house would die before next Christmas!

The West Country has been rich

ancient customs. One of the most pic-

turesque was that of visiting the principa

orchards on Christmas Eve, saluting a

chosen tree with an incantation, then

Here's to thee, old apple tree!

Hurrah! And fire off the gun!

Hats full, packs full!

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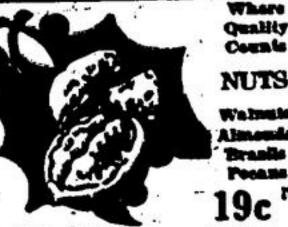
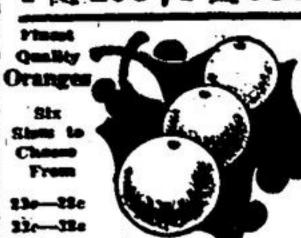


Table Table FIGS RAISINS Very Pine

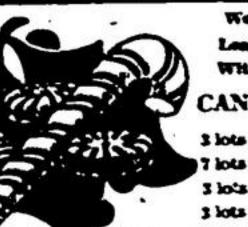


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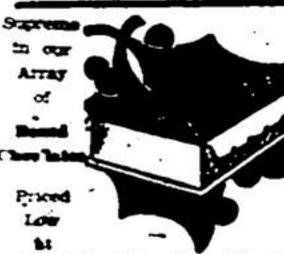
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Gave Us The Kiss

Legend Tells the Story of Son of Odin Who Instituted Mistletoe Kiss

parasitic plant growing on trees, mistletoe never takes root in the ground. It is a "sucker root" which draws its nourishment from the branch on which it lives. It will some times kill the tree if its trailing branches apread to any great extent. It belongs to a genus of which there are about twenty

It is generally believed that the oak is its favorite host, but it is rarely found on this tree; in Britain it is found mostly on the apple. Birds cat the berries, and the 3/550 seeds inside are surrounded by a sticky substance from which bird-lime is made. In collecting berries, the birds get many on their feet and carry them from tree to tree; once established in an orchard, it is difficult to clear. It is easy to get the Once Forbidden, But It Has to go to the valley on Christmas morning, seeds to grow; they should be rubbed seeds to grow; they should be rubbed have should be rubbed into a crevice on the underside of a Survived Along With Customs they could hear the merry chimes of these long lost bells.



and Commons accordingly ordered especially if it was found on the nak, and called Christmas Day" to be kept as a it has played a prominent part in mytholfast instead of a feast. But it survived ogy. Among the gods of Norse mytholand many of its quaint, traditional cusogy the most loved was Balder, son of Odin. Legend tells us how he spread sunshine and happiness wherever he went. grief fled before the brightness of his presence, he never knew what it was to to be unhappy, and all showered presents

But at last the charm seemed broken, for he dreamed that a great disaster was to fall upon him, and the gods were griefstricken at the expected calamity. His mother Frigga travelled the world asking all living things not to harm her son, and all willingly gave their promise. Happiness reigned again.

Legend of the Evil God Balder led such a charmed life that no harm could befall him; on days of festi val. a favorite pastime was to hurl missiles at this invulnerable hero, and all fell

harmless at his feet. But among the gods there lived a selfish being named Loki. He was fiercely jealous of the popularity of Balder and decided to put an end to his reign. He disguised himself, went to Balder's mother, and discovered that in her travels when she made supplication to all to spare her son, there was one tiny plant, growing onoak trees on the distant mountains, that

she had failed to visit. a powerful spear-shaft, and on his return searched out Hader, a blind god. By strategy. Loki induced Hader to throw the shaft. It pierced Bakler's heart and each party capping the other. his spirit travelled to the underworld.

There were great lamentations, and all the gods pleaded with the ruler of the underworld to release Balder. At last he consented on condition that every creature would weep for his return. The whole population of the workl started to weep with the exception of Loki Some Norse legends tell us that Balder

lives to this day in the underworld, but in others there is a happier ending, for Balder was restored to lide and he gave the mistletoe to the guidess of love to keep. Everyone passing under it received

CAROL SINGERS

Carol singers were originally the watchmen employed long ago by the city companies. The watchmen were in those days called "waits" -and that is why we sometimes call carol singers waits to-day.

himself in a long white sheet and horse's head adorned with colored ribbons. door-these have been shut and barred to of England. They go from door to door one hundred and forty churches. All them-begging for permission to sing, singing quaint rhymes and carrying through the centuries these church bells Loki collected the oldest and toughest telling of cold, hard winter days, and "mazers" or wooden bowls decked with were said to ring again at Christmas time,

Quaint Old-time Celebrations

And Ideas Still Hold Good

In Rural Britain

CARLIAMENT once banned Christ-

was "superstitious," and resolved to have

nothing to do with it. In 1644 the Lords

toms have lasted into our own day.

Mari Llwyd, or Holy Mary, for instance,

is still practised in some Welsh villages.

A party of villagers, chosen for their

up as mummers, the leader covering apple harvest

mas for sixteen years! Three cen-

turies ago the Puritans decided it

merry contest in singing and rhyming, son for generations and date from the neath the murmuring sea. until those inside fail to find a rhyming of Ireland who believe that on Christmas retort; then the door is opened and the Eve Judas Iscariot is allowed to re-visit

revellers are welcomed inside tive Christmas company gathered round; the devil peering over his shoulder. If a hoop tell off the cask of caler in the windows

origin, is still observed by shepherds and in 1000 the sea overflowed the land, and Round the village they go from door to farm laborers in some parts of the North swallowed it up completely, including its sprigs of mistletoe. With these he made asking for food and drink. Those inside evergreens and ribands for offerings, and the Cornjsh peasantry used to go out lament in turn that they are poor and Some of these mazers, curiously carved, in boats on Christmas morning to listen have little to spare, and this leads to a have been handed down from father to for these ghostly chimes booming be-

> reign of Charles I. This may continue for half an hour | There are still people in remote parts the earth, and anyone who looks into a In the old days in Wales, when the les- mirror that night will see either Judas or

the flaming Yule log, you looked furtively. Another Irish superstition is that on at the shadows of your friends flung on Christmas Eve the Holy Child is out he wall. If the shadow appeared head- alone in the dark and cold. To light him less its owner would die within a year on his way, candles are placed in the

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS!

z annoccorreporter de la compre de la compre

The Star still shines, as on that

night divine. And happy children sing their carols

The tall Cathedral candles with And we still worship at the Christ

the first the second of the se

Through mists light and wreaths of evergreen Trees trammed with timel, where gold, and red.

And on her breast a tiny haby head.

- Dorothy Sproule

All I can see is Mary's flower white

Bells

From Submerged Steeples and Buried Chapels Arise Legends Of Christmas Chimes

entire village lies buried.

countryskle.

Every Christmas morning people would gather from far and wide to hear these celebrated chimes, writes M. L. Stollard, and after their disappearance, so tradition tells us, the bells still continued their ancient custom, and could be heard from eneath the ground, ringing their Christ-Christmas in England Was mas greeting. Less than a century ago, we hear of parents telling their children and place their ears to the ground, so that

In the old Yorkshire fishing town of Whitby a similar legend is told. It is cellar on Christmas Eve, someone in the said that some Danish pirates stole the bells from the old abbey of St. Hilds, intending to carry them away to Denmark, but their evil designs were fruetrated, for the ship broke to pieces almost immediately on the Yorkshire rocks, and the entire crew were drowned.

In several coast towns we hear of this ancient tradition that lost church bells ring again. All down the East Coast, especially, where the encroaching waves Sugar cakes were often laid on the have wiped out so many old villages and quick wit and aptitude at rhyming, dress branches to propitiate the spirit of the hamlets, the inhabitants declare that on Christmas morning they can hear distinctly the chimes from countless sunken steeples.

nonasteries were dissolved by order of Henry the Eighth, a shipload of bells were sent abroad to be sold and melted down. Here again the vessel was dogged by disaster. It foundered mysteriously just outside Yarmouth, with all hands on board, and the bells were lost in the sea, but to this day the Yarmouth fishermen pause on their oars on Christmas morning, and listen to the muffiled peals from under the water mingling with the louder chimes of the parish church.

The submerged land of Lyonesse, off the coast of Cornwall, was once a flourish. ing district, thickly populated with Wassailing, a custom of Scandinavian people. The Saxon chronicles tell us that

Another legend of phantom Christmas



bells comes from the Lancashire coast. where a little Saxon chapel, said to have been built by King Arthur, disappeared wholesale into the sea during a tremendous storm, but every Christmas moraing the chapel bells can be heard ringing out their old Saxon tunes to herald the Great Birthday

every Christmas Eve.

Pealling

EAR the English town of Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, is a valley in which, according to tradition, an

Centuries ago it was swallowed up by an earthquake, and with it a magnificent old Saxon church, whose wonderful peal of bells had long been famous all over the

sprinkling it with cider or dashing a bow The bells disappeared under the waves, or jug of it against the trunk. This was but every Christmas morning they pay to ensure plentiful bearing in the ensuing their tribute to the Great Birthday, and year. At Warleggan the trees were hailed can be heard ringing their old triumphant peals far down under the water.

Below the Waves

During the 16th Century, when the



In Cumberland there is also a weird egend of a strange, slow curfew bell which inge out mysteriously far out at ses

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