens hold that it constitutes a sanction for salutes that might otherwise be too daring. Yet the old mysterious glamour of its power to harm still clings to it and imparts a touch of superstitious witchery to the tragic fate of the gay young bride who, mad with merriment, hid in the oak chest that proved her tomb.

Educate Your Bowels With Cascarets.
Candy Cathartic, cure constipation forever. 10c, 25c. If C. C. C. fail, druggists refund money.

CHRISTMAS GREEN.

CHRISTMAS goes in hearts of men,
Heedless of the howling winter,
Heedless of the gusts that sweep
Over the woodlands and the heather.
Manna in the night we sing
By the side of floral manger,
While the wickets widely swing
For the pilgrim and the stranger.

Colors with the roses twine
Round the chancel's inner pillars,
While the winds and waves combine
Commands and chiefs and sailors;
While the cheer of festival snow
Clusters o'er the marble's whiteness,
Then, morning, the angels flow
Glimmers with a summer brightness.

Faces of the living and dead
Thronging the church as one assembled;
Rubicons of cheer are spread
As in Yule's ancient walks we rambled.
Oh, the cheer, the cheer increased
Yes, in more than olden beauty,
Are like angel guests released,
Shadows in this lady city.

Children with their banners, see,
In the chancel always gather!
Happy they, with him to be
Children of a common Father.
Hear the organ's grandest song
With the welcome to the morning,
While the festal crowds swing
And the altar lights are burning.

Lovely Yule, though shadows steal
Unawares o'er all the brightness,
Though you cannot longer reveal
Maid mounds of snowy whiteness,
Yet the sweets of Christmas day
Grows and fragrance ever lifeth,
For the hand that took away
Is the hand that now gives gifts.

—William H. Chisholm.

He Went.

He—Half past 11! Isn't that clock fast?

She—I think not.

He—Well, I guess my watch is like myself—it is slow.

She—But it is not exactly like you.

He—Indeed?

She—No—it goes.—Harlem Life.

How Are Your Kidneys?
Dr. Hobbs' Sparagus Pills cure all kidney ills. Sample free. Addr. Sterling Remedy Co., Chicago or N. Y.

MERRY XMAS WAYS.

HOW THE ANCIENTS CELEBRATED THE COMING OF YULETIDE.

The Mistletoe and the Yule Log Were In Evidence—Festivities Began a Week Before Christmas Day—But There Was No Santa Claus.

IT is said that the American customs of celebrating the greatest of all festival days, Christmas, are descended from or are survivals of the old world customs which existed in England a couple of centuries ago. Yet when these latter are examined into it requires a wide stretch of an unusually elastic imagination to link the ways of the present day with those of the seventeenth or even the eighteenth century.

It seems probable that the folks of half a dozen generations ago crowded more merriment into the Christmas season than any of this generation, and they went about it with a zest which [illegible] systematic care that modern ideas have now decided to make great

GATHERING THE HOLLY AND MISTLETOE.

financial event. Let the fun-loving of a benevolent kind make merry with the crowded way of living these days, says the Washington Post. If one of the old merry makers could come to life on Christmas day and celebrate the festival in the gay fashion and custom demanded in his time, he would probably find himself in the lockup charged with rudely disturbing the peace.

Food, liquor, feasting, drinking and boisterous merriment were the chief features of the old time English Christmas time, and so it had for many previous centuries. But that was merely the accepted fashion and not nearly so much like the work of the pompous bodies which developed the responsibility of carrying into the dining [illegible] the boar's head.

The oldtime Christmas began a week before the arrival of the day, just as the shoppers of today rush out with fat purses to lure the holiday bargain. But purchasing gifts did not bother the heads or weary the bodies of the old world folks.

The gathering of the holly and mistletoe for the decoration of house and church was their initial task, and it was performed by the villagers in masses headed by brave pipers and fiddlers, who filled the forests with the joyful melodies of Christmastide. It was the pagans who first used holly and mistletoe for observance, and the practice was adopted by the early Christian church. The Greeks and Romans also used them in their religious observances, as did the Druids and the Celtic and Gaelic nations. So the young maid of today with hands alluringly under a sprig of mistletoe may find satisfaction in knowing that she is following the precedent of centuries.

In Scotland [illegible] the master peasants hurried in crowds to join the new comers, as each the Druidical priests were the honored guests. The train was headed by the lords singing carols and hymns. A herald preceded three Druids, furnished with hatchets for the purpose of cutting the mystic mistletoe. Behind the boar's head followed the chief of the Druids, accompanied by all his aids and followers. The chief presented the [illegible] with a golden sickle, detaching the mistletoe and presenting it to the priests, who received and bore the branches away with deep reverence. On the first day of the feast the branches, after resting on the decorated altars in the harvest, were distributed among the people as a sacred and holy relic, the priests crying, "The gift of God the Lord hath given."

Many were the superstitious attaching to this plant. Among the little day charms associated with it, when suspended in a bunch in the servants' hall, was the indefinitely and favorite observance of kissing. [illegible] its branches, the superstition prevailing that the maiden who passed beneath it should be kissed under her pure white at Christmas would be blessed by a speedy and happy marriage and certainly not be married in the ensuing twelve months.

A medieval observance which always followed the gathering of the holly and mistletoe was the cutting and trolling home of the Yule log. The favorite Yule log was a sound knotted block of elm or the rugged root of a tree of Lindenfels and grotesque form.

Formerly the servants of the family and guests sat down in turn on the Yule log, the throne of the master of the revels, sang a Yule song and drank to a merry Christmas and happy New year. As part of their feast Yule dough or Yule cakes were consumed. These bore impressed figures in the shape of an image. Sometimes they were made in the form of an infant. Now was the manger overlooked.

MAIL FOR SANTA CLAUS.

Some Strange Letters at Christmas Time.

"HERE is an address I never noticed until this year," said a postoffice clerk, sorting out some half dozen letters with "Mr. Santa Claus, Joyland," on the envelopes. Variations were, "Mr. Santa Claus, Joyland Co., N. Y., 911 Happiness Ave.," and "Mr. Santa Claus, Toy and Candy Palace, Christmasville, Joyland."

Another child, perhaps of Hibernian ancestry, had addressed his petition to the saint's residence in "Fairyland, Ireland." One young writer, with a somewhat hazy knowledge of geographical names, had sent his letter to "Mr. Saint Nickerits, to the North Pole, Mexico." Another, with a belief in the power and influence of nurse, had addressed his missive to "19 Bedford Ave., Kaar Meary," which, being deciphered, is found to mean "Care of Mary."

"I am sorry I cannot allow you to open any of the letters. It's as much a criminal offense to tamper with them as with any other letters," said the clerk to a reporter of The Commercial Advertiser. There were, however, two postal cards and one open letter, which were fair specimens. The latter was a modest request for the relief of the more pressing wants of the writer. It read:

Dear Santa Claus—You say that good boys get the best presents. I have tried very hard to be a good boy. Will you please bring me a fire patrol, two of cars, a nice book, a game, lots of candy and a little mittens, candy, oranges and cute dolls, dear old Santa Claus. We will expect you Christmas eve. Denzel.

A few letters were evidently written under the direction of seniors of the family and dropped in the mailbox to please the children. Most of the letters were without stamps.

What becomes of the letters after they reach the dead letter office? Most of them are eventually destroyed, as the children sign only their first names and there is no way of returning them.

Christmas Feasting.

During the middle ages the whole Christmas season was given up to revels and jollity, in which eating and drinking had a prominent part. The lesson instinct of our English ancestors led them to make of every holiday an occasion for feasting. Plenty to eat and to drink was their idea of a festival, no matter how sacred might be its associations. On Christmas they not only lined their stomachs with good cheer, as did Shakespeare's justice, but stuffed themselves with all sorts of rich, nourishing food and strongly compounded puddings and pies.

The Attraction.

He turned on, quite loath to go;
They cut upon the stage,
But not beneath the mistletoe;
She has that in her hair.

CHRISTMAS DREAMS

Make the Children Happy.

Let their Christmas Dreams be realized in a Glad Christmas.
You can find the things to do it with at

F. P. NORTON'S.

Personal selection in the San Francisco market has given the best assortment of Christmas goods ever brought here.

A GLAD CHRISTMAS

TOYS

In bewildering array for all ages and at all prices. Large line of rocking Horses and Shoo-Flys.

DOLLS

From the 5 cent unbreakable to the largest and best.

GAMES

All kinds from the simplest, for the little tots to the De Luxe combination game boards.

PICTURE BOOKS

All the old favorites and new ones too linen and paper, from 5 cents up.

COME

And let us show you Christmas gifts that are just what you want