

## A CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH MENELIK OF ABYSSINIA.

(Scribner's Magazine.)

The Negus seated himself on the throne, which was surrounded by court officials and attendants. At his right lay a large pile of flat bread, on a table covered with a white cloth, and decorated with flowers. On either side of the dais, which was curtained off from the rest of the hall by thin, flower-patterned chintz, stood two silver candelabra, eight feet high, holding sixteen lighted tapers. The guests, consisting of the various residents and ourselves, were placed at two tables on the Emperor's left, set with massive silver knives and forks, marked with the Imperial M. While we ate our well-cooked dinner of many courses, a number of dishes were carried to the Negus. Of some he partook; others, merely touching, he sent to the chief officers sitting about him. Before each of these groups

stood an attendant holding up a great piece of raw beef, killed that morning, from which the guests cut strips with a sharp knife, and, placing one end in the mouth, cut off the remainder. Each person had a decanter of honey-beer by his side. Upon the completion of our repast the chintz curtains were drawn back, disclosing the large hall, 160 feet in length, by 90 in breadth. The walls were covered with blue paper and gold stars. The roof, which was supported by two rows of open-work wooden pillars, was here and there decorated in red, green and orange. This hall soon commenced to fill up with officers and soldiers, who seated themselves in groups around baskets of bread. Attendants stood near the officers holding huge pieces of raw meat; while, to save time, the soldiers were served with cut portions. Each man was then handed a horn cup, nearly a foot long, filled with honey-beer. As the first detachment of troops finished, they were given a

small glass of arrack and ushered out to make room for the next. An Abyssinian brass band, trained by a Russian master, played a selection of music, and, finally, the national anthems of France, Russia, England, Italy and Abyssinia; to each we drank standing.