

L. STOCKTON

THE HOUSE OF SPECIALS



Great Clearance Sale

Remarkable selling during the last few weeks is indicative of the confidence the people have in our business methods. Everything is done on the square, and no person is ever lured to disappointment who comes to us. We inaugurate this sale in order to close out what's left of our fall goods.

BARGAINS WILL ABOUND THROUGHOUT THE STORE

Big Cuts in Dress Goods

Heads Rainproof Readona crepes, Serges, Mohelaines, Panamas, etc., all reduced.

Ladies' Suits, Skirts and Coats

This entire stock without reserve is cut to the quick. Profits are of no consideration.

STOCKTON'S

The busy place where they are not afraid to give a bargain.

ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

By J. P. O'Conner.

According to Pliny, the sanctity of the mistletoe in the worship of the Druids was an parasite of the oak. Any parasite growing upon that sacred tree was supposed to be God sent, and as the mistletoe—which, by the way, seldom now is found on the oak—was then its most frequent parasite, it was honored by the sacrifice of a couple of white oxen, and sometimes even by human sacrifices. In Scandinavian mythology the mistletoe—so far from being what it is with us, one of the Christmas weapons of Cupid—furnished the wood for the arrow by which the otherwise invulnerable Balder was slain, Balder the god of poetry, son of Odin and Friga, terrified his mother by narrating to her a dream of his own death. In her terror Friga summoned all the powers of Nature—earth, air, fire, water, and all animals, trees, and plants—and exacted from them an oath that they should do Balder no hurt. Thus secured, Balder took courage to join combat with the gods, and his invulnerability in battle set his arch enemy, Loake, to ferret out its cause. Loake, in the disguise of an old woman, praised to Friga her son's valor, dwelling so much on his miraculous escapes from death that Friga disclosed to him the secret of his invulnerability. "Nothing in Nature will injure him, since I have bound all things by an oath to abstain from hurting a hair of his head; except," she added as though by an afterthought, "the mistletoe, which I had forgotten, but of course nothing so insignificant could possibly harm him." On this hint Loake suggested to the blind Heda an arrow made out of mistletoe as the only effective weapon for Balder's destruction; and with such an insignificant weapon even the blind Heda succeeded in slaying the son of Odin.

It is curious that not one of our Christmas festival customs is Christian in its origin. Christianity had "to stoop to conquer" the heathen by the assimilation of their rites and ceremonies. The burning of the Yule log, like the hanging of the mistletoe, of Scandinavian origin, since our ancestors of this race used to kindle bonfires at their feast Juul, at the winter solstice in honor of Thor. By the way, you can cheaply insure your house against fire by preserving an unconsumed fragment of the Yule log in your cellar till the following Christmas, and using it to light the log next year, as Herrick suggests:

"With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psalteries play
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is teending."
Teending—i.e., burning.

Heathen and Scandinavian, again, are both the Christmas tree and the Maypole, symbolic of the Scandinavian Ash, Yggdrasil, the Tree of Time whose roots penetrate to heaven, to Ginnungagap—where the frost giants dwell—and to Nifheim, where dwells the great serpent, Nidhogg, and under whose root is Helheim, the home of the dead. The Christmas tree is usually supposed to have been introduced into England by Prince Albert, but the following passage from "The Greville Memoirs" shows that it was trying to take root there eight years before the accession of Queen Victoria: "Dec. 27, 1829—On Christmas the Princess Lieven got up a little fete such as is customary all over Germany. Three trees in great pots were put upon a long table covered with linen; each tree was illuminated with three circular tiers of colored wax candles—blue, green, red, and white. Before each was displayed a quantity of toys, gloves, pocket handkerchiefs, work, boxes, books, and various articles, presents made to the owner of the tree."

The custom was imported into America.

From the Roman Saturnalia are derived many of our Christmas customs, and among them that of masquerading. In the year 1400 Henry IV was entertained at Christmas at Eltham by twelve aldermen and their sons as mummies. Shortly afterwards, however, according to Fabryam, a conspiracy to murder that king was organized under the guise of a Twelfth Night Mummery. The plot was discovered only a few hours before the time arranged for the assassination. Indeed, it was the numberless murders and other felonies which were committed by mummies that provoked Henry VIII's ordinance against mummery or guising, commanding that all persons who went about thus disguised to great houses should be committed to jail for three months as rogues and vagabonds.

bonds and fined at the king's pleasure.

"The Lord of Misrule" is also of Saturnalian origin. "If," writes Prynne in his "Histriomastix," "we compare our Bacchanalian Christmas and New Year's tides with the Roman Saturnalia and feasts of Janus, we shall find such near affinity between them both in regard of time and in their manner of solemnizing that we must needs conclude the one to be the ape or issue of the other. Hence Polydore Virgil affirms in express terms that our Christmas loads of misrule (which custom, saith he, is chiefly observed in England), together with dancing, masques, mummeries, stage plays, and such other Christmas disorders now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalian and Bacchanalian festivals; which concludes he, should cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them." Stubbs tells us that these lords of misrule, whose reign extended from All Hallows eve to Candlemas day, had from twenty to sixty officers under them and were furnished with an imposing array of hobby horses, dragons and musicians.

Apocryphal irreverence in church, I cannot resist quoting the ever delightful Pepys' account of Christmas day in 1662: "Had a pleasant walk to Whitehall, where I intended to have received the communion with the family; but I came a little too late. So I walked up into the house and spent my time looking over pictures, particularly the ships in Henry VIII's voyage to Bullen—marking the great difference between those built then and now. By and by, down to the chapel again, where Bishop Morley preached on the song of the angels. 'Glory to God on high; on earth peace and good will towards men.' Methought he made but a poor sermon, but long, and reprehending the common jollity of the court for the true joy that shall and ought to be on those days. Particularly concerning their excess in plays and gaming, saying that he whose office is to keep gamblers in order and within bounds serves but for a second rather in a duel—meaning the groom porter. Upon which it was worth observing how far they are come from taking the reprehensions of a bishop seriously, that they all laugh in the chapel when he reflected on their ill actions and courses. He did much press us to joy in these public days of joy and to hospitality. But one that stood by whispered in my ear that 'the bishop do not spend one groat to the poor himself.' The sermon done, a good anthem followed."

Here is another characteristic Christmas day entry of that sly diarist: "Christmas day 1665—To church in the morning, and there saw a wedding in the church, which I have not seen many a day; and the young people as merry one with another, and strange to see what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition, every man and woman gazing and smiling at them."

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Salem Woolen Mill Store.

SCENT AWAKENS MEMORY

By Robert Mallaby.

Have you ever experienced the peculiar association that exists between memory and scent; a remarkable influence which upon your becoming sensible of a particular fragrance instantly arouses the vivid recollection of a long forgotten person or place? Moreover, different essences have curious psychological properties and stir within one involuntary emotions of joy or grief.

Any one who has ever lived in the country is susceptible to the aroma of hay. It drifts sometimes from those compact, wire-bound bales as prepared for distribution in the city, and if you chance to pass a wagon laden with it and catch but the faintest breath of its exquisite perfume what a sheaf of memories it brings. In some the recollection leads back to early childhood. In you, perhaps, whose face betokens endless fulfillment, in you it wakes the memory of your distant youth. How long ago—sometimes you cannot quite remember—but with what evanescent sweetness your mind disperses all the years that intervene. The dreary treadmill of the present, the toll and tempests you have undergone, instantly fade and for the moment are forgotten. Once more you lie full length in dreamy idleness upon the green bank of some crystal stream.

Across the velvet pasture land you go at evening, beyond the cornstalks and the fields of yellow grain. You climb the boulder-strewn and vine-clad hillside and turn to watch the crimson afterglow. Forest and vale and upland crest are breathing a solemn requiem for the dying day. The twilight falls like a benediction; the sweet west wind blows softly on your face; but your eyes look out above the crooning lowlands, across the valley and beyond the purple hills. There you will go to that far distant cry and put your young and sturdy shoulder to the wheel. You will succeed; will win, you know it, and hew a way to fortune and to glory. Now, after all these years, it rushes back

to you, brought by that fleeting fragrance of the hay.

The other day I opened an old chest in my attic. Untouched it had lain there among the shadows for longer time than I now can remember. I knew it once had been my mother's and contained her personal effects. My memories of her had slowly faded, growing more dim with each succeeding year until time had softly blended them into a haze of tender nothingness. I drew the dusty box into the sunlight and pressed its ancient, time-corroded clasps. Slowly, for its seemed almost like sacrilege, I raised the creaking lid. Instantly there arose a faint, sweet perfume, and thirty years were swept away as though they had never existed. Had I but seen her yesterday, so clearly was she there before me. I recalled at once her every feature.

A young girl brushes by you on the sidewalk. Once more there comes a transitory scent. You start at some unwonted heart vibration; the thrilling of long silent memory strings that stir and waken into sudden music. Who was it, where? you vaguely question. Ah yes, of course, now you remember. It was in your school days—you were not eighteen. She—the girl to whom clung that same fragrance—lived near you in another street. She perhaps was a year or two your junior. A rounded, bright-eyed, joyous maiden with laughing lips and wind-swept, ruddy cheeks. There was always about her a marvelous freshness, as if the sun and air were blended in her in more than nature's true assignment. Her hair—how soft it was, and wavy.

Thus they come, those curious scent-memories, and long forgotten faces look at you out of the misery background of the bygone. A bit of lace, a flower, some transient perfume which lingers for an instant and is gone, but whose brief fragrance awakens recollections that for a space obliterate the present. That sky which was so blue; those silent woodlands; the madcap little river's crystal gleam. Again you feel the touch of clinging fingers, white silver peals of once familiar laughter come ringing down the pathway of remembrance.

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