

twice as big as the little cups that had served me such hot delicious coffee whenever a friend came to call. Denuded of its gifts the tree stood forlorn and I put it away.

Outside my window I could see, on the high Corcovado peak, the statue of Christ, that is visible from almost every point in Rio de Janeiro. "Deus e brasileiro", the Brazilians confide. Somehow in Rio I felt it was true.

#### SCHERZO

The third year I was in Brazil I obtained an apartment of my own, complete with Brazilian maid, and Christmas in Rio in 1947 in my home was to be a real Canadian affair. I had more puddings and Christmas cakes from Canada. I knew that if you set a match to Canadian rye, it would flame into Yuletide brightness. A friend from the American Embassy arranged for me to get a turkey from the Argentine. I had my guests in mind, friends who were away from home, whether home were Canada, the United States or Sweden.

My maid and I consulted about the turkey, cookbook in hand. Neither of us had ever roasted one before. Evidently roasting pans are little known in Brazil, and what my maid went out to look for was too costly for a one-time venture. The day before Christmas we bravely decided to bake the bird in a cookie pan with an inch high side.

There are several things I shall always remember about that Christmas. Every time I opened the kitchen door, the maid was mopping up turkey fat from the tile floor. Neither her smiling face nor her wooden clogs seemed to mind the flood. The water supply did not give out until the swimmers had showered and the dishes had been washed. Truly, a present of a miracle!

When we had had our meal and it came to the time for the toasts, we first drank a toast to "The King". Then I asked a Brazilian friend to toast the President. Her face got as red as fire and she refused. However, she did toast her country and we all drank thankfully. The U.S. President was toasted and then we called out to the Swedish lad at a far-off table. Puzzled, he said "The King? What King? Oh, the King!"

In the market I had found a very real but very small tree. This had been my Christmas tree and it put out tentative branches

during the next year and stayed behind with friends when I left Brazil.

#### ALLEGRO NON TROPPO

My last Christmas in Brazil was spent with friends in the country.

To go to the country in Brazil one should go by train, for it is by train that you see sleepy little towns, have an opportunity to buy stalk after stalk of little bananas, the *banana doro* which are the tastiest of all, and packets of small cheeses which are eaten with the heavy guava paste that makes one of the best desserts in the world.

On Christmas Eve in the afternoon a large fir tree, freshly cut from a nearby wood, arrived at the house. In the evening we trimmed it. So full it was of green branches and life that it needed little decoration.

Out in the kitchen we cleaned a duck by oil lamp, peering into the shadows until almost all the duck seemed to be outside his frame. Then we sat and talked of other Christmases and of how it had been in Europe as a child or in Canada. At midnight we yielded to a tradition other than our own and opened our presents.

Christmas Day we welcomed friends and enjoyed the duck, but it was hot and I longed for the refreshing cold of a Canadian Christmas.

My spirit had turned northward and I was soon to follow.

Allison Hardy.