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The MAGIC of the MISTLETOE

GENEVIEVE HAZELRIGG



DRUIDS GATHERING MISTLETOE

Did you ever, as you officiated as high priest or priestess in the osculatory rites of yuletide, did you ever wonder what tradition, myth or superstition had conferred upon you such delectable privilege? Did you ever stop, in your ardent ceremonial, to consider that you were perpetuating one of the most hallowed and exalted of religious ordinances handed down through the ages in rendering such tender homage to this "orphan plant of wondrous birth?"

And would it not surprise you to learn that our very word "mistletoe" and that our most impassioned of the graces of Terpsichore—the waltz—are traditionally enmeshed in the canny tendrils of the pearly-berried mistletoe?

The mistletoe is a freak plant, a parasite or excrement. In its embryonic period it is said to defy the laws of gravitation by pushing its radicles in the opposite direction to the generality of plants. Not only its berries but its leaves grow in clusters of three placed on one stock, hence its sacred place in religious rites as a symbol of the Holy Trinity.

It was believed by the Druids and other ancient sects in northern and western Europe that any tree to which the mistletoe attaches itself is selected by God himself for special favor, and that all that grows on it is sent direct from heaven.

Contrary to the general belief, it is found more rarely on the oak tree than on the apple, ash, elm, poplar, willow and hawthorn, and it is due to this scarcity that it was vested with exceptional reverence when discovered clinging to the sacred tree of the Druids—a name derived from the Greek word drus, or druce, meaning an oak.

Says Pliny: "When it (mistletoe) growing upon an oak) is discovered it is treated with great ceremony. They call it by a name (guthil, or gutheyl—good heal), which in their language signifies the curer of all ills." After they have well and duly prepared their festive cheer under the tree, they bring hither a milk-white cow and a bullock, hitherto unyoked; then the priests in white vesture climb into the tree and prune off the sacred herb with a gold hook, bill or sickle, the branches falling beneath into a white saggum sheet. They must never touch the ground. The common people remain at a distance, formed in a circle, while the priests approach with trembling awe the bloody victims, which were carried around the open fire. After this the animals are slaughtered as a sacrifice—doubtless to the goddess of fecundity, for the mistletoe is a symbol of the prolific.

In the myths of all nations we find a "holy tree," a "world tree." Among the Druids, as well as among other creeds, this tree was the oak; and it is a very interesting thing to know that our word church—from kirk—finds its root in quercus, the generic name for the oak. This tree was cherished as the mother and nurse of man, and was supposed to be the dwelling place of the food-dispensing god. The ominous rustling of the leaves and the mysterious notes of the feathered songsters signaled the presence of the divinity to the awe-struck votaries who consulted the infallible oracle, burning odoriferous fumes in homage. The Dodonean oak and its oracle are celebrated in epic, myth and story, its mystic ritual being zealously perpetuated by the Druids. They danced circular dances in consecrated groves, and the remnants of an old chant still preserved by the Celts—He! Derry Down Dey. "In a circle the oak moves around"—reveals the archetype of our modern waltz.

Another reminder that "the groves

are God's first temples" is found in the arches and vaulted roofs of Gothic church architecture, revered tokens of the bending arches of intertwined boughs. The Yuletide custom of decking our churches and our homes with boughs, wreaths and garlands finds its antecedence in heathen sanctuaries.

The spirit of Christmas is most magnanimously manifested in York, England, where they carry mistletoe boughs to the high altar of the cathedral and proclaim "a public and universal liberty, pardon and freedom to all sorts of inferior and wicked people." They suspend it under the chancel arch and bear it to the city gates, toward the four quarters of heaven.

In the varied nomenclature of the word "mistletoe," according to the nationalities concerned, do we discover the magical virtues with which the weird plant is invested. Dr. Johnson says the word is derived from mistlon, state of being mingled, tod on toe bush. In German it is mistel, mixed, and Saxon tan (Danish time, Dutch teene), twig, sprig. In Armorican, Welsh and Irish it is all yach, or its equivalent for all heal; and Pliny calls it omnia sanans, a term of similar import.

In upper Germany on Christmas morning they go about knocking on each other's doors, shouting "Gut hyl," the synonym for the Druid name. In Brittany it is the herb de la Croix, which heals fevers and gives strength for wrestling. At the time of George I. it was called lignum sancta crucis—wood of the holy cross—so highly were its medicinal properties esteemed.

Hung about the neck it renders witches powerless. It is used in houses to drive out evil spirits. It is an amulet against poisons, and the inhabitants of Elgin and Moray keep it as charms. Throughout Britannia it had a place assigned to it in every kitchen, and a young man was deemed to have the right to kiss any lassie caught beneath the cherished branch, plucking off a berry with each kiss. If a maid were not kissed under the mistletoe it was a sign that she would not marry during the ensuing year, a tradition still prevailing. Even Mr. Pickwick availed himself of the pleasant privilege despite his oft-quoted injunction. To dream of mistletoe presages wealth, and in the language of flowers it signifies: I surmount all difficulties.

The Cymric, Celtic, Gaelic, Teutonic

The Spirit of Christmas

HEART of the World, beat strongly—
This is the season of hope;
Banished the doubts that have wronged!
Clouded life's general scope,
Under the snow germs are stirring,
Fruits of the summer long down;
Life has one purpose—merrering;
Rip'ning the seeds that are sown.

Heart of the World, beat gayly—
This is the season of mirth,
This is the season when daily
Joy is renewed in the earth,
Checked are the looms and the spindles,
While through the silence there rings
Laughter of children that kindles
Echoes in heavenly things.

Heart of the World, beat kindly—
This is the season of love;
Men, tho' they seem to grope blindly,
Follow the dictates thereof.
Learn from the ages this lesson—
Love is the treasury's key—
They will thy labor bless thee and thy neighbor,
And life be as deep as the sea.

—Harper's Weekly

FROM THE TAR HEEL STATE

A Column of Paragraphs That Have Been Carefully Gotten Together and Condensed by Editor.

Salisbury.—Smallpox continues to spread in north Iredell county, and it is said the disease is getting more severe as it spreads. At some homes, it is reported, whole families are down with the dreaded disease.

Sparta.—John Moxley, who shot and killed Mitchell Wilson, a respectable farmer of Glade Creek township, was admitted to bail by Justice of the Peace Carrioco at the preliminary trial a few days ago. The bond was fixed at \$500 and was readily given.

Raleigh.—The North Carolina Branch of the American Poultry Association in session here elected as president J. S. Jeffrey, West Raleigh; first vice president, E. H. Cain, Asheville; second vice-president, Dr. R. E. Ware, Shelby; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. C. B. Campbell, Asheville.

Charlotte.—In order that needed funds may be forthcoming in time to meet interest obligations which are due in New York January 1, the finance committee of the board of aldermen in special session voted to allow one per cent discount on all taxes which are paid by December 28.

Raleigh.—The examination of the fifty-nine applicants to practice pharmacy in North Carolina was concluded before the state board of pharmacy, the examination being held in the hall of the House of Representatives. It is expected that it will be a day or two before the result of the examination is made known.

Durham.—Upon the return from New York City where he went recently to assist in the plans of disintegration in the matter of the Government and the American Tobacco Company, Vice-President C. W. Toms, of the Liggett and Myers Company, which is to own and operate the W. Duke and Sons branch, gave out the first authorized interview with reference to the local aspect of the re-organization.

Sanford.—In some sections the farmers, unable to get their cotton picked, are plowing it under to prepare the way for sowing wheat or for other crops. Some farmers offered 75 cents a hundred for picking all the fall, yet they failed to get much of it picked out. These farmers will hardly plant for as big crop cotton next year as they did this year unless they find that a successful cotton picker has been made.

Raleigh.—Commissioner of Agriculture W. A. Graham revealed smoldering embers of discord in the State Department of Agriculture in his annual report to the State Board of Agriculture, when he spoke of "imported regulators" in the way of employees of the department, who have, as the commissioner sees it, been authorized by the Board of Agriculture to make changes in the work of the department.

Raleigh.—Governor Kitchin has received a letter from President Frederick Neudorff of the National Horticultural Congress held at St. Joseph, Mo., in which he pays high tribute to North Carolina's representation at the congress and State Horticulturalist Hutt and Assistant Horticulturalist Shaw, who installed the North Carolina horticultural exhibits that won sweetest prizes and numbers of the most coveted highest awards in competition with the entire country.

Monroe.—Deputy Sheriff Jule Griffith came to town from New Salem township, where he had been for several days, with a whiskey still that he had captured on his visit there. The sheriff found the still and lay watch upon it for twenty-four hours, but the operators failed to put in an appearance and he removed the same to a farm house nearby and brought his trophy to the court house. It is of 40 gallon capacity, full copper and in excellent condition.

Statesville.—The city board held a meeting in the Commercial Club rooms. Only routine business was transacted. The board of aldermen held its regular monthly meeting. There was not a great deal of business before the board. The matter of the bonds of Mr. Sidney Kenny, who has been granted a franchise for the construction of a gas plant, was taken up and the bonds were recognized, but their acceptance postponed until work on the plant was begun.

Washington.—Comptroller of the currency Murray, approved the conversion of the American Exchange bank of Greensboro, N. C., with a capital of \$400,000, into the American Exchange National bank of Greensboro.

Greensboro.—Harper Hodgkin, one of the wealthiest farmers of this section, met almost instant death near here when a horse he was driving became frightened and by a sudden swerve threw him from the buggy. He was picked up unconscious and died shortly after being carried to his home, half a mile from the scene of the accident.

Wilson.—Julius Webb, formerly of Fremont, was bound over to December term of Wilson Superior Court in the sum of one hundred dollars to answer to the charge of retailing, having appealed from a four months' sentence to the roads.

Wilson.—John Elliot, on complaint of Bill Hines, was up before Mayor O. P. Dickinson on the charge of enticing the fifteen-year-old girl of Hines to leave her home. In order that the kinks may be gotten out of the entangled skein, Elliot was bound over to court in a justified bond of one hundred dollars.

STATES RIGHT TO PENALIZE ROADS

AN IMPORTANT CASE ARGUED AT WASHINGTON BEFORE THE U. S. SUPREME COURT.

CONCERNS NORTH CAROLINA

Principle Involved Was Before Court In Two Cases—In Both Cases the Plaintiffs Had Been Awarded Penalties—Southern Was Defendant.

Raleigh.—A special from Washington states that the right of the states to penalize railroads for refusing to receive goods for shipment in interstate commerce was argued before the Supreme Court of the United States.

The question presented to the court concerned particularly the state of North Carolina. A direct attack was being made on the constitutionality of the statute, enacted in 1905 in this state, imposing a penalty of \$50 a day on a railroad for every day it refused to accept goods for transportation.

The principle involved was before the court in two different cases. One arose out of the shipment of a carload of shingles by Reid & Beam from Rutherfordton, N. C., to Scottville, Tenn. When they loaded the shingles onto a car and asked the station agent at Rutherfordton to ship it to Scottville it was declared that he replied he knew of no such place. It proved to be a flag station on the Knoxville and Augusta Railroad, to which no published rate existed. After several days' delay the goods were shipped. No damages were proven to have resulted to the shippers, but they recovered \$350 as penalty, imposed by the statute for refusing to receive the goods.

The second case arose out of Mrs. D. L. Reid's attempt to ship household goods from Charlotte, N. C., to Davis, W. Va. No published rate, as authorized by the interstate commerce laws, existed between Charlotte and Davis, and the shipment was delayed five days before a rate was obtained. A jury awarded Mrs. Reid \$25 damages and \$250 as penalty.

In both cases the defendant was the Southern Railway Company.

Meeting of Medical Society.

At the regular monthly meeting of the Gaston County Medical Society for December the principal feature was the election of officers for the ensuing year. Officers were elected as follows: President, Dr. James W. Reid of Lowell; first vice president, Dr. D. A. Garrison, Gastonia; second vice president, Dr. C. J. McCombs, Stanley; secretary and treasurer, Dr. T. C. Quickel, Gastonia; delegates to annual meeting of the State Medical Society at Hendersonville next June, Drs. James A. Anderson of McAdenville, and R. H. Garren of Bessemer City; alternates, Drs. Mc. G. Anders of Gastonia, and C. Frank Robinson, Lowell.

Believe the Bonds Are Legal.

Although the bonds aggregating \$150,000 recently sold by the city of Winston to a syndicate have been temporarily held up in view of a technicality which the attorneys for the syndicate have raised, the general impression prevails that the bonds as they stand are legal, and will stand the test if it really comes to a test. Hon. Clement Manly, of the law firm, who are city attorneys, stated that the election was held and that the bonds were sold in accordance with the provisions in the city charter.

Addressed a Full House at Shelby.

Gov. W. W. Kitchin delivered his first address to the Farmers' Union at Shelby in the court house to a packed house. A hundred or more were turned away for lack of room and those who were inside listened for over an hour to the Governor's ideals of citizenship. A brass band furnished music. He was introduced by Mr. R. M. Gidney, chairman of the executive committee of the union.

Sandlin Granted a Respite.

L. M. Sandlin, the convicted wife-murderer of this city, condemned to die in the electric chair Friday, the 8th, has been granted a respite by Governor Kitchin until December 29, at the request of L. Clayton Grant, Esq., and on the ground that there is some newly discovered evidence as to the alleged insanity in the convicted man's family. His attorney thinks there is yet some hope that he will escape the electric chair. Mr. Grant will go to Raleigh and lay before Governor Kitchin the new evidence.

Constitutionality Is Sustained.

The constitutionality of the act of the General Assembly, establishing the Stenewall Jackson Manual Training and Industrial School at Concord, is sustained by the Supreme Court in the decision of the court in exparte Richard Watson, from Mecklenburg county, in which the effort was to attain the release of Richard Watson from the institution, where he had been committed by the recorder of Charlotte for vagrancy, while his father was in jail and declared to be an unfit person to have the boy.

FIGURES FOR THIS STATE

Two Hundred and Ten Thousand For the Charlotte Postoffice—A List of The Other Appropriations.

Raleigh.—In a special received from Washington it is stated that the estimates call for \$210,000 with which to complete the remodeling of the Charlotte postoffice.

For commencing or completing buildings already authorized by law these amounts are named as necessary in North Carolina: Gastonia, \$25,000; Greenville, \$29,000; Hendersonville, \$5,000; Hickory, \$32,000; Oxford, \$37,000; Raleigh, \$138,000; Washington, \$47,000; Wilmington, \$120,000, and Winston-Salem \$20,000.

It is also recommended that the following appropriations be made for rental of buildings pending repairs: Raleigh, \$9,000; Reidsville, \$3,500, and Winston-Salem, \$7,000.

For the maintenance, remodeling of buildings of the Cherokee Indians school an appropriation of \$36,650 is asked.

For river and harbor work the Secretary of the Treasury's estimates coincide with those made by Chief of Engineers Bixby in his annual report. It is set forth that \$50,000 is needed to carry on the work of improvement by the construction of locks and dams on Cape Fear river above Wilmington; for maintenance of improvement of inland water route from Norfolk, Va., to Albemarle sound, \$3,000; improving harbor at Beaufort and for maintenance, \$5,000; improving Beaufort inlet and for maintenance, \$10,000; improving harbor at Morehead City and for maintenance, \$1,000; improving Shallow Bag Bay and for maintenance, \$1,000; waterway from Pallico sound to Beaufort inlet and for maintenance, \$2,000; improving Bay river and for maintenance, \$1,000; improving Contentnea creek and for maintenance, \$2,000; improving Fishing creek and for maintenance, \$1,500; improving Neuse and Trent rivers, continuing improvement and for maintenance, \$10,000; improving New river and waterways to Beaufort and for maintenance of improvement of New river and of inland waterways between Beaufort harbor and New river and Tar rivers and New river and between New river and Swansboro, \$7,500; for maintenance of improvement of Northeast and Black rivers and Cape Fear river above Wilmington, \$12,000; improving Pamlico and Tar rivers and for maintenance, \$6,000; improving Scuppernon river and for maintenance, \$2,000; improving Swift creek and for maintenance, \$5,000; improving Waccamaw and Little Pee Dee rivers and continuing improvement and for maintenance of Waccamaw river, \$25,000.

To Involve All Health Authorities.

Raleigh.—The ruling of Judge R. B. Peebles, of the superior court in the suit of Dr. J. J. L. McCullers, against the Wake county commissioners testing the right of Dr. McCullers to the office of county superintendent of health is to have the effect of involving the health authorities of the entire state in the fight that will now be made in the supreme court. Judge Peebles holds that Dr. McCullers' election by the county board of health is void because that board is found to be an unconstitutional body because the legislative act of the 1911 assembly (Sec. 9, Chapter 62) undertakes to provide for the chairman of the county commissioners and the county superintendent of schools to be members of the board of health when the constitution of the state, Article 14, Section 7, declares expressly forbids the holding of two offices by one person.

Statesville Wants Railroad.

Statesville wants the Norfolk Southern Railroad to come to it, and its people are enthusiastic over the prospect of having the much talked of Raleigh to Charlotte railroad come on from Concord to Statesville, and its people are willing to do the right thing to get the Norfolk Southern to build to Statesville from Concord. The distance is something like thirty miles from Concord to Statesville, and the people of the later place say that the territory through which the road would pass, and the interests of Statesville, would be such as to give the road a business that would pay well and handsomely.

Shelby Bond Issue Carried.

At a special election for the issuance of \$13,000 worth of bonds for the city to take over the Shelby electric light and power plant, the measure carried by a vote of 158 to 39. The vote was extremely light and little interest was shown, but a majority of the votes cast and not a majority of the registered voters was necessary to carry the election. The city will assume control on May 1, 1912, provided the bonds can be sold at that time. The privately owned plant is on a pay-l basis.

A Near Railroad Wreck.

Southern train, No. 139, from Goldsboro to Greensboro, side-swiped Engine No. 9, of the Raleigh and Southport, branch of the Norfolk Southern, coming around the curve at Mill's Wagon factory, just south of this city. The passenger train was running about 25 to 30 miles an hour, when it struck the back of the tender of engine No. 9. It is a miracle that No. 139, striking the locomotive at such a rapid rate, did not turn over, thus killing and injuring many people.

VERY LITTLE HOPE IS FELT FOR MEN

GRIM DEATH IS THOUGHT TO HAVE CLAIMED ALL OF THE ENTOMBED MINERS.

THE RESCUE WORK GOES ON

Eighteen Dead Have Been Found and Eight Bodies Have Been Recovered—A Very Pathetic Scene at the Mouth of the Mine.

Brieville, Tenn.—Somewhere in the depths of the Cross Mountain coal mine probably one hundred men lie dead, while their sorrow-stricken families keep vigil at the mouth of their tomb, hoping against hope that their loved ones may be alive when rescuers reach them.

Eight torn and mangled bodies had been brought forth at nightfall, when search was abandoned, for the day. Outside of the immediate families of the entombed men, no one in this little mountain village believes that any living thing in the mine survived the terrific explosion of coal dust that wrecked the workings.

For more than thirty-six hours every surviving miner in this region had toiled with no thought of food, sleep or pay to remove the debris and force fresh air into the innermost recesses of the mine. They practically have penetrated to the main entry head nearly three miles in. They expect to be ready to work the cross entries in which the other bodies have undoubtedly been cast by the force of the blast.

Black damp developed and retarded progress but the silent force pushed dauntlessly on, some of them till they were carried out overcome by the noxious gases.

Thousands of the morbidly curious flocked into the village and crowded about the main entry of the mine. They saw nothing because there was nothing to see, but the pitiable grief of the stricken families.

All of the bodies recovered have been identified. Among them was that of Will Farmer, assistant foreman of the mine. The top of his head had been blown off. He is survived by a widow and two children.

There is hardly a family in the entire Coal Creek valley that has not felt the icy touch of death. The problem of caring for the widows and orphans will be a grave one requiring immediate solution. Certainly Brieville will be unable to care for her living with more of her wage-earners numbered among the dead.

Surplus in U. S. Postoffice.

Washington.—"For the first time since 1883 the annual financial statement of the Postoffice Department shows a surplus instead of a deficit." This is the burden of the annual report of Postmaster-General Hitchcock of just made public. At the beginning of the present administration in 1909, Mr. Hitchcock pointed out, the department showed a deficit of \$17,479,770, the largest on record. In two years this deficit has been changed into a surplus of \$219,118 despite important extensions throughout the service. These extensions include 3,744 new post-offices, deliveries of mail by carriers in 186 additional cities, 2,516 new rural routes aggregating 60,679 miles, and 8,000 additional postal employees, with the salary-roll greater by \$14,000,000 than it was two years ago.

Refusal Draws Stanley's Ire.

Washington.—The refusal by John D. Rockefeller and his almoner, Rev. F. D. Gates, to accept the "invitation" of the House "Steel trust" investigating committee to appear and testify, drew a pointed and laconic note from Chairman Stanley, chairman of the committee. Mr. Stanley's letter to Mr. Gates follows: "Sir: My recent communication to you was intended not to provoke a discussion of the value of the Merritt testimony, or of your personal integrity, but to give you an opportunity to defend." There was no letter addressed to Mr. Rockefeller.

McNamara Are in Prison.

San Quentin, Cal.—The McNamara brothers entered San Quentin penitentiary where James B. is condemned to spend the remainder of life for his confessed crime of murder, and John J., secretary of Bridge and Structural Workers, is sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for dynamiting. It was James B. who blew up The Los Angeles Times' building, October 1, 1910, with the loss of 21 lives and John J. who abetted in wrecking part of the Llewellyn Iron Works, in Los Angeles.

Our Army is a Makeshift.

Washington.—In his annual report to the President, Secretary of War Stimson declared that the contingency of war with a first-class power would find the army of the United States practically unprepared. He attributed this largely to the fact that the army was "scattered out over the country" in too many posts, and to a lack of reserves. The army on the peace footing habitually maintained, with miniature companies and troops, he characterized as ineffective for any serious service.