

Christmas in Foreign Glimes

ENRICO DE MAISON



CHRISTMAS
ON A
GERMAN MAN
OF WAR

IF AN American, who had not seen much of the world, should awake on Christmas morn while a German, French, English, Italian, Swiss or Danish Christmas celebration was in progress in his vicinity, he would imagine himself within the exclusive confines of a home for the mentally incompetent.

The American Christmas is a matter-of-fact festive occasion. People begin buying presents a week before; they present them Christmas morning and the next day return to work, the entire affair forgotten until the following brings the season around again.

Not so in the countries across the water. They observe every tradition in the mother lands; they plan for weeks and the festivities which mark the birth of Jesus Christ are carried on for a week or more. The Christmas tree in Germany is allowed to remain decorated far into the next year, extending over a period of several months.

Unique ceremonies grace the Danish, French, Swiss and Scotch Christmas celebrations and that which the Teutons foster have been handed down from ages. In Mexico one of the treasured customs is the breaking of the Pinata, a tradition being connected with the little ceremony which ushers in Christmas day. A queerly constructed effigy of a woman is hung up in a corner of a room and a child blindfolded, armed with a stick, proceeds to dislodge the old woman from her position close to the ceiling. When the feat is accomplished the presents contained under the covering of the dress of the figure are distributed.

The beauty of that little game is the uncertainty attending the possibility of the woman being dislodged and second, the uncertainty as to whether the less favored of the family circle will draw any presents from the treasure store beneath the skirts of the woman.

Christmas, of course, is observed only in Christian countries, but some heathen, in fact, nearly all of them, have one day or another on which to receive and send presents to their friends and others who are not friends. In countries ruled by absolute monarchies, the rulers are sometimes afraid to open their gift receptacles for the reason that oftentimes treacherous persons inclose fancy little bombs not marked in the invoice. Of course such undesirable persons do not have any more Christmas to celebrate, affairs being arranged in that manner if they are caught.

While the Christmas idea is practically the same in most countries of the globe which observe the day, there is a great variety of presents and a certain nation's desire for gifts made in wide variance to that which the next door neighbor believes in. Germans as a rule give the children presents, most of which are made in this country, while Americans are always particular about buying the babies toys marked "made in Germany."

A Frenchman told a clever little story at a Christmas banquet in Paris a year ago, which ran along on that line. He was enamored with a beautiful young lady whose home was on Rue de Boulevard. She was of artistic taste, so he studied her desire in painting creations for three weeks before Christmas. At last he came to the conclusion that probably an oil painting by a noted French artist might please her. He took special pains to hunt out a store where he might procure one. He did and put several weeks' salary into the gift.

He had it delivered Christmas morning and received a cordial note of thanks from the young lady, who unfortunately had not thought to purchase anything for him. This, of course, was embarrassing to both parties, but that evening while fondling the creation in his presence she happened to scan the back of the portrait. It said: "Made in Hoboken, N. J." She was in the midst of thanks and an embarrassing explanation of why she hadn't sent him a present, when she noticed the birthmark of the oil painting. She stopped, and they haven't spoken to each other since, according to the story.

All of which goes to show that the value of a gift more than the spirit which the giver exhibits



THE WEINACHTSMAN
IN GERMANY



TREE FOR CHILD MODELS IN PARIS

is taken into consideration by some persons. The young man, probably, was sorry for the abrupt termination of his friendship with the young lady, but perhaps it was for the best. That was his version of it, anyhow.

Most English speaking nations celebrate Christmas just as we Americans do, but each has its little self-made variation. In Italy they celebrate with a grand dance, as a rule, and they take great pains to be attired in gaudy raiment. The Danish are very deliberate about their Christmas festivities and great fetes and gifts are the order of the day. The Swiss are fervent in their worship of the Saviour on that day and the little children dressed for gala affairs parade the streets in order that their parents may look at them and compare them with the "kids next door."

Many persons who have read much history and who have been able to persuade themselves that the present century is all wrong as to the date of the birth of Christ, are skeptical as to whether we should observe the sacred day when we do. Estimates as to when Christ was born extend clear from June to January 26.

Prior to the fourth century Christmas was not observed on December 25, for there was no period of uniformity in observing the day among the early churches. The skeptical persons who have studied the thing from end to end say that on December 25 it rained in Judea and then attention is called to the Biblical statement that shepherds were watching their flocks when Christ was born. Now how could they watch their flocks when it was raining? Is the argument of the unbelievers that December 25 is the correct day of feast.

One person who is not skeptical declared that perhaps they didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain in those days. But of course that is no argument. The chances are the calendars have been changed so much that the original December 25, if hunted down, would be found flitting with May 1. Of course the correct day upon which to worship has much to do with the feeling of Christians in the matter, but at the same time, if the event is properly observed the time of observance is but a detail.

Many good churchmen who seldom attend church on Sundays find Christmas an excellent day to attend church because it only falls on Sunday once in seven years and it doesn't break in on their weekly holiday morning nap.

Millions of dollars are spent every year in every country of the globe for presents. It is declared in mercantile circles that the United States in

proportion to population is the biggest national distributor of gifts.

There are many concerns in Germany, England and France which confine themselves exclusively to the manufacture of gifts such as are exchanged only during the celebration of the birth of Christ. Besides being a holiday which should be devoted to worship of Jesus Christ, it is a day which is looked forward to by merchants as a big source of profit.

In other countries, as in America, there are many small Christmas tragedies enacted because of the dislike which some folks take to gifts and because of the thoughtlessness of others in omitting some of their friends. Some make it a rule, and advertise it well, that they have decided to confine gifts to the immediate family circle, so that none will take offense if they receive no gifts from their hitherto cherished friends. Of course the ones who are notified of the change in the routine are careful to scratch off the names of the friends who have eliminated them so that when Christmas comes there is no needless embarrassment.

The poets once sang: "It is not the gift, but the spirit of the giver," and also "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth." There are dozens of little Christmas axioms of that kind which are used and misused toward the end of the year. That first saying has been cleverly shifted about in this manner: "It is not the gift, but the price which the giver putteth into the gift."

The proper Christmas spirit as told from the pulpit is far from that which many follow out in selecting presents. Mother countries exhibit less interest in costly gifts than does America. Travelers in countries of the old world have been surprised at the great number of Christmas presents which are home-manufactured. Several weeks before the glad event, the families sit themselves down in their rooms and start, secretly, work upon the Christmas gifts. In the country districts of certain parts of America this custom is still retained.

Long a Temperance Worker.

"Mother" Stewart, who died recently, was 92 years old. She devoted her life to the temperance cause. Mrs. Stewart established the first W. C. T. U. in Ohio at Osborn in 1873. In 1876 she visited England and organized the first W. C. T. U. in that country. Following the civil war she lectured extensively in the southern states on behalf of the war sufferers.

Five years ago "Mother" Stewart became interested in the teaching of Alexander Dowie and visited Zion City where she remained one year, since which time she lived with friends at Hicksville. Until five years ago she resided in Springfield, O., where she led in many temperance crusades. Scarcely a woman in America could boast of the praise from pulpit and press like "Mother" Stewart.

Sees Great Future For Siberia.

More than 500,000 persons emigrated from European Russia to Siberia in 1907. Vice-Consul Chandler of Dally reports, and of this record-breaking number fewer than ever before returned to their homes. Every colonist arriving in Siberia receives 37 acres of land free, paying no taxes the first three years and only half the regular taxes the next three.

Siberia imports \$10,000,000 worth of goods by caravan from China annually, almost entirely tea, while Siberia exports to China only \$750,000 worth of articles annually, and many of these originate in European Russia.

THE SAME FAMILY.

An official of the department of commerce and labor, who had been directed by his chief to draw up a summary of the conclusions of certain distinguished authorities on engineering, met with disaster not long ago, when he had occasion to refer to certain statements of A. R. Colquhoun, the British engineer.

The official had been told that after Mr. Colquhoun's name there should be

placed the letters "M. I. C. E." (Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers). "That's easy to remember," the official had said, adopting an easy system of mnemonics. "M. I. C. E." spells "mice."

This memory system was of little avail, however, for when the official handed in his summary the letters after Mr. Colquhoun's name were "R. A. T. S."—Lippincott's.



State Journal

ANNOUNCES its third annual bargain week during which subscriptions will be accepted for the whole year or 1909 at the cut price of only \$3 without Sunday, or \$4 including Sunday. This Bargain Rate is good only during the week of December 21 to 28 and the regular rates after that date will be \$4 and \$5. All new subscriptions commence January 1 and continue until January 1, 1910 at the \$3 and \$4 rate. All papers stopped at the end of that time without any effort on your part. One reason why this cheap price can be made on such a big newspaper is that everybody pays in advance, thus having no dead-beat bills. You pay only for your own paper this way. Next, by cutting out traveling solicitors' salaries, hotel bills and railroad fare, and doing all business through Uncle Sam's mails at a cost of only a couple cents. When an agent calls on you to present a proposition, remember you pay every cent of his salary and expenses; in most cases the solicitor gets more than you are making. It's a wasteful method and you pay for the waste. Everybody is trying to dodge the middleman—here's a chance to cut him out. The Journal does not print liquor advertisements or unclean medical stuff accepted by other state dailies. Why not protect your family from impure advertising? The Journal is not under obligations to a political clique because it has no job to hold or none to get. It is free to treat every subject in the interests of the people. No matter about your politics, during the legislative session you will find The State Journal the one newspaper whose reports are completest, fairest and earliest. We are right on the ground and spend the money to get the news. Remember, just this one week of cut-price and then back to the old rate. Why not try this big state paper until January 1, 1910, at this low price. Send your money to

State Journal, Lincoln, Nebraska

Santa's Biography

Santa Claus, the most widely known and popular individual on earth, was born so long ago that it would not be ladylike for him to acknowledge it, so nobody knows his exact age. Neither is it known just where he was born, nor who his parents were, but they must have been eminently respectable people, for everybody nowadays claims kin with him. He is the only untitled person whom nobody calls "Mister," and he is a bachelor of excellent repute. Although he gives away more at Christmas than Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Rockefeller ever thought of giving, he is not classed with the millionaires. Still he shows a preference for that class and he puts more in their stockings than he puts in the stockings of the poor. Perhaps he has a taste for fine hosiery. Some bachelors do. In

any event, the fact remains that the rich get more out of him than the poor do. Maybe he is not altogether to blame for that. Anyway he doesn't ride around in an automobile. This may be because he wants to save more to give away. At the same time he doesn't ride in the street cars. So there you are.

Santa Claus is the only truly religious person, for he never asks anybody what church he belongs to before taking up his stocking to fill it. Neither does he care a continental about politics, and he never votes. He is especially fond of children, and the children are so dead stuck on him that they want him to come around every day in the year. Their parents, however, don't feel so much that way about it, and Santa Claus kindly con-

siders their feelings in the matter. He knows enough not to be anxious to work a good thing to a frazzle.

Nobody knows where Santa Claus lives in the summer, also the spring and fall and most of the winter, but wherever it is it must be a healthy place, because he always shows up at Christmas looking so fat and jolly that really he ought to advertise the location and take in boarders. There is one thing certain, if he did there wouldn't be any "No-Children-Taken" signs around the establishment.

Santa Claus confines his attention almost exclusively to mankind, the lower animals, except the reindeer, having no pull with him whatever. This is a well-known fact in natural history, which may be proved by pictures of Santa Claus and his holiday turn-out coming over the snowy roofs.

When Santa Claus dies there will be the biggest funeral ever heard of, but there is not much likelihood of that event ever happening as long as there are any children alive. When they are all gone Santa Claus will go too, for what's the use of his monkeying with grown-ups?

RECORD HARD TO BEAT.

Harper's Weekly Confident It Has Discovered Meanest Woman.

The meanest woman in the world has been discovered. She lives at Penatanguish, on the Maine coast. Willie Boggs, a little orphan who works like a man and saves all he earns in the hope of going to college, asked her if she didn't want a mess of clams. She did. Willie took the

basket and the clam-digger, hastened down to the beach at low tide, and, after two hours' hard work, returned with a bushel of quahogs.

"How much do I owe ye?" the meanest woman inquired.

"Why—er"—little Willie hesitated, knowing that she wouldn't pay the regular market price. 20 cents—"why—er—I guess about fifteen cents, Miss Prudence."

"All right," said she, and handed him a dime.

"But that's only ten cents," Willie modestly objected.

"That's right," Miss Prudence reassured him. "I'm charging ye five cents for the use of the clam-digger."

And the clam-digger was one she had borrowed from a neighbor that morning.—Harper's Weekly.

If one is sufficiently curious about what is going to happen to-morrow he will never commit suicide.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Peculiar Classifications.

A Florida judge ruled that mullet were not fish, but birds, because they had gizzards. The customs officials in New York ruled that frogs were fish and must pay duty as such. A game warden in Maine gained popularity by declaring oysters were game and so acquired jurisdiction. And now comes a decision from the custom-house that bagpipes are toys and can not be classed as musical instruments for purposes of taxation.—Florida Times-Union.

Church Prayer-Meeting

A large church in Chattanooga, Tenn., has a thermometer fixed upon its wall, whose highest point numbers its entire church membership, and whose mercury is set at the number in attendance on the church prayer-meeting. There must be something startling about this to look at in black and white if the church prayer-meeting is attended in proportion to its membership as it is in many of our

Christian churches. It is said that the church prayer-meeting is a sure indication of the spiritual condition of the church.

Preserving the Peace.

At the muzzle of a gun a Milwaukee man tried to force his wife to make up a quarrel. Well, that's the way international peace is made and preserved.—Cleveland Leader.

Lesson in Accuracy.

Register of Deeds Charles C. Maas, a candidate for re-election, is taking in all sorts of religious and civil celebrations and ceremonies these days, and on a recent Sunday afternoon he started out to witness the laying of a cornerstone of the new Jewish temple being erected by the congregation Anshe Stand, at No. 452 Sixth street.

Mr. Maas had been in the Ghetto district before, but he had some dif-

ficulty in finding the place where the cornerstone was to be laid, so he approached a bright looking little Jewish girl, perhaps ten years of age, and said:

"Little girl, can you tell me where they're laying the cornerstone of the new temple?"

"No, I can't tell you where they're laying the cornerstone," replied the youngster, "but it's in the middle of the next block on the other side of the street that they're building the synagogue."—Milwaukee Free Press.