

ful, just as it is in America. The days pass slowly, but finally Christmas Eve arrives. At 6 o'clock the climax of excitement is reached. The father rings the bell, the doors of the long-sealed-up Christmas room fly open, and there stands the entrancing tree in all its majesty. The children are admitted into what seems to them like Paradise. They find not only the wonderful tree, resplendent with tinsel lights, candles and gifts, but also a table spread for each of them, and they hurry to see whether their hopes and wishes have been realized.

In some parts of Germany, Scandinavia and Holland, the custom obtains for all the children to say a prayer to Kriss Kringle at the chimney corner on Christmas Eve, asking him to fill their stockings for Christmas morning. They confide in him as to what they would like. Kriss Kringle, Christ Kindlein, is the German Santa Claus who is supposed to come down the chimney with gifts for all good children.

The American boy would probably feel very much at home in either Russia, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway or Sweden at Christmastide. In these north countries the customs are very like those of the homeland. But in the Southern European nations, where Christmas is more a religious than a home festival, he would find a holiday very different from ours.

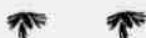
This is especially true of Italy. Italian children do not hang up their stockings at Christmas or have a Christmas tree. On Christmas morning they are taken by their mothers to the churches. There they are called on to recite hymns of praise to the Madonna and Child in the "Presepio," which is a representation of the stable of Bethlehem where Christ was born. Within the rocky cavern are wax images often as large as life of the Madonna and Child, of Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men, and images of animals.

The children of the Sunday schools of the Evangelical churches in Italy sometimes have trees, however, though there are not many of them as yet. The branches are laden with yellow oranges, with silvered balls, and with strings of gilt paper. The lighted candles are usually of the three national colors of Italy: red, white and green. The family festival of Christmas eve is the chief delight of Italian children. There are fish, eels, nuts, cakes, fruit or vegetables for old and young. On the next day the Christmas dinner is enjoyed, the chief dishes being capon and pangallo, a sort nut-and-fruit cake.

Very few American boys and girls would care to spend the Christmas holidays in France where no one pays much attention to Christmas and where no presents are exchanged. The children who have no "home with a little 'h'" in France and who are being reared in the convents, often have some beautiful Christmas ceremonies, the spirit of which might well be introduced into other lands. For weeks before Christmas the convent children begin to prepare for the convent celebration. The crib with the Christ Child is the chief center of attraction, and the reward of good behavior is the privilege of helping make the crib. A gold straw is laid for each kind act and

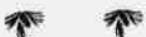
for each day well spent. The highest reward of merit is the privilege of laying the wax figure in the crib. The children of the poor are always kept in mind by the convent child. It is the custom to get ready presents of fruit, necessaries, clothing, etc., for these "unfortunate children of God." When the children receive their Christmas boxes on Christmas Eve, the first gift taken from these is placed in the basket for the poor. After the solemn midnight mass on Christmas Eve, which all the children attend, they are given something to eat; and then they all return to bed to sleep till late on Christmas morning.

There is no tree and no hanging up of stockings for the native Cuban children on Christmas Day. Santa Claus would have a hard time looking for his usual place to enter the houses, for in Cuba the houses are built without any chimneys. There is a midnight feast on Christmas Eve, but children have no part in it. The pleasures of Christmas gifts are reserved till "King's Day," January 6. This day is celebrated in commemoration of the visit of the Wise Men of the East who brought their offerings to the infant Saviour. It is at "King's Day," and not at Christmas that the Cuban children hang up their stockings and place their shoes when they go to bed the night before.



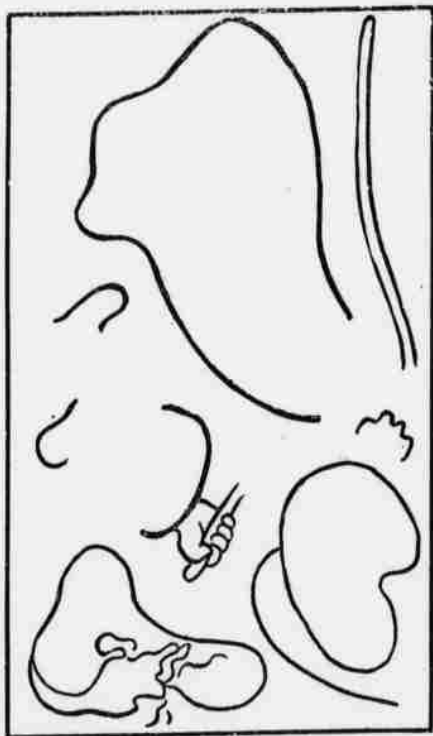
Conundrums.

- When is a beefsteak like an uncommon plant?
- When rare.
- Why are staffs of old men like Lent?
- Because they are lent on.
- When are hunters and stars alike?
- When shooting.
- When are cattle like fine liquors?
- When branded.
- Whose tongue is it that never speaks?
- The wagon's.



Uplifting the Public.

- Tim—There goes a man who has done much to arouse the people.
- Bim—Great labor agitator, I suppose?
- Tim—Naw; alarm clock manufacturer.

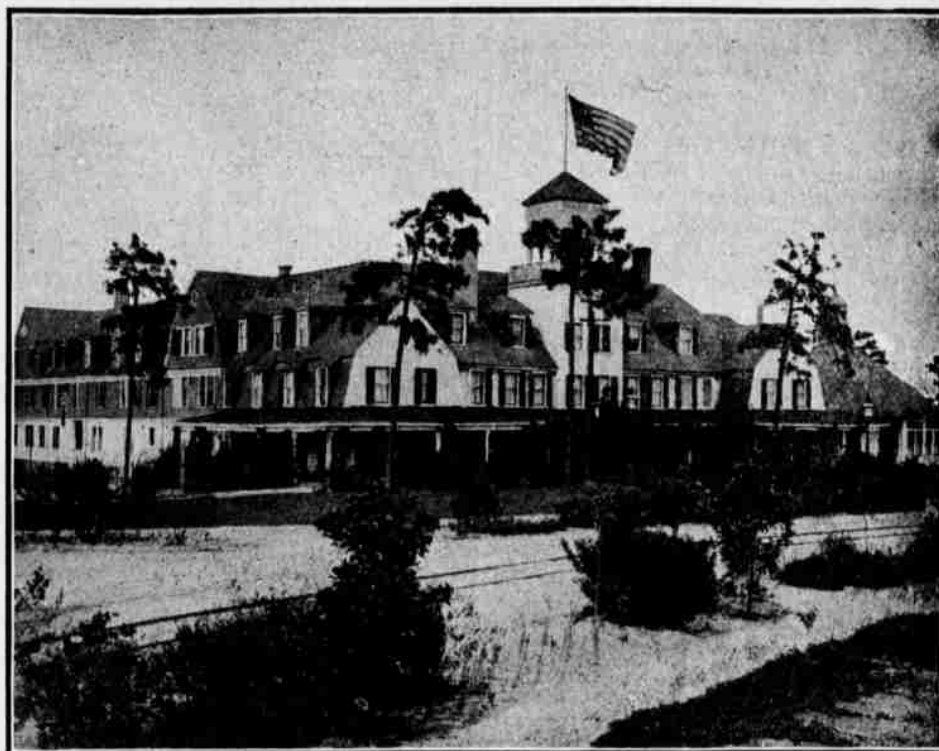


CUT-OUT PUZZLE PICTURE.

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