# CHRISTMAS WITH THE QUEEN

BY SARAH A. TOOLEY

If there is one season of the year which Queen Alexandra loves more than another I think it is Christmas. Around the festive season gathered the pleasantest associations of her youth. What gay, happy times she had as a child in the old Gule Palace, Copenhagen, when with her five brothers and sisters she danced around the Christmas tree on Holy Eve, while loving parents looked on. Then there were visits to her grandparents, the Landgrave William of Hesse and the Princess Charlotte, in their palace near-by, service at the Frue Kirke or the Chapel Royal, the giving and receiving of presents, wreathing the holly and mistletoe, clapping hands as the Yule logs blazed, and, the greatest delight of all, getting a new fairy story from Hans Andersen himself, an honored visitor to her childhood's home.

The Queen had nothing to learn about

Yuletide festivities when she quitted the land of the Vikings for Albion's shore; rather indeed was she coming to a land which had borrowed its customs from her Norse and German ancestors. Her Majesty's first Christmas in her adopted country was passed quietly at Windsor with the then sorrowing Queen, but in after years it became the custom to spend the season in her beloved Norfolk home with her husband, children, and retainers in good old English style, and for forty years the tradition, with a few exceptions, has been maintained.

When the King succeeded, the good folks at Sandringham feared that they had seen the last of the accustomed Christmas festivities, though some shook their heads knowingly, and declared that the Queen would never willingly forsake the old place. The forebodings were justified when it was announced in 1901 that the King and Queen would keep Christmas at Windsor. This was but following a national custom which had its beginning nearly a thousand years ago, when the Norman kings held their wassail on the Royal hill, and

"Many a carol old and saintly
Sang the minstrels and the waits."

There is indeed no Royal residence more intimately associated with the Christmas festivities of the Court than Windsor Castle, and it seemed in the order of things that His Majesty should elect to spend the first Christmas of his reign where his predecessors had done. It will be remembered that the indisposition of the Queen prevented the plans from being carried out, and compelled their Majesties to remain at Marlborough House. When the next anniversary came round it found the King and Queen enjoying the festive season as of old at Sandringham. Whether this is to be regarded as a precedent for the future it is unwise to prophesy, but in describing a Christmas with the Queen we have still to travel to Norfolk

We take the liberty of the designere of Christmas cards, and imagine that as the season approaches frost and snow come in its wake. I have seen Sandringham at all seasons of the year, and never is it more picturesque or exhilarating than when the pine woods are turned into shimmering wreaths and garlands of hoar frost, the moorland a carpet of snow, the lake in the park frozen over, and the broad gravel roads, which are the delight of the King, give out a metallic ring. Peacefully the hamlets and villages lie around, and here and there a red-tiled roof peeping through where the snow has melted in the sunshine. The estuary of the Wash gleams white in the distance, and the air is keen from over the North Sea.

The "Hall"—and I sympathize with the natives who cling to the old name in preference to the modern appellation of Sandringham "House"—stands out picturesquely, with its red-and-white Elizabethan architecture showing against the fir and pine trees. It is the centre from which radiates this Christmas-time kindness and good cheer for all the country-side. There is not an ailing or infirm person in any of yonder cottages but has received some token of the Queen's thoughts; not a child who does

not bless her for present or expected pleasures; and every laborer on the estate has received from the King a substantial addition to his Christmas fare. There is not a house, however humble, in the parishes around the Hall with an empty or even an ill-filled larder, nor anyone lacking warm clothing. For a great number of years it was the Queen's custom to give a red cloak to each girl and a red cap to each boy in the village school at Christmas, but though this is not as rigidly observed as formerly other things take their place.

Let us in imagination enter Sandringham House on Christmas Eve. Holly gleams on the walls and mistletoe hangs in the hall; crackling pine logs from the estate send pleasant gleams through the cosy rooms. Everywhere is the comfort and brightness which we associate with a country house at this season. Pleasant talk and laughter is heard on all sides, for their Majesties' family guests have arrived. "Granny" is all smiles and mystery, and the little ladies Alexandra and Maud Duff cannot extract one word as to what Santa Claus has got in store for them. The Queen enjoys her own surprise presents as much as the young people do theirs, when the special courier from Russia arrives bearing, according to the yearly custom, gifts from her beloved sister, the Dowager Empress, and other members of the Imperial Family.

If Christmas morn dawns clear and bright, and King Frost has done his duty, it is a fair scene of park, gardens, and lake on which the Queen looks out from her boudoir. Within all is pleasant confusion. Presents, I know not how many, from Her Majesty's kith and kin beyond the sea, and intimate friends nearer home, with piles of letters and dainty cards, cover the tables, while from the private telegraph downstairs comes message after message of greeting. The Queen invariably spends the early morning hours in her own apartments, and thither come children and grandchildren to wish her a merry Christmas. The Duke and Duchess of Fife's little girls being in the house get the first chance of seeing "Granny," but the pretty quartette of grandchildren from York Cottage, led by Prince Edward, are early on the scene, to be followed by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and by Prince and Princess Charles, who drive over from Appleton Hall if they are not already at Sandringham.

On this joyous morn Their Majesties have a complete family circle around them, save for the loved lost one, and to him the Queen's thoughts turn at this season, and she will slip away to the Duke of Clarence's old room, where everything remains as he left it, to place flowers upon the table, or to give some mute and loving token that he is not forgotten in the general rejoicing.

As the hour for service approaches, the roomy oak omnibus stands at the Hall door. The Queen and the Princesses enter, and drive to the pretty little parish church of St. Mary Magdalene in the park. The King, accompanied by the Princes and gentlemen guests, usually walks. The church has been prettily decorated, not by the Queen, as is frequently stated, but by Mrs. and Miss Hervey, the rector's wife and daughter, some of the flowers and evergreens having, however, been sent from Sandringham. The choir of schoolchildren sing the time-honored hymns, and their Majesties, in common with the village folk, join in the universal thanksgiving, "Unto Us a Child is Born." Service over, the Queen pauses at the lych gate to smile good wishes to the people standing respectfully around, and enters the oak omnibus to return to the Hall, the King proceeding on foot as before.

All their Majesties' family and guests, including the grandchildren, assemble around the luncheon table, forming a very merry circle. The afternoon and early evening are spent in stripping the Christmas tree in the ball room, and in games and amusements for the juvenile members of the house party, "Granny" presiding over the family tea table with her accustomed vivacity. Later the little ones retire with their attendants, and the King and Queen with the elder portion of the family dine together in good old English style, the orthodox dishes gracing the sideboard, and toasts and good wishes circling round. There is a Christmas tree for the servants, and every member of their Majesties' household has received a personal present. The Queen generally makes a prettily-chosen gift of jewelery to the ladies of her entourage.

In the days gone by, the laborers on the estate used to have a Christmas dinner in the coachhouse at Sandringham, decorated for the occasion, and the women and children were entertained to tea. Of recent years a gift of beef and tea to each head of the family has taken place of the dinner, but the Queen still continues the custom which she started forty years ago of giving the school children a Christmas treat at the Hall. This is held one afternoon during the festive week, and it is a great sight to see the youngsters, some five hundred of them, coming up the drive, many in red cloaks and caps. They assemble in the ball room, at one of which is a gigantic Christmas tree gleaming with fairy lights and covered with toys. The tables are arranged down the side of the room, and the Queen and her daughters distribute the gifts from the tree, serve the little visitors with tea and cakes, and amuse them with games. The servants come to look on at the merry-making. It is in some respects a repetition of the tea which Her Majesty gives the children on her birthday, December 1, and the two occasions are her great delight. The Queen is never more in her element than when performing the duties of a chatelaine, and at these annual festivities she has seen—though one finds it difficult to realize it, with her ever-youthful appearance—the children take the place of their parents, who, as boys and girls, came to her tea parties in the sixties.

Annual balls for the county, tenantry and servants had to take place at Sandringham in continuation of the Christmas festivities. On these occasions their Majesties were indefatigable among the dancers, going up the middle and down again in a style which would have delighted Roger de Colerley. These gay dances ceased after the death of the Duke of Clarence, and their Majesties were prevented from resuming them by the successive deaths of the Duchess of Teck, the Queen of Denmark and Queen Victoria. Whether the

balls will be revived this year, if Sandringham again witnesses the Royal Christmas, it is premature to predict.

One cannot close a record how the Queen spends the festive season without reference to her never-failing thought for sick children. Toys for them are always a part of her Christmas selections, and are ever sent by specials messenger on Christmas Eve, often with the greetings written in her own hand, to the Children's hospitals, of which she is a special patroness. The joy with which these afflicted little ones hail the coming of their gifts can be readily imagined, and the consciousness of their pleasure must help to give the Queen a happy Christmas.

# Christmas at Cape Sabine

BY LIEUTENANT R. E. PEARY

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In the entire list of Arctic localities there is probably no name which for Americans is more Associated with gruesome recollections than Cape Sabine, the barren point of rocks which defines on the west the northern end and narrowest point of Smith Sound.

Bleak and sombre, wind-swept and ice-battered its atmosphere heavy with human pain, despair, contention, and death, when not bound in the iron fetters of the ice, it is resisting the incessant shocks of the constantly southward-surging pack.

Starvation Cove, where the last of Franklin's men met their end, fills a similar place with the Englishmen.

But in other respects the two localities are entirely dissimilar.

The horrors of the latter, hidden from the world for years behind the inscrutable uncertainty of the Arctic wastes, resulted in the period of greatest activity known in the history of Arctic exploration.

Ship after ship, and expedition after expedition were sent out to solve the mystery of the disappearance of Franklin and his men, until at one time some ten or twelve ships were simultaneously engaged in the work, and more of the North American archipelago was discovered and charted than had ever been done before or has been done since.

The horrors of the former, known almost immediately, put a complete damper on government interest in and assistance to Arctic work on this side of the Atlantic; and its influence is felt even today, after a lapse of many years.

About two miles south of the point of Cape Sabine a growth of rocks islands forms a small bight, discovered by the English expedition of 1876, and named by them Payer Harbor. Brought into prominence a few years later from being the shelter from which the Proteus started out to her destruction, it has since been a familiar name to Arctic students.

Here my ship, the Windward, was caught by the ice in September, 1900, and compelled to winter with Mrs. Peary on board. I being north at Fort Conger at the time. Here I joined her on May 6, 1901; and here I determined to establish my winter quarters for the coming season, the locality being the southern key to the Smith Sound line of approach to the pole. In pursuance of this purpose the Windward's deckhouse was unshipped, hauled over the harbor ice, and set up in a favorable location overlooking the harbor. All stores and equipment which could be spared from the summer walrus-hunting were landed and secured.

Late in August both my ships, the of Death came amongst us, and remained for nearly three months.

December of 1901 found me with my faithful Esquimaux decimated by the ravages of a fatal disease, and my party slowly recovering from our passage through the "Valley of the Shadow

SOME OF THE ESQUIMAUX DOGS.

Windward and the Eric, steamed away for home, leaving me and my party just below Erie Bluff, on the Ellesmere Land coast, some twelve to fifteen miles south of Payer Harbor.

Not until September 17 did the cementing of the inshore ice permit us to reach Payer Harbor, and scarcely were we settled down when the Angel of Death." Naturally our Christmas was not a specially hilarous one. My party at this time comprised my colored man Henson, or Matt, as he was generally known; Charlie, my cook, a fine, big specimen of the Newfoundland fisherman, and the following Esquimaux: Ahngoodloo and his wife Ekaresah; Ahngmaloktok and his wife Ionah; Ahngodoblaho, his wife Sintikahhu, and two children; Ahahghisu, an old deaf mute, and her daughter Ahmemi, and two orphan boys, Koodlooktoo and Arkao.

Henson and Charlie were quartered with me in the deckhouse, which I had landed fro mthe Windward. This contained a small sleeping-room for each of us, a kitchen, and a dining room. The Esquimaux were quartered in "Fort Magnesia," the old Stein headquarters. Both habitations were walled in completely with snow blocks, and the entrances still further protected by snow vestibules. Only by such means can comfort be secured in the vicinity of Sabine, which is a region of strong and incessant winds, summer and winter.

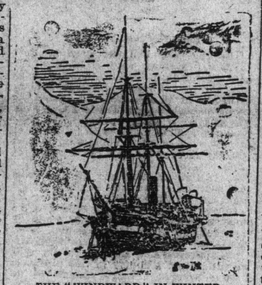
The sun had long since left us, and we were shrouded in continual darkness. The ice, which all through the preceding months had been surging slowly past us, was now at rest, fettered by the intense cold.

The extremity of Cape Sabine, the northern end of Brevoort Island, and the northern side of every projecting point, were piled high with ice masses torn from the floes as they passed.

East and south-east lay the still unfrozen expanse of the horth water, its inky waves supporting stratum of air heavy with condensing vapors, which, at any breath of wind settled in upon us in a freezing pall of more than Stygian darkness, through which slowly filtered minute spiculae of ice.

Five days before Christmas Matt and the three Esquimaux men had started for the head of Buchanan bay, fifty miles distant, to bring out the meat of some musk oxen killed there in October, and which the illness of my entire party had made it impossible to bring out before.

I wanted, and at first intended, to make this trip myself. I was anxious to get out and away for a breathing spell from the place where the illness and death of my devoted people had held me prisoner for so long. I felt that I needed the change and separation from the saddening associations. But after thinking the matter over carefully, I felt that the uncertainty of finding the meat cache in the darkness of the Arctic night, and after the snows of two months, simply from description, was too great an uncertainty for me to risk.



THE "WINDWARD" IN WINTER QUARTERS.

Three days before Christmas occurred the winter solstice, and it was a cheering thought in the darkness which shrouded everything to know that the sun had reached the limit of his southern swing, and, though he would still be invisible for weeks to come, was slowly returning to us. Jackson in Frans Joseph Land complained of sleeplessness during the long winter night, increasing with each successive winter. I did not experience his trouble, although this was my fourth successive winter. But I did have great difficulty of sleeping at the right time. I was nearly wide awake during the greater portion of the night, and then dead sleepy at breakfast time.

The day before Christmas was cloudy, with a strong northerly wind, increasing in the afternoon to a wild gale with suffocating drift. Evidently there was open water close off Brevoort island, though there was not enough light to allow it to be seen.

In the evening I opened a box of candy, fruit, etc., from home. Charlie was busy cooking and cleaning house for Christmas, and I passed the hours dreaming of the far-distant faces, knowing there were many loving and anxious thoughts for me at home even though one tender, fond heart was still for ever.

Christmas day came even thicker and darker than the day before, with the wind swung round into the south, and howling viciously over the rocks and across the ragged ice which filled the harbor.

In the absence of the men, the feeding of the dogs left behind devolved on me, and under the conditions of darkness and wind was a matter of considerable time and some difficulty. These faithful animals were fastened in knots of five and eight, wherever the buildings or the rocks afforded a lee from the biting wind. Some forty in all, the work of feeding was by no means a matter of a few minutes. They knew as well as I that this was feeding time, and ever since Charlie started the fire for breakfast, and the wind had carried the coal scent broadcast, they had been on the qui vive, even the apparently sleeping ones having one ear wide open, and as I came out clad in my worst clothes, with old gloves kept for the purpose, and, hatchet in hand, walked towards the pile of frozen walrus meat, which was kept replenished from my big caches across the harbor and on Brevoort island, every dog was on his feet.

When, having pulled a big frozen flipper from the pile, I began dragging it towards the nearest group, the neglected ones broke into a wild chorus of barks, howls and screams, interspersed with snarls and cries of pain as vicious but short-lived battles showed that irritated impatience could hold out no longer.

Every dog in the team which I was approaching was straining forward to the utmost limit of his trace, his eyes, which shone in the darkness, fixed on the walrus meat, his whole body quivering; and with the barks and howls had given way to low whines, coughs, and the chattering of teeth in eager anticipation.

Kneeling or stooping as the ground required, just in front of the dogs, with back to the wind, the frozen meat was chopped off in big chunks, until at last each dog, with a long-drawn sich of satisfaction, refused any more, and I turned to the next team. Though all were thoroughly fed, of course, I had my favorites. These were the ten beautiful greys forming my own team, fastened in two lots of five each in the lee of one of the buildings. With their long legs, bushy tails, and pointed ears and noses, they looksd like a pack of timber wolves. But the affectionate dog nature showed out as I approached in low "woofs," the lifting of a paw as if to shake hands, the standing upright to stretch out both paws towards me, with numerous other little canine expressions of welcome.

Better trained than some of the others, there was no fighting, each one knowing that he would get his full share, and standing alert like a veteran first baseman to catch each piece that came his way.

After the meal was over I busied myself with untangling the traces, and there were rubbing against my legs, playful seizing of my hands, and contented growls.

Then there was "Miss Whiteface," born under the house at Fort Conger two years before, now with five beautiful gray pups of her own, comfortably located on a bed of grass in a little snow house; and "Sin," Marie's red dog, which, though an abomination from her color, was treated with every consideration for her little mistress's sake. She, too, with her four coal-black pups, had a bed and a house of her own.

When at last the work was completed, it was with a feeling of thankfulness that my meat supply was ample to enable me to feed my faithful assistants full rations; and I entered the house with a glow of satisfaction that, with their stomachs filled to repletion with the rich, heat-giving walrus meat, they were all curled up among the rocks, warm and comfortable within their furry coats.

ESQUIMAUX MEMBERS OF LIEUT.-COMMANDER PEARY'S EXPEDITION

Dinner, the chief features of which were a fine musk-ox steak and a plum duff, was a triumph of Charlie's skill. His success in this, a present of a generous box of candy, and the fact that his foot, which he had scalded severely the first day of the month, was now completely healed, made the day much more than a mere name to him.

Hours later, after Charlie and the Esquimaux had gone to bed, we had our Christmas—I and my pictures of the home folk—with a cake, a small bottle of Moselle and a cup of coffe before us.

We looked into each other's eyes, dreamed of the past, each drop of the favorite wine a vignette and a reminiscence of some bygone pleasant experience; speculated as to the future, and what another Christmas would bring, till the fire went out, and I turned to my narrow bunk, where the roar of the gale lulled me to sleep, and I followed in dreams my waking thoughts.

Matt and his party returned three days later. They had groped their way to the head of the bay through the darkness and deep snow, only to find that the greater portion of the meat cached in October had been eaten by the numerous and ravenous foxes.

Fortunately, on Christmas day, they came upon and killed two musk-oxen. They were going from their camp to the meat cache when, not far away, the rush and clatter of hoofs in the snow and over the rocks were heard. Several of the best dogs were quickly cut loose, and, the natives following, with senses scarcely less acute than those of the dogs, the animals were run down and brought to a stand up the slope of the cliffs, and shot with the muzzle of the carbines almost touching them in the darkness.

What with the success and excitement of the hunt, abundance of fresh meat and a small flask of our precious brandy, which I had packed for them when they left, these members of my party passed Christmas night by no means unpleasantly in a comfortable snow ingloo in the heart of Ellesmere Land.

## HIS IDEA OF IT.

A little child who had recently attained the distinction of having a birthday—when all had conspired to give her a very happy time—made a remark in reference to the approach of Christmas that I thought worth pondering: "We must all try to make Jesus enjoy his birthday, mustn't we, mamma?"

"Yo' needn't tell me," observed Uncle Eph'm, "dat Dowie is de prophet 'Lijah come again. He's de reincarnation of an old Mississippi river steamboat mate I used to wuk undah 'way back in de '50s—or else he's de old steamboat mate himself."—Chicago Tribune.

# SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY

Watching High Temperature Action—The Sun's Mysterious Ring.—The Fastest Brain Growth.—Sugar From Carbonic Acid.—Color-Blind Artists.—Wind-Power Electricity.—A Handy Cement.

Fresh revelations in the phenomena of high temperatures have been brought by the new quartz vessels of German makers. These vessels bear great heat without softening, and may be exhausted of air, while one end of a quartz tube may be safely cooled and the other end kept very hot. In such tubes, heated in an electric furnace, German chemists have been studying the fusing and vaporization of metals in a vacuum. The varying behavior of zinc, cadmium, selenium, tellurium, lead, antimony, tin, bismuth, silver, copper and gold have been watched, the evaporation of cadmium beginning at 320 degrees C., while gold—the most refractory metal tried—distilled but little at 1,375 degrees.

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The peculiar atmospheric or solar phenomenon known as Bishop's Ring, seems to be of very rare appearance. It was first observed in Honolulu by Rev. Sereno Bishop, a few days after the Krakatoa eruption of 1883, and it has been seen but few times since. M. Forel has reported noting it on the first three days of last August from a height of 6,500 feet in the Alps. It appeared as a double ring around the sun, the inner portion being of bluish-silver color, while the outer part was a band of copper, 20 degrees wide, shading off into the blue of space.

* * *

Brain development is found by Prof. Seggel, of Munich, to have two periods of acceleration—from 10 to 11 and from 17 to 18 in girls, and from 12 to 13 and 19 to 20 in boys. At the period of most rapid increase in height, from 12 to 14 years, the growth of the brain is less than one-hundredth that of the body, but at 17 to 19 it grows one-thirtieth as fast, and at 20 reaches one-seventh of the body growth.

* * *

Carbon is the basis of all organic products, and a striking discovery of Julius Walther, a St. Petersburg chemist, is that this element may be made to enter into various combinations with oxygen and hydrogen by simple electrolysis of water charged with carbonic acid gas, the results being several sugars and vegetable acids from one form of simple apparatus. The water was charged with gas evolved on pouring hydrochloric acid on marble. The anodes of the electric apparatus were brushes of platinum and the cathodes were preferably of clay or silicates of aluminum with large surface. The solutions about the anode and cathode were enclosed in separate clay receptacles, that of the anode being kept 5 degrees C. warmer than the other by a lamp. The current was gradually increased, both in power and intensity, and at 2 volts and 0.75 ampere oxalic acid appeared, being soon followed by tartaric acid, and by citric acid at 4 volts and 2.25 amperes. Fruit sugar was produced at 5 volts and 3 amperes, then grape sugar. The richness of the products in carbon seems to increase with increase in current and intensity.

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A collection of pictures by color-blind persons formed a late novel exhibition by Dr. F. W. Edridge-Green before a London society. Dr. Green divides the color-blind into two distinct but associated classes. The first consists of persons with a spectrum shortened at one or both ends, who consequently cannot see certain rays; and an individual with a shortening of the red end would not see a red light at a distance, although able to pick out all pieces in a mixture of colored wools. The second class are unable to recognize certain colors. Normal-sighted persons see six colors, some even seven; the second class of the color-blind see five, four, three two or one color, and are called pentachromic, tetrachromic, etc.

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Sycamore is an exceedingly durable wood, and a statue from it, now in the museum of Tizeh, is reported sound and natural in appearance, although nearly 6,000 years old.

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The problem of wind power for electric stations has been studied for several years by Prof. La Cour, in the interest of the Danish government. To overcome the difficulty of irregular speed, the motor is provided with an intermediate shaft in connection with a balance, and the belt from the windmill is led vertically on the disc of this shaft, the pressure on the latter being regulated by the balance bearing convenient counter weights. Through this device the belt slides on the disc as soon as the load exceeds a given maximum. A wind power plant, supplying about 50 amperes of current at 110 volts, has been in operation about a year at Askov, Denmark, and feeds about 450 incandescent lamps. It has given excellent results, with little attention, calms of several days being bridged over by a reserve of petroleum motors.

* * *

A German chemist describes a new cement, composed of casein and some tannic acid compound, that becomes very hard when dry, and is then insoluble in water, oils, petroleum, etc. In preparing it, calcium tannate may be obtained by adding clear lime water to a tannin solution until no further precipitation occurs, then pouring off the liquid and drying the precipitate. The calcium tannate is mixed with casein in proportions ranging from 1 to 1 up to 1 to 10. The dried mixture is reduced to powder, which is ready for use on adding water to any desired consistency.

* * *

The serum obtained by inoculating horses with cobra venom, so effective in the practice of calmette, has been found by Dr. Tidswell to have no power in counteracting the venom of Australian snakes. Other experiments seem to prove that the anti-venomous serum is only active against poison of snakes of the same species as that supplying the venom of the serum.

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From the latest measurements by Curie, it is estimated that the energy of 15 pounds of radium, fully utilized, would run a one-horsepower engine many centuries.

## CHRISTMAS AT ENGLISH COURT

### Kings and Queens Encourage the Celebration.

Nowhere is Christmas a more cheerfully observed festival than at the English court. Our Kings and Queens have ever delighted to set an example of gaiety and good-humor at such a season. Royal masquerades, great tournaments, and generous feasting of rich and poor alike were some of the features which marked the festive season. Bluff King Hal was, of course, foremost among the merry-makers of such a time. In the course of a fascinatingly interesting volume (published by Elliot Stock) dealing with Christmas customs in history as well in foreign lands as our own, Mr. W. F. Dawson recalls, among many other interesting pictures a scene from the court of the jovial monarch of many wives.

Four hundred years and more since at this time Henry VIII. was busy with a Royal masquerade at Greenwich, in which he himself with eleven others appeared. They were disguised "after the manner of Italie, called a mask, a thing not seen afore in England; they were apparelled in garments long and brode, wrought all with gold, with visers and cappes of gold; and after the banket doen, these maskers came in with six gentlemen disguised in silke, bearing staffe torches, and desired the ladies to dance; some were content, and some that new the fashion of it refused because it was a thing not commonly seen. And after thei daunced and communed together, as the fashion of the maske is, thei tooke their leave and departed, and so did the Quene and all the ladies."

The same King, again at Greenwich, kept Christmas "with great nobleness and open court," and in other years did so with revels, masks, disguisings, and banquets royal." Once he entertained twenty-one of the Scottish nobility whom he had taken prisoners at Salom Moss, and gave them their liberty. On all these occasions the monarch gave unremitting attention to the great tournaments, and not to display skill at them was almost to lose his favor. Yet some discretion was required to rival, but not to excel the King, whose ardent temper could not brook superiority in another. But, although victory was always reserved for Royalty, it is but fair to allow that the King was no mean adept in these pursuits, for which his bodily powers and frequent exercises had qualified him.

Royal Christmases have not been without their tragedies. The Wars of the Roses interrupted the gaities of the season more than once. Indeed, the terrible battle of Wakefield was fought at this period of the year. And when that sanguinary feud eventually ended, the effects were felt at Christmas time more than any other. For Henry VI., possessing as great regard for the honored season as anyone else, greatly desired to have it fitly observed. Yuletides were not marked by the splendor associated with either his predecessors or successors, and we have it on record from the historian that at one time he was so pressed that he had to borrow money in order that Christmas might be adequately observed in the palace.

We have gone past those days when Royalty can be so distressed as this. They do not dispense hospitality upon such a scale as in olden days, but their gifts are more wisely placed, and it is not simply the pleasures of the favored few that are considered. Into many a home that would otherwise be joyless Royal favor and kindliness carries good cheer and happiness, and the Royal Christmas is the happier for it.

## NO CHRISTMAS TREES.

### The Serious Religious Ceremonies in Vogue in Spain.

Christmas trees are unknown in Spain. But every child that can afford it has a nacimiento, which is a clay or plaster representation of the birth of Christ. It always represents the child, Jesus, in the cradle, and often Joseph and Mary and the animals in the manger, and the wise men from the East and sometimes angels also. They are embowered in a kind of greenery. Sometimes representations of the animals in Noah's Ark are added. A Spanish child will keep its nacimiento from year to year, and make additions to the collection.

Christmas Eve is celebrated in Spanish homes by a family party, and a supper, chiefly of sweetmeats and wines. Instead of hanging up their stockings the children in the country hide their shoes and slippers in the bushes, and they find them filled with fruit and candies in the morning.

## A SWEDISH CHRISTMAS.

### To Church in the Very Early Morning.

If you were in Sweden on Christmas Eve you would hear the church bells begin to ring at five o'clock, for everybody stops work then, and the festivities begin in great earnest everywhere in the kingdom. Class distinctions are forgotten and servants are allowed to sit at table with the family. After supper comes the universal Christmas tree, for Sweden is one of the early homes of this beautiful custom.

On Christmas morning at six o'clock while all is still dark you would go to church, for everybody goes—unless you stayed at home to mind the lights in the house, for every home in the kingdom is illuminated. There is almost sure to be deep snow, and you would go to church in a sleigh. Behind every sleigh you would see two boys standing on the runners and holding pine torches—a beautiful spectacle as a long procession of sleighs glide over the snow on a forest road. These torches are stuck up in a circle around the church. A whole week is given to good cheer and hospitality.

## CHRISTMAS IN ITALY.

### Venetians Present Candies and Custards to Their Friends.

Christmas in the Catholic countries of Southern Europe is very different from Christmas in these Northern lands. In Rome it is a quiet and solemn day, and the chief interest is in religious service. The celebration goes on from December 25, when the sacred Bambino (the Christ-child) is brought out, till January 6, when it is put away again. The churches are, of course, brilliantly illuminated with innumerable candles, and the solemn and impressive service is everywhere attended. There are family reunions, but the solemn festivities of the time, in spite of the usually mild Indian summer weather, are held quietly indoors. Every Venetian rich or poor, makes a present of a box of peculiar candy, made of honey and nuts (called mandorlato), and of a glass of fruits and mustard (called mustardo.)

In Italy, instead of the Christmas tree, you will find (especially in Florence) a straw basket made to hold gifts decorated with green things arranged in the form of a tree. The commonest gift to children is a plaster toy representing the Nativity.