

*Giddings Deutsches Volksblatt*, 25 Jan 1923. Image 011600014.

Letter from Germany

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Dresden, 31 December 1922

Christmas Celebration in a German Children's Home

As we enter this home we observe a much different atmosphere today. There is a stage with a curtain, the door frames are decorated with twigs of fir. All guests are asked to go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, take their coats off and have a cup of coffee. Representatives of school, church, friends are asked to have a seat in front of the stage. The plan for the future is to change an existing barn into a place to celebrate festivities and eat. The bells are ringing and the children sing the old German Christmas hymn "Oh du fröhliche, oh du selige gnadenbringende Weihnachtszeit." A poem is read and then we see Maria and Joseph and the baby in the cradle as well as a group of angels all played by the children of this home. Then the arch angel appears and says "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her" and a little girl of age 3 sings "Kommet ihr Hirten, ihr Männer und Frauen." Then the house father reads the Christmas story. After a brief break Santa Claus appears. The children sing the song of the Tannenbäumchen which is followed by a short play by the children and their school mistress: the little Christmas tree comes from the marketplace to a poor family, gnomes and angels do their part, they set the table for the poor people and father returns from work. Now it is time to celebrate and all, little children and adults sing together "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht."

The head of the organization shares a few remarks in which he explains the thought of all people, little and big, are a blessing to human society. Peace on earth will come to all and their well-being and happiness and then it is finally time for passing out the gifts. The children are called by name and led to their place at the long table where they find their Christmas gifts of books, games, clothing and stollen and cookies, nuts and apples. Christmas hymns are sung. This celebration was moving everybody's heart. The present children were those who already had to experience the toughness of life at their homes and had now found a new home full of love.

Dear Mr. Proske, you have helped to make this celebration so very special. Just lately you had sent another \$3.00 from Mr. Max Kriegel in Copperas Cove to help our German children. We thank all of those across the ocean for their gifts to our children.

I wish you and all our German friends across the ocean a blessed new year.

My regards to you,

yours

Richard Wachs

President of the Dresden Association of the Friends of Children

Translated by Margot Hendricks