

and butter), a saddle of beef, green peas, asparagus, stewed cold caperries and rice, and coffee and cakes." Captain Sverdup, in command of the expedition, writes in his narrative: "When the Christmas tree was brought in, everybody was quite silent for a moment. As it stood there, with its glittering gold and silver tinsel, and its red and white candles in the midst of our darkness, it seemed to be a greeting from home and from above. It seemed as if we were being told that there was still life, and that the light was not really gone. We thought there, we were sitting amid our dear ones, and could take them by the hand. It was as if happy thoughts had been sent to us, and then we had to shout for joy, and make more noise than the wolves howling outside in the snow."—*Sel.*

### Santa Claus in Finland

Staff-Captain Savonen, of the Salvation Army, Finland, thus describes Christmas in that country: Christmas in Finland is celebrated all over the country as the most important holiday of the year. Everyone makes ready for Christmas Eve. Rooms are cleaned and garnished; Christmas-trees are decorated with flags, fruit, candles, and glittering tinsel, and placed in the centre of the room; the windows, likewise, are illuminated with burning candles. Whilst the happy family is gathered about the gaily-decorated tree, singing and rejoicing together, the door opens and "Christmas-buck" (Santa Claus) enters, loaded with numerous presents. This is, perhaps, the most interesting moment, especially to the merry-hearted little children, and their enjoyment is also the enjoyment of the grown-ups. Early on the Christmas morning, all the churches and chapels are illuminated, and people stream into the Christmas service, which is conducted by priests in their flowing white robes. A slum officer last year found a family in distressing circumstances. The unhappy woman's husband had been in prison two years; she herself had been ill. The captain drew out from her basket some bread, butter, meat, rice, coffee, sugar, candles, and clothes. What rejoicings they had! What happy laughter from the pinched-faced little children! The poor woman, between her sobs, said, "You are too good, captain, too good!"—*Sel.*

### At Sandringham Palace

How King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra spent Christmas at Sandringham is thus described by one who wrote while the late King was yet alive:—"For several weeks their Majesties are busy in preparation for this festive season. Not only are gifts carefully chosen for all the royal household, but there are relatives and friends abroad to whom presents are sent, and usually each recipient receives 'just the thing' wanted. So numerous were the gifts for distant friends that a special royal mail was laid year used for their despatch. At Sandringham, everyone on the estate is remembered, and the dinner-table in every cottage is enriched by a prime joint presented by the King. Last year, the Queen and Princess Victoria drove in a carriage, which was laden with articles of clothing for the royal ladies. Aged persons and those who were bedridden received some articles of wearing apparel, besides other gifts. The Princess of Wales also called on a number of old folk. The royal coachhouse looked like a butcher's shop. Long benches were set up, and these joints were handed to policemen, laborers, postmen, railway officials, gar-

deners, and others, each of whom was kindly spoken to by the King and Queen. Nearly two tons of meat were distributed. Her Majesty, who thinks so kindly of rich and poor, young and old and infirm, does not forget her pets at this season of goodwill. She visits the kennels and stables at feeding-time, and gives special dainties to her four-footed friends. And even the birds have a sheaf of wheat hung by her orders where they can help themselves."

### Christmas in Sweden

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 then 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 earliest homes of this beautiful custom. On Christmas morning, at six o'clock, while it is still dark, you would go to church, for every body 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 a deep

O M. bright Christmas morning of my soul's delight! Glimpse all the bells. Breathe all the garlands. Bounce all the anthems. Shake hands! Say,

### "MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

Merry with the thought of sins forgiven, merry with the idea of sorrows comforted, merry with the promises to come. Oh! lift that Christ from the manger and lay Him down in all our hearts. We may not bring to Him as costly a material present as the magi brought, but we bring to His feet and to the manger the frankincense of our joy, the pearls of our tears, the kiss of our love, the prostration of our worship.

Down at His feet all churches, all ages, all earth, all heaven. Down at His feet the four-and-twenty elders on their faces. Down the "great multitude that no man can number." Down Michael the archangel. Down all worlds at His feet in worship. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men! Glory to Jesus our Saviour!—*Talmage.*

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 glides 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."—*Sel.*

### The King's White Swan

One of the most characteristic items of the Christmas menu at Sandringham is the white swan. It is said to have been introduced by Richard Coeur de Lion, and for several centuries this bird has been looked upon as the "royal bird." In earlier days, no one was permitted to keep swans without permission of the monarch. At the present day, anyone may enjoy this privilege besides the King, who owns a flock of swans on the Thames. For the Royal dinner on Christmas Day, one of the plumpest of these birds is selected from the King's cygnets, and forwarded by special messenger to Sandringham. It is usually prepared for cooking in much the same manner as a goose. In favor, it is described as something between goose and

hare. The swan is a favorite delicacy of the nobility, and at St. Helena, in Norwich, there is a large swannery—where about one hundred cygnets are fattened for market at a time. At Christmas-time, a plump bird will sell at as much as two or three guineas.—*Sel.*

### Christmas in the Sahara Desert

A writer thus describes Christmas in the Sahara: "I wore all day a white helmet, a white suit, and white shoes, for it was hot—98 in the sun, 70 in the shade. Riding through the village, I saw dark-skinned Africans sleeping in the shade. Their mouths were open, and flies crawled unheeded over their eyes. Riding instead of turkey, I saw the Arabs loading camels with dates. The camels were made to kneel, and they snarled and growled like human beings, as their loads got heavier and heavier. I saw Mahomedans in their white robes, kneeling in prayer on the sand. For dinner, instead of turkey, I had partridge. I dined on my terrace. It was pleasant enough, only the light drew a few mosquitoes. I took my coffee after dinner in a Moorish café, hung with red and yellow hangings. All around me, grave Arabs, swathed in white, smoked tobacco charged with fat, a kind of opium, and on a platform three musicians played wild music. Towards ten o'clock, I wandered homewards. The moon shone in a pale sky, and against the pallor of the night the palm plumes were very still. There was no wind. Now and then, in the silence, dogs barked from the walled encampments. A camel roared. A mosquito buzzed before my face. Whipping my wet brow—for it was warm walking—I sighed and longed for white snow and the cold glitter of our northern starlight."—*Sel.*

### Pudding Made by a Lord

Perhaps the most heroic attempt to keep Christmas in conventional fashion, under unconventional conditions, was that made by Lord Wolsley, when a young officer in the trenches before Sebastopol. He and his comrades decided that the Christmas should be honored and that there should be a plum-pudding. The "pudding" was compounded of biscuit, grease, and such fruit as could be obtained, the ingredients being mixed in a fragment of a Russian shell. Wrapped in a cloth, it was baked for seven hours, and a tasty reminder of the great festival was eagerly looked forward to by the hungry officers. But before the pudding was considered "cooked," orders came transferring Wolsley and his tent command to a distant part of the works. Should they leave the pudding until their return, or eat it as it was? They were hungry, and the latter course was decided upon. The "pudding" was duly swallowed, and away they went in obedience to order. Late that night Wolsley was troubled with internal disturbances that he attributed to the doctor's kindly ministrations. It seemed, said the future field-marshal, as if pieces of Russian shell were rolling against each other inside. It was the only pudding, the first and last, he ever made.—*Sel.*

Tommy (on Christmas morning): "Where does Santa Claus get all his things, mamma?"  
Mamma: "Oh, he buys them!"  
Tommy: "Well, he must be a stupid to let anyone palm off a tin watch on him!"—*Sel.*