

HONEY AND SCHOOL

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Under the Mistletoe.

THERE are three evergreens with which the name of Christmas is ever associated—the yule, the holly, and the mistletoe.

"Bringing in the yule log" has formed the subject of many a Christmas poem and picture, and the holly is no less seasonable a tree in its way, but above both of these ranks the mistletoe.

Many are the legends which cluster round the little shrub with its bright berries and fresh, green leaves, and children well know that if they can manage to kiss some friend who happens to be standing directly beneath it, great happiness is assured to both parties. The little ones in our picture well understand this, for they have one and all left their toys on the floor in their efforts to kiss the grandmother, who also seems to understand her share of the fun. We only wish that happiness were so easy of attainment.

The Old and the New Year.

As the midnight hour drew nigh, the Old Year stood before me. Weary and wayworn he seemed; and in his hands was an hour-glass, whence the last sands were falling. As I looked upon his wrinkled forehead, memories both pleasant and mournful came over me. I spoke earnestly to him: "Many blessings hast thou brought me, for which I give thee thanks. Now have they been every morning, and fresh every evening. Thou hast, indeed, from my heart's garden, uprooted some hopes I planted there. With their clustering buds they fell, and were never quickened again."

"Praise God for what I gave and what I took away," he said; "and lay up treasures in heaven, that thy heart may be there also. What thou callest blighted hopes are oftentimes changed into the fruit of righteousness."



UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

But I answered: "Thou hast also hidden from my sight the loved and the loving. Clouds are strowed upon their faces—they reply to my call no more. To the houses they made fair they return not, and the places that once knew them know them no more forever."

bring me joy or sorrow, life or death?"

Looking with glowing eyes into the untrodden future, he replied: "I know not. Neither doth the angel nearest the throne know; only He who sitteth thereon. Give me your hand, and question not. Enough for thee that I accomplish his will."

Still he said: "Give praise to God. Your lost are with him. They have preceded you. None can drift beyond his love and care." Then his voice grew faint, and he murmured: "My mission unto man is done. For me the stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre. I will enter in and slumber with all the years of the past forever."

And he straightened himself out to die. As I knelt by his side I said: "O dying year, dear dying year, I see a scroll beneath thy mantle. What witness shall it bear of me when time for me is done?"

Low and solemn was his voice: "Thou shalt know when the book of the universe is opened."

The midnight clock tolled, and I covered my face and mourned for his death, for he had once been my friend. I remembered with pain how often I had slighted his warnings, neglected the golden opportunities of growth he had given me, and cast away the precious hours he had been so generous with, and I buried my face and wept. When I again lifted my head, lo! the New Year stood in the place of the Old.

Smiling, he greeted me with good wishes and words of cheer. But I was afraid, for to me he was a stranger; and when I would have returned his welcome, my lips trembled, and were silent.

Then he said: "Fear not. I come from the great source of all good, whence come all good gifts."

Trembling, I asked: "New Year, whither wilt thou lead me? Art thou appointed to