

**Third Pittsburgh Meeting  
of the  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION for the  
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE**

**Dec. 27, 1934 to Jan. 2, 1935**

The programs of the fifteen Association sections and the forty-three special scientific societies meeting with the Association are rich with papers on latest work in research in the various fields of science. . . . Symposia on important medical subjects, "heavy hydrogen," the role of chemistry in education, the place of science in education, quantum mechanics, social anthropology, relation between science and scientific organizations and the press. . . . More than one thousand papers by individuals relating their most recent work in scientific research. . . . Special afternoon and evening addresses by eminent leaders in their respective fields. . . . Doctor Henry Norris Russell, Princeton University, retiring president, will speak on "The Atmospheres of the Planets." "Review of Some of the More Important Recent Advances in the Study of Blood Diseases" is the title of the address to be given by Doctor Cyrus C. Sturgis of the University of Michigan. Doctor Charles F. Kettering, of the General Motors Corporation, will discuss "Some Future Problems of Science and Engineering." Professor Albert Einstein will speak to a small and selected audience on "An Elementary Proof of the Theorem Concerning the Equivalence of Mass and Energy." A demonstration lecture on "Ramblings in Research" will be given in the Carnegie Music Hall Sunday afternoon, December 30, by Doctor Phillips Thomas. . . . Complimentary concert Sunday evening by Doctor Marshall Bidwell, organist, and the Carnegie Institute of Technology Symphony orchestra. . . . Society dinners. . . . Smokers. . . . Teas. . . . Reduced railway rates of a fare and one-third for the round trip. . . . The annual science exhibition and registration are located in the new building of Mellon Institute for Industrial Research. Section and society sessions will be held in buildings of Carnegie Institute of Technology, the new Cathedral of Learning of the University of Pittsburgh, and in other halls in the immediate vicinity. . . . The third Pittsburgh meeting promises to be one of the best in recent years.



**Mistletoe**

**M**ISTLETOE is one of the features of the Yuletide celebration that is older than Christianity. The Druid-taught Celts thought a great deal of the mysterious green plant with white berries that made itself at home in the trees, and from the Celts our ancestors, even the Teutons, learned much of their pre-Christian religion, including the pagan celebrations that correspond to Christmas. "Yule" is a Druid word: it is appropriate therefore that we should keep some harmless reminder of the Druid midwinter revels.

The mistletoe attracted the ancients partly because like the holly it was an evergreen, holding its glossy foliage when most of the trees lost their leaves, but also because of its mystifying habit of springing from trees, and especially from the sacred oak, as though it were a branch of different birth but of the same substance. They knew nothing of the science of parasitology; and the seeds of the plant are so tiny that they apparently escaped notice, so that the mode of transfer of the mistletoe from tree to tree on the beaks of birds remained a sealed mystery to them.

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Though the fate of other plants that make up our Christmas greens is a source of anxiety to conservationists, nobody worries about the mistletoe. In spite of its romantic associations, it is a destructive parasite and as such is harmful to timber. Since it grows high on the branches of trees it is a bit difficult to harvest for the market: we moderns do not care to fuss around with the golden sickles the Celtic girls are said to have used. So down South, where most of our domestic supply comes from, men knock clumps of it out of the trees with heavy charges of buckshot!

*Science News Letter, December 15, 1934*

**ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Roman Senator's House  
Found Under Papal Church**

**I**N THE famous Lateran section of Rome, workers restoring the Church of St. John Lateran have discovered what appears to be the palatial home of Senator Plautius Lateranus himself.

For centuries this property, on which a Papal palace and other religious structures came to be built, has been known as the Lateran, after its one-time owner. The Senator lived in the days of Nero and was banished in 66 A.D. for taking part in an anti-Nero conspiracy.

Sixteen feet under ground, digging has revealed four small rooms of a fine residence. Original Roman masonry is still covered with its facing and paintings in Pompeian style. These fresco remains show fruit garlands, infant cherubs and animals in brilliant colors and an extraordinary variety of tints and shades. It is hoped that the frescoes may aid in understanding technics of painting in ancient Rome and chemical composition of the colors used.

Mosaic floors in two rooms are completely preserved, showing trefoil patterns, carefully executed.

The Italian archaeologists are taking great pains that not the smallest bit of mosaic or stucco is thrown away. Each piece is spread on a large table, according to colors, and as far as possible rearranged into pictures.

Less deeply buried than these rooms, the archaeologists found ruins of a later date. These consist of two rooms with inscriptions denoting that they were part of barracks of the imperial guard. The inscriptions mention that Rufinus and Lateranus were consuls in 197 A.D. This bears out the history of the famous Lateranus family.

*Science News Letter, December 15, 1934*