



If Grandpa Were Santa Claus!



If Grandpa were Santa Claus, how happy we would be! When toyshop toil was finished he would take us on each knee. He'd tell us all his secrets and he'd name the pretty toys He'd made and kept in hiding for the other girls and boys.

We have a real, live Grandpa! He visits us each year, And he is quite a bosom friend of Santa Claus, I hear. Although he owns no reindeer, and of playthings no great store— If Grandpa were Santa Claus, we could not love him more!

GENE MORGAN.

EMOTIONAL VALUE OF DAY

Christmas Spirit Almost Universally Felt, But What It Is Remains a Mystery to Many.

The emotional value of Christmas may be said to be universally felt. Something happens at Christmas that, if only for a day or two, does the whole world good. What that something is remains for many a mystery. A number of persons who feel the renewing impulse are like Faust when the notes of the Easter song arrest his suicidal intent; they take and enjoy the moment's deliverance and continue to regard the source of the boon as nothing more than mythology made potent through human associations. Others are moved through superstitious fears; they approach the great season with consciences crowded with uncomfortable memories; Marley's ghost is after them, but, unlike Scrooge, their new heart is only for Christmas week. Another group simply fall in with an ancient custom and are surprised, and indeed pleased, when the dry bones of their unbelieving minds come together, take on flesh, and begin to live. A vast multitude meet the great day with buoyant expectation, take with thanks its new happiness, return to their work in this exalted mood, and ask no questions about cause and effect. A few philosophize on the phenomenon, and they are willing to stake their lives on the substantial truth of their insight.—George A. Gordon, in Atlantic Monthly.

Don't and Do in Holiday Fire Caution

- Do not decorate your Christmas tree with paper, cotton or flimsy materials.
- Do not use cotton to represent snow.
- Do not permit children to light candles.
- Do not leave matches within reach of the children.
- Do not place Christmas tree near window curtains or gas fixtures.
- Use metallic tinsel and non-inflammable decorations only.
- Use asbestos fiber to represent snow.
- Set the tree upon a substantial stand.
- A house of merriment is better than a house of mourning.
- Have an extinguisher or a few buckets full of water near the tree, ready for use in an emergency.

When and Why.

"Do you go to Sunday school now, Georgie?" inquired Georgie's uncle. "Yep; Christmas is comin'!" "Don't you go except just before Christmas?" "Yep; I go just before the summer picnic, too."

MISTLETOE HISTORY

Gathering of Plant Sacred Rite in Druidical Religious Festivals.

Also Considered a Potent Remedy for Ills, a Belief Which Still Exists in Some of the Remote Places of Europe.

WE decorate our homes with sprays of mistletoe at Christmas time, but few of us know the history of it as a Yuletide symbol. Pretty girls are kissed under it and a great deal of fun and nonsense is carried on apropos of it, but no one stops to think of how ancient a decoration it is or how sacred it was once thought to be.

Almost everybody has a vague knowledge that the Druids of old had something to do with the gathering of mistletoe, but just what that something was is not clear to the average mind.

The fact is that the ancient Celts in their druidical religion had two great festivals, one in June and the other in December, the latter being equivalent to our Christmas. In both of these great festivals the gathering of the mistletoe was a sacred rite.

Pliny in his "Natural History" describes the ceremony. Speaking of the Druids' worship of the oak, he says: "They believe that whatever grows on these trees is sent from heaven and is a sign that the tree has been chosen by the god himself. The mistletoe is very rarely to be met with, but when it is found they gather it with solemn ceremony. This they do especially on the sixth day of the moon, because by the sixth day the moon has plenty of vigor and has not run half its course."

"After the preparations have been made for a sacrifice and a feast under the tree they hail it as the universal healer and bring to the spot two white bulls whose horns have never been bound before. A priest clad in a white robe climbs the tree and with a golden sickle cuts the mistletoe, which is caught in a white cloth. Then they sacrifice the victims, praying that God may make his own gift to prosper with those upon whom he has bestowed it.

"They believe that a potion prepared from mistletoe will increase their flocks and that the plant is a remedy against all poison."

It was believed to be a remedy for many ills, and this belief is still to be found in many remote places in Europe. In Holstein, for example, the mistletoe is regarded as a healing remedy for wounds, and in Lorraine, France, it is always administered by the native people as an antidote for poison.

In the northeast of Scotland people used to cut withes of mistletoe at the March full moon; these they bent in circles and kept for a year to cure hectic fevers and other troubles. In some parts of Germany the mistletoe is especially esteemed as a remedy for the ailments of children, who sometimes wear it hung around the neck as an amulet.

In Sweden on Midsummer eve mistletoe is diligently sought after, the people believing it to be possessed of many mystic qualities, and that if a sprig of it is attached to the ceiling of the dwelling house, the horse's stall or the cow's crib, the trolls will then be powerless to injure either man or beast. Branches of the plant are commonly seen in farm houses hanging from the ceiling to protect the dwellings from all harm, but especially from fire, and persons afflicted with the falling sickness think they can ward off all attacks of the malady by carrying about with them a knife which has a handle of mistletoe.

Like their Swedish neighbors, many German peasants consider the mistletoe a powerful charm against evil spirits. A similar belief seems to have lingered among the Romans, whose religion at a very early date was somewhat similar to that of the Druids. When Aeneas descended into Hades he gathered to protect himself from the infernal powers a branch of mistletoe, which Vergil calls the golden bough.

"IS 'E COMIN' TERNIGHT?"

WILBUR D. NESBIT

HIT'S de las' thing I heah when I tun out de light: "Is 'e comin' ternight, mammy? Comin' ternight?" En de good Lawd knows, dough I see "Not yet." Dey's a-astin' me still whut dey gwine ter git. En I peek en plan, en I skimp en squeeze. En I hurries apas' all de winders I sees, "Case de chilluns espec's dat he'll bring 'em a lot." En dey think he's de same dat de White Folks got.



Why, de chilluns believes' Dey is sho' dat hit so. En dey countin' on him lak a map dat dey know. En dey talk er de things dat he suttin ter bring. "Twell dey set up in baid en dees holler en sing. En I tell 'em 'y sho' good ole Santy 'll come wid a doll en a sled en a railroad en drum. En dey drif' off ter sleep wid a smile on dey face— En dey ain' not a cent I kin spah in de place!"

HIT'S de las' thing I heah when I tun out de light: "Is 'e comin' ternight, mammy? Comin' ternight?" En I lurch' wid dem all w'en dey plan whut dey do. Wild de things dat he'll bring—en I say hit's all true! En de white chillun up whah I's wukin' dey 'low. Dat ole Santy he'll come, en won't miss 'em nebaw. "Is 'e comin' ternight?" Lawd, I wisht hit 'ud be. Dat he's oom' heah on fix up dis 'poblem for me!



Except ye become as a little child ye shall in no wise enter into the joy of Christmas time.

The Christmas Robin. In many parts of England the robin is associated with Christmas-tide. There is a belief that on Christmas eve these birds will sing near a house where a person is dying, to cheer him.

WHAT YOU CAN GIVE

Helpful Christmas Present Suggestions for Those Who Are Puzzled.

Unabridged Dictionary Will Be Appreciated by Children of Kindergarten Age—Other Suitable Gifts for Young and Old.

A NUMBER of correspondents who have requested suggestions of books suitable for Christmas gifts will find answers to their queries in the following:

Among the many attractive gift books for very little boys might be mentioned Professor Rausmussen's "Analogy Between the Monogamous Protoplasm and the Silurian Molecule." We can think of no book that would be a greater source of delight to the child that is not yet out of short dresses. It tells in easy words of eight and ten syllables of the sports and pastimes of the protoplasmic family and draws beautiful moral lessons from the corpuscles of the carboniferous era. It is handsomely illustrated with representations of the agile animalcule and will be sure to delight the heart of the little boy or girl who finds it in his or her stocking, as the case may be.

Another dainty idea for a child of three or four years is the Unabridged Dictionary. The simplicity of style observed in this interesting narrative recommends it at once for children who have reached the kindergarten age. The plot is not so complex and the characters are sufficiently varied to hold the unflagging interest of the little ones. We have in mind a gentleman who gave his little son a dictionary last Christmas, and he assures us that the lad simply devoured the book.

A pretty present for a child is the clinical report of the county hospital. This comes nicely printed on clean white paper, with bizarre illustrations showing the rise and fall of the temperature, amount of protoids eaten, official count of the germs, statistics as to microbes and many other amusing and entertaining ideas. A rare source of pleasure with this book is to have the little fellows pronounce the long words first the way they are spelled and then read them backward and see what difference, if any, there is in the sound. Some boys would rather do this than go skating.

In the line of pure romance there is nothing more entertaining from Prof. T. L. Escopex's "How the Spectrum Caught On in Saturn." This highly original historical tale tells how the spectrum revealed the secret of Saturn's rings, showing that the planet was warm and dry and that the two rings were for ice water. It comes in four large volumes, with 22 pages of logarithmic calculations that are sure to delight young and old.

As a gift book for a member of a temperature family there is nothing pleasanter than "The Complete Barkeeper." This tells exactly what goes into the stuff that men put in their mouths to steal away their brains, and will be of valuable assistance to any person who wishes to apply satisfactory tests and determine whether or not he has been equipped with brains and would inspire larceny.

"One Thousand Ways to Cure a Cold," by Burton Hales, is a beautifully written book, giving all the remedies for cold that were suggested to its author in one day. There are 89 variations of the quinine and whisky treatment, and the other 911 remedies consist of the same prescription without the latter quinine. This is a good book to have in any house.

"The Servant Question and Its Answer" will deceive many people, but it might do for a gift to a young married couple. The answer is quaintly given: "Beard."

WILBUR D. NESBIT.

VALUE OF A CHILD'S GIFTS

Those Made With Their Own Hands Teach Good Lessons and Give Inspiration.

If we stop to think about our Christmas giving we realize that a gift means more to the giver than it does to him who receives. If it is given in the proper spirit the donor finds out to the full that it is really "more blessed to give than to receive," a fact that is lost sight of in an age of the commercial spirit.

With children there is a great educative value in their present giving if it is encouraged to be really their own giving. If the mother, however, simply prepares some little remembrance, and says "Mary, this is your Christmas present to Aunt Ellen," the gift has no meaning in the thoughts of the young giver. And not only has it no meaning, but it becomes actually harmful for the reason it presents the idea to the child that the gift without the giver is really a gift. And the child has put no thought or self sacrifice into the giving of that present.

On the other hand, if the child be given pocket money which it may consider its very own, or better still, if it is enabled to earn pocket money and is then encouraged to set aside a portion of its very own money for present making the idea of true giving is acquired. The sacrifice, the forethought, the love necessary to make a gift a real gift are there.

The home-made gifts of children have many valuable lessons to teach the young givers. Many lessons in sewing, raffia, bead-work or painting may be given under the guise of making a gift. In one family, where the elder sister had never made gifts, and really never learned to sew well until she was eighteen years of age, the younger sister, a girl of ten, inspired by the example of a small friend, wished to make birthday gifts for her family. Once she asked her mother to teach her how to crochet; another time to scallop, and before she was twelve years old she had become as proficient a little seamstress as one would want to see.

Thus practical lessons are learned, while the child is inspired with the idea that "Not what we give, but what we share; the gift without the giver is bare."

FRIENDLY ADVICE.



"Can you suggest something for me to get for my wife for Christmas?" he asked of the shopkeeper. "You'd better get her a box of cigars, I expect," said the shopkeeper. "She was in here this morning and bought a lace parasol for you."

MORE SLIPPERS COMING.

"The time is at hand," said the preacher, with wrath showing plain on each teacher's face. "When slippers will be showered down upon us by every feminine preacher."

"They are to be married on Christmas day." "Would you call that 'Yule-tied'?"