

# Gift Slips



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## A Safe Holiday

Here are some "Safety First" hints for Christmas and the days that follow—  
Give your children all the toys they need and all you can afford but buy wisely. Be sure that tiny toys aren't given small articles that they can swallow or inhale. Look out for pins in cheap dolls. Youngsters love Christmas trees but hundreds of fires take place every year because of carelessness, such as using candles; failure to place the tree on a firm base and using tinsel or crepe paper for decorating purposes. Non-inflammable snowflakes should take place of paper and cotton. Electric lamps should be substituted for candles.

When trimming the tree, use a step-ladder, not a rocking-chair or box.  
Wrapping paper and excelsior should be disposed of immediately.  
Dispose of the tree before the second day of January as when it has dried out, it is highly inflammable.

### Robin Hood Died On Christmas Eve

That it was on Christmas Eve in the year 1247 that a certain daring son of a noble house, one "Robin Hood" bid good-bye to his doughty comrade "Little John" and breathed his last beneath the ancient oaks that witnessed their bold escapades.



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## A Legend of Nazareth

It was in the garden, and the children were at play. They laughed and clapped their hands. "I can see you," cried one, "even roses cannot hide you. Come, play with us."

The Christ Child, who stood deep among the flowers came from behind the rose trees and gaily ran to his companions.

"We will gather flowers," he said. "We can pick fresh in my Father's garden. It will not take long to fill a basket."

So saying, he hastened down the path and entered the house.

He reappeared with a large, brown basket. "We will line this with leaves, and then the flowers will keep cool and fresh."

"Oh, yes!" said one of the little ones. "Then we may pick as we choose."

Together they freely gathered the sweet blooms. "Be careful you do not prick your fingers with the thorns on the bushes," said the Christ Child tenderly.

Very soon the little beds were stripped of most of their flowers, which now lay red and white in the basket.

"Let us made crowns of the roses that are left. We can wear them when we go home," cried one of the children.

Eagerly they gathered the remaining blooms, and, sitting upon the ground, made circles which with many a snarl, they placed on their heads. Then they danced round, the flower circles nodding merrily upon their foreheads. Suddenly one child stopped and gazed at the Christ Child.

"See," he said, "your crown has no roses left upon it. The leaves and the flowers have fallen, and only the thorny stems are left. We will make you a new crown from the flowers left in the basket."

But the Christ Child replied, "Gather the flowers and be glad in them. Dance and be gay and enjoy the day. But crowns are made of thorns as well as roses, for roses grow with thorns."

And the others, forgetful in their play, danced and sang. Then, taking the basket with them, they left Him smiling and alone.

## Christmas Candles

The candle is the true symbol of Christmas. Its flickering taper shining on the walls of the city house or the country cottage sends out the message of "peace on earth" quite as much as the chime of Christmas bells. No Christmas tree is complete until the candles, whether of wax or of electric lights, have been fastened to its boughs.

The charming elderly lady gives each child in the neighborhood every year a "Twelfth Night" candle. This is a very large candle, which is to be lighted on Christmas eve and placed on the window-sill set in a wreath of holly and so placed that its flame burns at the center of a Christmas wreath hanging in the window. It is then kept burning every evening until the eve of the Twelfth Night, Jan. 6th.

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That it was on Christmas Eve in the year 1247 that a certain daring son of a noble house, one "Robin Hood" bid good-bye to his doughty comrade "Little John" and breathed his last beneath the ancient oaks that witnessed their bold escapades.

The significance of this pretty rite is as follows: The candle is symbolic of the star which the wise men saw in the East, and it is kept shining on the walls of the house during which the wise men were following the star on their journey to the manger where the young Christ lay.

Children especially love this beautiful custom of having a lighted candle represent the Christmas star, and in some of the homes where the Twelfth Night candle is kept burning, each child carries for the candle under for an evening, all taking turns. The candle is presented with lowered to encircle its flame, and when the child goes to bed it is his duty to blow the candle out.

## Norway, Sweden Babies Are loaded With Gifts

In many districts of Norway and Sweden every baby born on Christmas day is the recipient of many gifts and bounties from the relatives. He receives a bounty from both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and in some districts these bounties amount to a considerable amount of money, which is generally invested until the child is of age.

The children that are born to some classes of the people in Naples on this happy day are visited by "wise men"—who are selected by some philanthropic society—and are presented with imitation stones which are valued highly by the children in later years, even supernatural qualities living are to blame, and not this being ascribed to them.

## Make Christmas Burden, Be Unhappy Rest of Year

It is so customary nowadays to hear disparagement of Christmas as a season of vanity, selfish display, greed and covetousness that we like to point out the other side. Some of our critics declare that Christmas gifts are themselves dictated by self-interest—that they are meantly offered in the hope of a return—with interest—or are an exhibition of vanity. And yet, who would dare to say this of a mother, who deprives her self to give happiness to her children, or of the girl who willingly foregoes some little vanity for the pleasure of her parents? People who make Christmas a burden and a tax show the same attitude throughout the year—their own false standards of living are to blame, and not this holy festival. —Rural New-Yorker.

## The Christmas Spirit Lives

The Christmas Spirit still lives on, 'E'en though the winds of sense blow wild No shattered hope can stay its thrill No faltering faith shall dim its glow; The Christmas Spirits plan will find A way to cheer the troubled mind.

The Babe of Bethlehem lives on Mighty! and as the Prince of Peace The manger crib as memories shrine Deplores the wavering faith of man Christ's words remain, His action timed Peace and good-will to all mankind.

Justice and mercy must live on A challenge met on Calvary's Cross The tyrants sword must bend and fall His blood stained hands in chains relax Then shall the earth cast off all fear And sing again of joy and cheer.

Changed and confused man-kind lives on While frowning powers their vigil keep Man's hide-bound world must bear recall God gave His Son and earth to all.

—D. A. Louise Birch.



The oxen in their stalls, they say, Go down upon their knees In honor of this Holy Night, The heavenly Child to please.

A legend tells of mystic buds That curious on a thorn, In spite of Winter, strangely flowered The Day that Christ was born.

The Magi came from lands afar Their precious gifts to yield; In fear and trembling to His crib Came shepherds from the field.

But hushed are the eternal hills That heard o'er Bethlehem The angels sing, and saw the Star Shine glory down on them.

— STANLEY STOKES.

## Christmas the World Over

### Contrasting Rites

Strange as it may seem, in many parts of Europe, Santa Claus does not do the rounds to the children, nor do they always receive them on Christmas Day.

According to legend in Spain, it is the Three Wise Men who bring presents to the children. On the Eve of Epiphany (also called Little Christmas) the shoes of the children are put on the balconies and windows, and the following morning they find their gifts awaiting them.

Christmas in France is a day just for the children; they receive their gifts then, but their elders celebrate New Year's Day, the first of January, by the exchange of presents.

Russia has a very strange superstition, Santa Claus appearing as a devil with horns and a tail. He switches the children with twigs and leaves behind him a small picture for each one of himself and the other devils as a gift.

Early in December, when the holiday season begins in Hungary, the children receive a visit from St. Nicholas (or Santa Claus) who brings them candy. They are very good after his visit and their writing letters asking the angels for the presents they want, as the children believe their Christmas gifts are from the Holy Child, brought to them by the angels.

The children of Norway believe that it is the Christmas Gnome who brings them gifts at Christmas. An old legend has it that these gnomes make their homes underground, and that they will bring bad luck to anyone who is unkind to them. In the barn, a bowl of porridge with a butter "eye" in the middle of it is left by the children for the gnomes as a Christmas present.

Some interesting legends tell us that the use of holly originates from pagan days, also that witches hated holly. At one time, a mischievous robin is supposed to have paid a visit to a maiden who had not decorated her bed with holly. Another legend has it that holly is symbolic of the Crown of Thorns worn by Christ, because of its blood-red berries and thorns.

The mistletoe dates from the time of the Druids who believed that the plant had miraculous powers because of its immortality. It received from them the name of "All Heal" and was dedicated to the Scandinavian Goddess of Love, Friga. Probably from this comes the custom of kissing under the mistletoe; sometimes a branch of holly was used.

## Many Rivals of Holly

Even in England they have at least a dozen different varieties of holly, and the world at large has no fewer than 146 species of this tree.

Australia is the only inhabited continent which has no holly — no true holly, that is to say. Yes, Australia has a substitute, a shrub called "native holly," which grows in Victoria and New South Wales. It is not an holly, but its leaves are holly-like, and it is used very extensively for Christmas decorations.

Ivy is another plant which does not flourish in Australia as it does in England, though in the hills you find a kind of ivy with odd, wing-shaped leaves. But the housewife preparing her Yuletide show has no true holly or ivy to hang on the walls.

Yet there is no lack of green-stuff for Christmas decoration in the Australian Commonwealth. The favorite plant is the she-oak the tops of which are useful for feeding cattle in times of drought. There is also "ceasy-top," with its big, handsome leaves, and various pines such as the Iron and King William pine. Asoola is also popular.

New Zealand has an ivy-tree of its own, stout branches and large evergreen leaves. If you want its botanical name, this is Panax Coleman, and it is found in both the North and South Islands.

A favorite plant for Christmas decorations in Australia is the Macquarie Harbor Vine, which is a native of Tasmania, but is grown in Australia and New Zealand. It has a currant-like fruit, with a delicate acid flavor, which is used for making tarts, puddings and preserves. The long, graceful branches make beautiful and



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