

public gardens was frozen over, and the skaters, allured by the seductive music of the band, which played on an island in the middle, pirouetted about on its smooth surface all day long. How invigorating and exciting it all was; everyone seemed to be in a rollicking Christmas mood.

Some of the skaters wore gay coloured caps and scarlet coats, and these pretty touches of colour added considerably to the picturesqueness of the scene against a background of black-limbed, leafless trees, bearing on their upper branches patches of frozen, glistening snow.

We joined a large cosmopolitan party in a boarding-house in the Gartenstrasse, well-named for its nearness to those beautiful gardens.

As Christmas Day drew near, a sense of mystery began to be felt—one felt that surprises were being prepared. The organisers of the entertainment went about in a state of suppressed excitement.

On the eve, the doors of the large salon were kept rigorously closed, and we were told that on no account was anyone to enter. Those in the secret were ever darting in and out, closing the doors sharply behind them.

"What is taking place in there?" asked one or two of the most curious.

"Ach! I shall not say you now; it is *beautiful—beautiful*," laughed a vivacious *fraulein*, with a merry twinkle in her eye.

Anticipation ran high until 7 p.m., when a bell pealed in no uncertain tones. Arrayed in our smartest clothes, we all gravitated towards the centre of attraction. The doors were thrown wide open, and we found ourselves on the threshold of fairyland! The room was a blaze of colour, and in the middle, on the floor, stood a giant Christmas Tree, scintillating with a hundred points of light, bright tinsel, and coloured ornaments. Its majestic proportions occupied a large part of the room, leaving a semi-circular avenue for its admirers to pass around. At the base were piles of interesting-looking parcels.

"Ach, wie schön!" "Ach, wie herrlich!" "prachtvoll!" were echoed round the room; and indeed it was a pretty sight.

We Britons, not being accustomed to this style of entertainment in adult life, contented ourselves with pleased and quiet smiles. We were soon told what we had to do.

"You shall open ze packets," our genial hostess commanded.

We picked them up one after the other, until we found some addressed to ourselves. We tore off the string and paper in some excitement, only to find them wrapped again, and

addressed to someone else, to whom we had to hand them. The same thing was going on all round the magic tree, and soon we found ourselves the recipients of countless bogus parcels.

This, of course, stimulated everyone's curiosity, and the game waxed fast and furious until the scene round the tree was one of paper, string, and excitement! We all received something, I remember. Mine was a little sugar man, with some gentle allusion to matrimony!

The tables round the room were spread with real presents for real friends. As the fairy lights burnt low on the tree, an indication that time was getting on, a new excitement was provided for us. The servants brought in punch, hot and strong. So strong, indeed, was it that a few sips, just sufficient for a toast or two, were all our heads could stand, as we desired to go steadily to bed!

The capacity of our German friends was greater; they drained their glasses again and again without any inconvenience.

There was a recrudescence of the fun and merriment with the relighting of the tree on New Year's night; but whether or not we were again regaled with *too* strong punch, I can't remember.

In some German houses—I believe in most—to inaugurate the festival of the Christmas Tree on the eve, that most beautiful hymn, "Heilige Nacht," is sung in harmony—as Germans know how to sing—by all the household standing round the tree.

So sacred a thing is the Christmas Tree in Germany, that I have even seen it on the altar in a church, not as a humble spruce-fir, but with all its gay decoration. This would scarcely appeal to English people. Nevertheless, we must not forget that it is to the Germans we are indebted for introducing into our country, in the early part of Queen Victoria's reign, the much-honoured Christmas Tree.

My patient had never spent Christmas in Germany before, and I believe it did her quite as much good as the oculist's treatment. No disloyalty intended. BEATRICE KENT.

WELCOME HELP.

We acknowledge with many thanks the following donations towards the expenses of the Nurses' Registration Bill:—

	£	s.	d.
Miss E. L. C. Eden	1	0	0
Miss Jane Fawcett	10	0	
Miss Dreyer	10	0	

Expenses in the coming year seem likely to be considerable, and these gifts are therefore very welcome.

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