

Christmas in Foreign Climes

BY ENRICO DE MAISON

A FAR CRY

The Story of a Happy Christmas
By MAGLYN DUPREC

(Copyright, 1908, by Short Story Publishing Co.)

It had not been easy for John Wellington, Sr., to select his Christmas gifts this year, although his old wife and one or two servants were all for whom he had to provide. It was Christmas eve, and he had been through bookstores, where handsomely bound volumes of story writers, philosophers and poets were displayed on every counter; through brilliantly lighted jewelry stores, where precious stones gleamed softly against backgrounds of rich velvet; through the perfumed shop of the florist, where delicate blossoms from famous greenhouses breathed forth a fragrance that gave the lie to the bitter wind and swirling snow outside. With each he had left a generous check, but always with an unsatisfied feeling that he was paying for something he did not care to have. Finally, he had been lured into a shop whose windows displayed an attractive lot of toys for small boys, and he had selected from its almost endless store of guns, wagons, wonderful animals and ear-splitting "wind instruments," a red tin horn, costing him only 25 cents.

This had given him more satisfaction than any purchase he had made for many times that amount.

The other parcels he had ordered delivered, but this he had carried himself, as though it were something too precious to be trusted to other hands. It was this that he unwrapped before

wife. "You're right, mother. I did think it best. I would rather have seen him dead than worthless, and I knew if he had worth, he would conquer himself, and rise without my aid, more of a man than with it." She put her arm around his neck and patted his cheek. "He has risen somewhere, father. I know it. He could not be your son and fall," she said, the loyalty and love of a lifetime lighting her face with a soft radiance.

He took up the tin horn from the table where he had laid it, and fondled it as if it were fraught with memories, instead of merely recalling them.

"It's ten years since he left," he said, "what a man he must be now—31 to-night. But I was thinking, when I bought this, of the time when he was such a little yellow-haired toddler, and almost drove us wild with just such a horn as this at Christmas time."

She took the horn from him, and looking dreamily at it, said: "We'll keep this, father; maybe Jack's boy will some time make these old walls ring with it at Christmas time as he made them ring, himself, so many years ago."

"God grant that he may!" said the old man. "Do you remember, mother, how he used to come chasing down the street after me when I would start off to my work in the morning?"

"Yes, and how you would pick him up and carry him back to me," she said. "And do you remember the time we came near losing him, the day he ran away to hunt you in the city?"

"Who that saw you then could forget it, mother?" and he took her hand in his and drew her down to the chair beside him. They sat hand in hand in the silence, given over to voiceless memories of the past, only the ticking of the old clock keeping an accompaniment to their dreams of other Christmas Eves. They were sitting thus an hour later when a servant opened the door and said, respectfully: "There is a telephone call for Mr. Wellington."

"Can't you answer it, Mary?" the old man asked, loath to leave his comfortable chair and dreams.

"No, sir. It is especially for you. A long-distance call, I think."

"Who the deuce wants to talk to me from a distance," he said, as he rose and went to the telephone in the hall.

"Hello, who is this?" he asked, as he picked up the receiver. "Yes, this is John Wellington."

"A party in Chicago wants to talk to you," said the long-distance operator.

"All right, put him up. Who in thunder do I know in Chicago," he ejaculated to himself, pressing the receiver closer to his ear.

A peculiar wailing sound was all he heard, and a puzzled expression crept over his face. "Talk a little louder. I can't understand a thing you are saying," and he listened more intently. The wailing grew a little louder, but still it was nothing but an inarticulate wail, and for a moment the old man looked thoroughly disgusted.

"Confound it!" he shouted at last. "You sound exactly like a mewling infant. I don't know what you are saying."

Then a man's laugh was heard, followed by "A merry Christmas, father. You know exactly what he sounds like, but you don't know what he is saying," and there was another laugh, ringing joyful, as in his boyhood days, and the old man knew he had found his own.

"Jack, Jack, my boy, is that you?" he shouted, staggered by the unexpected joy of his sudden discovery.

"None other, father, but what you just heard was another Jack, the second Jack Wellington, Jr. He has just arrived, and his command of English is somewhat limited, but he was doing his best to introduce himself, and invite you and grandma to Christmas dinner with him, and—"

"Oh, Jack, Jack, where have you been all these years?" sobbed the old man.

"Catch the Lake Shore Limited to-night, father, bring mother with you, and I'll tell you all about it when you get here. You've got time. You see, father, I've kept track of you and mother all along. I wasn't going to let anything happen to the old folks, and—" there was a catch in his voice, "I've got the right kind of a report to make, father. Never fear that."

The old man could scarcely contain himself as he listened, pressing the receiver closer and closer to his ear, as though he feared some bit of the precious news might escape him. Then he shouted: "All right, son, we're coming on the next train." He left the receiver dangling on the wall, and started on a run to the room where his wife sat, shouting as he went: "Mother, mother, it's Jack—our boy. Get ready, mother. I'm going to have a cab here in 20 minutes to catch the train for Chicago." She had risen with a wild look on her face, and had started to question him, but he shook his head, saying: "No, no, I'll explain later. Not got time now. We're going to spend Christmas with Jack and his boy."

He started for the phone again, and then dashed back, exclaiming: "Pack the tin horn if you don't pack another thing. Any child that can cry loud enough to be heard all the way from Chicago ought to have breath enough to blow that horn," and he dashed again to the phone to order a cab.

Natural Deduction.

Peckem—I can't understand why so many people look upon Friday as the unluckiest day of the week.

Mrs. Peckem—Why, do you consider it lucky?

Peckem—It must be. Few people get married on that day.—Chicago Daily News.



CHRISTMAS ON A GERMAN MAN OF WAR



THE WEINACHTSMAN GERMANY



BREAKING THE CHRISTMAS PINATA IN MEXICO



TREE FOR CHILD MODELS IN PARIS

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 treasurable 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

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 Christian 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 puteth 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 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.



"I Bought It for a Memory, Mother."

the big, old-fashioned fireplace where his wife sat, as soon as he had come in from the storm-swept street. As he held it up where the red gleam of the firelight was caught on its rounded surface, a look of surprise swept over the gentle old face near him.

"Why, John, you never bought that! Surely they handed you someone else's purchase."

"No," he said, his face growing suddenly tender, "I bought it."

His wife, with a woman's quick instinct, divined the reason. She stepped nearer to him and laying her hand on his arm, looked at him with pleading eyes, saying: "But why, father?"

It was the first time she had called him father for a decade past, and there was a pitiful break in the old man's voice as he replied: "I bought it for a memory, mother."

That was the first time in ten years he had called her mother, and at the sound of the name, she, too, gave way—gave way, womanlike, leaning her head on his arm, and sobbing out a grief that had silently stolen the roses from her cheeks and the light from her eyes as the years had gone by. The old man's arm went round her lover-fashion, while his hand gently stroked her soft white hair. "There, there, mother, dear. The boy's not dead. I'll find him for you, if I have to hunt the world over. I was to blame," he said, with such infinite regret in his voice that the old wife reached up and drew his head down to her face and whispered: "Don't take it so, father. I know you thought you were doing the best for the boy when you sent him away to do or die on his own account, and somehow I feel tonight, as I have never felt before, that he may be found."

As she spoke, something in her tones made him feel that at last his wife had forgiven him entirely for the decision which, ten years before, had robbed her of her only child. Always before this he felt through all her gentle and kindly care for him, that tucked away somewhere in the silent recesses of her being there was just a little bitterness against him for the childless state he had brought upon her. But now that he, himself, had come to repent it, he knew beyond a doubt that the last drop of that bitterness had been swallowed up in a grief grown sweet from being shared.

He sat down in his great arm chair and looked up with misty eyes at his