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CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Christmas Customs

(N. N. L., in 'Our Young People.')

If the origin of our Christmas, as a whole, is dim in the obscurity of ancient time, far more antique appears to be the practice of one of its immemorial features.—the use of evergreens in its celebration. Nehemiah records it, saying: And they found written in the law: Go forth into the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and

palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths.

But this was only the revival of a custom prevalent at least in the days of Joshua, and very likely long before. No doubt the idea of gathering 'thick branches' of greenery for the mid-winter festival, was to stimulate the foliage and gladness of summer, and so recall a more joyous season.

The use of evergreens in England is as

old as when the Druids brought the mistletoe from the woods with solemn ceremony. Each year the Druidical apostles of sylvan worship—'occupier of the holm'—sent out persons to discover the earliest and best of the mistletoe growth at the season when the voice of the cuckoo was first heard. It having been found and reported, preparations were made for great sacrifices. When the next moon was six days old (at which time the Druids began