

# THE DEEP PHILOSOPHY OF TOYS



A Hungarian Doll.

These photographs were taken at the Exhibition of Dolls of All Nations and Sale for Benefit of the Unemployed Girls of the City at the International Institute for Young Women, 113 E. Thirty-fourth street.

## Its Teachings Are Found in Children's Playthings, Which Are Capable of Teaching Better Than Schoolbooks

*"The child is eternal, and so are toys and tears and laughter. When the house is put in order by strange men, when the clothes that are worn and the tools that were used are put away, there will be found an upper room full of toys. These remain."*—From "The Toy Shop," by Margarita Spalding Gerry.

making history and inventions that are revolutionizing social conditions from the toys that are now its treasured playthings. They will be connected with facts learned later on, and will materially assist in impressing these facts upon the memory.

"The toys keep pace with the times, and may serve as object lessons to those who will learn. Who knows but that they may eventually throw light on the long forgotten period of the twentieth century should the archaeologists of ages to come be as fortunate in their finds as the Egyptian excavators of the present?"

There is no great world event that has not been symbolized by a toy. Even the guillotine of the French Revolution has been reproduced by a plaything. Who knows but that the child Moses may have owned the linen doll stuffed with papyrus grown on the banks of the Nile that reclines dumbly behind glass in the museum of to-day?

The fine workmanship of the Middle Ages of Europe and of the Renaissance is reflected in the toys of those periods. There was no special trade of toy-makers then. Mrs. Sewill Jackson, a writer who has delved perhaps further than anybody else into this fascinating subject, thinks it possible that Benvenuto Cellini may have carved many of the silver toy soldiers found in modern collections and that Chippendale may have furnished a doll's house.

THE small boy gets a train of cars. His first thought is, "Why won't it go?" Naturally. He has seen trains tearing along and his imagination immediately endows the miniature equipment from the toy shop with life, motion, speed, excitement.

So what does he do? He gets down on the floor and in marvellous stooping postures known only to the small boy drags his train along until he thinks a respectable speed has been attained.

Into the cars go dolls for passengers, into the locomotive tender small pieces of coal, carefully washed, for fuel. But—there's no smoke coming out of the smokestack! Ah! the little brain solves the problem. Into the smokestack he shovels sawdust with a spoon. Again the train starts. Out comes the sawdust in irregular spurts along the tracks. That's something like. The picture is complete. The child has been forced to think and he has had a lot of fun.

What is the point, you ask? Patience! A little girl breaks her doll's head. Is that the end of her toy? By no means. There is enacted a tiny drama for a while.

First come tears and sobs. Then the little girl—your little girl, anybody's little girl—borrows a piece of cloth from her mother. "Poor sick dolly" is solemnly bandaged and put to bed. Possibly a small brother is the doctor. Dolly is operated on with a needle. The mother puts a new head on dolly while the children are fast asleep. The next day the great eyed inanimate little thing, darling of a child's dreams, leaves the hospital completely cured.

That is the philosophy of toys. And that is not all. The mind never reflects a suggestion. What the busy driving little brain is doing to-day with a toy may well be translated years later into the efforts of a workaday world, when the golden age of the nursery is but a part of the delicate web of memory.

Nothing in life is as beautiful as the stirring of thought within the child. That idea opens up a whole volume of psychology. But ponder it here for a moment and you will come to understand the deeper philosophy of toys. Perhaps these lines of Robert Louis Stevenson—who knew, if any one ever did, the heart of a child and how the childish brain reproduces in play the world passing round about him—will help you:

What are you able to build with your blocks? Castles and palaces, temples and docks, Rain may keep raining, and whens go round.

But I can be happy and building at home, Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea.

Then I'll establish a city for me; A kirk and a mill and a palace beside, And a harbor as well where my vessel may ride.

Yet as I saw it, I see it again, The kirk and the palace, the ships and the men, And as long as I live and wherever I may be, I'll always remember my town by the sea.

Let us follow the trail of the toy still further back into the ages: Children do not change with the centuries. Always has the child had his toys and his games, and the diversions of the playroom have been curiously similar throughout the years. The little black children of South Africa, the infant Russians, the tiny Malays, the small people of our own



"Pavlova," dressed by Malvina Hoffman, the sculptress.



The Princess Kosak.

Photos by Underwood & Underwood.

Indian races, have played much the same games as did the Greek and Roman and Egyptian children before them. It seems indeed that a common humanity begins in infancy.

The rattle, that venerable toy of joy forever to children of all ages and under all skies, was well known in ancient Greece, and greatly esteemed for the use of infants. It probably was invented in the fifth century B. C. by Archytas, a philosopher who was indeed great, since he was not too busy to lend his wisdom to reasonable childish things.

Nor must you run away with the idea that toys are only for children. Scattered throughout the world are grave merchants, doctors, lawyers, magistrates and men following the profession of arms who have a passion for toy soldiers. Some collect only certain types; others strive to obtain a complete gallery of small lead warriors.

One collector has more than 400,000 specimens, another has 200,000. In the latter collection each regiment of infantry is composed of twenty-five infantrymen, and ten cavalrymen compose each regiment of horse. The infantry regiments of another grownup enthusiast consist of 240 men, with ninety-six in each of the mounted branches.

Some of these collectors keep their treasures, brought together only after years of untiring search, for the most part peacefully reposing in flannel lined cabinets. Others of a more militant turn conjure up great battlefields in

history. Verily is the child the father of the man! And great is Nuremberg, chief cradle of that most debonair of toys, the little lead soldier.

Another word as to toy soldiers. Mrs. Jackson writes:

"In Germany, where the play of children is so much utilized for educational purposes, toy soldiers are taken very seriously; not only do the best Nuremberg makers employ good artists to make their models, but men of letters to furnish details as to past wars, archeologists to secure accuracy in details of arms and accoutrements, and writers to furnish short accounts of the wars in which the soldiers were engaged. Nearly every war of any importance in the history of the world has contributed to the furnishing of copy and models to fill the delightful glass covered boxes, to contain the famous toy soldiers of Nuremberg."

The magic lantern, which perhaps above all other toys appeals to the love of mystery of the boyish mind, was invented by Roger Bacon, an English monk who told his beads back in the thirteenth century. Some years later the magic lantern became a favorite among the nobility, having particularly great popularity in the fun loving homes of France.

It may almost be said that toyland has held up a mirror to the field of science. The great laws of gravitation, centrifugal force, magnetism, hydraulics, have all found their way into the nursery, illumined and simplified for the childish mind by the art of the toy-



A corner at the sale and exhibition.

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In the beginning of things came man, sequent to him woman; on woman followed the child, and on the child the doll. It is a climax of development and the crown of these is the doll.

The words are those of Francis Thompson, the Englishman whose untimely death lessened the great company of writers and made an end of that wisest of humankind a lover of children.

It has been rather cruelly said that a child's love of endlessly dressing, hand and face washing and otherwise beautifying her doll, comes less from a liking for neatness than from a desire to inflict on something else the continual discipline which she herself receives from her nurse as from a stern inexorable face. No matter, make believe doesn't depend on motive for its effectiveness, and we are all human.

The land of the cherry blossom is the modern paradise for dolls so far as housing them is concerned. The home of the little lady of the old is complete down to the pen and ink and writing pad with which, no doubt, she indeliberately love notes. And if there is anything in toyland more fetching than a baby Japan-se doll, chubby, rosy and serene, the chronicle does not know just what it is.

There is not space enough to write of the dolls of the world, but rest assured that the heart of a little girl in Borneo is just as full of the divine mothering instinct that makes the childish love of dolls a thing apart as is the heart of a tiny maid of Gotham.

The gallery of toy animals has always been filled to overflowing. Little Egyptian boys of the olden time had a strong liking for spotted cows made out of pottery; the annual loving boys of Ceylon had a weakness for mules, and there are still preserved some curious figures from Greece before the Christ era.

The children of King Aesopius, ruler

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