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The Mistletoe Bough

Thomas Haynes Bayley

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall;
And the baron's retainers were blithe and gay,
And keeping their Christmas holiday.
The baron beheld with a father's pride
His beautiful child, young Lovell's bride;
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be
The star of the goodly company.

"I'm weary of dancing now," she cried;
"Here, tarry a moment-I'll hide, I'll hide!
And, Lovell, be sure thou'rt first to trace
The clew to my secret lurking place."
Away she ran-and her friends began
Each tower to search, and each nook to scan;
And young Lovell cried, "O, where dost thou
hide?
I'm lonesome without thee, my own dear bride."



They sought her that night, and they sought her next day,
And they sought her in vain while a week passed away;
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,
Young Lovell sought wildly-but found her not.
And years flew by, and their grief at last
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past;
And when Lovell appeared the children cried,
"See! the old man weeps for his fairy bride."

At length an oak chest, that had long lain hid,
Was found in the castle-they raised the lid,
And a skeleton form lay moldering there
In the bridal wreath of that lady fair!
O, sad was her fate!-in sportive jest
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.
It closed with a spring!-and, dreadful doom,
The bride lay clasped in her living tomb!

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