

b. The Three Magi.

c. Story of the Mistletoe.

*Note 22.* For the well-known custom of "kissing under the mistletoe," we are indebted to the following legend: Baldur, the god of love among the Scandinavians, was hated by Loki, the god of evil, but as nothing that sprang from fire, earth, air, or water could harm him, the wicked spirit accomplished the death of Baldur by means of a mistletoe dart. As some reparation for this injury the plant was afterwards dedicated to Baldur's mother, so long as it did not touch earth, Loki's empire. In her hands it became the emblem of love, for everyone who passed under it received a kiss to show that it was no longer the instrument of enmity and death.

d. The Glastonbury Thorn.

*Note 23.* Among the popular superstitions of the sixteenth century we find the following: (1) The cock crows all night long on Christmas eve and by his vigilance frightens away all malignant spirits; (2) At Midnight on Christmas Eve the cattle in their stalls fall down on their knees in adoration of the infant Saviour, in the same manner as the legend reports them to have done in the stable at Bethlehem; (3) Bees sing in their hives on Christmas Eve; (4) Bread baked on Christmas never becomes mouldy. Thus all nature was supposed to unite in celebrating the birth of Christ, and to partake in the general joy which the anniversary of the Nativity inspired.

*Suggestion 22.* Use each of the above headings as the subject of a carefully prepared theme.

## II. CHARLES DICKENS.

1. Significant facts in his life.
2. Distinguishing characteristics as a writer.
3. Present popularity.
4. Names of his best known novels.
5. The three great novelists of Dickens' era.