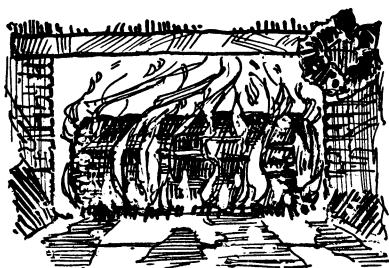


BOTANY
NATURE RAMBLINGS



Christmas Botany

► ON THE secular side Christmas is gifts and good cheer, family reunions and good companions, snow, lights, bells and Kris Kringle. And it is also the trees and plants with which we bedeck the festival.

These trees and plants form a special Christmas herbarium. In first place, of course, is the tree itself. Many of our Christmas trees are spruce. There are several kinds of spruce but they can all be told from the other evergreens by their needles. Spruce needles are short and quite stiff, and each one stands up on a sort of little pedestal by itself.

Fir trees are very often used. Their needles are softer than spruce, and somewhat curved. The Douglas fir is used quite extensively in the Northwest. Of course, the kind of tree cut for Christmas depends on the available local supply. In pine country, pine trees are the prevailing type. Unlike the spruce-fir group, pine needles are borne in little clusters of from two to five.

Mistletoe is firmly entrenched among the pleasanter frivolities of the season. Custom has endowed it with a special charm and power and, though small, it sells extremely well. So well in fact that florists now pack-

age it in little cellophane bags, complete, rumor has it, with pins for fastening to ladies' hats.

Botanically, mistletoe is a parasitic plant which grows not in the soil but on trees, deriving much of its sustenance from them. However much foresters, like other men, may value mistletoe at Christmas time as a subterfuge for kissing, their year 'round professional view of it is as a plant pest that saps, and sometimes dwarfs and kills, the trees it feeds on.

Honored in a different way are holly and poinsettia. Of the two, holly is the older as a Christmas plant. But when this evergreen became threatened with extinction as our expanding population created an ever-increasing demand for it, a substitute was sought. Poinsettia, which had been in use as a Christmas plant in California, was readily seized upon. Both are desired for their attractive display of the season's colors.

The Yule log, while in no sense a botanical species, deserves some notice, if only for its antiquarian interest. The disappearance of the Yule log can be attributed to two things: the clearing of the great forests, and central heating. In olden times the custom was to hunt up the biggest log to be found. It was usually oak. Cut as generously as possible so it would still fit the fireplace, it was then set in place at the back of the fire to burn unattended during the days of prolonged revelry.

Great oaks are rare and fireplaces are more so. When Christmas comes, no special effort is needed to keep the house cozy. The furnace is stoked or the thermostat set just as on any other winter day. The nearest thing to the Yule log custom is an act that has become traditional on Christmas Day among folk who live in apartment houses. That is the Christmas gift to the superintendent.

Experience has shown that if the donation be large enough, the house will be snug well into the New Year.

Science News Letter, December 19, 1953

HOW TO TRAVEL
—and get paid for it

There's a job waiting for you somewhere—on a ship, with an airline, in overseas branches of American firms, in foreign firms overseas—even exploring if you're adventurous.

The full story of what job you can fill is in Norman Ford's new book, *How to Get a Job That Takes You Traveling*. Whether you're male or female, young or old, whether you want a life-time of paid traveling or just hanker to roam the world for a short year or so, here are the facts you want, complete with names and addresses and full details about the preparations to make, the cautions to observe, the countries to head for.

You learn about the jobs in travel agencies (and as tour conductors), in importing and exporting concerns, with mining and construction companies. Here's the story of jobs in the Red Cross and the UN organizations, how doctors get jobs on ships, the almost-sure way for a young girl to land a job as airline hostess, the wonderful travel opportunities if you will teach English to foreigners, and the fabulous travel possibilities for those who know stenography.

"Can a man or woman still work his or her way around the world today?" Norman Ford asks in this book as you might ask today. And he replies in 75,000 words of facts, "The answer is still a very definite Yes!"

To travel and get paid for it, send today for *How to Get a Job That Takes You Traveling* on a money back guarantee if not satisfied.

Mail \$1 with your name and address to: **HARIAN PUBLICATIONS, 2 Scranton Avenue, Greenlawn (Long Island), N. Y.**

LISTEN and LEARN A LANGUAGE by **LINGUAPHONE** **IN 20 MINUTES A DAY**

World's-Standard Conversational Method
FRENCH **SPANISH** **GERMAN**
RUSSIAN **JAPANESE** **NORWEGIAN**
—29 Languages available

At Home learn easily, quickly by the LINGUAPHONE CONVERSATIONAL METHOD. It's like living in another country. You LISTEN—you hear native men and women speak—you understand—you SPEAK, correctly as they do. Worldwide educational endorsement: a million home-study students. Write for FREE Book, "Passport to A New World of Opportunity."

SEND FOR **FREE BOOKLET**

LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE
8-12 Mezz., Rockefeller Plaza
New York 20, N. Y.

Send me your FREE book. I want to learn..... language.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....Zone... State.....

Questions

CYTOLOGY—What is DNA? p. 387.

□ □ □

FORESTRY—What are advantages to the farmer of growing Christmas trees? p. 386.

□ □ □

GENERAL SCIENCE—Of what is Jupiter's atmosphere composed? p. 388.

When does blood start circulating through the lungs of baby lambs? p. 389.

□ □ □

Photographs: Cover, Piasecki Helicopter Corp.; p. 390, Dravo Corporation; p. 393, Edgerton, Germeshausen & Grier, Inc.; p. 394, Fremont Davis; p. 395, Bell Telephone Laboratories; p. 397, Sun Oil Company; p. 400, Reynolds Metals.

UNITRON

Have you ever seen a GALAXY?

Or the rings of Saturn, the moons of Jupiter, or the craters and mountains of the Moon? To merely read about the Universe is to deprive yourself of the intellectual excitement of exploring the vast reaches of space. UNITRON Telescopes are chosen by leading universities and amateur astronomers for their outstanding quality and proven performance; by engineers and business executives as a source of relaxation and mental diversion. Unexcelled for real close-up views of distant terrestrial objects—mountains, animals, ships at sea, etc. UNITRON values cannot be duplicated. Write at once for free educational literature on how to select a telescope and illustrating all UNITRON models. Learn why astronomy is today's fastest-growing hobby!



ALTAZIMUTH REFRACTORS

COMPLETE with mounting and slow motion controls, tripod, view finder, erecting prism system (2.4" and 3" models), star diagonal, sunglass, wooden cabinets, etc.

1.6" MODEL: with eyepieces for 78X, 56X, 39Xonly **\$75**

2.4" MODEL: with eyepieces for 100X, 50X, 35Xonly **\$125**

3" MODEL: with eyepieces for 171X, 133X, 96X, 67X, 45X,only **\$265**

Additional eyepieces available for all models.

OTHER UNITRON REFRACTORS

4 INCH PHOTO-EQUATORIAL\$890

4 INCH EQUATORIAL 785

4 INCH ALTAZIMUTH 465

3 INCH PHOTO-EQUATORIAL 550

3 INCH EQUATORIAL 435

2.4 INCH EQUATORIAL 225

Time payment plan available.

ALL INSTRUMENTS FULLY GUARANTEED

Send check or m.o. or 25% deposit with balance C.O.D. Shipped express collect. Xmas orders shipped same day as received. Write for illustrated literature: Dept. L-123.

United Scientific Co.

204-206 MILK STREET, BOSTON 9, MASS.

