

A Girl's Christmas in a Paris Studio.

Miss Alice Righter has sent THE COURIER the following account of a Christmas she passed in Paris.

"Well, it was three days before Christmas, and forty students boarding at the American Woman's Club were feeling decidedly blue. Most of us were strangers to one another, with varied tastes, interests, and up-bringing, but we all had the same kind of homesickness as the holidays drew near.

"We were reminded of our distance from home by the absence of the hearty Christmas feeling in the air. The great fete of the winter in Paris is New Year's day. On Christmas Eve some of the children place their shoes by the fireplace for the Petit Jesus to fill with toys, and there are chimes after midnight mass at the Madeleine and St. Sulpice, but England is the nearest country with family parties, Christmas trees, and visits from Santa Claus.

"One afternoon we were discussing the different ways of keeping Christmas in America. Four of us had been drinking five o'clock tea in the studio room of a young artist at the club, and we were helping her 'do up' the tea things.

"How did you have your presents?" asked one girl of another, gleefully polishing a spoon.

"We always hung up our stockings," was the reply, "we four sisters, and looked at our presents early in the morning sitting up in bed. I wore red and white striped stocking at the age of seven, and I remember exactly how mine looked with a big orange in the toe and a cane of peppermint candy and a sprig of holly sticking out of the top. I'd love to see just such a fat, beautiful bumpy stocking again!"

"Suppose we have one here," began our hostess, turning around kettle in hand.

"And give each other presents," interrupted a girl, and we all four exclaimed in childish verbiage, "Let's!"

"Our after-tea chat day was a long one as we discussed details and resolved our selves into a committee to speak to all the girls about it, collect five cents a piece for refreshments, and decorate the club reception room. The girl who had such a vivid memory of the striped stockings of her youth was commissioned to make one similar in style but large enough to hold all the presents. Grace of form in this case to be secondary to strength.

"Of course if each student brought a present each student could receive one, the offering of some other girl. A limit in price of one franc (twenty cents) was recommended, but if just the thing was seen costing a few sous more, it might be purchased. The presents were all to be securely wrapped up and given by 5 o'clock of Christmas Eve to the member of the committee whose pleasant task it was to fill the stocking.

"Did you ever attempt to secure concerted action in any scheme from forty women folks? If so, your sad experience will enable you to appreciate our surprise and pleasure at the cordial reception of our little plan. All from the 'old girl' of several years' sojourn to the lonely new arrival of the night before, joined in with hearty enjoyment and good will.

"Christmas eve arrived, and the blue room presented a festive appearance. A bright fire burned in the open grate, and the room was flooded with softened light from many lamps and candles with pink and cream colored shades. Above the chimney piece and the doors hung mistletoe and holly. Art junk of various kinds had been borrowed from the students. A great brass milk can was filled with holly, a quaint old copper dish with pink and cream roses, and another on a high window ledge held a mass of glowing chrysanthemums. In

a corner were the refreshments; sweet cider in green jugs of Holland peasant ware and nuts and raisins in bowls of the same. Between two windows hung the stocking, big enough to have necessitated a separate journey of Santa Claus' eight reindeer. It was made of Turkey-red calico with stripes painted on it in Chinese white, bulgy and bumpy with mysterious parcels and a bunch of holly crowning it.

"With each new arrival a spontaneous burst of applause greeted this noble spectacle. When all had come the distribution of the presents began amid great excitement, each girl taking one from the stocking as her name was called out, beginning with an Abbott and ending with a Young. You would have been surprised to see what a variety of pretty trifles came out of that stocking. Among them were little cups and saucers for afternoon tea, cream jugs, fruit plates of Breton ware, little wooden sabots that could be used for jewelry or matches, Japanese work baskets, pencil sketching cases, candlesticks of Rouen faience, dainty head rests covered with cretonne, unmounted photographs of Louvre paintings, tea strainers of silvered wire, and green peasant jugs for flowers or water. A Philadelphia girl had put in one of those delightful hammers with a hollow handle filled with tacks and a cork in the end. Another had found in the Halles one of those pink-yellow splint baskets, in shape like a long cylinder, that come from Spain filled with 'haricots verts.' This was just the thing to hang up by one's writing desk for waste paper scraps. But best of all was when a stout lady unrolled a little American flag, and, waving it high in the air, called out:

"Tis the Star Spangled Banner! Three cheers, girls!" A shrill feminine cheer rang out, while a few of the most homesick girls furtively wiped their eyes. When the stocking was empty the cider, nuts, and raisins were passed around, and the hubbub subsided to a general chatter. The maker of the stocking was overwhelmed with compliments, and presently one of the girls remarked: "My private opinion is that it's one of her own, loaned for the occasion."

"Girls! I do believe she'll go in!" And go in she did up to her shoulders. Then she was taken up by six strong students and toted about the room. "After this hilarious and undignified proceeding, there was some dancing, and then it was time for those to go who were to hear midnight mass at St. Sulpice or the Madeleine. Parting 'Merry Christmases' were heard on every side, the talking of groups in the court, the call to the concierge, 'Porte, s'il vous plait!' and the great door of the Rue de Valenciennes closing with a clang ended our Christmas Eve."

The Coconut Crab.

The coconut crab is one of the oddest specimens of the whole crab family. He lives in the South Islands, and makes a diet of coconuts. This species has a pair of front legs terminated with a strong pair of pinchers, and it is with these that he husks the nuts and breaks through the weakest portion of the shell. The crab begins by tearing the husk, fiber by fiber, and always at the end where the eyeholes of the nut are situated, that being the weakest place in the shell. When the husk has been removed the crab commences hammering the shell with his heavy claws, and soon makes an opening, through which he extracts the meat of the nut. Mr. Darwin, writing of this crab, says: "I think this is as curious a case of instinct as I ever heard of, especially in structures so remote from each other in the scheme of nature as a coconut and a crab."

Town and Country.

He—"Wouldn't you rather ride in the country than in the park?" She—"No, indeed. There is nobody to look at one in the country."—Judge.

The Devil Himself Knows its Worth.

Last night I had a wonderful dream, Wouldn't know what me befel? I fear the tale, untrue w ll seem, I dreamed I was in Hell.

The Devil opened wide the gates When he heard me ring the bell. Strange sights I saw, and wonders great, In this most boundless Hell.

The streets were lined with shadowy forms, And paved with slimy shell, On every side were men with horns, In this most hideous Hell.

Unto the Devil, then said I: Old man, I pray you tell, Where are the papers, for them I sigh, In this most darksome Hell.

The latest Courier I fain request, And a seat in yourer dell, Where I, in peace, may read and rest, In this red-hot old Hell.

Our weekly papers are a sight, They're sent here 'junt to sell," We've every kind 'cept The Courier bright, In this infernal hell.

Too good for us, is this model sheet, Each demon would leave his cell, Could he secure a paper so neat, In this delusive Hell.

The Courier circulates far and wide, And pays advertisers well, Such worthy features we are denied, In this most hopeless Hell.

BY A TURN OF THE HEAD.

Missed His Wife and the Theater he Got His Dinner.

A city official, who supposes the episode is a close family secret, arranged with his wife to meet her at the office last Friday night at 7 o'clock, says the New York Herald. They were then to have dinner at a hotel, and attend the theater. He was prompt, but his wife had not yet arrived, so he patiently waited on the sidewalk with his eyes on the door that she might not come without his knowledge. He paced back and forth, reading the bulletins, observing the direction of the wind and looking at the clock as it marked the passing minutes; but he saw all who entered the building. He heard a loud clanging of gongs, as a fire engine dashed down 6th avenue, and turned his head for not more than five seconds to look after it. His wife was only a few minutes late, as she hurried from a Broadway car and rushed into the office, during the five seconds his head was turned. She had not seen him, and was pleased to think that he would be the one to be blamed for being late, as she sat down to wait his coming. He continued to wait and pace, as the clock ticked off the minutes. Eight o'clock was near and he became very impatient, as he realized that it meant to either miss dinner or the first act of the play. When 8 o'clock was passed he saw another act slip away. In a few minutes more he had given up the theater, and feared for the dinner. In another ten minutes all of the plays were changed, and he determined to go home. She was also discouraged and hurried to the street to take a northbound cable car. They met, and well; the theater was given up, but they had a dinner and each promised to say nothing about it.

Peru's Desert.

In the long coastal desert of Peru, which is 2,000 miles in length, but only 120 miles broad at its widest part, the rivers disappear in the dry season and begin to flow again in February or March (when rain falls in the Cordilleras. One of the most important of these rivers is the Piura, the return of whose waters is welcomed with great rejoicings by the inhabitants of its banks.

Air-Tight Compartments.

The air-tight compartment theory of building ships was copied from a provision of nature shown in the case of the nautilus. The shell of this animal has forty or fifty compartments, into which air or water may be admitted, to allow the occupant to sink or float as he pleases.

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