

# WELCOME AND VISITORS

Do unto others  
As ye would  
That they  
Should  
Do unto  
You.

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## Christmas Customs.

Our Christmas-tree we get from Germany. Perhaps the poetic idea of making spruce and fir bear fruit out of kind and season to brighten the dulness of wintry hours, may be taken from a legend of the times of Thor and Odin, but it more probably has its origin in mediæval pageantry. We have taken it from Germany, and that but recently, for sixty years ago it was a custom unknown in England.

dowering portionless maidens and aiding poor children. A legend which tells how the good bishop restored to life three children that had been murdered, caused him to be regarded as the patron saint of children, and it soon became the custom for the elder members of the family to give little gifts of toys or sweetmeats to the little ones on the eve of St. Nicholas' day, which was December 6. In southern Italy this is still one of the great festivals of the year, and far more pre-eminently the

It is also, and as this was generally suspended by the huge, open fireplace, the story that the saint made his entrance through its cavernous mouth followed very naturally.

The addition of the sleigh and the reindeer was also necessary to explain satisfactorily to the children how the saint could visit all the cities of the lowlands in the short space of a single night.

Kriss Kringle is often spoken of as the German Santa Claus, but this is an error. Kriss Kringle



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR GRANDMA.

S. T. Coleridge, in describing a visit to Germany in 1826, gives a graphic account of the Christmas-tree custom, as one of which he had never before heard, and peculiar to the German people. It came to America with the German settlers of Pennsylvania, who kept up the custom decades before the descendants of the Puritans adopted it.

The custom of gift-giving comes to us from a legend of mediæval Italy. St. Nicholas, a bishop of the church in the fourth century, inherited a large fortune, all of which he gave away in charity—

children's day there than Christmas. It is easy to see how this festival, falling so near to that of the nativity, became in most instances to be combined with it.

Santa Claus is only St. Nicholas in Holland speech. The saint who in Italy—the home of his birth—was a man of tall and imposing presence, became in the Deutsch legend short-legged and pot-bellied, and the necessities of the climate supplied his garments of fur.

Hanging up the stocking was a Netherland cus-

is a corruption of Christ Kindlein, or the Christ-child, and is derived from a wholly different legend, which describes the Saviour in the guise of a little child bringing gifts to the little ones on the anniversary of his birth as a human infant. This legend the poetic Germans allied with their Christmas-tree, and have always preferred it to the old, fat Santa Claus of Holland, with his Christmas stocking and his reindeer.

THEY that sow in tears shall reap in joy.