

Christmas in Foreign Climes

BY ENRICO DE MAISON



CHRISTMAS IN A GERMAN MAN OF WAR'S HOME

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 Christmases 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 Chanler of Dalny 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.

A POSER.



Mrs. Whim—You needn't say woman has no mechanical genius. I can do anything on earth with only a hair-pin.

Mr. Whim—Well, sharpen this lead-pencil with it.

An Experienced Walker. Champion Hayes of Marathon fame, praised at a dinner in New York a walker.

"He is a walker?" someone said. "Yes," said Mr. Hayes, "and the next race he enters, mark me, he will win."

"Why, I didn't know he had had any experience as a walker," said the other in a puzzled voice. Mr. Hayes laughed.

"No experience as a walker, eh?" said he. "And the fellow's owned an \$80 second-hand motor car for the last two years!"

\$100 Reward, \$100.

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.

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Mrs. Crimsonbeak—That's like the selfish men! Don't want the women to have any privileges!

"I forgot to say, dear, that the island is only used for convicts!"

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