CHRISTMAS TREE IN MYTH, TRADITION AND TODAY

FATHER CHRISTMAS IN THE FLESH

A CHRISTMAS TREE MARKET

"HEIGH-HO THE HOLLY"

MYRIAD are the myths and legends that cluster around the Christmas tree. Its origin takes us far back into prehistoric times when our skin-clad savage ancestors were tree worshippers and believed that a god or goddess dwelt in the evergreen. Long prior to the Christian era, the fir tree was used in Rome in the December holiday festivities of the Saturnalia and its branches were decked with little yellow jeweled images of pagan divinities, especially of Bacchus.

In the Yuletide celebrations of the Druids of ancient Britain, the evergreen had a distinctive place with ivy, holly and mistletoe. The Druids believed that the evergreens sheltered the good spirits of the air who fled to them at the approach of cold weather.

There is a Scandinavian myth that tells of the tree that sprang from the blood-soaked ground where two lovers met a violent death, and of mysterious lights that hovered about the tree at Christmas time. At the period of the winter solstice, the ancient Egyptians decorated their houses with palm leaves which symbolized immortality and the starry sky. At this period of the year the ancient Persians decorated the plane tree with ornaments and jewels.

An old German tradition gives Saint Wilfred the credit of transforming the tree worship of the savage Teutons to a Christian ceremony. It was about the year 725 that he led a party of priests into central Germany for the conversion of the worshipers of god Thor. Prince Gregor, the grandson of a king, was with him, having been entrusted to his care by the abbess of the cloister Fhalsel. On Christmas eve they were fighting their way through the snow of the forest when they came upon the heathen tribe of Geismar. They were assembled under the thunder oak, symbolic of the power of Thor, and were prepared to offer up sacrifice. The white-haired priest of the heathens had chosen the young son of the chief as the fairest possession of the tribe, and he was to be offered, for the god was very hungry and needed the utmost atonement.

As the venerable priest raised his stone hatchet on high and brought it down to kill the boy, who was ready, prepared for the stroke, Winfred appeared and warded off the blow with his staff. The people were gratified at his saving of their favorite and allowed him speech and he gave them the Christian creed. Then he and the Prince Gregor took their axes and cut down the Thunder Oak. As it was ready to fall the lightning came and split it in many parts and it fell asunder. The waiting tribe then beheld in its place a slender fir tree, green and sparkling and odorous. Winfred bade the tribesmen bear this tree to the hall of Grundhar, the chieftain, to there assemble about it and make merry. About this first Christmas tree the wild men of the woods first heard the tale of the shepherd boy and the fields of Judah and it gripped their sturdy hearts. The tribes became Christian and ever after used the fir tree as a token of the day of Christ's birth.

The Christmas tree in its present style of usage cannot be traced back farther than the sixteenth century. It then existed only in the Rhine valley, to which narrow limits it was restricted for more than 200 years. At the opening of the nineteenth century it spread to the rest of Germany, and fifty years later had reached Bohemia, Hungary, Paris and England. German immigrants had already brought the custom to our own country and here it has become so popular that the supply of trees in the city markets is never equal to the demand.

Linking the present with the dim past of unnumbered centuries, there will this Christmas be displayed in American homes 5,000,000 evergreen trees. There are about 20,000,000 families in the United States, and one in four of these will make the Christmas tree a part of the celebration that is at hand. This does not mean that only these will participate in the festivities of the season, for there is still the stocking method of dispensing gifts. But in this great number of homes it has become the custom to use the trees in accordance with the old-fashioned custom of sturdy, rural Germany.

New York, the metropolis of the nation, uses far more Christmas trees than any other city in the world. Yet the city is so admirably located from the standpoint of available forests that the supply is always abundant and prices low. A quarter of a million Christmas trees are each year brought to New York, and all of them are sold during the week before Christmas. Over on Riverside Drive, where are the homes of the wealthy, expensive trees are sold. These are elaborately prepared, often being specially grown for the purpose and bring prices as high as $50. Yet the East Side gets its due proportion, and so abundant is the supply that good shrubs may be had for 25 cents and 50 cents. The little trees grow quickly and the farmers are often glad to have them cleared off their land. As a result the people who count the pennies closely find the Christmas greens within their reach.

Father Knickerbocker lives right in the midst of the most productive Christmas tree section. The state of New York yields them abundantly. Straight down from the Adirondacks they come in trainload lots. Northern Pennsylvania also produces them without stint, and so are all the nearby cities guaranteed an abundance. All through New England there is a general use of the Christmas tree.

For a month past there have been hundreds of men preparing the Christmas tree harvest for the youngsters who dwell in the towns and cities. In the smaller communities, provided the region produces the right sort of trees, the farmer himself cuts them down and brings them to market. He sells these trees to market men, to grocers, to florists and decorators. They are bought from him by the wagonload and cost little. Then they are properly prepared and set upon the sidewalk.

But preparation for the larger markets are different. In the hills around the greater cities making ready for Christmas is begun two months before the arrival of the day to be celebrated. In Maine, for instance, the men go out in gangs of four. They know their business, for they have gathered this self-same harvest for a generation. They have bought the trees as they stand in the field, paying the farmer five cents each for them. The butt of the tree is sawed off smoothly and painted over in order that the sap may be retained. The limbs are bound down tight so as to save room in shipping. Then they are bound together in bunches of five, this being convenient for both shipment and sale. They go to market in open cars that they may be kept cool and possibly damp. Otherwise their tips might wilt and their attractiveness thus be lessened. They are sold direct from the cars to retailers and these make a point of keeping them always in the open air.

Throughout the southern states the supply of Christmas trees comes from the southern pine that overruns the region. Ordinarily the markets are supplied by the wagons of the farmers, but in the bigger cities they come in carload and trainload lots. The fir is abundant in Colorado, but it grows in high, inaccessible places, and therefore the Douglas spruce and the lodgepole pine largely take its place. This is largely true of all the Rocky Mountain states. In California and the other Pacific Coast states the incense cedar and the young coast redwoods are quite generally used as Christmas trees. The swamps of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota furnish the markets of Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Detroit.

When the time is ready for the indoor use of the tree it is dug up and pared down to a graceful piece of earth as a base. Then a piece of canvas or any other sort of stout cloth is bound about the base to prevent crumbling of the earth. The whole of this is then fitted into a box or tub and is ready to serve its purpose in the house. It is more solid and effective indoors than the ordinary tree and never wilts or droops. It is in reality a living tree.

When the festivities are over the tree is taken to the point where it is to be planted. A hole is dug to fit its base. This may be successfully accomplished even where the ground is frozen. The tree is lifted from its tub, the cloth is taken from around its base and it is fitted again into the earth from which it came. The protected roots again take hold and the tree goes on growing without even a knowledge of its holiday experience. It is in no way injured.

Nurserymen specially prepare trees for just this purpose. Individuals may do the same thing with no more explanation than that given above. Trees from the native woods around any village may have their roots pruned in advance or they may be dug up with no preparation whatever. There is a better chance of their flourishing when they have been prepared for the transplanting. But any evergreen dug up with a bit of earth about its roots should grow.

There is also a manner of permanently marking trees without injuring them or interfering with their growth. A tag fastened to a piece of wire will remain attached to a tree for a century. This tag may be of metal and on it may be stamped the date and whatever legend is desired. The home of a growing family may thus be left with a permanent monument of all the Christmases that have passed over the heads of the children that have dwelt within it. When these return to the ancestral hearth in their old age they can recall the planting of the trees and the events that hover about the occasion in question. Incidentally, the landscape will have been beautified, and aside from the sentimental phase of it, much valuable timber produced.

The Christmas tree industry of the United States has assumed great proportions and Uncle Sam is making plans to place the industry upon a permanently profitable basis through reforesting large areas. Incidentally the new industry has furnished an opportunity for hundreds of boys and girls to earn their Christmas money in a new way by harvesting the cones of evergreen trees.

Of the nation's forest land, 60,000,000 acres are today covered with mature timber, while 40,000,000 acres are well seeded with young growth. This leaves 100,000,000 acres that are either non-productive or only partly productive. It is for this 100,000,000 acres that seed are to be gathered, and it is upon this vast expanse that they are to be planted until the whole is developed into its greatest possible yielding capacity, making it one of the finest forests that the world has ever known.

YULETIDE.

The wind across the snowclad hills,
A restless spirit, roves.
The murmur of the frozen rills
Still echoes in the groves.
The stripped trees, bending to the earth,
Their tale of sorrow tell;
Hushed are the sounds of recent mirth
That peeled in every dell.

Old winter breathes along the plain
Its chilling breath of snow;
The billows bounding o'er the main
An added fury know;
The sky is frowning, gray and cold,
The earth is brown and sere,
Yet on each barren waste and wold
The Yuletide bells ring clear.

MEDAL FOR CAPTAIN ROSTRON

This is the medal to be presented by congress to Captain Arthur Rostron of the Carpathia for the rescue of the survivors of the Titanic. It was designed by John Flanagan of New York, and will be made of pure gold.

Favors Consolidation of M. N. G.

Michigan's attitude toward the proposition to throw the national guard of the country into 12 divisions with Michigan and Ohio comprising one of them, has at last been made clear to the war department. Adjutant General R. C. Vandercook and Major Earl Stewart, of Grand Rapids, have placed Michigan on record as favorable to the proposed change.

But they do not want any Ohio militia officer designated as major general in command of the proposed division. Nor a Michigan officer. They say such a command ought to be in the hands of a man, who has had regular army training. Therefore they are for the innovation with the proviso that a regular army officer be placed in command.

Board Wants Convict Farm.

Turn the prisoners of the state of Michigan into successful, happy farmers; install within the walls of the penal institutions a technical school in the science of farming; give the convicts a chance to try out the technical knowledge obtained in the prison agricultural school on a good prison farm, and when their sentences are served send them forth equipped for a life of usefulness.

This, in brief, the most recent step in penology in the state of Michigan, is the plan to which the board of control of Jackson prison committed itself at its meeting.

Resigns at Request of Gov. Osborn.

James E. Wright, justice of the peace and one of the Muskegon county poor superintendents whose resignation was demanded by Gov. Osborn, has complied with the demands made by the state executive. He thus loses both offices.

Wright's own confession in the Myrtle O'Neil case, following his arrest in Detroit last month, convicted him. It was he who was chosen by Sheriff Brown and Prosecutor Miltner, also removed by Gov. Osborn, to accompany the O'Neil girl out of the state into Canada.

STATE NEWS IN BRIEF.

The state bank commissioner has authorized the City bank of Battle Creek to increase its capital from $100,000 to $150,000.

There is considerable agitation all over Gratiot county over the recent raise in rates of the two competing telephone companies, the Bell and Union systems.

An urgent invitation to visit Battle Creek was given Col. Theodore Roosevelt by the Battle Creek delegates who are in Chicago for the Bull Moose conference.

At a meeting of the Saginaw council the voting machines and election boards were found not guilty of trouble caused on election day by failure of the progressive lever to work.

Andrew W. Youngs, 24, of Flint, has been placed on trial charged with manslaughter. Youngs is held for the death of Rose Alberta, the young woman killed about four months ago while riding on a motorcycle, which Youngs operated.

Following Sunday saloon closing in Menominee, enforced two weeks ago, and the demand of 13 Marinette ministers to close saloons in Marinette, Wis., Mayor Fisher, of Marinette, has ordered the enforcement of the curfew law and the regulation of pool rooms.

Tuberculosis has caused 1,870 deaths in Michigan in ten months. Typhoid fever 453, the lowest in several years. Diphtheria and croup 346. Scarlet fever 136. Measles 79. Whooping cough 217. Pneumonia 2,164, which is very high for the state. Diarrhoea enteritis, under two years of age, 1,177, which is low compared with other years. Cancer 1,796. Secretary Dixon says the state board of health spends annually one cent per capita, while Pennsylvania spends 4 cents per capita.

Auditor General Fuller appointed B. M. Holcomb, of Kalamazoo, state inheritance tax examiner to succeed T. B. White resigned, to become state tax commissioner. Mr. Holcomb has been abstract clerk in the department.

At a meeting in Grand Rapids of the receivers of the Pere Marquette Railroad Co., it was decided to overrule the order of the traffic department not to accept perishable freight in less than carload lots during severe weather unless shipped in refrigerator cars.

A special investigating committee recently appointed by the board of supervisors will visit the Detroit house of correction on Dec. 17, to get pointers for a reformatory, which the board plans to build in Kalamazoo county.

While Prof. W. B. Pillsbury, of the physiological department of the U. of M., at Ann Arbor, was lecturing to his class he suddenly lost his mind. Physicians said the affliction was caused by an attack of acute indigestion, and that he will recover.

TEST PARCELS POST

Apportionment Made Postmasters to Work Out System of Delivery.

Test as to the conduct of the new parcels post law have been authorized by the postoffice department in Washington, during the first 15 days of January, a certain apportionment being given to each of the 1,600 free delivery offices, to be spent at the discretion of the postmaster in working out delivery and ascertaining the extent to which the parcels post is being used through his office and the receipts derived from it.

From these reports the department expects to base its estimate of money needed for carrying on the business the balance of the year, for which an appropriation will be asked of congress.

Postmasters are limited only by the amount of money given them. They are authorized to work out their own delivery system, whether by mail carriers on foot, horseback or in automobiles. Upon reports from the several postoffices the department expects to choose a plan for delivery in all the cities of the country.

New Job for Pierce.

The appointment of Charles S. Pierce to be secretary of the public domain commission when A. C. Carton, the present incumbent, becomes state land commissioner, Jan. 1, was announced in Lansing.

Inasmuch as Pierce had been considered to have a cinch on the position of clerk of the house of representatives the coming session, this appointment will let down the bars for a flock of candidates for the clerkship of the house, which pays $70 a week during the session of the legislature.

STATE NEWS IN BRIEF.

More than 200 laborers on the Kalamazoo city pay rolls will receive a turkey for their Christmas dinner from the city.

Warren Shepard, of Belding, Mich., will get $1,200 in a lump from Uncle Sam as back pension. He will also receive $12 a month.

The East Side Improvement association, of Kalamazoo, has appointed a committee which will try to secure a Carnegie library.

Nearly 1,000 children will be presented with shoes at Christmas through the beneficence of the Grand Rapids lodge of Elks. The order will spend $1,000.

Plans are being made to hold the ninth annual Michigan corn show of the State Corn Improvement association at the Kalamazoo Western normal, Jan. 10 and 11.

Senator-elect Woodworth, of the Huron-Sanilac district was in Lansing and stated he was preparing bills to introduce at the coming session for the initiative and referendum.

West Side Business association of Saginaw adopted a resolution urging the state legislature to take action to insure Michigan being represented at the Pan-American exposition in San Francisco in 1915.

The Michigan crop report just issued shows that the condition of wheat is good. The condition as compared with an average per cent is 90 in the southern counties; 88 in the central counties and 97 in the upper peninsula.

Judge Lamb has taken under advisement the mandamus proceedings of Thomas Kelly, defeated progressive candidate for representative. He brought suit against the Lake county board of canvassers to have H. Clay McNitt's election declared void. Kelly's name was left off the Lake county ballot.

Mrs. Fred Kemp, of St. Louis, was awarded a $1,600 verdict in the Ithaca circuit court against the Michigan Bonding & Surety Co., bondsmen for two Merrill saloonists, charged by Mrs. Kemp for her husband's death, which occurred in 1910. Kemp was killed when he drove into a ditch on his way home.

Mr. and Mrs. Gustave Buschke, of Saginaw, are the parents of twin daughters, who will celebrate their birthdays on different dates. One daughter was born shortly before midnight Friday and the other early Saturday morning.

The recently reorganized Muskegon Chamber of Commerce has elected officers, Paul R. Beardsley being chosen president, Dr. J. F. Denslow, vice president; W. Wilfred Barous, secretary, and John H. Moore, treasurer.

Some years ago the Northeastern Power Co., operating in northern Michigan, purchased from the state several hundred acres of land along the banks of rivers in that section of the state for flowage rights. It has been found that all of the lands are not needed for such rights and the corporation has advised Secretary Carton, of the public domain commission, that they will deed back to the state several acres. As the lands are near the state forest reserves the offer will be accepted.

Loss of Power

and vital force follow loss of flesh or emaciation. These come from impoverished blood.

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery

enlivens a torpid liver, enriches the blood—stops the waste of strength and tissue and builds up healthy flesh—to the proper body weight. As an appetizing, restorative tonic, it acts to work all the processes of digestion and nutrition, rouses every organ into natural action, and brings back health and strength.

Can anything else be "Just as good" to take?

Your Liver Is Clogged Up

That's Why You're Tired—Out of Sorts—Have No Appetite.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS will put you right in a few days. They do their duty. Cure Constipation, Biliousness, Indigestion and Sick Headache

SMALL PILL, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE.

Genuine must bear Signature

Brent Good

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

"The man who takes no interest in public schools, good roads, religion or politics isn't even a satisfactory habeen.

Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for Infants and children, and see that it

Bears the Signature of Chas. H. Fletcher

In Use For Over 30 Years.

Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

Real Things.

"Who was this great god Pan you read about who worked on pipes?"

"I guess he was a boss plumber."

Many Children Are Sickly.

Mother Gray's Sweet Powders for Children Break up Colds in 24 hours, relieve Feverishness, Headache, Stomach Troubles, Teething Disorders, move and regulate the bowels, and Destroy Worms. They are so pleasant to take children like them. Used by mothers for 27 years. At all druggists, 25c. Sample mailed FREE. Address, A. S. Olmsted, LeRoy, N. Y. Adv.

Advice From an Acquaintance.

"Now if I can get some acquaintance to indorse my note—"

"Better try some stranger."

Liquid blue is a weak solution. Avoid it. Buy Red Cross Ball Blue, the blue that's all blue. Ask your grocer. Adv.

Exception.

"You can't put water colors in an oil painting."

"You can, sea blue, can't you?"

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c a bottle.Adv.

Protecting Valuable Interests.

"Why do you charge so much extra for putting in a load of coal?"

"Well," replied the dealer, "you know coal is coal, and while it costs a little more, it is better to have anybody that handles it bonded."

Helping Bob Along.

May—I've just been reading about a Boston physician who tells you what ails you by holding your hand.

Jane—I must tell that to Bob tonight. He's thinking of studying medicine.

Very Much So.

"When Mrs. Jibbetts was asked why she neglected her friends so, she gave a bald excuse."

"What was it?"

"The baby."

Hard to Go.

"This case has some ugly features about it."

"Then put a good face on it."

A small boy doesn't find it very amusing to do the things his parents are willing to let him do.

An old toper says that none are so blind as those who refuse an eye opener.

Every woman should have an aim in life, even if she can't throw a stone with any degree of accuracy.

The chap who poses as a "good fellow" is apt to get the short end of it eventually.

Model Breakfast

—has charming flavour and wholesome nourishment—

Post Toasties

and Cream.

This delightful food, made of Indian Corn, is really fascinating.

Corn, says Dr. Hutchison, a noted English authority, is one of the ideal foods.

As made into Post Toasties, it is most attractive to the palate.

"The Memory Lingers"

Sold by grocers—

Packages 10 and 15 cts.

Postum Cereal Co., Ltd.
Battle Creek, Mich.

PECULIAR MARK OF REGRET

Tortoises, Appropriately Marked, Liberated at Death of the Emperor of Japan.

In connection with the funeral of the late emperor of Japan, a strange ceremony was performed. A Japanese correspondent writes: "Following the custom of carrying birds in large cages at Buddhist funerals, to be liberated over the graves, the Tokyo city and the Tokyo branch of the Red Cross society joined together in the ceremony of freeing three large tortoises as a mark of regret at the death of Emperor Meiji. The shell of the largest specimen was three feet five inches long, and upon the shell were engraved the characters: 'We humbly beg leave to show our deepest regret at the death of our Meiji Tenno. Let free in the sea off Ogasawara island on the day of the state funeral, September 12, 1912. Hiroshi Abe, governor of Tokyo.

On the back of another tortoise was signed the name of the president of the Tokyo branch of the Red Cross society. At first it was planned to inlay the characters on the back of the tortoises in gold, but, fearing that they might be captured again for the sake of the gold, the characters were done in black lacquer. On the evening of September 13, just as the gun gave the signal for the starting of the imperial funeral, officials who had been waiting in a boat off Ogasawara island gave the tortoises their freedom.

"All three of the creatures appeared to be delighted to be once more at large in the ocean, and put their heads out of the water as much as to say 'thank you,' and then disappeared from sight."

Birth and ancestry, and that which we have not ourselves achieved, we can scarcely call our own.—Ovid.