

# BENEATH THE MISTLETOE



By **ERSKINE DEFOE.**  
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**BLITHESOME** maid, divinely fair,  
 Stepped, thoughtless,  
 'neath the mistletoe  
 Hung high above the carpet square,  
 While out of door fell fleecy snow.  
 Heighho! Heighho!  
 Surprised beneath the mistletoe!

**HE** did not know she was so near  
 The kiss provoking mistletoe.  
 The bough upon the chandelier  
 Was deftly fixed, but not too low.  
 Oh, no! Oh, no!  
 In ambush was the mistletoe.

**NICE** in the mesh and fairly caught,  
 She showed no sudden haste to go.  
 Two victims with a single thought  
 Are brave beneath the mistletoe.  
 Just so! Just so!  
 The courage-giving mistletoe!

**WITH** cheeks suffused a rosy red  
 That shamed the holly's livid glow  
 She held aloft her charming head,  
 The lawful kiss did not forego,  
 And, lo! And, lo!  
 That kiss beneath the mistletoe!

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### MRS. SANTA CLAUS.

By **ELLA E. BARNES.**  
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**F**OR several years the proverbial Santa Claus with white beard had visited our Christmas tree to distribute the gifts and dispense his mirthful cheer. Last year he could not come, and as the age is one of womanly achievement he asked permission to send his wife.

Of Mrs. Santa Claus we had all heard, but none had seen her, and the announcement of her coming provoked great interest. Many were the queries regarding her appearance, but none could be answered. A knock at the door announced her arrival, and in came the kind old lady, covered with cotton snowflakes, rosy and animated after her long journey, but radiant with loving good cheer and affection for all. She wore a long cloak of bright red homespun in real antique, borrowed for the occasion and a wonderful poke bonnet, an ancient calash, trimmed with gleaming hoar and adorned with flowing strings of red and green ribbon. Upon her hands were huge fur mittens, and beneath her cloak, which she threw back from her shoulders, we saw her stockings crossed, knotted and a wonderful lawn upon with green embroidered border. Those she was pleased to exhibit to the ladies, for she took a womanly pride in her dress, with which she confessed that the sexes did not quarrel.



**IN** CAME THE KIND OLD LADY!  
 very often at the north pole, and, anyway, she was too busy to think of such things.

After a short rest, through which she rather gasped her Christmas salutations, she stood to make a short speech before beginning her gracious labor of distributing the gifts from the laden tree.

She said in part: "Ever since I married Mr. Santa Claus, over 150 years ago, I've tried to be a real helpmeet to him. But I've never gone around to entertainments before. I've done the work in the background, so to speak, as a good wife should. How ever, this year Santa's been dreadfully overworked, so I thought of all

these Philippine children added to the American list not so long ago, not to speak of the Alaskans and others. Then there's that bothersome crowd at Panama. So Santa said to me, real coaxing, 'Hannah,' he said, 'this year I'll have to ask you to help me out by going on a before the public. There's



MRS. SANTA CLAUS GAVE THE PRESENTS.

a tree. I've always attended, but I can't possibly do there this year. I'll send the presents as usual, but you go down for me, won't you, and distribute them for me. A great many ladies speak in praise, these days, and you needn't be afraid. So, though I'm bashful, I'm here, and please excuse any mistakes I may make. Santa can't kiss love and best wishes, and I've brought you each something as well as a bit of curiosity. I'll let them in just before I started out. They're in my bag here. The bag was one of my wedding presents, and I carried it on our first journey. Of course it's old, but I think so much of it I'd never give it up. See the letters on it—H. S. C. They stand for Hannah Santa Claus. 'Twas the first time my name was ever heard."

The old lady promptly exhibited her old-fashioned sole leather satchel and from its capacious depths distributed the point snowballs. These were formed of white cotton, and each when unwrapped was found to contain a tiny numbered card. The girls upon the tree had been previously numbered, and the snowball indicated to each person the gift to be received. Mrs. Santa Claus herself gave the presents and kept the company amused by her comments upon the beauty and usefulness of the various articles.

The evening was one of great pleasure and merriment. At its close Mrs. Santa Claus was invited to come again; but while she thanked the ladies for their kind thoughts, she said, "I'll have to see what Mr. Santa Claus says, for I always do exactly as he wishes."

If Christmas day Saturday be  
 A great winter that year you'll see  
 And full of winds both loud and shrill  
 But in summer, truth to tell,  
 High winds shall there be and strong,  
 Full of tempests lasting long,  
 While battles they shall multiply,  
 And great plenty of beasts shall die,  
 They shall be strong, each one, and keen  
 He shall be found that stealthy eun,  
 Though thou be sick, thou diest not.

### A CHRISTMAS CONSERVE.

By **ELLA STEPHENS.**  
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Take oranges and lemons, too;  
 Remove the juice and pulp  
 And add the rinds, grated most fine  
 Or by machine ground up.



Next put through the grinding machine  
 Or chop in wooden bowl  
 The walnuts and the raisins good  
 And almonds, blanched when whole.

Dissolve the sugar in a pint  
 Of excellent grape juice;  
 Then add to it the other things  
 And gradually reduce



By simmering all quite slowly down  
 Till like a marmalade.  
 Put into glasses, seal and place  
 Within the pantry's shade.



With Christmas roast or toothsome game  
 This conserve is delicious;  
 Or thinly spread on buttered bread  
 At tea time proves propitious.

**Christmas Firecrackers.**  
 In many parts of the south for years after the civil war it was Christmas instead of the Fourth of July that was the season for firecrackers. Every Christmas the storekeepers laid in large supplies of firecrackers, and the small boy of that period felt sadly slighted by Santa Claus unless he found at least one of his stockings stuffed with bunches of the little red explosives. In these districts such a thing as a firecracker on the Fourth of July was unknown. Of late years, however, the firecracker has been restored to its proper date in nearly every community, and Christmas noise is confined chiefly to the blowing of horns and the beating of toy drums.

**What's in a Name?**  
 Papa—Boys, what do you want for Christmas?  
 Billy—I want a bobbed.  
 Bobby—I want a billygoat.  
 Papa—Suppose you swap.

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