

When Santa Comes.

When the clock strikes seven on Christmas Eve,
When the holly is up and the twilight has fled;
We are told that the children who get all the toys
Are the ones who go quietly and early to bed.

No, we keep very quiet, and don't argue with nurse,
And try to be good as all children should be;
But, oh! the excitement that's bottled inside
Is almost too much for my brother and me!

We put on our nighties and dance by the fire,
And wait for our mother to come up the stairs;
But we're so excited we can't kneel up straight,
Or even remember the words of our prayers!

Though the fire burns so brightly we know he will come,
For Santa Claus never feels terror or dread;
He rides through the snow and comes through the fire,
With toys for all those who go early to bed.

We shut our eyes tight, kiss our mother good-night,
And try, oh, so hard, to go quickly to sleep;
For Santa is shy, and he never will come,
If we watch for his coming or venture to peep.

And when morning breaks, long before it is light,
We have turned out our stockings, compared all our toys,
We've pulled all the crackers—then mother comes in
And begs us with smiles not to make so much noise.

She tells us her stockings are empty, and so
We remind her now yesterday evening she said
That Santa Claus comes when we're all fast asleep—
And mother would never go early to bed!

Christmas Flower Legends.

(By Elizabeth X. Simmonds.)
Of the many legends which time and fancy have combined to weave, there are probably none more beautiful than those associated with the flowers of Christmastide, namely, the Christmas Rose, the Glastonbury Thorn and the Eainfoin.

The following old French story accounts for the origin of the Christmas Rose:
At the time of the Saviour's birth, when the shepherds were hastening to Bethlehem and the Wise Men journeying toward it with their costly offerings, one poor little peasant maid, Madelon, was sad at heart because she had no means of procuring even the tiniest gift for the infant King.

But her grief was felt in the courts of Heaven and the Angel Gabriel sent to comfort her. With tender words he took her by the hand, and, leading her out of the city, showed her a miracle which God had wrought to provide her with an exquisite offering. For as they gazed upon the snow-clad earth, lo! a tiny leaf and a little bud of green pushed their way through its wintry robe, and as Madelon watched, the petals uncurled and revealed a lovely rose of milk-white sheen. Then as the flowers sprang up all around her, the little maid gathered a great handful, while her heart sang for joy at the beauty of the gift thus miraculously found.

Botanically, the Christmas Rose is known as the black hellebore, and was used by the ancients to purify their houses and sanctify their temples. They also believed that if a house were strewn with its blossoms their faint perfume would drive away evil spirits, and if laid upon the cattle would render them secure against all spells of witchcraft.

In the old monks' "Calendar of Flowers" we find the Christmas Rose allotted to St. Agnes, a most appropriate choice, since its delicate white blossoms remind one of the patroness of purity. In some parts of Europe, "credited in snow and fanned by Arctic air," it is still called "Yea, winter rose," and prior to the Reformation was widely known as the "flower of St. Agnes." In Germany it is referred to as Christwurz.

The story of the Glastonbury Thorn is perhaps better known. This is a species of hawthorn reputed to blossom every Christmas Eve. Tradition tells us that in his travels the good Joseph of Arimathea came at length to Glastonbury to preach to the inhabitants the good tidings of the Gospel, but, being aged and sore fatigued with his climb up the "Weary-all Hill," sat down to rest, but no sooner had he planted his hawthorn staff in the ground than it took root and flourished apace, growing into a sturdy tree, bearing leaves and flowers in the depth of winter.

As the years passed the original Sainfoin (holy day), or red clover comes from France, and relates how when Jesus was lying in the manger at Bethlehem, some sainfoin chanced to be among the dried grass and herbs which served for His bed, and directly put forth its lovely red blossoms to form a wreath or crown around the Saviour's head.

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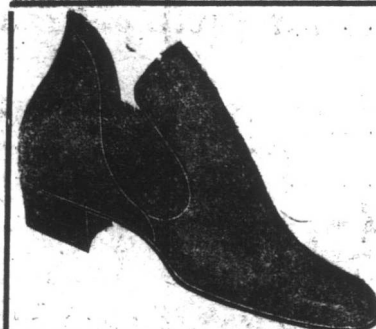
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