

## CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY.\*

CHRISTMAS in Germany!—how we have been looking forward to the pleasure of this season, and it has been far beyond even our brightest dreams! From childhood days we began to have a love for the German Christmas. Our pretty little Christmas stories are from the German; and from many sources we have gained the impression that Germany is the land for the true Christmas. Experience confirms the opinion. It really seems that here, above all lands, the true Christmas feeling is known, the spirit of “goodwill to men.” It is a holy time, and the nation, as a whole, burns with love to the “old, old story.” When one sees the great religious festival of Germany’s Christmas, there comes the feeling that we have but faintly recognized the Christmas story in our holiday season. The distinguishing feature of the German Christmas is the religious ceremony, the observance of the time as a sacred and solemn season.

There are minor distinctions, aside from this one great fact—the religious character—which are at once noticed by a foreigner. In the home celebrations we miss the fascinating legend of Santa Claus and his reindeer, the ride over the rooftops, the descent through the chimney, and the waiting stockings. The little German child knows naught of the delight of our little ones, of sending letters with the flames up the chimney; or lying for hours before the glowing fire, wondering about the little man who comes on “the night before Christmas;” of the stockings hung by the hearth, and the rushing to them in the early Christmas morn. Ah, we are glad not to have missed this sweet childhood dream, but how can it be possible in Germany, with no open hearths, and only these monumental white stoves? So we find there is a peculiar beauty in our own Christmas, even while we love the spirit in the German celebration.

Perhaps the best place to see the true German Christmas would be in the country or some small town or village; for here ancient customs have not yielded to modern civilization as in large cities, where, naturally, much intercourse with the world abroad tends to abolish old national traits.

\*Abridged in part from the charming volume “*Life Among the Germans.*” By EMMA LOUISE PARRY. Boston: D. Lothrop. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$1.50.