



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Mistletoe

George MacDonald

Kiss me: there now, little Neddy,
Do you see her staring steady?
There again you had a chance of her!
Didn't you catch the pretty glance of her?
See her nest! On any planet
Never was a sweeter than it!
Never nest was such as this is:
Tis the nest of all the kisses,
With the mother kiss-bird sitting
All through Christmas, never flitting,
Kisses, kisses, kisses hatching,
Sweetest birdies, for the catching!
Oh, the precious little brood
Always in a loving mood!—
There's one under Mamy's hood!

There, that's one I caught this minute,
Musical as any linnet!
Where it is, your big eyes question,
With of doubt a wee suggestion?
There it is—upon mouth merry!
There it is—upon cheek cherry!
There's another on chin-chinnie!
Now it's off, and lights on Minnie!
There's another on nose-nosey!
There's another on lip-rosy!
And the kissy-bird is hatching
Hundreds more for only catching.



Why the mistletoe she chooses,
And the Christmas-tree refuses?
There's a puzzle for your mother?
I'll present you with another!
Tell me why, you question-asker,
Cruel, heartless mother-tasker—
Why, of all the trees before her,
Gathered round, or spreading o'er her,
Jenny Wren should choose the apple
For her nursery and chapel!
Or Jack Daw build in the steeple
High above the praying people!
Tell me why the limping plover
O'er moist meadow likes to hover;
Why the partridge with such trouble
Builds her nest where soon the stubble
Will betray her hop-thumb-cheepers
To the eyes of all the reapers!—
Tell me, Charley; tell me, Janey;
Answer all, or answer any,
And I'll tell you, with much pleasure,
Why this little bird of treasure
Nestles only in the mistletoe,
Never, never goes the thistle to.

Not an answer? Tell without it?
Yes—all that I know about it:—
Mistletoe, then, cannot flourish,
Cannot find the food to nourish
But on other plant when planted—

And for kissing two are wanted.
That is why the kissy-birdie
Looks about for oak-tree sturdy
And the plant that grows upon it
Like a wax-flower on a bonnet.

But, my blessed little mannie,
All the birdies are not cannie
That the kissy-birdie hatches!
Some are worthless little patches,
Which indeed if they don't smutch you,
'Tis they're dead before they touch you!
While for kisses vain and greedy,
Kisses flattering, kisses needy,
They are birds that never waddled
Out of eggs that only addled!
Some there are leave spots behind them,
On your cheek for years you'd find them:
Little ones, I do beseech you,
Never let such birdies reach you.

It depends what net you venture
What the sort of bird will enter!
I will tell you in a minute
What net takes kiss—lark or linnet—
Any bird indeed worth hatching
And just therefore worth the catching:
The one net that never misses
Catching at least some true kisses,
Is the heart that, loving truly,
Always loves the old love newly;
But to spread out would undo it—
Let the birdies fly into it.

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