

# Christmas "Over There" This Year

DEPTHS OF SACRIFICE REACHED  
SINCE FIRST EAGER THROB OF  
WAR SPIRIT IN EUROPE TWO  
YEARS AGO... FEW BRIGHT  
SPOTS RELIEVE  
GLOOMY PICTURE



**V**ICTORY may come and victory may go, but no future triumphs or defeats can ever soften for Europe the memory of this dark Christmas of 1916, the saddest she has ever known. Pride in the present and faith in the future sustain everyone in the warring peoples in their exaltation of sacrifice. But at Christmas—Christmas, the feast of the home and of the family—exaltation dies, and only sorrow, the sorrow of the bereft individual, remains, says the New York Sun.

It is a very different Christmas Europe is approaching this year from that of two years ago. Then the shock and excitement of the beginning of the war were still tingling. In England the question of munitions is today of no less importance to the popular mind than, two years ago, was the absorbing question of getting a plum pudding to every man in the trenches. There was still talk of the Kaiser's dining in Paris, and discussions as to which ruler should lead the triumphant allies in procession through Unter den Linden.

Victory seemed a much simpler matter then than it does today. Everyone admitted then that victory would be bought only with sorrow and sacrifice. Now everyone knows, with the hard knowledge of experience, that victory will be bought only with sorrow heaped on sorrow and sacrifice heaped on sacrifice. It is this knowledge—sorrow in every home, however exalted or however humble, that makes the Christmas celebration of 1916 in Europe a solemn sacrament of sorrow.

Of all the warring peoples Christmas means the most to the Germans and on none will the sacrifice of the traditional customs of the day fall so heavily. There is no blood and iron in the German Christmas. There is instead a tender and appealing sentiment that is typical of all that is best in the German character. The whole world is indebted to Germany for the Christmas tree and for many of the most delightful of the Christmas stories and customs that Americans have adopted as their own. The German Christmas is a day for the home, the family and the children, with its every custom endeared by generations of tradition.

The real German Christmas celebration occurs on Christmas eve. About four o'clock the dinner is served, an elaborate and hearty feast, consisting of a long series of traditional dishes, all eaten in a state of wild excitement. During this meal the Kristkind makes its appearance. This figure is a curious product of sentiment and imagination, a queer combination of the Holy Child, the good fairy and our own Santa Claus. It is represented in the country district by a half-grown child made up as an angel, who goes from door to door calling for the good children, giving sweetmeats at one house and begging them at the next.

After dinner comes the great moment when the doors are opened into the Christmas room where the lighted tree has the place of honor. The tree is always placed near a window so that every passer-by can see and share it. A walk through the deserted residence streets of any German town at this hour on Christmas eve leaves a memory of Christmas cheer and spirit that can never be forgotten.

By nine o'clock the family is ready to eat again, a light supper including still more of the traditional Christmas dishes. Every one, rich or poor, has Nuremberg ginger cake, its shiny brown surface decorated with almonds and raisins, and with the word "Weihnachten" and the year worked out in pink and white frosting. Stollen, a sort of plum cake, and many sweet biscuits of various shapes and sizes, are all indispensable parts of this feast.

But this year, with a shortage of fats in her food supply so severe as to demand serious attention on the part of the government, there is in Germany no butter or milk for the Christmas cakes, no tallow or wax for the Christmas candles. To many people this little homey deprivation will bring a realization of the severities of war more vivid and more compelling than even the sight of the fast-growing graveyards. With two million new graves in the land, with dire necessity robbing her dearest holiday of its dearest symbols, no triumphs of arms can make this Christmas of 1916 anything but a sad and sorrowful feast in the homes of the German empire.

In Austria the Christmas celebrations are as varied as the races and religions that make up

that great loosely knit empire. Where the Greek church prevails the celebration occurs a fortnight later than ours; that is, on January 7. It is accompanied by feasting and by various local customs. The Slovaks of Bohemia and Moravia have curious Christmas usages in which superstition has entirely triumphed over religious significance.

This is the great day of the year when the peasant appeases all the invisible world of spirits. On the afternoon of Christmas eve the whole household marches in solemn procession to the stables and cow houses carrying bread, salt and beans. These are offered to the animals with certain hallowed words, and great is the dismay if any cow or chicken is indifferent to the offering.

Returning to the house, the parents sprinkle all their unmarried daughters with water sweetened with honey, thus insuring them honest, good-tempered husbands. The entire family then sip of silvovitzka, a strong native liquor distilled from plums. A small quantity of this is then poured on the floor to conciliate such other spirits as may have been overlooked. Everyone then falls on the Christmas feast without ceremony.

But this year war has reached out to the remote districts and blighted even such simple Christmas celebrations as this. The men of the families are all gone. Only the very young and the very old remain. There will be no blessing of the kine this year, for there are no kine to bless. All have long since gone to supply the army. There will be no Christmas feasting, for food was long ago reduced to the smallest quantity that will sustain life. And every day, in every village, the list of the widowed and orphaned grows longer and longer.

Vienna is known as a gay, light-hearted city. Its Christmas observance is ordinarily a happy combination of religious ceremony and Teutonic good cheer. But this year the brilliant midnight masses will be attended by black-robed mourners and there will be no good cheer in Vienna.

The Christmas celebration in all the countries where the Greek orthodox church prevails are much the same. As the holiday itself is preceded by a severe fast the Christmas feast takes on a highly important character. In many parts of Russia, especially in the cities, the gift-hung Christmas tree has been borrowed from the Germans, while a pudding of rice and raisins is the feature of the Christmas eve feast. From this feast has now been taken its crowning glory, the vodka bottle.

In only one other part of Europe has the heel of war pressed so hard as in Russian Poland; in only one other place has the land been so utterly devastated by fierce and continued fighting; in only one other place will the season of peace and good will be such a bitter mockery as to the hunted and starving Poles.

And this is in Serbia, poor, brave, beaten Serbia, with its whole population, an entire people, fugitive before hated and terribly feared invaders. During three years Serbia has been swept by three wars, the present one so relentless and so overwhelming as literally to wipe out the ordinary relationship of the people to life. They have ceased to have homes; they have ceased to possess property; they must burrow in the earth for shelter and forage for their uncertain food like wild animals. With her army making a heroic and desperate struggle, with her people dying with their spirit yet unbroken, the birthday of the Prince of Peace will not be celebrated this year in Serbia.

The sorrows of Belgium this year as compared with last are more of the spirit than of the flesh. The voice of Christmas, of peace and good will does not speak very loud to a captive people. With its army terribly decimated, its beloved king all but driven out of his own country, with its daily life subject to the scrutiny and the control of a stern captor, there is no room in Belgium for any of the old light-hearted Christmas spirit that used to show itself in crowded churches for midnight masses and gay all-night supper parties. Belgium waits as all Europe waits for the end of the war—waits with faith and hope and a determination as grim as it must be silent.

Happily the physical condition of the stricken people is better than last year. There is not the frightful confusion, the separation of families, the pitiful terror and want that went with the fight before the invaders. All relief measures are organized. Belgium is no happier this year than last, but she is less cold and hungry.

If the Belgian people ever again have a united Christmas they will find themselves with many new

holiday ideas. A tree twinkled in every place that housed a German last year, and though the Belgians will not allow their Christmas to be Germanized, yet the trees appealed to them mightily. Certainly the Christmas tree will be much more common henceforth in Belgium whether the Germans stay there or not.

Thousands of refugees waiting in England until their country is redeemed will bring back with them many ideas of the English holiday.

Until the marriage of Queen Victoria to the prince consort, Christmas in England was chiefly a day of churchgoing, of merry-making and of mighty feasting. The prince brought with him from his German home the customs of the Christmas tree and of gift giving. The latter has never become as firmly entrenched in England as it is here, but a lighted tree loaded with decorations and presents is established as a part of every English celebration. Christmas decorations of holly and mistletoe, the ceremony of the Yule log and many of the traditional Christmas dishes, notably the plum pudding, are all owed to English custom.

But it is a sadder and wiser England that approaches Christmas this year. Hundreds of thousands of young Englishmen have died to make her so. Today every Londoner has had a graphic lesson in what a powerful and resourceful enemy can do even in a "right little, tight little island." As a further object lesson, England will pay for the raisins for her plum puddings something like 200 per cent more than she did last year. The war with Turkey has done that to her.

England has had other black Christmases, but they were farther away from home. The Christmas of 1899 in South Africa was one that she does not like to recall, while the terrible Christmas of 1854, the Christmas of the Crimean war, when, as a writer of the day put it, "Thanks to General Muddle, things are about as bad as they can be," was always a bitter memory to that generation.

The year 1916 has not been a good year for England, and she knows it. The knowledge has shattered her complacency and has strengthened her determination. But she is not happy about it and her Christmas celebration will be a chastened feast.

Christmas in the Latin countries has always been more of a religious festival than a home celebration. In Italy it is more customary to exchange presents at New Year's than at Christmas. Lighted trees are frequently seen, but they are the luxury of the prosperous and not the habit of the people. The day before Christmas is more of an occasion than the day itself.

In the cities of southern Italy booths are erected in certain streets, as before Easter, for the sale of odds and ends and sweetmeats; wheeled traffic is barred and the people promenade slowly up and down, exchanging greetings. Midnight mass is said in all the churches. In the churches, too, are exposed the famous cribs, or presepi, representing scenes of the birth and infancy of Jesus. The beginning of this custom is ascribed to St. Francis of Assisi.

Christmas eve is the great feast of the season in France. In the provinces it is celebrated with processions in the streets, which were originally religious in character, but which have become profaned by the gaiety of the maskers. In Normandy and in Provence there are elaborate puppet shows of scenes in the life of the infant Christ. All the street gaiety terminates after mass in feasts in all the homes.

In Paris there are Christmas booths set up in many of the boulevards. This year they will be devoted to the sale of comforts for the soldiers.

Paris knows better than anyone just how black a wartime Christmas can be. She has never forgotten the Christmas of 1870. For ninety-eight days the Germans had battered at the city. Every sortie had failed miserably. The final bombardment was inevitable. On Christmas eve 900 men froze to death in the trenches just outside the city.

Better, it seems, than any of the other nations did France realize from the beginning what this present war would mean and, realizing, she consecrated herself utterly. She has made every sacrifice, great and small, even to giving up the crusty rolls and light white bread that are as the breath in her nostrils. When a Frenchman, every Frenchman, eats without complaint a grayish bread made of a mixture of wheat and rice and entirely lacking in golden crust, he has indeed an exalted spirit. It is a small thing, perhaps, but it is enormously significant.

Last Christmas was a solemn festival in France. A million gifts, gifts of wool, were sent to the men in the trenches. Every soldier had a glass of champagne. But there was no merry-making. Masses were said at open-air altars erected back of the battle lines. In the old church at Thann in Alsace a French Christmas was celebrated for the first time in forty-four years. But it was a celebration of prayer, not of rejoicing.

This year, at least, midnight masses will be said in the churches of Paris, but afterward there will be no gaiety in the streets as in former years, no dancing pierrots and harlequins leading the maskers, no brilliant round of restaurant suppers, the beloved revelry of the Parisian.

So Paris on Christmas eve will go home through darkened streets with a prayer in her heart for all those who have died for France and for all those who must yet die.

## DESIGNED FOR SHALLOW LOT

Brick and Shingle House That Meets Conditions Frequently Existing in All Towns.

ATTRACTIVE IN EVERY WAY

Placing the Building With Its Wide Side to the Street is an Advantage, Both in the Matter of Looks and Conservation of Space—Porch Made Feature.

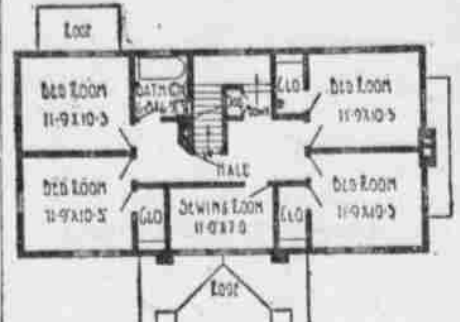
By WILLIAM A. RADFORD. Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building, for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 1827 Prairie avenue, Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

There is often found a condition, in laying out the streets of a town or city, which necessitates the formation of several lots which are not of standard depth. Such a condition might exist where two streets intersect at an angle other than 90 degrees. In such a case lots are laid out on two sides of the triangle as near to the apex as they may be carried without cutting down the depth to a value which will hamper the sale of the lots. If the angle of intersection of the streets is small, there will be a rather large piece of land which is usually not suitable for residences. That the size of this strip can be cut down by making the lots wider near the apex may be realized by properly designing the houses built on the shallow lots is a certainty. The shallow lots would be preferred property if assurance could be given that the houses would look well in their peculiar positions.

There are a few conditions which may be observed in order to produce

Because most city lots are deep and narrow, it is unusual to see a house designed as a city home which has its longer dimension across the front. Aside from the few cases already mentioned in which it is necessary to cut lots of peculiar shape on account of streets intersecting at sharp angles, the only place where a house with wide front is likely to be used is on a corner lot which offers frontage on two streets. Even if plenty of room is available, the usual custom is to build a house with its narrow side to the front, even though such a practice robs the owner of space which might be used as a large front or back lawn and presents the narrow side of the house as the only part that is ever noticed by passers-by.

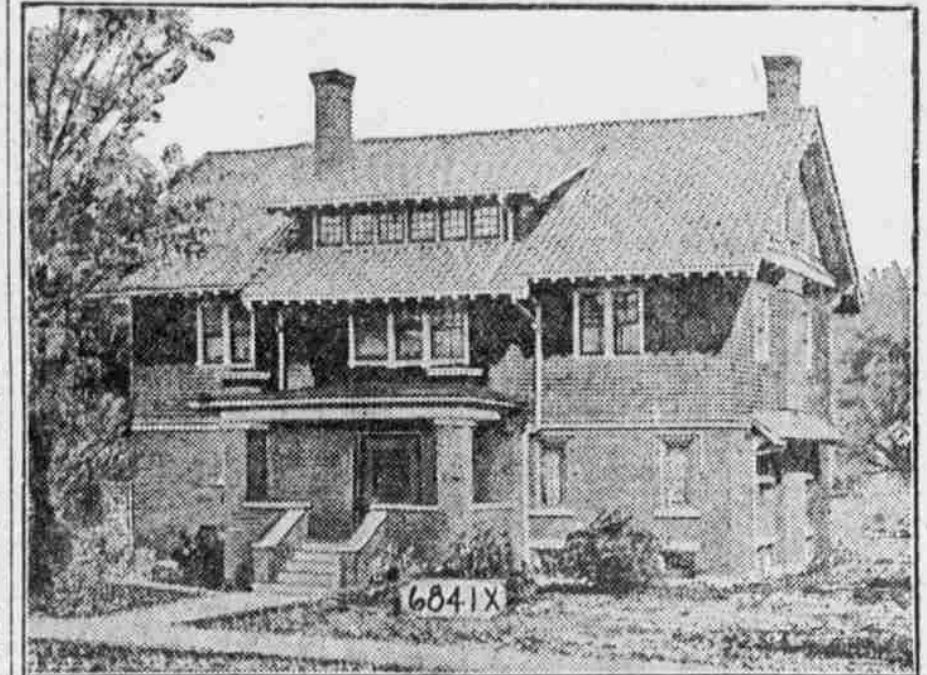
The design shown here presents an unusually attractive appearance from the street. Since the gable roof is placed with its ridge parallel to the street, the tile-covered surface, broken by the dormer with its six square windows, is a prominent feature. The upper floor is finished with shingles,



Second-Floor Plan.

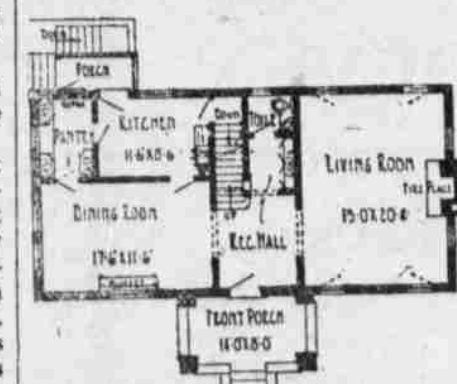
while the first floor walls are of brick, trimmed with white stone or stock terra cotta. Details are carefully worked out to produce a nicely balanced appearance. A special feature of the front porch construction is the manner in which the brick columns are carried up through the roof and capped with a white stone or terra cotta slab. Ornamental vases may be placed on these columns and flowers planted in them in the summer time. The canopy over the windows on either side of the chimney is covered with tile similar to that used on the roof.

The front door opens into a reception hall from which cases openings lead to the living room, dining room



the best possible effect in the appearance of the houses built on the narrow lots. Of course, it will be necessary to design these houses with the larger dimension across the front. This often helps the room arrangement rather than causing difficulty in grouping of rooms. As far as the exterior appearance is concerned, there is an advantage in the wider side of the houses being placed near the street, in that many pleasing effects are possible in the window and porch design, and the wall finish is more effective than in the case of a smaller wall surface. Another advantage of this type of house is found in the possibility of artistic and distinctive roof treatment.

The building line should, of course, be maintained in accordance with that which is established by the majority of



First-Floor Plan.

houses in the block. If the division of the property into lots is carried to the apex of the triangle with a lot on each street as the final division, each of the houses on these lots should be designed in the manner of a house which is to face on two streets. This division of lots is often preferred to the division which places a single lot at the apex, on account of the fact that the last house, in the latter case, is exposed on three sides to public view, and incidentally the owner of this lot has the improvement of two streets and two street sidewalks to contend with in case these developments are brought into effect.

The remaining small triangle which cannot be used for residence purposes is an excellent spot for the city or town to take up and improve with shrubbery, flower gardens and ornamental concrete or stone work. The brightening effect which these little beauty spots have in towns and cities is attested to by any number of examples of this treatment throughout the country.

and back through a hall to the toilet. The hall has space provided for coats.

The living room occupies the east end of the house on one side of the reception hall. The fireplace is built into the center of the wall opposite the hall. This room has two casement windows at each end and two windows on the side. The dining room is on the other side of the hall. A buffet is built under the window in the front wall of the house. Arrangements for serving meals are especially well handled, since the dining room may be entered from both the kitchen and the pantry. The latter room is a model of convenience. A wide shelf is built under the window with a case on either side. The refrigerator, which is laced from the rear porch, is handy to this shelf.

Four bedrooms, a sewing room and a bath open from the hall on the second floor.

### Improvement in Illumination.

Nearly every year has brought out a better, and at the same time a cheaper form of light. Nobody knows when experiments in electrical illumination will be terminated, or when some unknown form of light may be brought into use. The Museum Ethnological exhibit at Washington goes as far as the simple carbon filament light, but in the division of mechanical technology in the older building there are many interesting examples of early electric lamps and lighting apparatus together with later improvements showing the many phases of development in the art of illumination.

### No Peace for Him.

Willie was out walking with his mother, when she thought she saw a boy on the other side of the street making faces at her darling.  
"Willie," asked mother, "is that horrid boy making faces at you?"  
"He is," replied Willie, giving his coat a tug. "Now, mother, don't start any peace talk—you just hold my coat for about five minutes."

### A Stipulation.

"There's only one thing I ask," said the loser of a freak election bet.  
"What's that," inquired the winner.  
"If you're going to stand by and see that I eat all this molasses with a toothpick, I want you to admit that you won the bet and are insisting on its payment. Don't you pretend that you are my keeper."