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Tricky Tree Trimmings

Inside and Out

by Helen Clark

REMEMBER Christmas morning? How shivery you were, but how thrilled! How other mornings dad had to call at least three times before you dared venture into the cold room, but how this morning you were grooping for robe and slippers before dad had scarcely called, “Merry Christmas!” up the dark stairway; and you were down like a flash to the rooms below, never noticing the cold.

Do you still have distinct recollections of the tree in the corner of the room with the same star on top that had always been there? I do. Other decorations changed somewhat from year to year, but the star remained, in all its tinsel-glow.

Christmas tree stars, in fact, the trees themselves, are the result of legends and traditions from ages back. Each country has its own legends and each country’s is different from all the others. From Scandinavia to Egypt significant Christmas lore has come down to us. Each has its own symbolism of meaning; for instance, an old German legend says that Saint Winfrid was in the midst of a great group of converts hewing down a giant oak used for Druidic worship. When the tree was half down a great wind passed over the forest, gripping the tree and sending it crashing backward. Every-thing in its wake was ruined, except a green fir with its spire pointed to the sky. Because of the miracle, Saint Winfrid deemed that the fir be the holy tree.

All these legends and traditions, it seems, culminated in Germany, which abounded in evergreen trees. There Christmas tree decorating reached its height in olden times and from there the art has spread to all parts of the world. We could spend days studying Christmas decorations and symbols of various countries.

But coming to the more pertinent problem of our own decorations! Did you know that even the gloriously jumbled trees we decorated years ago might have the artistic significances? No? Well, why not apply the principles of design and decoration here as well as any place else? Every tree, no matter how gay or how sophisticated, can be simple in theme. This basic simplicity will be conducive to a more unified, and just as nice, finished product. Then, too, some glorious color schemes have been worked out in trees that would thrill the heart of any “applied artist.” When you go home to fix your own special tree for your folks or your-