



Lo, now is come our joyfull time,  
Let every man be jolly;  
Each room with Ivy leaves is drest,  
And every post with Holly,  
Without the door let sorrow lie,  
And if for cold he hap to die,  
We'll bury him in a Christmas Pye,  
And evermore be merry.



ALL of the evergreen plants have long been considered symbols of immortality, of rebirth. Hence they, and they alone, are appropriate decorations for the Christmas season, which was originally a celebration, under the disguise of various national religious forms, of the turning of the sun at the winter solstice, and the consequent renewal of life on the earth.

When Constantine was converted, he seized upon every underlying likeness, however remote, between the old faith and the new. Every familiar symbol that might be stretched to fit the strange faith; every old custom that would help to reconcile his lately, and sometimes forcibly, converted people to their unaccustomed belief, was adopted and re-explained. And the return of the sun, bringing life and light to the winter-bound earth, became the prototype of the coming of the Son of Man, bringing life and light to the soul of the sin-bound world. So that at first all the heathen observances were retained as far as possible, and merely given a new meaning.

At the Christmas festival, the ivy and holly still made a summer screen of the stone walls, as in ancient Germany they had turned the huge halls at mid-winter, to bowers of greenery, wherein the sylvan sprites, who dwell in summer among the forest trees, might pass the frozen months without too much discomfort. An echo from Scandinavia is still heard in the saying current among the peasants of the old world that if any bit of holiday decoration is left in the house after Candlemas day (February 2), a troop of little devils will enter and sit, one on each withered leaf, every one bringing its own small curse upon the house. These little devils are merely the old forest sprites, detained against their will by their undestroyed winter refuge and fretting to return to the awakening woods of spring.

The churches were still green with Christmas garlands in those early days, and ablaze with candles, as the temples of Saturn had always been during the corresponding Roman festival of the Saturnalia. But, as Polydore Vergil remarks, "Trimming the temples with hankyns, floures, boughes and garlandes, was taken of the heathen people, which decked their idols and houses in suche array." And as time went on, and it became no more necessary to make concessions that would help reconcile the people to their changed faith, these "heathen" customs became distasteful to the church. One of the early councils forbids men longer "to deck up their houses with lawrell, yvie, and greene boughes, as we used to doe at the Christmase season."

This command was observed in the temples, but in the baronial halls the old customs lived on: lived down their questionable past; won again the toleration of the priests who had sternly banished them, and to-day all the evergreens again are admitted to the strictest church, so that we again can say at Christmas, "Now with bright Holly all the temples strow With Ivy green, and sacred Mistletoe."

The "Early Calendar of English Flowers," an old poem wherein each month is recognized by its appropriate plant symbol, ends with these lines:

Soon the evergreenes Laurel alone is greene,  
When Catherine crowns all learned menne.

The Ivy and Hollie berries are seene,  
And Yule log and Wassail come round agene.

The laurel is used not at all, and the

ivy but little, in American decorations at Christmas, since both plants are exceedingly rare here. But in England the use of the ivy at least is universal, and the references to it in Christmas song and story alone would fill a small volume.

Besides its claim to appropriateness for the Christmas season which it holds in common with other evergreens, it has two especially strong recommendations of its own. On account of its habit of clinging strongly to its supporting tree or wall, it is a popular symbol of friendship and fidelity, and as such, an excellent decoration for the season of good will and universal brotherhood. And it was, in Roman days, sacred to Bacchus, who, when a baby, was hidden by his aunt, Ino, among its leaves, to save him from Juno's destructive wrath. Pryane says:

At Christmas men do always Ivy get,  
And in each corner of the house it set;  
But why do they then use that Bacchus weed?  
Because they mean then Bacchus-like to feed.

This satirical explanation was but too true in the earlier days, when Christmas lasted for weeks, and was given over to a revelry almost wholly heathen in character.

To-day, in America, the Christmas decorations almost exclusively are of holly, which, for all its popularity, is less consecrated by legend than any other holiday greenery. To be sure we make a sparing use of the mistletoe, which, from the ancient Druidical meaning of purity given to its wax-white berries, and from its use by them in the marriage rite, has come to give a charter for kissing as "broad as the wind." And we have added the bitter-sweet, which has no traditional signification whatever, is not an evergreen, and is to be tolerated merely for its beauty's sake, and for the slight suggestion it gives of the holly berry.

Our American holly is said to be less beautiful than the European plant, having leaves of a duller green. But, making all allowances for possible disadvantages, it still is a remarkably beautiful tree. And as a symbol of the immortality which it is the season's special mission to teach, it surely has no rival. The leaves remain on the branches for three years, losing their hold only when they are pushed off at last by the growing buds of spring.

Throughout England, so little is its supremacy disputed, that it is popularly known as "Christmas," just as the hawthorn is called "The May."

Its name has been a matter of considerable interest. Theophrastus and other Greek authors named the plant Agria; that is, wild, or of the fields. The Romans formed from this the word Agrifolium and called it also Aquifolium, from aetum, sharp, and folium, a leaf. Bauhin and Loureiro first named it Ilex, from the resemblance of its leaves to those of the Quercus Ilex, a species of oak which was the true Ilex of Virgil. Linnaeus adopted the name Ilex for the genus, and preserved the name Aquifolium for the most anciently known species.

Our popular name, holly, probably is a corruption of the word holy, as Turner in his herbal calls it holy, and holy tree. The thorny foliage, and the berries like drops of bright blood, could scarcely fail to remind a Christian of the crown of thorns, and this, together with the universal use of the plant in the churches at Christmas easily would account for the name.

In Germany it is known as Christdorn. The Danish name is Christorn. The same name, Christ's thorn, is found in some parts of England. But as no legend connects the holly with the crown of thorns, this name, universal among the Germanic peoples, must be merely the result of its appearance and of its Christmas popularity, as before suggested.

#### Food for Thought.

The ten-year-old girl who conquered a burglar with a broomstick is entitled to all credit for courage and vigor. Nevertheless when she adds a dozen years more to her age the wary unmarried youth may entertain doubts as to whether her energy might not some time be excessive for wedded bliss.

#### Report of the Home of the Friendless.

At the end of the biennium, November 30, 1908, there were in the Home for the Friendless at Lincoln sixty-eight children and six aged women, the youngest inmate being one week old and the oldest 82 years.

The home has been seriously handicapped during the last biennium because of a shortage of room for employes and cramped apartments for the children, and in fact that it has practically supported the Orthopedic hospital. The cooking was all done in the kitchen of the home and carried across the yard to the several dining rooms in the hospital building. The total expenditures for the maintenance of both of the institutions for the biennium was \$28,530.57 or a per capita cost of \$267.91. The home has five pay children.

#### The Horrid Man's Curl.

"There's no sight so pitiful to me," said the pretty girl, "as the painful attempt on the part of the man beginning to be bald to make a little curl in the middle of his forehead of the few remaining strands of hair. And still, I know they don't deserve my pity. I never have found a man yet with such a curl who wasn't horrid."

#### Domestic Economy.

They had automobilized in 24 miles to see Mr. Highflyer's pet oculist, and on the return three tires, one after another, had blown up. Whereupon Mrs. Highflyer remarked, plaintively, and with intense conviction: "My dear Alfred, it would have been so much cheaper to have kept you at home and bought you a glass eye!"

#### Three Years in Prison for Coon.

Clyde Coon of Omaha, who was brought to Kearney to answer a charge of forgery for passing a bogus check on W. L. Hand, pleaded guilty Monday in the district court and was sentenced to three years in the penitentiary. Coon has a wife and four children living in Omaha. When the forgery was committed he was supposedly representing a railway construction company.

#### Reason for Divorces.

After a woman marries a man he sees her the greater portion of the time in clothes of the kind that he never saw before marriage except on women who were running to a fire. —Atchison Globe.

"How," wails a stenographer in a Sunday paper, "can we girls escape the unwelcome attention of our employers?" Might try climbing a tree, suggests the Cleveland Leader; and making a noise like a suffragette.

Farmers should all have telephones. Write to us and learn how to get the best service for the least money. Nebraska Telephone Company, 18th and Douglas streets, Omaha. "Use the Bell."

### Lincoln Directory

**HERBERT E. GOOCH CO.**  
BROKERS AND DEALERS  
Grain, Provisions, Stocks, Cotton  
Main Office, 204-205 Fraternity Bldg.  
Lincoln, Nebraska.  
Bell Phone 512 Auto Phone 2639  
Largest House in State

# State Journal



**ANNOUNCES** its third annual bargain week during which subscriptions will be accepted for the whole year or 1909 at the cut price of only \$3 without Sunday, or \$4 including Sunday. This Bargain Rate is good only during the week of December 21 to 28 and the regular rates after that date will be \$4 and \$5. All new subscriptions commence January 1 and continue until January 1, 1910 at the \$3 and \$4 rate. All papers stopped at the end of that time without any effort on your part. One reason why this cheap price can be made on such a big newspaper is that everybody pays in advance, thus having no dead-beat bills. You pay only for your own paper this way. Next, by cutting out traveling solicitors' salaries, hotel bills and railroad fare, and doing all business through Uncle Sam's mails at a cost of only a couple cents. When an agent calls on you to present a proposition, remember you pay every cent of his salary and expenses; in most cases the solicitor gets more than you are making. It's a wasteful method and you pay for the waste. Everybody is trying to dodge the middleman---here's a chance to cut him out. The Journal does not print liquor advertisements or unclean medical stuff accepted by other state dailies. Why not protect your family from impure advertising? The Journal is not under obligations to a political clique because it has no job to hold or none to get. It is free to treat every subject in the interests of the people. No matter about your politics, during the legislative session you will find The State Journal the one newspaper whose reports are completest, fairest and earliest. We are right on the ground and spend the money to get the news. Remember, just this one week of cut-price and then back to the old rate. Why not try this big state paper until January 1, 1910, at this low price. Send your money to

**State Journal, Lincoln, Nebraska**