SIMPLE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENTS

SEVERAL GAMES THAT ARE EASY TO PLAY AND INEXPENSIVE TO PREPARE FOR YOUNG AND OLD

CHRISTMAS is the time when grown-up people wish they were young, and young folk, for once, are glad they are not grown up. Everybody comes together on a common plane of merry-making; and the dignity that generally keeps the elders from frisking around is cast to the four winds. Games are the order of the day. Here are a few that can lay claim to originality, in some measure anyway, and certainly to simplicity and fun-making powers.

The first is a Christmas tree party. It is a game in which young and old can join, and is just the thing for the annual family reunion.

The only requisite is an old, white sheet, which will not be needed again in its legitimate capacity as bed linen, and a pretty prize. On the sheet sketch or paste a design of a Christmas tree. No artistic talent is needed for this; anything recognizable will serve the purpose. An outline in colored chalks or charcoal is perhaps the easiest method of making it. Have each branch of the tree terminate in a circle containing a number, using the numbers from one to ten or one to twenty-five, according to the size of the tree.

To play the game each member of the party is blindfolded in turn and is given a rosette, with which he must "decorate the tree." Each person aims to pin his or her rosette on or near to the highest number on the tree. Each competitor has three trials, the three numbers to which he pins nearest being written down to his credit by the hostess, who keeps tally.

The one whose three numbers added together give the largest sum total wins the first prize. An inexpensive consolation prize may also be provided, and this opportunity may be taken for informally presenting gifts to friends.

A Toy Race.

Another idea for a holiday party is the mechanical toy race, in which toys of various descriptions moved by springs, etc., race across the drawing-room in order to win prizes for their owners.

To prepare for a race ask each member of the party to secure and bring with him a mechanical toy. In order to afford all an equal chance, it should be understood that no toy entering the contest is to cost more than 50 cents. Any toy capable of being wound up and running a race—such as an engine, horse or bicycle—is eligible. If the party is large, it is better to divide up the number of players and have only six entries in each race.

Every toy which wins a race is eligible for the test which follows at the end. The test races continue until some particular toy has come out winner three times.

Little mechanical devices in silver make charming awards. Thus, if two prizes are given the ladies' trophy might be a silver hair barette with patent device; the gentlemen's a novelty appertaining to the smoking outfit.

The Holly Game.

Then there is the new holly idea, a particularly pleasing little game devised especially for the holiday season.

It does not require a minute devoted to tiresome explanations or practice, and any girl can prepare the cards in morning hours.

Buy at a stationer's several sheets of thin white cardboard and one sheet each of scarlet and green paper. Cut the white sheets into small cards, carte de visite size. Cut from the green paper half as many little holy leaves as you have white cards and an equal number of berries from the red paper. The leaves should be about an inch in length and the berries a trifle smaller. To insure a prettily shaped leaf and a nicely rounded berry the outlines can be traced from the holly decorations on a Christmas card or booklet and used as patterns.

On half the white cards paste berries, and on the other half green leaves.

In playing the game the cards are thoroughly shuffled and seven are dealt to each player, the rest forming a pool. The object of the game is to secure a hand containing either all holly leaves or all berries. As soon as a player secures a hand of this kind—it must contain seven cards—he shows it to the other players, pockets the seven cards and takes a new hand from the pool. All cards pocketed belong to the player who wins them at the end of the round or game. The girl or man having the largest number when the supply is finally exhausted wins the game. The number of the games to be played for the prize is optional. In order to match cards in their hands the players draw rapidly from the right or left hand neighbor in a regular order previously agreed upon, as in Old Maid.

Pretty boxes, fancy work, or jewelry in design of holly leaves and berries offer a wide range of choice in the matter of attractive prizes.

Magic Colors.

Another pleasing game, with Christmas gifts as prizes, is Magic Colors. It may be used as the foundation of a holiday party either for children or "grown ups."

The morning before the company is to assemble the hostess takes as many small lengths of ribbon as she expects guests. All the ribbons are in different colors, or shades of colors, and each ribbon strip is cut into halves. One-half of each ribbon is hidden somewhere in the rooms to which the guests are admitted.

When the game is about to begin the hostess makes a little bunch of the ribbon pieces matching those hidden. Each player in turn closes his eyes and draws a piece from the bunch. The color drawn becomes his for the game.

The hostess then explains that a Christmas gift is in waiting for the player who first finds the mate to the ribbon strip that he holds. Any one finding a ribbon belonging to another player is requested to pass on without indicating its whereabouts, and continue searching until his own is discovered. Other prizes may be added if the party-giving purse string permits.

A Christmas Card Soiree.

The Christmas cards are a series of puzzles founded upon the popular literature—poems, songs, stories—of Yuletide. Christmas quotations may be substituted for the titles.

These puzzles are very easy to make, although difficult and exciting to decipher. The words of the title or quotation are represented by pictures clipped from magazines and papers, by original sketches, small and capital letters in type, and so on. The list of titles should be made out before beginning the work of illustrating.

By way of example the following list might be a portion of the selection: "Christmas Carol," "The Night Before Christmas," "Twelfth Night."

Represent the first by the letters which go to make up the word Christmas (cut from different kinds of type and jumbled out of their proper order), a picture of a car and a small roll of paper.

The second title can be symbolized by a sketch or illustration of a knight in armor placed before the word Yule.

For depicting the third title select a moonlight scene and write the numeral 12 across it.

For mounting the puzzles nothing can be more attractive than bevel-edged photograph mounts in soft gray or brown tint. Each card contains only one puzzle and is numbered in gilt.

In playing the game players are seated in a circle around a table. Each player is provided with pencil and paper and the puzzle cards are passed from hand to hand.

The player divining the largest number of the titles is rewarded with a book about Christmas, a photograph of an "Old Master," representing the Cave at Bethlehem, or a collection of Yuletide songs, carols and poetry.

THE DREAM CHILD'S CHRISTMAS BELT

BY LUCY T. HIGGINS

TEDDY was a dream child!

This his mother, practical in the extreme, asserted. Of this she was certain, at this, his latest whim. He wanted a fairy wand! Nay, insisted upon it. "A fairy wand like Aunt Nell told about in the twilight only last night!" A fairy wand, that waved, waved by him—a Prince—brought toys and toys, rocking-horses, a whip with a real snap if you wanted it; still further, Santa Claus, himself, with other presents for the folks. Here it was, just a week from Christmas, and Teddy felt sure his pile of pennies in his bank was not heavy. It jingled too loud, he was certain. Moreover, he had overheard mamma talking in the night telling papa "if they could only find their deed for their home, they could keep it always." She hated to give up the home for the children's sake. Then he thought he heard her cry, and papa saying: "Oh, well, wave a fairy wand, and find it yet, dear."

Now what a deed was, was more than Teddy could understand. An old lady that frequently visited Teddy's home, was wont to exclaim, "indeed! indeed!" but she never seemed to be looking for it. Teddy thought; and he rather thought a deed was something to be found, like a door key, or a pocket-book. Accordingly he started to look.

But first he thought he might as well have the fairy wand itself, and fell to asking mamma for it, which led her to her foregone conclusion, that Teddy was a dreamer! He believed every story so readily.

Mamma cuddled him in her arms soothingly—it was in the twilight time—after she had pulled the blinds down, shutting out the sight of the great ocean bay of Astoria, with its many-masted ships, darkening the room "just the proper degree for story-telling." Janet, the 16-year-old daughter, flung herself in a heap before the glowing coals of the cheerful grate, and abandoned herself to listen. The roar of the ocean waves, hoarse with a Winter storm, heightened the impression of coziness within, and lent an air of weirdness to the world without.

"Tedd, I know of something better than a fairy wand," mamma began. "What do you say to a Christmas belt? A Christmas belt that, if it could be found, would bring us lots of good things for Christmas, and pretty it is, too. As I remember, it was a leather belt of scarlet, with white beads woven in checks, set here and there with precious stones, pearls and diamonds; with clasps of gold buckles. But it was lost long ago!"

"Is that all, mamma?" Teddy queried. He had a delightful remembrance of a belt he had once with reins attached for driving horses that he was told had belonged to Santa's reindeer, and he was all attention. "Was this belt like his?"

"O! Mamma! Tell us the whole story," begged Janet. "Tell it like a fairy tale."

"Once upon a time when your grandmother was a little girl," mamma began, "way back in England, she was taken to the home of her aunts, two old maids, to live, because her papa and mamma died, and she had no brothers or sisters to make her home with. Here she lived like a little Princess, Teddy, and seemed as though she always had a fairy wand to wave. She always had so many good things. Her papa and mamma left her riches, which were to be given her according to her aunts' wishes.

"She had dolls and playthings, lots of picture books, Teddy, and in time, went to a girls' school where she was guarded strictly as to her pleasures. She was never allowed to see a boy. That, to Maidie, your grandma, was dreadful. She had read in storybooks about a big boy that came sometimes and carried a girl off, when he liked her, to an ivy-vined house, a big one with steeples and pictures in which a great organ thrilled you through with music. She was thinking of their churches in the old country.

"For all her good times in the school, one fear possessed Maidie. That was that she might never meet her boy! She never had a chance, she thought. When she was still a young girl—sweet 16—she went to her first ball. Her saucy black eyes danced merrily with enjoyment of the music, the colored lights and pretty girls. Her fluffy, brown hair framed her face in a high color of pink and white that was striking, matching her simple dress of red tarlatan. So thought the boy, who had really come at this, her first ball!

"Albeit the aunts frowned, fussed and fumed, Maidie received the attention of her Boy. He was a soldier Boy and had great tales of wars and warriors; of a certain black pony he rode; of London, the city. He related at length of the festivities in which she might lead as the Girl, if she would come with him. Maidie's aunts were horrified when they found Maidie had taken flight with the Boy. Their horror froze them. Like two great ogres, they said she should not ever return home. She should not have a penny of her wealth.

"Rumor reached them, occasionally, of the Boy fighting in a big battle. Later, the Boy was dead. Then the two ogres relented, opened their big arms for Maidie, the Girl, to return.

"The Boy, your grandfather, was not dead, but in prison. The Girl, with her persuasiveness, obtained her money, then left, securing her Boy's release in a strange country."

"The Girl took me, a little child, soon afterward," continued Maina, with a new tenderness in her voice, "to Honolulu with the Boy. And now we come to the Christmas belt, Teddy! There was the blackest, the shiniest and the cutest little native boy there that I took a fancy to. He became my playmate, and lived near us. None could weave flowers for me like he, none was so constant. The Girl said I might have him for my little servant and companion—all my own. One Christmas day, in playing in a flowered park of Honolulu, we found the Christmas belt. The Girl called it the Christmas belt because we found it on Christmas day, and said she should keep her money in it. She laughingly belted it around her slender girlish waist, and for all it overlapped several notches, declared she should always wear it as a mascot.

"For some reason the Girl and the Boy came to America, choosing a rich valley in Oregon for their home. By this time the coin in the belt was all gone. The Boy was an invalid, very sick at times. The Girl, with the same faith in the Boy, sought a way out of their difficulties. Far to the south was a magic city of shanties sheltering men rich with golden dust and golden nuggets, working with frenzied efforts. They needed clothing, they needed food in that new country. Why couldn't she supply the need? The Boy was weak; the Girl was strong and drove a herd of cattle over the mountain passes to the magic city. She knit warm woolen stockings made from the fleece of her own sheep and sold them to these miners of the golden city, bringing home their weight in gold. The Girl bought land, and the old, old house was built where it stands now. It was a story-and-a-a-half house of frame, the main feature of which was a great, roomy fireplace, where I used to stand at nights and see the stars peer at me. Nestled midst a forest of firs and oaks, it was wrapt in many a social event when the Girl entertained McLoughlin and other big men.

"Again the old house seemed in turn a fitting place for dark deeds, in its solitude and lonely location. Many tales of Indian fights and emigrant hardships were related around this old fireplace, which in its turn has a legend of a secret spring and recess to an aperture in the wall for hidden treasure in those early days, long since lost.

"A lot of little girls and several boys came to the Girl's home to live, and she decided that with her gold she would build another house, much larger, some distance from the old one. Then the Boy died. The Girl bravely struggled to bring up all her girls and the boys aright, and continued her hospitality as of old, for which she was noted. Her tenderness and thoughtfulness for her children were always noticeable. And when she became strangely reticent regarding her gold, which she would never speak of, we wondered, and wondered still more when she ceased wearing her Christmas belt. We dared ask her no questions regarding it. When she died nothing could be found of it.

Some time afterward I married. Workmen were sent to repair the chimney of the old house where I was to live. Alva, my black companion, still with us, now a grown man, went with them, and with the men disappeared that day. We never saw them again—never found the Girl's money or the Christmas belt. It is supposed the men found both money and Christmas belt, and—"

Here a maid entered with fuel to replenish the fire, saying: "I forgot to give you this letter, which the postman brought this evening. It came while you were out."

"Why, it's postmarked by old home!" exclaimed the mistress. It read:

My Dear Nancy: For a lark, my husband and I have brought our children to spend Christmas here on the old homestead. We've opened and aired every corner and nook of the house, and mean to give it a Christmas-y air during the next week. We want you and yours home, too; so please find a check enclosed. Be sure to come immediately. Your loving sister, CLARA.

During the days that followed at the homestead, Teddy, of all the children, seemed very quiet and thoughtful.

Mamma laughingly explained that he was her dream child. Could they not tell that by looking at him? See how pensive he was, how quiet!

His thin, peaked face seemed wistful, with large, luminous eyes that were afire with sights and visions of his world, sober now with a seeming study of thought. His curly black hair clung tenaciously about his shoulders, the neck showing pure and white. Offsetting the whole, his black velvet corduroy, belted at the waist, gave him a diminutive appearance for a 7-year-old child. He was a "little old man," his people asserted, and generally one must abide by the public verdict.

Serious and thoughtful, holding conversation with little people of his world, Teddy was an ardent lover and clung to his mother's skirts confidingly. He had such things to tell her! The latest was he must find the Christmas belt!

. . . . . .

The festivities were at their height, and in the almost darkened night the Christmas tree was lighted with many candles in the great sitting-room. Then, and then only, it was discovered that Teddy was gone! All the rooms were searched—the beds, the closet—to see if he was not there asleep. No Teddy could be found!

Mamma's face whitened and her heart beat fast while she wondered what fate could have befallen her dream child. She looked into the moonlit sky and for a moment felt peaceful when she thought perhaps the angels have taken them to his world—the world of little people like himself—but no! an Indian had stealthily carried him off, or he has wandered away and is lost in the woods.

A thought struck her. The old house with its fireplace! Might not Teddy be there? Perhaps he had remembered her story. Together, by the light of a candle, the party make for the old house. The door was slightly ajar. But no Teddy could be found! Teddy's mamma looks at the fireplace, but sees not her boy; then, in and up—and discovers an opening on the side of the chimney-place large enough for a person to enter. Softly she calls, "Teddy! Teddy!" but no response comes. Louder she calls again, "Teddy! Teddy!"

"Is it you, mamma?" comes the answer. "I've got the Christmas belt—see!"

Teddy rubbed his eyes, which, blinded by the candle, refused to open wide. At the same time he thrust his Christmas belt into his mother's hand. He had wandered there in the afternoon, he said, and, happening to push on a brick, the side of the chimney revolved back like a heavy iron door, where he found the Christmas belt. He remembered he had bumped his head, and nothing further.

Still a brilliant red, yet musty with mold, the jewels dull and lusterless, the Christmas belt was yet in a good state of preservation. It was heavy, and on opening it was found to be rich in gold coin. In its inner recess was found the deed. In the corner of the secret nook were found several boxes of gold and hidden treasure.

Teddy, the dream child, thought the Christmas belt was as good to have as a fairy wand, when he was taken in to see the Christmas tree and saw how happy every one was.

He said it was the jingle of the Christmas belt—the coins were inside, you know—that brought all the pretty things—a jingle as potent as the wave of a fairy wand.

"But the best gift was the deed," he sagely remarked to mamma, who lovingly hugged him in answer.

Then he went to bed with the Christmas belt firmly clasped in his little hand and lay sound asleep.

HOME OF THE JOBBERWOCK

How the Wonderland of Today Gets Its Strange Inhabitants.

FOR more than a generation the children of England have had their Christmas season made additionally delightful by the great spectacles that are produced on the stages for the special benefit of boys and girls. These beautiful and charming Christmas plays—known as pantomimes, although they really are not pantomimes at all, but true plays—have been transplanted to this country in recent years, so America will have her pantomime season just as England does, and American children will have the opportunity to laugh over the pantomime as Dickens and Thackeray and their young characters did.

A favorite pantomime always is that ever-new and absorbing story, "Alice in Wonderland."

Years ago the theatrical manager saw great possibilities in Alice's adventurous career in a strange country. She is surrounded, of course, by all those wonderful creatures of Mr. Carroll's imagination, creatures as weird and picturesque as could be desired by even the youngest critic. So on the stage there are scores of extraordinary specimens of fish, flesh and fowl. As "Alice in Wonderland" without the full complement of freaks would be worse than "Hamlet" without the Prince of Denmark, a great deal of attention must be and is bestowed on them.

The making of an ordinary theatrical mask is in itself an undertaking that requires a great deal of skill; "Alice in Wonderland" demands not only masks, but a variety of strange figures and animal disguises bewildering to the uninitiated.

Take the case of Humpty Dumpty, for instance, a creature who causes Alice no little distress of mind because she cannot be certain whether his necktie is his waistbelt or vice versa. Humpty looks very miserable as he sits disconsolately on the top of a basket, while a man bestows a lovely brightness upon his left eye with a dab of the paint brush. The figure is absolutely head and body combined, with short legs and arms so constructed that the actor who gives the dwarf voice also moves his legs and arms quite naturally. The huge head is made of papier mache, shaped in a mold.

In another part of the many-chambered "property" department is a lobster, going through a sort of premature boiling—at least his shell, under the skillful touch of the official paint brush, is rapidly assuming that brilliant complexion which only comes, as a rule, when the worthy crustacean has made intimate acquaintance with the inside of a cooking pot. It is an uncanny-looking object, with its great claws hanging limply from its basket body. On the stage the clumsy thing will be animated by some smart little boy who will cause many other boys to utter noble laughter when the claws begin to play pranks with the legs of the Mad Hatter.

"A mock turtle!" exclaims Alice, when told that such a strange creature is about to pay her a visit; "there isn't any such thing!"

The stage Mock Turtle is very fine and large, with a calf's head. The calf's head is the "mock" portion of the turtle; for it is a well-known fact that only an educated palate can discern the difference between turtle soup and "the same thing" made from calf's head.

There are half a dozen rabbits to play with Alice on her first appearance in Wonderland. They are very intelligent animals, and can talk and move their ears in a surprising manner.

Just above the empty oyster shells are the well-shaped heads of some of the prominent freaks of the play. The Lion and Unicorn are there, and there is not the slightest sign of the animosity that is supposed to exist between those two animals.

Half a dozen pairs of oyster shells gape blankly in the shadow of the property-room. The succulent morsels are now missing, but on the stage six tiny tots will be trotting about with the shells on their backs, to fall victims to the wiles of the Walrus and the Carpenter before the horrified eyes of Alice.

The head of the March Hare does not betray any symptoms of madness, for the straws have not yet been fixed "in the place where the wool ought to grow." That terrifying creature, the Gryphon, is represented in the group, its evil eyes glaring with all the ferocity of green tinsel in approved demoniac fashion.

Spaces are left at the throats. They are covered with the gauze through which the wearers may see without being seen.

Yonder is the shimmering suit of green to be worn by the Caterpillar, while the furry garments of the ever-grinning Cheshire Cat lie waiting for the human actor to get inside of them.

HUMPTY DUMPTY ON THE WALL.

GOLDEN DANCER'S LIFE OF FASHION

HOW SHE WAS FIRST CARESSED, THEN DISCARDED AND THEN MADE HAPPY AGAIN

AWAY up on the top of the Christmas tree stood a little gold dancer with a bright silver star on her head. She stood up extremely straight and stiff, for she was determined to look refined and aristocratic, despite the natural inconvenience of it.

If she envied the doll in the red skirt that hung on the tree in vulgar though pleasant ease, with arms and legs dangling ungracefully but comfortably, she made no sign. And as for the clown with the drum—she looked fixedly over his head. He did not care, but continued to grin up at her with unabashed impudence.

That was only natural, for the clown was low-born. Considered critically, he was really nothing except a spiral steel spring and a bit of green and yellow cambric.

However, the little gold dancer was not so truly aristocratic by birth as she wished to appear. For while on her mother's side there had been some real gold leaf in the family, her father was a short, stubby, unkempt paste brush, smelling rather badly of cheap glue.

Still none of the brilliant society on the Christmas tree knew that; and you may be sure that the little dancer talked of everything else rather than of the attic where she was born.

She criticised the decorations and furniture of the fine room with a freedom that showed all the others that she knew what belonged to wealth and culture. And she mentioned the pictures in the illustrated papers and the statuettes and other works of art in the world in such a familiar manner that the wooly lamb and the Noah's Ark felt completely humbled.

The wooly lamb was naturally very modest, for it came from a family that was so large that little money could be expended on any one member. Consequently it had been forced to be contented with cotton instead of real wool, and instead of silk ribbon it had only a bit of purple paper around its neck. Even its bell was not a truly good one. It had to be shaken with a great deal of perseverance to make it ring at all, and then it could not be heard really well unless it was held close to the ear.

As for the Noah's Ark, that establishment was so mixed that it never pretended to belong to good society. There were a few boarders, such as the lion and the elephant, who were inclined to haughtiness, but whenever the folk in the ark went out they generally went out all together, and it was not easy for the world to see the distinction between the better classes and the others.

Therefore, on the day before Christmas the little dancer was considered superior to everybody else. Even the envious goldfish that dangled from the best branch on the tree had to admit it.

When the tree was lit and the family came in, the dancer was praised so much by everybody that her flighty head became still more flighty, and she began to imagine that Christmas had been made for her. Really, it was the other way. But she thought not.

There was a little girl in the room, and she was so beautifully dressed and had such delightful brown curls that the dancer said to herself:

"What a distinguished person! That is the company which one must keep when one is a gold dancer with a silver star on one's head." So she stared at the girl with her best smile, which was a very good one, for it had been painted on her face with great care.

Before long she was gratified to observe that the little girl was staring at her, too. And at last her vanity and pride became overwhelming; for the little girl held her hands up and began to beg for the pretty golden dolly.

Then you may be sure all the other decorations, high and low and rich and poor, nearly burst with envy. The pasteboard grenadier became so indignant that he almost fell into a pink candle that was burning under him. A mouse that was descended from a rich family consisting of real felt and the finest of clockwork slipped a cog and began to run around and around in anger. The doll in the red skirt made believe to fall in a faint and let her head drop to one side till everybody laughed.

The only folk who did not betray any feeling whatever in the matter were the wooly lamb and the Noah's Ark. They did not care.

However, the pride of the golden dancer was to have a great and humiliating fall. For no sooner had she been introduced to the little girl than the latter dropped her at once. Alas! the whole company saw then what was the true inwardness of the proud dancer. All her elegance and aristocratic appearance were only show. Her back was plain, ordinary, cheap white paper.

Instantly the whole world and the Christmas tree seemed to the little dancer to go around in a dizzy whirl, and she thought that she should die from grief and shame. There was only one lucky thing that saved her from perhaps going to pieces at once—that was that she had fallen face downward, and so did not need to look at any of the company.

While she lay there a boy of the family stepped on her once without knowing it and again without looking to see what it was under his foot, and again just because he was a boy. The little dancer did not even cry out. She felt so bad in her mind that mere bodily suffering did not impress her.

Later, somebody kicked her and turned her face upward again. That was the worst of all; for the first thing that she saw was the beautiful little girl playing with the wooly lamb and fondling it lovingly.

After that the little dancer did not care what became of her. She did not even care when the broom, a most rude and uneducated person who did general housework and had no taste for anything refined, came along and began to sweep her away.

The broom had heard the little dancer boast the day before. As a matter of fact, he had respected her deeply and had believed all that she said about her family and her high connections. But he made believe now that he had known about everything all along. That is the way of the world, and there is nobody in it so worldly wise as a broom. Everything proud and rich and beautiful is bound to be swept up some day or another by the broom family; so they know a great deal about life and vanity.

"Ha! ha!" chuckled the broom coarsely. "My golden lady, you are now in my hands, and I shall show you who is the true master of this house. I shall sweep you into the street, where you may try your airs and graces on the other rubbish in the gutter. Let it be a lesson to you never to look down on folk who are genuine all the way through with no paper back. I am real from head to toe. One of the finest trees that ever was seen furnished my backbone, and I cannot waste my time on you."

When the little dancer fell into the street, her silver star was almost torn off and her golden dress was sadly spattered with grime, for, although the broom was very severe about keeping the rest of the household clean, he did not waste much time in washing himself. He was like a great many persons who are much more particular about others than they are about themselves.

She found herself alongside of an old and tattered rag dog. He was so feeble and crippled that he was pitiable to see. One of his legs had been pulled so hard that the red flannel of which he was composed inside hung out like blood. The dancer's first impulse was to pull her skirts away. But she stopped herself, for she had begun to learn a great deal. So she even condescended to nod politely when the rag dog said "Good day."

As was natural, it was not long before the two companions in ill-fortune began to exchange confidences. After hearing her melancholy story, the rag dog nodded his head wisely and said:

"Ah, yes, my dear, that is what one must expect when one enters the society of the wealthy. I, too, wanted to move amid fashion and pomp. But I soon found that when one is only a rag dog, or, excuse me, golden only on one side, one cannot hope to be created as an equal.

"I thought that my fortune was made when I became the friend of the boy in that house from which we have just been dismissed. But you see the result. I am old before my time, and instead of leading a life of contentment and respect, I must expect now to go to the rag factory or some other gloomy place."

Just then a tiny girl came along. Her hands were red with cold and the thin shawl that was wrapped around her was full of holes. She was picking up bits of coal and wood.

Her bright eyes allowed nothing to escape them. So she did not fail to see the rag dog and the golden dancer. With a cry of joy she picked them both up and looked at them as if she never had seen anything so beautiful before in all her life.

She petted the injured rag dog and kissed his poor crippled leg. She was so overcome with awe of the golden dancer that she did not dare to kiss her. And if it had been the day before, the dancer would have been angry indeed had a ragged little girl tried it. But now something queer and mysterious came over her, and she held her face up as well as she could until the little girl suddenly lifted her up and pressed her mouth to hers.

And with that kiss the little golden dancer with the silver star learned all at once what true love and happiness are.

The rag dog with his wounds all stitched, and the dancer with her golden dress rubbed clean and with the silver start pasted lovingly, soon stood in the little girl's poor attic room and the three were happy ever afterwards.

SANTA CLAUS' WORKSHOP

GERMANY, FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND BUSY ALL THE YEAR TO MAKE TOYS FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

OLD Santa Claus is one of the largest employers of labor in the whole world. His workshops are to be found in nearly every country, and thousands of men, women and children are busy all the year making millions of toys of all kinds and sizes to fill the capacious bag which their genial master carries about with him on Christmas Eve.

No sooner has he delivered the last toy on Christmas Eve, removed all traces of soot from his smiling face, and turned his bag inside out to make quite certain that nothing has been left in the corners, than he begins to busy himself with the manufacture of toys for the next year.

The most popular toy is, of course, the doll; and when you consider the number of girls who possess at least one, and sometimes a whole family of dolls, you will be able to understand that many thousands of workpeople are employed making this one kind of toy. There are rag dolls made in England; china-faced dolls made in France, and Dutch dolls, which are not Dutch at all, but only called so because they are principally shipped from Dutch ports.

Then, of course, there is the old favorite, the wax doll. Let us take a peep into some of the rooms of a toy factory or workshop and see for ourselves how they are made.

On the tables and counters are hundreds of wax heads, more or less finished. In another part of the room is a pile of bodies, legs and arms all heaped up together, and if you take a glance into that bag in the corner you will be somewhat surprised, for it is full of doll's eyes looking up at you with glassy stare.

A number of men and women are busy. A large pan of wax is placed in a still larger pan containing water heated by means of gas. As the water gets hot the wax, of course, melts. Into the molten wax a workman now drops the coloring matter, generally rouge, to give the dolls that beautiful complexion which we all delight to see.

The plaster moulds for the heads, made in three pieces, are then firmly tied together, and the mould thus formed is carefully filled with the liquid wax. After a certain time the greater part of the wax is poured back, but a portion coming into contact with the cold plaster mold has already set.

The mold is now untied and removed, and there we have a wax head nicely formed, and looking almost as natural, and sometimes as large, as life. Wax bodies, arms and legs are made in a similar manner.

Two holes are cut in the wax head for the eyes, which in the case of the more expensive dolls have to be placed into their sockets very carefully. In the cheaper kinds the eyes are first warmed and then forced into their place, being finally cemented with a little wax.

Although our doll is now possessed of a pair of eyes, much still remains to be done. Eyebrows are required, and these are generally painted on, but sometimes real hair is stuck into the wax carefully and slowly, a few hairs at a time, until the whole is complete.

Then Dolly's face is ironed! With a specially constructed iron tool the workman rubs at the wax until the face is quite smooth and polished.

The lips and nostrils are painted, the teeth put in, without the aid of a dentist, and, finally, the head is carried to another part of the factory to have the hair put on by women, who, if they do not use real hair for this purpose, use a specially prepared material which looks as good as real, and that after all is the main thing. Bodies and limbs are now added by other work-people until the doll is completed and ready for Santa Claus' bag.

In the old-world town of Nuremberg a great number of workmen are employed all the year making lead soldiers and all kinds of lead toys, and a mighty army of lead soldiers is turned out every day by these industrious people.

The workers of Nuremberg also make toy telescopes, microscopes, magic lanterns, and all manner of mechanical and scientific toys. There also is made the well-known and ever-popular clockwork mouse, which runs about the table or floor in such a life-like manner.

Not a great distance from Nuremberg is the town of Furth, where the Noah's Arks are made, containing the curious animals and the still more curious trees with which we all are familiar. At Sonneberg no fewer than 12,000 children are employed making toys for other children to play with and destroy. As the Christmas season approaches, these little workers are kept so busy that they often sit up the greater part of the night helping their parents to earn money.

Wooden animals and carved toys of all kinds come from Saxony, where the soft wood from which they are made is procurable in large quantities at small cost. A length of wood is cut away by means of the turning lathe until its outline takes the shape of the animal or figure desired. When this is done the wood is sliced up into thin pieces, each piece being a rough representation of the animal. By this simple process large numbers of animals are made at one time, and only a few finishing touches are needed.

Another famous one of Santa Claus' great workshops is situated in the Tyron, 4000 or more feet above the level of the sea. The people of this district have supplied toys to Santa Claus for more than 200 years. The small wooden dolls are carved by the Tyrolese, and from this district also come the jointed dolls known as "Dutch," whose limbs make a peculiar noise when they are moved, as if their poor owners were suffering from rheumatism or growing pains.

Many toys are manufactured in France. The French have the knack of turning everything to account, and it is said that most of these tin toys are made from old sardine and other tins that have been thrown away. In France are made cheap sets of chessmen and bone dominoes, a large proportion of the bone used for this purpose being the waste material from the factories of toothbrush manufacturers.

Small toy drums are made in France chiefly out of preserved fruit boxes which have served their purpose and been thrown away with the rubbish. Toys worked by means of a pneumatic tube, the compressed air causing the figure to dance and perform many queer and undignified antics are French inventions.

Skittles, battledores and shuttlecocks, military toys, and toy watches are also made in France and sent to England and America, thousands at a time.

Many of the poorest inhabitants of the East End of London are toymakers, working in their own homes, which often are little better than dungeons or stables. Dolls' boots and shoes are made out of waste material, and cheap wooden toys such as peg tops, rattles, etc., are also produced in London.

Johnny's Letter.

"Dear Santa Claus, I hope you'll come,
And bring me first a great big drum,
And then some soldiers, too;
A bicycle, a box of bricks,
And, next, a set of magic tricks
Not difficult to do.

"A humming top, a knife, a kite,
A baseball bat, good strong and light,
A pair of gloves to match;
A football and a tennis bat,
Some tadpoles and a large white rat,
A gold or silver watch.

"And then, I'd like an album, please,
To put my stamps in at my ease,
A boat, the 'Jolly Tar,'
A proper book, with lots of fights
With Indians, robbers, or with knights,
And last, a motor-car!

"Good-bye, dear Santa Claus, and mind
You don't leave anything behind!
Yours truly, Johnny Spotten."
That is his letter which I quote—
This is the list of things he wrote—
I wonder if he got 'em!

The Christmas Tree.

The Christmas tree was standing
With the candles all alight
And presents hung from every bough,
It was a splendid sight!

And Freddy looked in wonder,
His heart was filled with joy,
He'd never seen so fine a tree
(He was a little boy).

And then he said: "Oh, mother!
I do think that is fine!
Whose garden did it grow in?
Can I grow one in mine?

"If I should plant a candle
Down in my little plot,
Would it grow up a Christmas tree?
Oh, mother dear, why not?"

Religious Freedom in Mexico.

Mexican Herald.

Missionaries in this country are on on equal footing before the law with the clergy of the Catholic church. The federal nor the state governments make any distinction between them. Around the members of all communions is thrown the protection of the federal constitution. Because some of the more fanatical and uninfluential people in Catorce warned the missionaries to leave the town, the impression has gone abroad that the whole community was hostile to Protestant missionaries. It is time that this utterly false impression was done away with. The municipal government of Catorce is composed of enlightened and unprejudiced men; they will uphold law and order in that community.