

# An Xmas Mistake

By FRANK H. SWEET.

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**S**T. NICHOLAS was resting  
 From his Christmas work at last,  
 The gifts had all been given,  
 The holidays were past,  
 And, dozing in his armchair,  
 With his cat upon his knees,  
 The good saint smoked his honest pipe  
 And took his honest ease.  
 But something roused him quickly,  
 He started from his seat.  
 A soldier bold, a maiden fair,  
 Were kneeling at his feet.  
 "St. Nicholas," the maiden cried,  
 "Behold my fearful plight!  
 These wounds have been inflicted  
 Since that dreadful, dreadful night  
 When you left me in the stocking  
 Of a being I dare not name."  
 She paused. The soldier raised his  
 voice  
 And said: "I blush with shame  
 To stand before your saintship  
 In the dress you now behold,  
 But the way I have been treated  
 Makes my very blood run cold.  
 I've been nursed and kissed and cod-  
 died—  
 I've been rocked and sung to sleep.



A SOLDIER BOLD, A MAIDEN FAIR, WERE KNEELING AT HIS FEET.

Oh, were I not a soldier still  
 I'd almost like to weep."  
 "Ah," mused the good St. Nicholas,  
 "I think I understand,  
 And he smiled a merry little smile  
 And coughed behind his hand.  
 "Twas on that busy Christmas eve,  
 When all was in a whirl,  
 This doll was given to a boy,  
 This soldier to a girl."  
 And then aloud he gravely said:  
 "I grieve to see your pain,  
 But if you'll stay with me a year  
 All shall be well again.  
 Next Christmas eve, my children,  
 When you are well and strong,  
 I will put you in the stockings  
 Where you really do belong."  
 "I wonder where my soldier is!"  
 Cried gentle little Moll,  
 And Baby, gazing round him, sobbed,  
 "Where is my baby doll?"  
 But, though they hunted high and low  
 And searched both far and near,  
 The maiden and the soldier bold  
 Were seen no more that year.

**Saved Family From Asphyxiation.**  
 Chester, Pa., Dec. 17.—The timely arrival of Ella Wright, daughter of William Wright, at her home prevented the entire family's death from asphyxiation by escaping gas fumes. When the woman arrived she found her mother lying unconscious in the kitchen, while near her was a younger brother, also unable to move. Several other members of the family were found in the parlor. A doctor was summoned and succeeded in resuscitating them. An investigation showed that gas from the stove had escaped from the gas stove.

**Woman Killed in Runaway.**  
 Stroudsburg, Pa., Dec. 14.—Mrs. Lewis DeHaven, of Anaconink, was killed and her son, Arthur, seriously hurt in a runaway near their home. The horses which they were driving became frightened and plunged, overturning the buggy. Mrs. DeHaven was tossed in a ditch and received injuries which caused her death in a short while and the son received internal injuries.

**Creditors Get a Matchbox.**  
 Wilmington, Del., Dec. 18.—Creditors of Harry L. and John H. Evans, of the bankrupt brokerage firm of H. L. Evans & Company, will get John H. Evans' silver matchbox for division among themselves. The Evans brothers will be allowed to retain their jewelry, which the creditors tried to get, but which Judge Bradford has ruled is wearing apparel and cannot be taken from the bankrupts.

**Mother's Fatal Mistake.**  
 Bethlehem, Pa., Dec. 17.—Miss Jennie Beidelman, aged 25 years, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Beidelman, of this place, died in terrible agony as a result of taking a dose of oxalic acid instead of epsom salts given her by mistake by her mother.



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# The Mistletoe

By ROBERTUS LOVE.

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**W**HEN you step under the sprig of mistletoe hanging from the chandelier to get your Christmas kiss you may not be particularly interested in the genesis of the peculiar little vegetable growth which Cupid seems to have appropriated for his own. Nevertheless the process of mistletoe production and reproduction is highly interesting. In some parts of England, where most of the mistletoe of Christmas



BERRIES CRUSHED ON A BRANCH.

time comes from the gardeners propagate the parasite artificially. Mistletoe, as is well known, is of the parasitic kind, taking its sustenance not from the ground, but from a tree. The apple tree seems to be its favorite, though the hawthorn, the lime and the poplar frequently carry the parasite. The scientific inoculation of trees with the mistletoe growth is practiced with excellent results in the north of England. The gardener takes between his thumb and forefinger one of the little berries of the mistletoe, crushes it so that its sticky juice oozes out and sticks it upon the surface of a branch of the tree. Usually he selects a young branch, on which the bark is soft and easily penetrable. If an older branch be chosen, the bark is slightly scraped on the surface. The berry is mashed flat against the bark. The seed which it contains is thus held in place by its own gum.

Late April or May is the proper season for inoculating. The seed soon sends through the bark a little "feeler" or root, and a small twig, bending in toward the branch of the tree, appears.



SWELLED BRANCH AND TWIG.

After a considerable period this twig which looks like a small fishhook sticking in the tree from the top of the hook, falls off. The uninitiated thinks it is all over, but the experienced gardener knows better. He knows that after a time the branch will begin to swell at the point of inoculation, gradually rising to a little

peak at the place where the hook has been. This tip gets green and shiny, a bud pushes up, and in a few weeks an unmistakable twig of mistletoe is visible, with a stem and a long leaf or two.

After this the mistletoe comes rapidly into its kingdom and takes possession. The close observer will see other little swellings and peaks along the branch, the thin roots of the mistletoe having traveled under the bark to sprout up in fresh places. Thus it travels along until sometimes the whole tree is in its possession, fine bunches of the Christmas hanger growing abundantly.

When once the mistletoe takes possession of a fruit tree the effect upon the fruit is quite noticeable. The mistletoe takes its nourishment from the tree to which it clings. That is the soil in which its roots live and thrive. Naturally this reduces the amount of substance which formerly went into the fruit. If the parasite is an apple tree, the apples become small and scraggly. The mistletoe has stolen away their sweetness and plumpness. Man grows by what he feeds on. So does mistletoe. And as the pork eating man visits the penalty of death upon the pig so does the penalty of withering and rotting fall upon the apple whose progenitor feeds the spreading parasite. Nature is full of wonders, and the growth of mistletoe is one of the most wonderful when adequately studied.

Mistletoe grows naturally in parts of England and Scotland, being propagated by birds. In some of the northern counties of Scotland no mistletoe is found. This is believed to be due to the absence of the mistle thrush



TWIG AND FIRST BUD BURSTING.

from those counties. The thrush of this name is exceedingly fond of the mistletoe berry. After eating its fill the bird flies to another tree. Being cleanly, it uses the branch of the tree upon which it alights for a napkin, wiping its sticky bill thereon. Frequently a mistletoe seed is thus deposited and glued to the bark. Then the reproductive process follows naturally.

An official inquiry as to whether mistletoe is still to be found on oak trees, as in Druidical days, resulted in the discovery of several oaks in one county of England bearing the parasite. But modern mistletoe has come to be Cupidical rather than Druidical. When the mistletoe and the miss, plus the mister, get in the proper positions the result rhymes with kiss.

**Newspaper Man Killed By Train.**  
 Trenton, N. J., Dec. 16.—George F. Fiske, a New York newspaper man, formerly of Philadelphia and Pittsburg, and recently press agent for the Jamestown Exposition, was struck by a Pennsylvania railroad train and killed here.

**\$2100 For Small China Tea Pot.**  
 London, Dec. 14.—A small Bristol china tea pot, presented to Edmund Burke by the founder of the Bristol factory, was auctioned here and brought the remarkable price of \$2100.

# THE THREE WISE MEN.

Who Were They?—An Unsolved Christmas Mystery.

One Christmas mystery remains unsolved. Who were the wise men of the east—the magi who followed the star of Bethlehem from afar to do homage to the newborn Saviour?

The simple story as told in the Bible is one of the most familiar in Christmas lore. Any child could recite it in detail. Painters and sculptors have made it the theme of the most inspired products of their brushes and chisels, but to this day the identity of these wise men remains a mystery. A search of the great paintings in which the subject is treated produces a bewildering number of different ideas presented. There are half a hundred different versions of the books of the ages as many.

It is fair to assume from the fact that the visitors were received at court by King Herod and that they carried gifts of value that they were in their own country men of royalty or close to it. Herod evidently deemed it well to treat them with deference, for disquieted though he was by their news of the comet that was to lead them to the birthplace of the Redeemer he dissembled and told them that when they had found the newborn he would return to worship with them.

Much of our information about the early days of the Christian era comes from the monks of the fourteenth century, who delved deeply into historical sources since lost to the world. Their story of the three wise men has received wide credence. According to these monks, the wise men were three great kings called Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. Caspar was the oldest and from the north. At the time of the birth of Christ he was sixty years old, and for more than two-thirds of that time he had ruled in Arabia. Balthasar was black, a native of Saba, from the east, and forty years old. The youngest was Melchior, from the south, whose country was Tarshish. He was twenty years old.

Impelled by some mysterious power, they dropped all the cares of state and followed a single star thirteen days and nights without eating or sleeping till it led them to Jerusalem.

Then the story follows that of the Bible until they returned to their own countries.

The story does not stop here. It tells circumstantially the after life of the three wise men. The good Apostle St. Thomas journeyed to their country and baptized them, and all three went out to preach the doctrine of the Christ.

They were slain by barbarous gentiles, and later the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, recovered their sacred bones and took them to Constantinople. Thence they were carried to Milan and finally found an ultimate resting place in Cologne, where they now are.—New York Post.

# WHEN SANTA WENT ASTRAY.

Miracle of the Loaves Repeated For Washington's Poor.

The day of miracles has not passed, according to the firm belief of a hundred or more poor people in Washington. Last Christmas day Almas temple of the Shriners gave its annual dinner to the poor. It was a well planned affair, generously contributed to, and turned out a big success. But the most notable thing about it was not on the programme and made the hit of the occasion.

While the Shriners were feeding their guests there came to their hall 150 loaves of bread. The huge six foot Santa Claus was busy cracking jokes as he waddled about and took down the gifts from the Christmas tree. In the middle of one of his stories there entered another big, fat Santa Claus, carrying a colossal basket full of bread, and behind him were three or four negroes, also carrying baskets of bread. One of the Shriner committeemen at once inferred that some one had sent a gift of bread to be distributed and signed a receipt for the 150 loaves. In a few minutes they were handed around to the heads of families, and an additional smile of Christmas joy went around with them.

When the festivities were nearly over and the crowd had begun to disperse a man came running in and asked: "Did you get 150 loaves of bread?" "We did," was the reply. "What did you do with it?" "Gave it away." "Well, that was an order from the Carroll Institute. It came here by mistake. But it is all right. We are glad you gave it away, and if you need more let us know," and the man went away, evidently fully satisfied with the incident.—New York Times.

# Christmas Tree For Cat.

Christmas is the great religious festival when the kind heart finds many ways of ministering to the joy and pleasure of others. The good women of Boston who originated and sustain the Animal Rescue league have hit upon the unique idea of a Christmas tree for the cats that are waiting for homes at that institution. A bush is provided and trimmed with meat and other suitable enticements for such animals, and just before they are turned into the room the members of the Kindness club are admitted to enjoy the antics of the cats.

This club is composed of boys whose ages range from eight to thirteen years and is the outcome of the league's work in a poor section of Boston. They are pledged to do some kind act each day and to protect animals from cruelty. After the cats have demolished the tree and gone to sleep the boys are given refreshments and sent home truly filled with the spirit of Christmas.—New York Mail and Express.

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