1899. ( DESERET EVENING NEWS: SATURDAY DECEMBER



The Mistletoe Has Been Regarded With Veneration for Ages and Gener-tions Gone Have Kissed Under its Boughs.

Ohi the mistletoe bough! How many are the legends and fables that cluster round it. How often have we heard of the Druids and their ancient ceremones, and how little do we remember of the details!

march.

d the details: Some parts of the ceremonies are perhaps best left undescribed, but the perhaps decount, as given by Pliny. following account, as given by Pliny, following account, as given by Pliny, is sufficiently minute and not uninter-sting: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the beauty of the soldier's Christmas is that he does everything himself. He gathers all the greens that decorate the

"The Druids held nothing more sa-"The Druids held nothing more sa-tred than the mistletoe and the tree that bears it, supposing always that tree to be the robur," according to the mistletoe, however, is but im. "The mistletoe, however, is but tim. The inisticute, however, is but A soldier cook prepares the dinner, sol-rarely found upon the robur, and when found is gathered with rites replete with religious awe. . . Having made all due preparation for the sac-for the feast. He is the fairy godfather made all due preparation for the trees. For the feast. He is the fairy godfather rifice and a banquet beneath the trees, who indirectly supplies the substan-they bring hither two white bulls, the tials, and this is the way he does it: they bring hither two white buils, the horns of which are bound then for the first time. Clad in a white robe, the priest ascends the tree and cuts the mistletoe with a golden sickle, which is received by others in a white cloak. They then immolate the victims, offer-tree their may a mysterious, but it is only a mys-tery to the outsider. To the soldier it is as clear as daylight. The company fund is composed of the savings of the voar. The Covernment fundies in

of the Druids, planted near homesteads to protect them from fire. So precious, indeed sacred, were the oak and the mistletoe considered to be, that dire-fal calamities are described by several writers as overtaking those who recklessly destroyed them.

In that quaint old book, Evelyn's "Sylva" (dated 1679), there is a charming tale which deserves to be quoted at full length. He writes that " I am told of the disasters which hapen'd to the two Men who (not long since) fell'd goodly Oak near Croydon, upon which s branch of Misselto grew, which they sold: The one losing soon after his Eye, the other breaking his Leg, as if the Hamadryads had reveng'd the indig-

tity." Then, again, another authority, "Aubrey's Natural History and Antiquitles of Surrey," informs us that: "To cut cakwood is unfortunate. There was at Norwood one oak that had mistletoe, a timber tree, which was felled about CHRISTMAS DAY WITH OUR SOLDIER BOYS FAR AWAY.

## They Will Have Plenty to Eat, an Abundance of Cheer, and Uncie tam Will Provide a Christmas Tree for the Presents.

A soldier's Christmas is not at all supplies that he was entitled to.

A solution of the civilian pictures it. I think most people feel a little sorry for soldiers and saliors, and wanderers the cry of "Give us this day our daily bread" does not apply to the army. The daily bread is surer than manna and more plentiful. The ration comprises in general, when Christmas comes around. They imagine them as having a fit of doleful dumps and being very unhappy—all because they have no fire-side of their own. It is well meaning, the doubt this survey the survey of the s titles of them. No soldier can eat all these things, so the Government very no doubt, this sympathy, but dreadfully mistaken. For the roving heart there mistaken. For the roving heart there is nothing like a Christmas on the march. At least five days before the night when the Christ-child was born, each Difference of the company fund, which has such a ring of hospitality in its name. The fund must be used for the benefit

post on the land is full of a suppressed excitement, as though charged with electricity, so that even the uninitiated would know that something new was of the company, and usually it goes for table delicacies or for the barracks. Most of it goes on the table in the shape of jellies, fruit and milk. From this source come all the extra daintics for the Christmas dinner.

A HAPPY DAY.

Fortunately enough, most soldiers have the same ideas of Christmas, and there is little to distinguish the great Christian festival in the Philippines from that in Arizona. The big quadrangle of the parade may be snow-cov-ered or not—it is a mere question of climate—but inside the tall beetling barracks the scene on Christmas day is much the same, whether the mess-

room is warmed by huge, roaring pines, or by slanting shafts of Oriental sun-

To begin with, the day is one of the big annual holidays at a military post, and soldiers dearly love holidays, having never really outgrown their school-boy days. Everything except necessary

isg up their prayers that God will ren-der this gift of his propitious to those whom He has so granted it." It was also supposed to be the em-bediment of lightning, probably be-cause the branches are forked, and was frequently, in times far later than those been able to consume in one day all the

it yourself, and I guess it's true. 'The hunting parties go off into the moun-tains, sometimes at a distance of two days' ride from the post, and make a camp. Usually they come back laden --buck, antelope, wild turkeys, wild geese, quail, and sometimes a bear. It is a great sight to see the return of the Nimrods. There is a blowing of bugles and a clattering of blowing of

ground. Of course fortune has smiled and frowned with the partiality we are all used to. The successful hunters are very proud, but ill-luck does not mean being sent dimerless to bed, nor does a meal fit for a vegetarian follow as a matter of course. The army is communistic and the fruits of the chase are impar-

tially divided. If there chance to but one bear, the steaks, chops and haunches are divided after Solomon's good old-fashioned plan, that has yet

to be improved upon. The wild game is always supplemented by other meats. Roasted crab, hiss-ing in the bowl, is a favorite and there ing in the bowl, is a favorite and there is always turkey, without which Christ-mas would be a fraud. The turkey is smothered in cranberry sauce and the army soldier may dine entirely on the bird that shares honors with the eagle if he likes

if he likes. Most of the army cooks are accomplished in their art. They know the tastes of their comrades, and often the officers take an early breakfast with the men. This always means a plate of hash in which onions are the chief component, a pint cup of coffee and good bread, for the soldier cook is a prime baker.

THE DINNER.

upplies that he was enticled to. The cry of "Give us this day our daily read" does not apply to the army. The better worth the eating if you captured is satisfied with a cracker. But when a cracker is satisfied with a cracker. But when a cracker is satisfied with a cracker. is satisfied with a cracker. But when you breakfasted in the darkness of 6 o'clock on Christmas morning, appetite is not lacking at 12, and the true soltial on which the Christmas dinner is spread. It is covered with a white cloth, not particularly shining nor of fine quality, but clean to the touch, fresh to the smell and immaculately

white. The trouble is that the entire white. The trouble is that the chilfe dinner, with the exception of the des-sert, is put upon the table at once. Your ordinary soldler cares little for style and less for niceties of service. He wants to see his dinner in the ensemble, from the good filling vegetable soup to the turkey and cranberry sauce in the place of honor. One hears much of groaping tables, but in this case if is dinner, with the exception of the des-sert, is put upon the table at once. Your groaning tables, but in this case it is literally true.

The tables fairly sag with the weight that is put upon them. Soldiers want plenty of meat and the turkey is invariably backed by at least two vari-eties of meat. There are vegetables ga-lore, and the feast is closed by a trio of indigestibles, mince pie, plum pud-ding and fruit cake, any one of which is sufficient to bring down an ordinary man, but not Jack the soldier, who has the digestion that exercise and plain fare alone can give. This is the makeup of the Christmas feast. The changes of detail from year to year are unimportant. The officers and their fami-lies inspect the tables, informally, after

they are spread and the soldier eats until he can eat no more. In the morning they usually have

Why, then, let a soldier drink. games and races. For obvious reasons these are held in the morning, for who But, to return to the Christmas din- | would feel like indulging in them af-

pole, chasing a greased pig and playing an exaggerated "snap the whip," when some small end man flies into space. dier is a valiant trencher man. The tables are long and broad and substan-grease on the hands and clothes of his pursuers, until at last someone retains a hold on him. There are always prizes for winners. Football and baseball are also favorite pastimes for the

morning hours. And so the great festival has some

times as many letters as at ordinary

times. Christmas at an army post, with several hundred jolly fellows that you know and like, isn't at all a lonesome thing. I doubt very much if the en-listed man would exchange his Christmas night with fifty men around a glowing fire and stories of all shades

and complexions for the most ideal of Christmases beside his own fireside. Uncle Sam's young men are a gay lot. homesickness are soon dispelled. They

always seem to be singing in their hearts: And let me the canakin clink, clink; And let me the canakin clink.

A soldier's a man; A life's but a span;

C. S. RUSSELL.



AROUND THE YULE.

LEGENDS CLUSTER

Lo! now is come our joyful'st feast, Let every man be jolly. Each room with ivy leaves is drest. And every post with holly. Now all our neighbors' chimneys smoke, And Christmas blocks are burning; Their ovens they with bak't meats choke,

And all their spits are turning.

The celebration of Christmas, conidered by the Puritans popish and Idolatrous, has for many centuries been so universal that it may prove of interest to contrast the rites, ceremonies and quaint beliefs of foreign lands with those of matter-of-fact America.

Many curious customs have become completely obsolete and live only in tradition, but it is surprising to find what singular superstitions still exist There are few dull days and no gloom among credulous classes, even in the on Christmas. The slight fumes of light of the nineteenth century.

In the Holy Land at this season the place of greatest interest is naturally the Church of the Nativity at Bethle-hem, erected on the supposed location where Christ was born. It is said to be the oldest Christian church in existence, having been built more than fifteen centuries ago by the Empress Hel-ena, mother of Constantine. Repairs were made later by Edward IV. of England: but it is now again fast fall-ing to decay. The roof was originally composed of cedar of Lebanon and the walls were studded with precious jewels, while numerous lamps of silver and gold were suspended from the rafters. The Greeks, Latins and Armenians now claim joint possession of the structure and jealously guard its sacred precincts.

Immediately beneath the nave of the cathedral is a commodious marble chamber, constructed over the spot where the far-famed stable was said to have stood and reached by a flight of stone steps, worn smooth by the tread and kisses of multitudes of worshippers. The manger is represented by a marble slab a couple of feet in height, decorated with tinsel and blue satin and marked at the head with a chiseled star, bearing above it the in-scription in Latin, "Here was Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary." At the foot are several altars, on which incense is ever kept burning and from



a timber tree, which was felled about 187. Some persons cut this mistletoe for some apothecaries in London, and sold them a quantity for ten shillings each time, and left only one branch re-maining for more to sprout out. One fell lame shortly after; soon after each of the others lost an eye, and he that e the others tost an eye, and he these felled the tree, though warned of these misfortunes of the other men, would, notwithstanding, adventure to do it, and shortly afterward broke his leg; as If the Hamadryads had resolved to take an ample revenge for the injury done to their venerable and sacred oak." This is a digression. Let us off to the woods again, and study our mistle-toe. We find that there are different the. We find that there are different varieties of it; some pendent, some eret in habit; some with narrow, oth-ers with wider leaves. An instance has been known of two varieties, one up-right, the other drooping in habit, be-ing found on the same part of the same branch, and the effect was most pe-rolar.

There is a tragic legend about our plant, a Teutonic myth which tells how Balder, a demi-god, was almost per-fect in learning and all virtues, being indeed so pure that no unclean thing was allowed to come into his presence. Wis allowed to come into his presence. His mother, Freya, hearing that it was prophesied that he should die, made all ihings on earth, such as fire, water, leasts, metals, trees and sickness, vow that they would not injure her son. Becoming thus apparently invulnerable, be was the object of envy with all his contemporaries, one of whom, the wicked Lote, grudging him his exemp-tion, ascertained by subtlety that no two had been taken from the mistle-ted, since that plant grew on other We, since that plant grew on other ites and not upon the earth, and was, moreover, too slender and young to the an oath. Therefore the wicked lote aimed at Balder a dart made of mistletoe wood and slew him, to the treat grief of Freya, who in her de-spair requested his delivery from Ha-des. Her petition was granted on con-dition that everything on earth would tesent to it. Everything on earth would tesent, with the exception of one old woman, who was supposed to have been Lote in disguise." From Balder to Pliny seems a start-ing transition, but the latter author has something to tell us about our plant to decidedly tinged with fable that his the an oath. Therefore the wicked

a decidedly tinged with fable that his sens the proper place to recount it. This writer has been discoursing about the box-tree, and declares that "on the

The writer has been discoursing about the box-tree, and declares that "on the borth side it produces mistletce; on the with hyphear." Hyphear, be it under-siod, is to be considered as a some-what similar parasite. As regards the mistletce, Pliny has howe yet more astonishing statements to make. In the course of his observa-tions upon it he remarks that "that which grows upon trees which lose their layer, loses its leaves as well; while, a the other hand, that which grows to evergreens always retains its leaves. In whatever way the seed may have been sown, it will never come to anything unless it has been first swal-line by birds, the wood-pigeon more particularly, and the thrush; such being the nature of the plant that it will not come to anything unless the seed is hat dipened in the crop of the bird." The latter notion, that birds are often the means of dispersing and propagat-ing the seed, is no doubt correct though; but, of course, their interven-tion is by no means absolutely indis-tensable, as anyone whose garden con-tains an apple tree can prove for him-set.

self. It seems rather hard on these "smale iswiss" to read the next instant that these same berries on which they feed are "a most fit matter to make lime of to entrap and catch birds withall." Pliny believed in the medicinal vir-tues of the fruits, which, he said, were an antidote against all poison; while Genarde, though mentioning the glutt-hus character of the preparation, adds that "It hath been most credible re-parted unto me, that a fewe of the ber-ries of Misseltoe brused and strained his oile and drunken, hath presently and foorthwith rid a grievous and sore Famous in fable.

Famous in fable, projected by Hama-frads, esteemed by chirurgeons, used a a decoration—the mistletoe bough

hich mass is conducted, while a score of hanging lamps shed a fitful light

over the apartment. Many theories have been advanced as to the explanation of the mysterious "star in the east" which guided the wondering shepherds, but it is now thought to have been Venus at the height of its splendor. The early Christians decorated their

The early Christians decorated their churches with evergreens out of respect to the passage of Scripture in Isalah-"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee; the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together to beautify the place of my sanctuary"-and the pagans be-lieved them to be omens of good, as the spirits of the woods remained in their branches.

Holly is known in Germany and Scandinavia as "Christ's thorn," and is em-blematic everywhere of cheerfulness, forgiveness, "peace on earth and good will to men." The oak mistletoe or "missel" was held in high veneration by the ancient Druds, who remarked to the periods.

Druids, who, regarding its parasitic character as a miracle and a symbol of immortality, worshipped it in their temples, and used it as a panacea for the physical ailments of their follow-ers. When the moon was six days old It was ceremoniously cut with a golden sickle by the chief priest of the order and received with care into the spotless robes of the company, for if it fell to the unholy ground its virtues were con-sidered lost. Then, crowned with oak leaves and

singing songs of thanksgiving, they bore the branches in solemn procession to the altars, where two white oxen

were sacrificed to the gods. The custom of "kissing under the mistletoe" dates back to the days of Scandinavian mythology, when the god of darkness shot his rival, the immor-tal Apollo of the North, with an arrow made from its boughs. But the sup-posed victim being miraculously re-stored to life, the mistletoe was given stored to life, the mistletoe was given into the keeping of the goddess of af-fection as a symbol of love and not of death, to those who passed beneath it. A berry was required to be picked with every kiss and presented to the maiden as a sign of good fortune, the privilege ceasing when all the berries were gathered were gathered.

In "Merrie England" Christmas was the chief event of the entire year, and was sometimes celebrated for nearly a month. The tables of the wealthy literally groaned with plenty, but the poor without their gates were not forgotten, for-

Old Christmas had come for to keep open house,

He'd scorn to be guilty of starving a mouse.

That remarkable compound known as "wassail" was composed of warm ale or wine, sweetened with sugar and fla-vored with spices, and bearing upon its surface floating bits of toast and roasted crabs and apples. The huge bowl, gaily decorated with ribbons, was passed from hand to hand around the table, each guest taking a portion of its contents, as a sign of joviality and good-fellowship. But the triumph of the pastry cook's

art was "the rare minced pie," the use of which is of great antiquity. The shape was formerly a long, narrow oval, representing the celebrated man-ger at Bethlehem and the fruits and spices of which it was composed were symbolic of those that the wise men of the Orient brought as offerings to their new-born King, while to partake of such a pie was considered a proof that the eater was a Christian and not

a Jew. Candles were first used to demon-strate the power of Christianity over the darkness of paganism and were sometimes arranged in triangular form to available the Twinity. to symbolize the Trinity.

Christmas carols are commemorative of the angels' song to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem and are seldom heard in America, save by the surpliced choirs of Episcopal churches. The English "waits," or serenaders, who sang under the squires windows in hopes of receiving a "Christmas box," unconsciously add a touch of romance and picturesqueness to the associations





of the season. For upon the frosty evening air arose such strains as-Awake! glad heart! arise and sing! It is the birthday of thy King. God rest you, merry gentlement Let nothing you dismay, For Jesus Christ, our Savior, Was born upon this day.