

QUEEN ELENA IN HER ELEMENT.

Italy's First Lady is Extravagantly Fond of Children and Christmas is Her Chance.

SANTA CLAUS AS MINISTER.

Little Princesses Yolanda and Mafalda Keign Supreme in Quirinal at Rome Next Week.

Special Correspondence.

Rome, Dec. 8.—Although the real celebration of Christmas, with the exchange of gifts, comes, for the majority of Italian children, on the Epiphany, leaving Dec. 25 an entirely religious day, the royal family keep Christmas as do other countries. This is a tradition in the house of Savoy which the present king and queen have maintained.

At court all is movement and life at Christmastide. Both king and queen personally select the valuable presents they give to the members of their households. This year Queen Elena will take peculiar pains in choosing an infinity of gifts, as it is said she gave dissatisfaction last year, through an innocent judging of other people by herself.

FOND OF CHILDREN.
One of her greatest weaknesses in children. She adores her own, loves those of her ladies-in-waiting, and has a more than kindly feeling for all young people as such, even extending her affection to the eldest son of the Duke of Aosta, who will sometime sit on the throne of Italy, if Queen Elena has no boys. In the general course of weak human nature she would not feel very friendly towards him—and in fact she did not in the beginning—but he conquered her as a baby, and that meant forever.

Last year the queen thought she could not please her ladies-in-waiting better than by pleasing their little ones, so she arranged a magnificent Christmas tree, which she hung with everything that the infant heart could desire, the presents being most costly and numerous, but there were only trifles for the parents. This was too much, the lament were long and loud, and reached the ears of the poor queen, who had intended so well and had satisfied so ill. With her, one lesson is sufficient, so that this season the gifts are to be many and beautiful, but strictly for the minims.

GIVING OF PRESENTS.
The giving of the presents forms a regular ceremonial. They are all arranged on various tables. There are jewels for the wives of those decorated with the collar of the Annunziata, wives of cabinet ministers, and ladies-in-waiting. Each present has a card attached, which is written the name of the person for whom it is intended. The Countess Giucciardini, the chief lady-in-waiting of her majesty, has a large book in which she has written every year a list of the presents given by both the king and queen, and the names of their recipients. In this way the giving of duplicate gifts is avoided. The ladies-in-waiting wear the jewels presented them by her majesty for the first time at the reception given to the diplomatic corps, on the evening of the last day of the year.

Besides this "intimate reception" for the bestowing of gifts, there are innumerable others, so that the season is considered at court to be the most fatiguing of the whole year.

QUEEN AS SANTA CLAUS.

This Christmas there is to be an entirely intimate Christmas tree for the little Princesses Yolanda and Mafalda, the former being not yet three, and the latter having just completed her first year. Christmas to the babies is one long laugh beginning with the moment they open their eyes in the morning until they close them at night. The first thing they see is some mirth provoking object, placed so as to catch the attention. Last year Princess Yolanda found a "miser" doll sitting on her pillow, and when she moved it stuck out its tongue. She laughed and laughed until her nurse obliged her to stop, and then she clasped the new treasure to her bosom and flew to papa and mama. After breakfast during the morning, the shutters were closed and the electric light turned on, so that the beautiful trees shining with tiny colored electric globes and laden with curious and many shaped parcels shown in full glory to the view of the mouth-watering children. This year the tree will be smaller and the queen herself will act as Santa Claus.

Their majesties themselves receive no gifts outside the family circle. It is not permitted; but those who feel special gratitude to them, or from their rank are near the throne, have got into the habit of sending the babies remembrances, which are accepted.

The whole of the day of Christmas at the Quirinal is strictly private, a "home" day, where the servants are made glad also, and where the children are the chief consideration. As the years go on, and the princesses are older, and there are perhaps others, more will be made of this "holiday," but it will always be entirely intimate.

ROMAN CHRISTMAS EVE.

The typical Roman spends the night before Christmas in merry company, generally playing tomboles, a kind of lottery, and about one o'clock of the morning of the 24th the entire party adjourns to the fish market, where there is a magnificent display of the fish to be sold later on, immense eels being the most conspicuous. The dinner in the evening, which begins about nine, so that it will finish just the hour arrives for midnight mass, is composed entirely of fish soup, and fish fried, boiled, baked, etc., with tomato sauce and cauliflower. Although the king and queen do not leave the palace, they adhere to this program more or less closely. This is followed on Christmas day by a magnificent and elaborate banquet, which, however, has no invariable dish, such as our American turkey.

The very opposite pole of the Quirinal festivities are those of the vatican, which is more busy than merry. The pope sends personal greetings to Catholic sovereigns of Europe—Austria,

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THE GREENWALD FURNITURE CO. VIEW OF FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS.

Hungary, Portugal, Bosnia, Belgium, Saxony and Bavaria—and good wishes, through his Nuncios, to other monarchies and governments, poor Italy being the only exception. This cardinal of course—and those of the various dioceses of Italy, have already sent, according to custom and in this quality of viceroy of the church, salutations and good wishes to the Catholic sovereigns, through the ambassadors accredited to the vatican. The manner of the papal court is of very ancient date, and is most scrupulously observed. The letters all bear the date of Nov. 25, St. Catherine's day. Of course the cardinals out of Rome send letters to the pope, all of which have to be answered by the secretary of state, Cardinal Merry del Val, but it is said that Pius X will, like Leo XIII, read personally every letter sent him at this time, and dictate the replies. The cardinals of Rome present their homage in person; they will go together into the presence of his holiness, when the cardinal-deacon, Oreglia di Santo Stefano, will deliver a graceful little speech, replied to by the Pontiff himself, who afterwards enters into familiar speech with each.

WHITE POPE'S CHRISTMAS.

It is a pity no layman is allowed to be present to give us a picture of the scene, the white pope—in reality as well as in name, for he is clad all in white—receiving the allegiance of the red pope, the prefect of the propaganda, Cardinal Gotti, and the black pope, the general of the Jesuits, Father Martin, surrounded by the princes of the church in their gorgeous robes of scarlet and gold, and as a setting to the picture, the noble apartment of the pontiff, with, as its chief ornament, a magnificent crucifix in ebony, ivory and gold. The ambassadors accredited to the holy see are all received, besides various personages. The wonder of it all is that any man, no matter how strong, at the pope's age, can undergo the necessary fatigue. There is considerable speculation everywhere as to the changes which Pius X will make in the Christmas program. So far every economy in which he has participated has been changed in some essential feature, usually to simplify it, but nothing will be known until the moment actually arrives.

AMERICANS BAULKED KING

How Sargent and Abbey Kept Candidate Out of Royal Academy.

Special Correspondence.

London, Dec. 7.—How J. S. Sargent and Edwin A. Abbey, the famous two American members of the Royal academy, recently managed to upset a pet project of King Edward's can be told for the first time on the authority of a Royal academicalian. It seems that the king was especially anxious to have Emil Fuchs, the portrait painter, made a member of the academy, and that Sargent and Abbey found means of preventing the royal wish from being carried out. Ever since Fuchs designed the new postage stamps, which bear the king's head—and which most people think anything but artistic—and made the drawings for the coronation medal, Edward VII is said to have been remarkably "keen" on him, and the sovereign has spent a lot of time in the artist's studio in Devonshire street.

Not long ago it popped into the royal head that Fuchs ought to be a Royal academicalian and the result was a letter to the famous society of Burlington House to the effect that his majesty would be pleased to see the appointment made. That letter made trouble. According to my informant, the members of the Royal academy did not think Mr. Fuchs entitled to become one of their number, but they were in no end of a quandary as to how they could get out of making the appointment without offending the king. In their perplexity, however, some of the more prominent academicalians went to Messrs. Sargent and Abbey, and asked for a suggestion, which was promptly given. The two American artists, who, of course, are quite the biggest guns in the English world at present, promptly sat down and wrote to the king stating that if Mr. Fuchs was elected to the academy, they would resign. Whereupon his majesty is said to have withdrawn his request without loss of time.

The English royal family really gets a lot of fun out of Christmas, owing to the number of grandchildren, grand-nephews and grand-nieces for whom presents have to be chosen with that care and thought for personal preferences that makes it more pleasant to give than to receive. The king's big country house at Sandringham will be the scene of the gathering this year, and as the whole family is in good health and spirits at present the festivities are expected to be more lively than for many a year past. The chief of the great kitchen at Windsor is already busying himself with the traditional baron of beef and the mighty plum pudding, and the tradesmen are looking to Buckingham Palace with respect for their wares for royal inspection. After the Christmas shopping is done, their majesties will go to Sandringham until about the middle of January and then move on to Windsor castle.

Probably the busiest American woman in England today is Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain, daughter of the late Judge Lindell, secretary for war under President Cleveland. She has been present at practically every one of her husband's speeches in the big tariff campaign of which he is the foremost figure. If he succeeds—and those who said he wouldn't are beginning to hedge—there is little doubt that he will become prime minister. And Mrs. Chamberlain will have earned her place as mistress of the famous British House, for she had been a great political help to her husband in many ways, hearing his speeches before they were delivered, prompting his hints and there, and even pulling him by the coat-tail to call his attention to an overlooked point made by someone in the audience. At Newport the other night a man interrupted the speech with a friendly comment which the intelligent Joseph misinterpreted and was starting in on a tart retort when the situation was explained to him in a whisper from his wife. She always appears cheerful of him on the platform and is greeted with raptures of applause. Her face is known everywhere now, despite her objection to being photographed.

There was the usual animated gathering of Americans to eat turkey with real cranberry sauce and finished off with real pumpkin pie at the American society's Thanksgiving banquet. Mr. Choate, referring to William Jennings Bryan, who was the chief guest of the evening, had a little sly fun with the ex-senator of Free silver. He said he had taken him to the Bank of England where he could make a special study of finance and currency, a suggestion that evoked great laughter and cheers. Mr. Bryan, he said, was making a tour of inquiry and had sat at the feet of Asquith and Chamberlain and Goschen and Roseberry, and if his ideas on the dollar question—having heard all those gentlemen in the space of forty-eight hours—were not a little mixed they would appreciate what a quality the man had. "We are delighted to welcome this famous orator," said the ambassador in conclusion, "this candidate twice over of a great party—so which perhaps we do not all belong—the honest man whose purity of character and unbounded cheerfulness of temper have disarmed even his political adversaries of all personal hostility."

Mr. Bryan got back by telling Mr. Choate that if he were to give full credit to what the ambassador had said he might be in the position of the young lady whose sweetheart praised her until she felt so big that she would not speak to him.