

# Christmas IN MANY LANDS



Christmas in Paris—Santa Claus has an Xmas Party

## How the Feast of the Nativity Is Celebrated from Greenland to Australia.

Copyright, 1914, by International Syndicate. It is interesting as well as instructive to know the manner in which the various Christian nations do homage to Him whose birth and mission laid the foundation of our religion. These celebrations reflect in a measure the conception of the countries of this glorious event as well as indicate the traditions of the people on the subject. So curious and quaint are many of these festivities that they may almost be classed among the folk lore of the people.

**Germany.** Germany has been called the Christmas country, due to the fact that the celebration of the Nativity is carried out with more feasting and merriment than in any other land, for the Germans while a brave and vigorous nation are sentimental and childlike in their pleasures. They have produced a Christmas that is a very Paradise for children and at which arises the old delight to play at being young again around the big Christmas tree set up in the German home. Early in life the child is taught to love the festival, and the impression remains so permanent that no matter where the German may be later in life when December the twenty-fifth rolls around you will find him celebrating just as he did in his childhood days.

The German housewife begins her Christmas preparations early in November and makes many of the gifts with her own hands. Always thrifty, she never wastes time in idleness, and all sorts of knitted garments are found among the presents to her friends. There is much secrecy about certain cupboards to which Mother

always carries the key. The festivities begin on Christmas Eve at midnight when the door of a room which has been kept closed earlier in the evening so that Santa Claus may not be disturbed at his work is thrown open and the children run in and dance about the Christmas tree—the common property of the family. Each person's gifts are placed in a pile on the table and the parents give them out amid wild shrieks of delight from the children. After awhile the youngsters are hustled off to bed as their elders must be in church at five in the morning to hear a sermon on the Birth of the Saviour of Mankind and to assist in the singing of the carols. New prayer books are the fashion for the morning service as these are popular as gifts. After church there is one round of visiting and feasting. The poor are always remembered and every cottage has Christmas cheer. Much of this is provided by the Royal Family, the municipal authorities and charitable societies. The Empress and Crown Princess are always interested in this work and it is safe to say that even today with the country at war the poorest child will not be forgotten.

**Austria, Italy and Spain.** In Austria the celebration is much the same except at the palace, where the aged Emperor gathers his family about him for a reunion. The dinner, however, lacks the jollity of the royal feast in Germany. Franz Joseph always remembers the unfortunates of Vienna, and in each city district there is a huge tree and presents distributed to the poor at his expense. The Italian spends a merry Christmas with bonfires and fireworks on the night of the twenty-fourth. He goes to midnight mass after a gay time on the streets, and when the dawn breaks on Christmas he sleeps for a while and then pays visits to his friends. Cake, candy, wines and fruits are kept on the buffets of every household and the callers are expected to enjoy themselves. Their



Christmas in West Africa

visit to the Bambino—the doll made to represent the Christ Child, is one of the features of an Italian Christmas celebration. In Spain there is a two-day holiday—Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, both of which are celebrated by a mixture of religious services and feasting. There are three masses on Christmas Day and one at midnight of December twenty-fourth. The latter is well attended, almost every family being represented, servants included. In the old days the servants usually preceded the family to the church, each playing on a different musical instrument. The service is picturesque—the organ peals and the choir chants as the priests bring from under the altar the figure representing the new born Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes of gold and white, while the congregation to a man fall down and cross themselves in mute adoration. The service is called the "Cock-crow Mass." At 1:30 A. M. the crowds go home. On Christmas Day the poor come to pay their rent to their landlord and he gives them a gift, usually a piece of salt fish for luck. During the afternoon the poorer classes parade the streets dressed in gaudy clothes. At Seville the fashionable driveway is crowded with people who go there only on Christmas. Sometimes there is a bull fight in the afternoon.

**Norway.** The Norwegian's most delicate compliment to a lady on Christmas is to send her a brooch or a pair of earrings. These presents are packed in hay and she must hunt them as one does "a needle in a haystack." No



A German Christmas Tree

reason can be found for this, the people merely saying that it is an old custom. One of the prettiest established usages of Scandinavia is the dinner to the birds. On Christmas morning every gable, gateway or barn door is decorated with a sheaf of corn fixed on top of a tall pole. This is for the Birds' Christmas dinner. Mummies (Kris Kringle) are particularly active during the Christmas season in the north countries. In Northern France the Birth of the Saviour is celebrated by eating,

drinking and merrymaking and in family reunions. The Christmas tree is set up and children are given gifts by Santa Claus. In Paris the boulevards throng with merry-makers, and turkey, plum pudding and foods popular in England are on the menu cards. In Southern France the miracle plays of medieval times are given in the churches. They begin with the singing of the Shepherds outside the church asking if they may enter. This being granted they come in followed by the Shepherdesse, who walk three by three, carrying a tree festooned

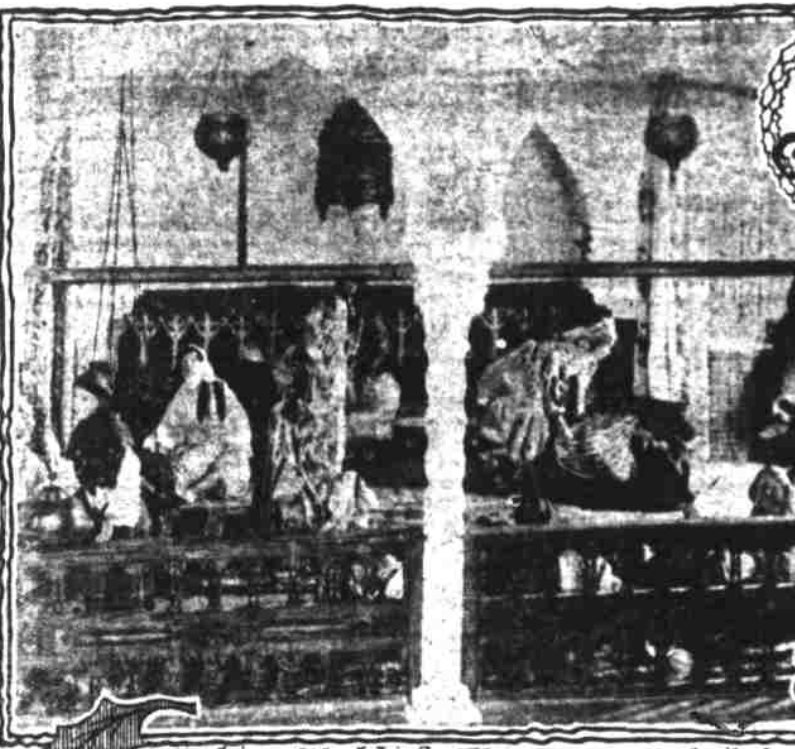


Xmas in Greenland

with apples. They pass to the baptismal fonts which represent the palace of Herod. The King is seated on a raised throne between his two ministers. Lawyers stand about with books. Suddenly the Eastern star slides on a string to the pulpit, three knocks are heard and the Magi dressed in Oriental costume appear. They make known the object of their visit and Herod sends them to Bethlehem and they pass out as the shepherds and shepherdesses bow low. After they have prostrated themselves an angel comes to warn them that they should return to their country without visiting Herod again. The star appears as a guide; the wicked King rises and gives orders for the slaying of the innocents and the play is finished.

**Russia and England.** The Russians love to sing on Christmas and they have a number of poems which speak of the master of the house as the bright moon, the wife is the red sun, and the stars are the little children. Men go from door to door singing this song on Christmas morning and wishing the inmates a Merry Christmas. Mummery is also popular in Russia, the favorite disguise being that of Lazarus, the blind beggar. Sometimes the Mummies go from town to town in sleighs singing songs and amusing the populace in general. In the churches miniature representation of the Nativity is set up with a wax figure of the Child in the center. All sorts of crude figures were used, some made of paper and others of wood and china. All day long the people prostrate themselves before this shrine. England has her Yule Log, her baron of beef, her plum pudding, her mistletoe, her carols and her Christmas charades with the mummies. Many of these customs are rapidly dying out although royalty still has the baron of beef brought into the dining room on Christmas Day with some ceremony, the Yule Log still burns and carols are sung. Christmas is celebrated in all the British colonies, especially among the soldiers, who never fail to have their plum puddings and beef. In Australia, where the

weather is warm on Christmas, the people go out camping and have game and fish dinners in the forests. In India, the land of summer, tiger hunting parties are organized for the day, but the men always contrive to have some little reminder of the English Christmas for their dinner. **Africa and Greenland.** Away down in German East Africa the Germans have taught the negro the Christmas story, and in many homes the natives have their Christmas trees. At the missions there is a feast all day long with a tree full of gifts for the boys and girls who come to the mission school. Also in the West Indies the Christmas festival follows the customs of the countries of which they are colonies. For instance, Jamaica has an English Christmas as far as possible; Cuba, although free and independent, still clings to old Spanish customs, and likewise Porto Rico, Haiti follows French customs, while the Danish West Indies cling to the Scandinavian practices. In Greenland where the people for the most part are Catholic the natives set up a little Christmas tree. The walls of their houses are covered with religious pictures and a candle is placed before each one on Christmas Eve to light the way of the Virgin and the Child. In many South American lands where the Spanish idea prevails the people hold carnivals, and in one place the curious old Spanish custom of several men going outside of town and mounting ladders to look for the Wise Men is still in vogue. The Servians burn a Yule log on Christmas and believe that the ashes kept in the house during the coming year will bring health and prosperity to the family. As they are of the faith of the Greek Church the religious service is the same as that of Russia. All over the world, rich and poor in every land welcome the coming Christ with joy in their hearts. "At home, at sea, in many distant lands This Kingly Feast without a rival stands."



Arabian Wedding—This Group Contributed by the Wife of the Governor of Algiers

## WOUNDED SOLDIERS PLAY SANTA CLAUS

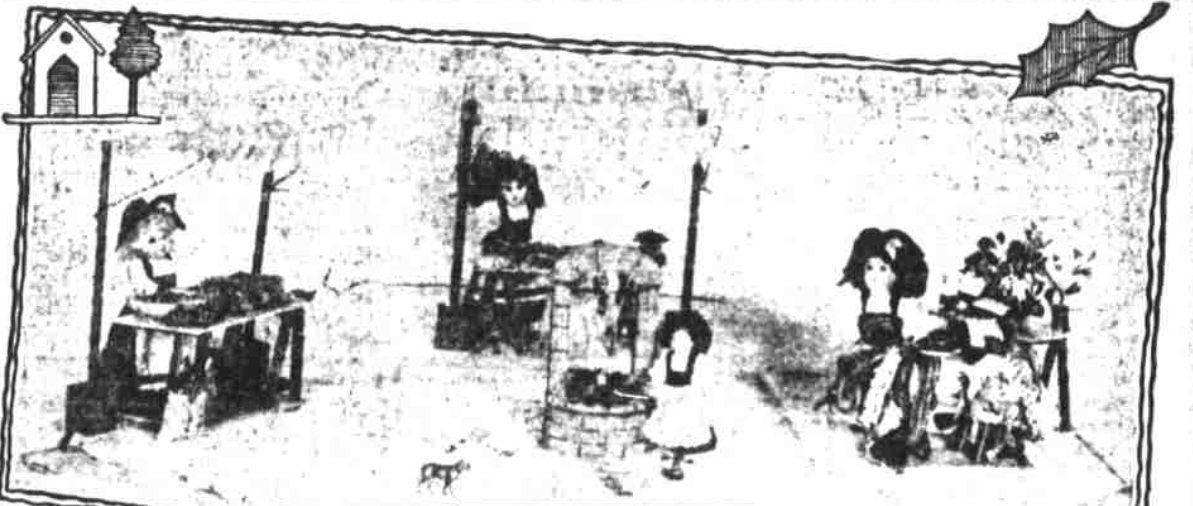


Polish Doll

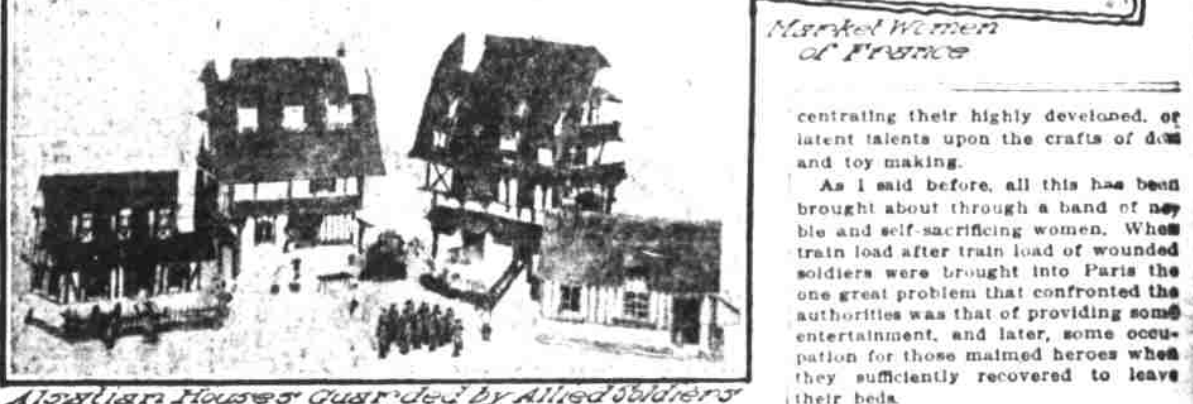
## Exquisite Dolls and Wonderful Toys Fashioned By Frenchmen Recovering from Their Wounds Form Marvellous Exhibit - Artistes of Old World Among the Contributors.

**By A. R. Parkhurst, Jr.** WHEN Santa Claus starts out on his rounds on Christmas Eve his sleigh will be filled with a bewildering assortment of dolls and toys such as this jolly old gentleman never dreamed of possessing before. In fact, Old Kris Kringle has been sorely perplexed ever since it was evident that the terrible struggle now being waged in all Europe would extend over the Christmas tide, for fear that the sources from which he usually recruited his stock of gifts for his army of friends on this side of the water might be cut off. With Germany and Switzerland sending little or nothing, things looked gloomy, but France came to the rescue and from this country has come such an assortment that makes even us grown-ups sigh with envy as we watch the rapturous youngsters clutching these exquisite dolls to their little bosoms. Just prior to Thanksgiving Day when that time-honored Christmas slogan is dinned into our ears and thrust into vision at every turn, which is none other than "DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY," those wealthy, hardworking and extremely patriotic New York women who have collected thousands upon thousands of dollars for the La Fayette Fund and the Relief Fund for

France, conceived the idea of importing the total output of the soldiers' handwork. An exhibition, known as Soldiers' in Toyland, was arranged under the auspices of the La Fayette Fund in the Old Knickerbocker Club building in Fifth Avenue and at once it sprang into tremendous popularity among the women of wealth and fashion. Prices far out of the ordinary were obtained and when one pauses to consider that every dollar thus spent is being appropriated to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of the war, it recalls to most of them what utter mockery that exquisite Yuletide greeting, Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards Men, is receiving in war-torn Europe this year. **Mlle. Thomson's Idea.** The idea of this doll and toy exhibition was conceived by Mlle. Valentine Thomson, well known in Paris as the editor of La Vie Feminine, the celebrated newspaper for women. A commission was formed by her to promote the scheme, those associated with her including the Baroness de Laumont, Mme. Sauterrie, Mlle. de Marmier, daughter of the Duc de Marmier de Choiseul; Comtesse Philippe de Las Cases, and Mme. La Verrier. It is as delegate of the Commission that brings Mme. La Verrier to New York, where she is taking an active part in the exhibition at the Knickerbocker Club. Her husband is president of the Chapal College in Paris, and in the course of a visit he paid to this country four years ago he lectured for the Alliance Francaise. It was as the guest of Mme. La Verrier that I visited the doll and toy bazaar and as we approached each group she had some charming story to tell in connection with this or that doll or toy, adding a personal touch to the whole tour of the huge room which could not have been obtained under less delightful auspices. There is nothing more interesting in the collection than the group of historical dolls made after some of the most famous persons in the world. Each is costumed correctly as to the period it represents, and also depicts accurately, in features, the persons for whom they stand. These dolls governed by Madame Bidons, Princess Matilde Bonaparte, Empress Eugenie and Viscount de Brun and others equally celebrated, were made under the direction of the managing director of the House of Margaine La Croix, himself a war



Market Women of France



Arabian House as Guarded by Allied Soldiers

cripple. The construction of other beautiful dolls was supervised by upwards of 1,000 workers from the House of Caillet Secours who were thrown out of work by the war. The Doucet House is represented by an exhibit of a group of dolls each two and a half feet tall and each representing some historical character. They show the actual damaska, lace, silks, satins and furs worn in earlier generations. There are still other groups dressed after paintings by Velasquez, Gainsborough, Van Dyke, Chardin and others. The Salenois factories of Sevres and Limoges have supplied individually modelled heads for these dolls. The group of Fairy Tale dolls are so less interesting than those of fashion and history. No set is more appealing than the military group in which every type of soldier now in the service of the Allies is shown. Each is correct as to uniform and every arm and branch of service each combatant is attached to, is shown. **An Algerian Idea.** The wife of the Governor of Algiers has contributed a set of dolls dressed as Arabians. This represents an Arabian wedding in an Arabian house, and the house is quite as interesting and delightful in craftsmanship as the little manikins that are participating in the ceremony at Hymen's altar. For every distinct group of dolls there is a set of furniture faithfully adhering to the period represented. There are delightful little chateaus, charmingly furnished, as well as quaint little farm houses with all accessories in and out of doors. The human side of the exhibition is seen in the story of a well-known Parisian wig maker which Mme. La Verrier delights to relate. Like all true Frenchmen, this wig maker is an artist. He enlisted in the French army, went to the front, was in the thick of the fight until an enemy's bullet lodged in his spine. Another struck him in the eye and when he was taken back to a field hospital it was found that he was paralyzed from the waist down and the injured optic sightless. His sufferings were intense, but he bore them like the hero he was. As his convalescent period arrived he was presented with a bald-headed doll, given some hair, a curler, and a pot of paste. His joy was a delight to behold. Monsieur set to work and ere long his deft fingers were accomplishing miracles that never had been wrought upon a doll before. These dolls were coiffured as no doll had ever been coiffured before. For weeks he lay upon his back, helpless, except to dress the hair of the myriad of dolls that were laid upon his bed each day. Now he is up and able to hobble about, the master of a new and useful art which will return to him and his dependent family a handsome living as long as he survives. **Artists Are Stricken.** Scores of other incidents such as interesting as that of the wig maker are related by Mme. La Verrier. Vast improvements have been made in the arts of doll and toy making through this war. Sculptors who responded to France's call to arms have been returned to the hospitals far from the battle fronts scarred and maimed for life. Some have lost their legs and in consequence are doomed to spend their remaining days in a wheel chair. Many famous painters called forth to return so terribly injured as to preclude all chance of their ever touching brush or canvas again. Many soldiers whose circumstances prior to the war did not afford them the opportunity to give vent to their artistic talents are now deprived of the trades that heretofore put bread into the mouths of the little ones dependent upon them. These sculptors, artists and artisans now are all con-

centrating their highly developed, or latent talents upon the crafts of doll and toy making.

As I said before, all this has been brought about through a band of noble and self-sacrificing women. When train load after train load of wounded soldiers were brought into Paris the one great problem that confronted the authorities was that of providing some entertainment, and later, some occupation for those maimed heroes when they sufficiently recovered to leave their beds.

### Women Learned Trades.

Mlle. Thomson and those of her commission set to work and diligently applied themselves to the art of doll and toy making. They mastered every detail of the craft and then returning to the bedside of their stricken charges they imparted to them the knowledge they had thus acquired. Naturally the soldiers at first were overjoyed to find some task they could accomplish without fatiguing themselves and in this way while away the tedium of long hours in bed. Quick to seize the idea, the soldiers applied themselves diligently, for before long they were told that the time was not far distant when they could become so proficient at their new trade as to earn a good livelihood therefrom. This gave an added zest to the work and before many weeks some of the most exquisite examples of the doll and toy crafts that Paris had ever seen were being sent from the military hospitals of Paris.

Many of the soldiers who learned these trades in their hospitals have so far recovered as to be out again, and groups upon scores of them have been sent broadcast through the villages and rural districts of France to impart their knowledge to the afflicted of those districts and in this way France is acquiring a new industry that before long will rival even the reputation of Germany so long enjoyed as the toy mart of the Old World.