
* CHRISTMAS, OR YULETIDE *

To the children—bless their fresh little hearts!—Christmas is almost the Christmas of old. To them it is the festival of love in



which they come into their birth-right more fully than at other seasons. Long may its tide rise for them!

But for us oldsters, what has happened to the Christmas of auld lang syne? Who cares now about the Christmas carol? We came into Christmas fellowship in childhood, "trailing clouds of glory," see things in gray, and walk through the Christmas-tide dance of revelry like people who have forgotten the figure, and no longer care to dance.

To many of us, Christmas is the season when we are conscious of falling below certain standards, themselves vague and undefined. Our consciences are guilty, and we know not why. Let us acknowledge this and keep the faith with ourselves for once!

Why is it? What is Christmas? Why should we care about it? Why is it on our consciences? Maybe the trouble lies in the fact that Yule-Tide has been gaining on Christmas.

Yule-Tide was the festival of the Druids. It took place in the depths of the great groves of ancient oak, on which grew the mistletoe—the mistletoe with its horrid parasitic character, and its greenish waxy berries. The Druids were horridly parasitic, too, and they hid their knowledge from the people, and exercised magic powers, and sometimes they left on the foliage in the Christmas wood, the red drops of human sacrifice.

Then came Christmas—The Mass of the Christ—and fought with Yule-Tide. Against darkness, it pitted light. Love, it put in the field against cruelty. Instead of the fires of Druid sacrifices it lighted the fires of the family hearth. In place of the Druid's human victims, it installed the roast goose, the broiled fowl, and the boar's head.

And instead of the blood-drabbed wych-hazel, it lifted as its standard the bright green and red of the holly—and it hung the mistletoe in the hall as the bough which advertised the wine of red lips, free to the otherwhiles forbidden taster. The Christ who