

SANTA CLAUS IN PORTO RICO.

CHRISTMAS in Spain is a religious festival rather than a social one. It was so originally in Porto Rico, but the population has been influenced partly by the spirit of the new world and partly by the many American merchants who reside in the cities and who exert an influence much greater than the numbers would seem to warrant.

The churches welcome the day with chimes which begin at midnight and last until the midnight of the next day. What with one church beginning ten minutes too soon and another ten minutes too late and a third at the right moment, what with bells which ring every fifteen minutes and bell ringers who under some ancient custom will sound the great bells every half hour, the air is filled with music which never seems to end.

If you are near a campanile the effect is not altogether pleasant on account of the volume of sound striking the ear with too much force, but in a public square several hundred yards from the nearest belfry, where trees



A DAUGHTER PLAYS ON THE GUITAR, and buildings break the sound waves, or in suburbs on the hillside the effect is unspeakably delightful.

Pleasantest of all is it when you are sitting in the inner court or quadrangle of a Porto Rican home. Around you on four sides the house rises above you, and in the grounds or in great tubs and porcelain pots rich flowers, graceful vines and restful trees afford shade, color and perfume. The sound of the bells descends from the air above very much like a benediction. You sit in an easy chair, and servants bring you tea or steaming coffee, sweetmeats and biscuits, confections and cigarettes, while a daughter or son plays ancient songs or dances upon a mandolin or guitar.

The churches are crowded; so are the clubs and most of the places of recreation. Every vehicle is in use, and here and there can be seen young men and women trying to imitate English models. Some of the people of the mountain districts carry out many of their early superstitions in regard to Christmas. They hang over the doors of their houses boughs of trees which are supposed to possess charms and often conduct marriage ceremonies under great canopies made of these charmed trees.

A great many wild flowers are in bloom at Christmastide, and these are worn by children of the mountain districts in wreaths and garlands about their heads, necks and waists. The Christmas giving is sadly missing in our new possessions. The churches hold no Christmas tree, and there are few charitable societies to give feasts. However, one hospital for old people and orphans in Ponce gives a Christmas fete, and the inmates have a good meal and receive warm clothing, medicines and other useful gifts.

The American occupation has brought extra Christmas cheer to the people of the island. The American residents celebrate the day in good American fashion, and, best of all, they put money into circulation and give zest to industry and business.

When Shepherds Watched by Night.

Some historians contend that the shepherds could not have watched by night on the Bethlehem plains in December, it being a period of great inclemency. In answer to this a well known student says: "Bethlehem is not a cold region. The mercury usually stands all the month of December at 46 degrees. Corn is sown during this time, and grass and herbs spring up after the rains, so that the Arabs drive their flocks down from the mountains into the plains. The most delicate never make fires till about the end of November, and some pass the whole winter without them. From these facts I think it is established without doubt that our Saviour was born on the 25th day of December, the day which the church throughout the world has united to celebrate in honor of Christ's coming in the flesh."—Washington Star.

The Most Popular Christmas Poem.

The most popular Christmas poem ever written for children was that familiar to the world, beginning:

"Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house—"

The poem was written by a very learned man, Dr. Clement Clarke Moore, a profound Greek and Hebrew scholar. He was a professor in the General Theological seminary in this city. He was born in 1779 and died in 1863.—New York Globe.

THE IRON REINDEER

I'm up to date, and, be it said,
I certainly this year
Shall break and burn the ancient
sled
And cook the ancient deer.
Those things are out of date for me;
They're now a shattered dream.
Oh, I'm as happy as can be
About my brand new scheme.



That sets all hearts aglow.
And I shall call, and not in vain,
While stockingward I head
My mile a minute flying train,
"The Christmas Limited."



FULL soon across the boundless
plain,
Beneath the Christmas stars,
I'm going to travel on my train
Made up of baggage cars,
And they'll be simply stuffed with
toys
And other precious things
For little girls and little boys
For whom I spread my wings.

Oh, yes, in jigtime, down the track
I'll gayly glide along,
From home across the land and back
To fill all hearts with song.
And to my agent at each town
I'll toss a bundle great
Each artless child with joy to crown
And make its heart elate.

I'll run along on schedule time,
Through wind swept drifts of
snow,
My bell shall be the Christmas
chime



Christmas in the Colonies.
'Twas the merry Christmas season,
And the palms swung in the breeze
Of the lovely old December in an island
over seas,
And a meditative maiden of the kind
called Philippine
Sat and gazed, with pensive visage, on
the sultry winter scene.

Well she knew that on the morrow all her
folks would celebrate,
Place a palm tree in the parlor, hang
their anklets o'er the grate.
On the heaped up Christmas table, gleam-
ing with its load, there'd be
Appetizing bird's nest truffles and ba-
nana fricassee.

"Let me see," she murmured softly; "fa-
ther 'll get his string of beads,
Blue and yellow. I am certain they're the
very kind he needs.
For his old ones looked quite shocking,
though he never seemed to care,
And his new set's quite the swiftest thing
a gentleman can wear.

"And for mamma there's the nose ring
that I bought on Thursday week,
With the handsome whalebone stickpin
for insertion in the cheek,
And little brother's boomerang! He'll be
immensely pleased.
That or a bamboo jumping jack are the
things for which he's teased.

"And as for me, I only hope they've got
the things I need—
Just one or two nice costumes made of
genuine coral bead,
A toe ring would be lovely, and a piece
of copper wire
To wear around the instep make up all
that I desire.

"Except, of course, some other things that
every girl receives.
Such as various kinds of dresses made of
nicely ripened leaves.
For surely," said the maiden as she
smiled a scornful smile,
"I'm not like those American girls who
always think of style."

—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Timely Caution.

Don't give any one bric-a-brac or pic-
tures unless you are morally sure you
know his taste. Presents that must be
displayed are apt to be a great strain
on the affections. No matter how the
receiver may hate them, he must fa-
ther them and deface his rooms with
them or insult the giver. Now, a book,
for instance, even if the receiver
doesn't like it and doesn't want it, can
be tucked away among other books
and forgotten, but an ugly vase we
have always with us—at least till we
can smash it.

A New Excuse.

One of the men in a large pottery
took two or three days' holiday now
and again, and when he came back, on
being asked what was wrong, he said
he had been away burying his grand-
mother.

He did this two or three times, and
then he thought he had better change
his excuse, so, on being asked the next
time, he replied:

"Well, my brother, the sailor, is at
home just now, and he is so used to
the sound of the waves that I had to
lash pulps of water on the window
all night before he could sleep, and
then I had to sleep during the day."—
London Mail.

SANTA CLAUS A STRANGER.

He is Officially Unknown to Uncle
Sam's Mail Agents.

The postoffice department does not
know Santa Claus. The old saint has
no official existence so far as Uncle
Sam's mail agents are concerned. This
is due entirely to the fact that Santa
Claus lives everywhere at the same
time instead of having a single local
habitation like other people. It is very
sad, but it cannot be helped. Letters
which children address to Santa Claus
or Kris Kringle must go straight to the
dead letter office.

Some time ago an effort on behalf of
the children was made to induce the
postoffice department to permit post-
masters to open all letters addressed to
Santa Claus and turn them over to the
parents of the child correspondent or
to some local organization having a
Christmas fund to spend, but the at-
torney general for the department ren-
dered an adverse decision, holding as
follows:

If postmasters were granted authority
to open all such letters and select those
which they thought proper to deliver to
persons applying for them, there would
be temptation and opportunity for post-
masters and other employees to open let-
ters indiscriminately, some of which con-
tain inclosures of value, and give us an
excuse for such action the authority
granted by the department.

The department's legal adviser also was
of the opinion that, if permission were
granted to deliver such letters to benev-
olent societies and individuals, it would be
difficult for the department to draw the
line where benevolence ends and com-
mercial begins. Many persons desire such
letters for use in newspapers and maga-
zine stories, the name of the child of
some prominent public man attached to
such a letter making it especially valua-
ble for that purpose and often cor-
respondingly embarrassing to the parent
of the child. Furthermore, the opinion
states, such a practice would violate the
principle of the sanctity of the seal,
which is one of the best features of our
postal system, and the department would
continually be open to serious suspicion.

Candles For Christmas.

Christmas candlemakers are busy
for many months in the year. It would
be impossible to estimate how many
hundreds of thousands of dozens of
pretty little colored wax candles are re-
quired for Christmas trees all over Eu-
rope and America. There are also can-
dles for church decoration at Christ-
mastide. Whereas the Christmas tree
tapers are, some of them, so tiny as to
require seventy-two to make a pound,
the great altar shafts of pure beeswax
will sometimes stand six feet and
weigh forty pounds apiece.—Tit-Bits.

Avoiding Temptation.

Hammert—Styngham has never
bought a Christmas tree for his chil-
dren.

Callahan—Probably he is afraid of
temptation.

Hammert—Temptation?

Callahan—I mean that he is afraid
that if he did buy a tree he would be
tempted to buy something to hang on
it.—Town and Country.

THE TERROR'S CHRISTMAS.

Turkeys Were \$17 Each During the
Siege of Paris.

When the Christmas day of 1870
dawned upon Paris the city had been
in the iron grip of the German invest-
ment for about three months. The
winter was a bitterly cold one, the
thermometer registering 10 degrees be-
low freezing point on Christmas morn-
ing. The Seine was frozen over.

The poor's daily rations were a few
ounces of horseflesh and a piece of re-
pulsive looking black bread.

By Dec. 25 food prices had reached
their highest point since the begin-
ning of the siege. On Nov. 13 a pound
of butter fetched \$14 and a rabbit
\$3.50. By Dec. 19 rabbits had risen to
\$5, a box of sardines brought \$2.50 and
eggs 25 cents apiece. For one's Christ-
mas dinner one could buy a goose for
\$10 or a turkey for \$17. Pigeons were
\$3 each, and a small fowl could be ob-
tained for \$5. Ham was \$1.50 a pound.
As for vegetables, carrots and turnips
were 4 cents each, and a bushel of po-
tatoes cost \$3.25. There was hardly
any milk in Paris, and the little there
was had to be preserved for the sick
and wounded. However, there were
occasions of wine, and the wineshops did
a roaring trade.

For some time before Christmas the
starving people had been feeding on
cats, rats and dogs until by Dec. 25
a dish of cat's flesh was hardly obtain-
able. Dog was 60 cents a pound, and
fine rats fetched 14 cents each. Many
domestic pets were killed for food.
"Poor Azor!" said a humorous citizen
as he finished a stew made from his
favorite dog. "How he would have
enjoyed these bones!"

With true Parisian light heartedness
the citizens tried to make the best of
things, and the cafes and restaurants
were almost their normal aspect. At
half past 10, however, an order of
Trochu closed every shop and cafe,
and by 11 o'clock Paris had gone to
bed.

The midnight mass of Christmas-eve
was celebrated as usual in the church-
es, which were crowded with pray-
ing, weeping women. Newspapers ap-
peared as usual, some of them contain-
ing glowing accounts of perfectly im-
aginary French successes. The sa-
tirical sheets were even more bitter
and venomous than at other times
and published scathing caricatures.
Some showed the fallen emperor, Na-
poleon III., as a shoeblick at King
William's boots, or as a beggar with
his pockets turned inside out, or as a
traitor handing over France to mur-
derers, or as a thief making off with
millions of the nation's money. Oth-
ers depicted Julius Favre in tears and
pocketing Bismarck's gold and Trochu
handing over the keys of Paris to a
Prussian in exchange for a bag of
coin. In all the idea of Parisians that
France had been betrayed by those
who ought to have protected her was
prevalent.

So at this season of peace and good
will suffering Paris was nearly at her
last gasp. Owing to the tenacity of
her rulers and citizens, however, her
agony was to be prolonged for some
weeks longer, as it was not until
February that the negotiations for a
capitulation began.

Christmas With Stevenson.

Passengers aboard the steamship
Lubeck unexpectedly spent Christmas
at sea in the year 1890, but the fact
that Robert Louis Stevenson, the fa-
mous story writer, was among them
made that a most memorable holiday.
The Lubeck was en route from Austr-
alia to Samoa. She broke a shaft and
limped along several days under sail.
"Mr. Stevenson," says the captain in
relating the incident, "cheered every-
body up by telling funny stories that
were better, coming offhand from his
lips, than most literary men could
write if they worked over them for
weeks. He knew, too, that it was only
a question of a short time before he
would die of consumption and that he
could never again go home for more
than a brief visit. It was simply won-
derful what a difference that one man
made among the passengers, and I
guess almost all of us would gladly
spend the time to make port under
sail, with machinery disabled, if we
could have a Stevenson aboard."

A Polish Custom.

Peasant lads in the villages of Po-
land have a pretty Christmas custom
which affords great delight not only
to themselves, but to the other vil-
lagers. This is called the procession
of the star. At Christmas time the
boys make a large hollow star, two
or three feet between points, lighted
from the interior. This is carried
aloft at the end of a pole or staff. It
symbolizes the star of Bethlehem. The
three wise men of the East—Caspar,
Melchior and Balthazar—are im-
personated by boys. Others in the party
bear a little puppet show cabinet, in
which are performed the drama of the
Nativity and other Scripture incidents
appropriate to the occasion. From
house to house around the village this
procession trudges in the snow at
night singing carols, and the villagers
present the boys with small coins as
Christmas gifts.

Mistletoe on Apple trees.
The growth of the mistletoe on oak
is now of very rare occurrence, but it
flourishes luxuriantly in many parts of
England on the apple trees.

Hurry Up Santa Claus!

Yander Mistah Chris'mus,
Loatin' long de way,
"He slower than a railroad"—
Dat what chillun say.
Der wants 'im fer ter hurry up
An' pass de time er day,
Dreamin' 'bout de comin' er de Chris'mus!
—Atlanta Constitution.

OUR CHRISTMAS ON THE PLAINS

NEVER shall forget our Christmas
dinner in a construction camp in
the year 1900, said a former Colo-
radoan. We were building a res-
ervoir out on the plains about ten
miles east of Pueblo. We had 150 men
on the job, all white men.

We had a poor cook on the job and
couldn't seem to find any other. As a
result there had been men leaving
every day and constant grumbling all
the fall, and it came to a head Christ-
mas day.

It was a beautiful, bright Colorado
Christmas. The men were to work
in the morning, have a turkey dinner
at noon and lay off in the afternoon.
The old man had bought three pounds
of turkey per man—450 pounds. The
birds had come out the day before.

About ten minutes after noon I heard
a kind of an angry roar outside. I
never heard anything like it before,
and it made me jump. It meant trou-
ble of some kind. I hurried out and
saw a surging mob at the door of the
cook tent. The men were all shaking
their fists in the air and yelling with
one steady, hoarse, prolonged yell. I
went around behind the tent and slip-
ped in. There stood the cook raging,
fighting drunk, brandishing a meat ax
and emitting a steady stream of pro-
fanity. In front of him surged the
mob, just out of reach of the meat ax,
crazy mad. I didn't blame them.
They had come off work with their
mouths all made up for turkey, and
not a table was set, not a spark of fire
in the stove and 450 pounds of turkey
scattered over the section of alkali
plain which formed the floor.

The battle was short. The men ran
in behind the cook, tripped him and
the minute he was down had a rope
around him.

"Hang him, hang him!" they roared
and started off with him to the meat
pole.

In all my life I never was so scared
as I was that day. I didn't care in
the least whether the man was hang-
ed, drowned or died in his bed. Yet
civilization rose up in me, and I knew
I had to save him. I ran like a deer
to get around the crowd and reach the
meat pole first, and all the while I



BRANDISHING A MEAT AX.

ran I was cursing the cook. When
they got to the meat pole they found
me on a box facing them with a gun.

"What do you want?" they roared.
"Get quiet," said I.

Those in front called out, "Shut up!"
When they were still I said: "Boys, I'm
sorry this thing has happened. It's
my fault for not watching this fool
closer. But we can wash those tur-
keys and have a good dinner yet if
some of you'll turn in and help me.
They aren't hurt any. As for this
scum of a cook, I don't care any more
about him than you do. But I'm in
charge here and I can't let him be
hanged. You can go ahead and hang
him if you want to, but you'll have to
kill me first. Now go ahead."

I waited, but no one stirred. There
were plenty of guns in the crowd, but
no one was ready to undertake the
job of killing me. I gave them only a
minute to think. Then I said to the
man that held the rope, "Untie him."
He did it. "Get out of here," I said
to the cook. The fellow got up, white
as death with fear.

Then I turned to the men and asked
if there were any who had ever done
any cooking, who would help me. Half
a dozen volunteered. We washed the
turkeys and put them on to boil. I
never worked over anything in my
life as I did that Christmas dinner.
The men were still silent and sullen,
and I didn't know but they'd hang me
if the dinner didn't suit them. I tried
desperately to remember all the cook-
ing I'd ever seen my mother do, and
thanked God when I found that one
of the men could make pies and an-
other soda biscuit. About 5 o'clock we
had the best dinner the camp could
turn out, boiled turkey, boiled potatoes,
canned squash, canned corn, canned
peaches, dried apple pie, hot biscuit
and coffee.—New York Press.

Partial Cure.

"I fear you are a victim of the drink
habit."

"You misjudge me. Lack of the
price cured me of the drink habit long
ago. It's merely the thirst that both-
ers me now."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Hopeless.

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

"I do."

"Then why do you have such a
grinch?"

"I hate myself."—New York Journal.

The first catalogue of the stars was
published about 1500.

WAR! A Merry War---A War on Prices.



"Cut and Slash" is the
slogan. We invite critical
comparisons. The lynx-
eyed cautious Bargain
hunter is even welcome.
"It is he" who knows and
appreciates true values.
"It is he" who buys from
us and rejoices in so doing.
We people offer you a
chance to get more value
for a dollar than anywhere
else.

The New Jeweler, North Side of Court House
DIDOT & SON

Monroe Street Candy Kitchen

The finest and largest line of Candy Boxes.
The purest, therefore the best. It has been
acknowledged by all.
A full line of Christmas goodies of all kinds.
Call and see, prices right, quality no better.

J. S. COLCHIN

Hello, Hello,

Where are you going?

I am going down to the Peoples' Res-
taurant to buy my Xmas Candies, toys
Nuts, Oranges, Xmas trees and tree
decorations. They have the best and
cheapest in the city.

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of cigars duplicate the gifts of others
you only duplicate the pleasure. In
all our stock there is no brand of ci-
gars that outclass the—

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as an example of superior quality for the money.
Anyone of three popular brands makes an ac-
ceptable gift. For instance the

The Congress, San Barnardo or Rayo
For sale by all dealers. Manufactured by
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We have the candies for holidays. We
have all kinds and at the right price. We
permit on one to under sell and we guar-
antee the quality.

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