

TALKING DOLLS.

The Latest Production of the Clever German Toy-makers.

One of the most striking of the new Christmas toys taking the shape of a real talking doll. In the past dolly's vocabulary has been limited to such phrases as "Da-da" or "Ma-ma," sounds produced by a reed and a pair of bellows. All that is to be changed, and dolly will be able to say quite a number of nice things and carry on little conversations of a hundred words or more and, if necessary, sing the very latest song.

The idea comes from Germany and is really an adaptation of the principle upon which the gramophone is based. Briefly it is this: Secreted somewhere in the doll's interior will be a tiny disk machine, which will carry a record about two inches in diameter. When the doll has been made presentable and ready to take part in the conversation her little nurse will simply place a disk in a crevice some where in dolly's back, an operation as simple as putting a penny in a slot, and the doll will do the rest. Two dolls, with suitable records, may easily be made to carry on quite intelligent conversations.—London Daily News.

Some Christmas Thoughts.

Lift up your eyes to the great meaning of the day and dare to think of your humanity as something so divine and precious that it is worthy of being made an offering to God. Count it as a privilege to make that offering as complete as possible, keeping nothing back, and then go out to the pleasures and duties of your life, having been truly born anew into his divinity as he was born into our humanity on Christmas day.—Phillips Brooks.

May the spirit of the sweet Christmas Child possess me; may the Star of Bethlehem shine above my dwelling place.—Thomas a Kempis.

The season of regenerated feeling—the season for kindling not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flames of charity in the heart.—Washington Irving.

We make a great deal of peace with heaven; Christ made much of peace on earth.—Henry Drummond.

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas when its mighty Founder was a child himself.—Charles Dickens.

Christmas Fires.

If one would revive a memory of the old Yule fire, a backing of hard wood, the largest to be had, should be chosen. The hearth should be clean and cold before Christmas even and the log set in place with the cedar or pine or other "light wood" kindlings at hand. As the sun goes down fire is applied and the big log set ablaze. In the days of the Druids, whence Yule log is derived, the priests lighted the annual log with an ember from the sacred perpetual fire they guarded. In the mountain regions of the south the hearth fire is kept with an almost equal fidelity, scarcely ever being permitted to die out from October to March, and in the cabins of the negroes it is no uncommon sight upon a Christmas night to see within the fireplace itself, their heads up the chimney, peckalminies of various sizes busied in warming their toes, their bare feet resting on logs of cedar or hickory or oak and their black eyes rolling with anticipations of coming good things.—Harper's Bazar.

The First Christmas Observance.

Christmas gets its name from the mass celebrated in the early days of the Christian church in honor of the birth of Christ, its first solemnization having been ordered by Pope Telesphorus. This was in or before the year 138, for in that year Pope Telesphorus died. At first Christmas was what is known as a movable feast, just as Easter is now, and, owing to misunderstandings, was celebrated as late as April or May. In the fourth century an ecclesiastical investigation was ordered, and, upon the authority of the tables of the censurers in the Roman archives, Dec. 25 was agreed upon as the date of the Saviour's Nativity. Tradition fixed the hour of birth at about midnight, and this led to the celebration of a midnight mass in all the churches, a second at dawn and a third in the later morning.

Where the Toys Come From.

The value of German toys exported to foreign countries last year was close to \$15,700,000, of which the United States, as the principal customer, took about \$4,000,000 worth. Sonneberg is the chief center of the industry. The annual report of the chamber of commerce of the Sonneberg district gives the following scale of daily wages paid to persons working on dolls and doll heads, the hours of labor being ten to ten and one-half. Male adults, 54 to 60 cents; female adults, 36 to 48 cents; male youths, 36 to 48 cents; girls, 24 to 37 cents. Most of the hands are paid by the piece, the men earning from \$3.00 to \$6, the women from \$1.92 to \$3.00 and the youths from \$1.10 to \$2.40 per week. On piecework some skilled males earn as high as \$7.20 and expert women up to \$4.32 per week.

Not a Bad Idea.

Johnny—Tommy, let's put our pennies together and buy ma a nice Christmas present.

Tommy—All right. "What shall it be?" "I guess we had better get her a padded slipper."—Texas Stripes.

An Ancient Substitute For Turkey.

A roast sucking pig was formerly a favorite roast dish on Christmas day, says an English magazine. George IV. was particularly fond of the head of a sucking pig, split, well seasoned and deviled.

HOME COMFORT.

Why Not Have Every Room in the House a Sitting Room?

"Every room in your house seems to be a sitting room," remarked the relative who was being "taken through the house."

"So it is," was the reply. "I don't believe there's a bedroom in the house that is merely a sleeping apartment and nothing more."

Both comments indicate the tendency in many homes toward turning the bedroom of each individual into a private sitting room, where its owner may retire from the bosom of the family when desirable and yet be quite as luxurious as if downstairs in library or family sitting room.

Jill's room contains not only her little white bed and dressing table, but also her bookcase, her desk, her lounging chair, her alcohol taskette and all the small personal belongings which make it possible for Jill to live a quite complete existence in her own little room, says the Philadelphia Bulletin.

Jack, too, has his lounging chair, his desk and books and prints and smoking things up in his room, and perhaps you will hunt in vain for his bed, for very likely it disappears in the daytime in the guise of a big, roomy davenport or a wardrobe, with a plate glass mirror.

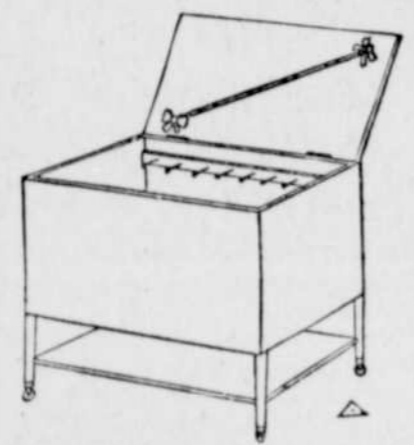
Downstairs is the commodious family sitting room, where all assemble when socially inclined. But when the spirit of solitude impels then the bedroom sitting room offers a refuge unknown in the old days, when in the middle class home there was no place to sit except with the whole family or in a cheerless, barren sleeping apartment.

This tendency toward isolation may be decry'd by some as selfish, but one wonders if it is not one of the most helpful aspects of the steady growth of individualism. We all become a little weary of each other, and a brief respite from the society of even the best beloved is sometimes desirable.

PORTABLE WORKBOX.

Mounted on Casters It Is Easily Moved From Room to Room.

I have an oblong workbox on legs and casters, which I easily take from room to room wherever I want to sit, and I have all my work and all my "tools" before me. Mine is a box twenty-five inches long, eighteen wide and fourteen deep, with a handy shelf



A HANDY WORKBOX.

added. The cleat in the back with nails in holds my thread, darning cotton, thimble, shears, etc. I tacked crotone both inside and out and padded the cover on both sides, tacking a band of ribbon across to hold handy things. The padding makes a nice cushion for needles and pins. I do not roll my patterns up, as it makes them unhandy to cut from. I pin them together flat and lay them in the bottom. On this I place a false bottom of pasteboard the size of the box, padding and covering it. This not only covers my patterns, but is easily removed and brushed when dusty. Pockets or other additions may be put in to suit each one's fancy.—Mrs. L. E. Ellison in Good Housekeeping.

Simple Plays For Children.

A mother called upon to plan many entertainments for her children has hit upon the plan of taking the children's favorite story and making a simple dramatization of it and allowing the children to give it before their little friends.

The parts are divided between her own children and their friends. Sometimes the story is given as a series of tableaux. In no case is the dialogue long or heavy or the scenery elaborate. This mother argues that all children love to imitate and to dress in costume and that these little home dramas train them in many ways, besides giving them much pleasure.

They memorize the words, they form the habit of telling the story, and, as the mother leaves the arrangement, scenery and the costumes to her older boys and girls and they are not allowed to expend any money on these, she claims they are becoming expert carpenters and dressmakers, besides showing great ingenuity in making the most of their materials at hand.

Room Moldings.

It is often more refreshing to gild moldings in part than to gild them wholly. Thus an inch bead may be divided into short chunks of three inches in length and alternating gilt and cream color, thus saving half the gold and enhancing the effect. It must, however, be borne in mind that in such a case there must be sufficiently strong confining members of red or other emphatic color to keep the molding rigid or a loss of repose would result instead of an accession of richness. Curved members should be enriched by the application of straight line ornament, and vice versa. This is a good rule and gives full value for the expenditure of time. Another rule is to put the darker tints on the recessed parts and the lighter on the raised parts, a practice approved by the best taste.

The SPORTING WORLD

The Great Sysonby.

Expert turf judges look to see James R. Keene's great racer win the classic Suburban handicap at Sheepshead Bay, New York, next June. Sysonby is wintering finely.

Sysonby will carry 131 pounds in the Suburban. No horse has ever carried so heavy an impost to victory in the Suburban, but as Sysonby is a sensational horse he may accomplish this feat.

From a folder issued annually by Thomas Smith of the Coney Island Jockey club, which contains a table of the winners of the Suburban handicap since its inception, it can be seen at a glance that the heaviest weight ever carried successfully in this famous fixture during the twenty-two



JAMES R. KEENE'S SYSONBY.

years of its running was by August Belmont's Henry of Navarre, which bore his impost of 129 pounds to the front in commanding style in 1896, defeating, among others, the heavily supported Clifford, the favorite, to which he was conceding three pounds. Clifford was third, while The Commoner ran second, Henry of Navarre giving him sixteen pounds.

The time made by Henry of Navarre in the mile and a quarter was 2:07. The race has been run in faster time, both before and since Henry of Navarre's year, but from the standpoint of weight carried, concessions successfully made and class of defeated horses the student of form must admit that Henry of Navarre's performance was a notable one.

Lipton to Challenge Again?

Sir Thomas Lipton is thinking of challenging for the America's cup with a seventy foot sloop.

A race between seventy footers would be popular with many because it would give several a chance of taking part in the defense of the cup. It would not be necessary to form a syndicate and have about a million dollars to build and race a seventy footer, and for that reason if for no other it would be a more sportsmanlike proposition. A seventy footer could be built for less than \$50,000. Each suit of racing sails would cost about \$4,000. For the Reliance each suit cost about \$20,000. It took a crew of sixty-four men to handle the Reliance, and these men had to be taken care of on a big tender which had been chartered for that purpose. Less than thirty men would sail a seventy footer, so that the cost of running the boat after it had been built would be less than one-half of what it cost to run the Reliance. If seventy footers were agreed on it is more than probable that three or four would be built. There would be not just one defender from Herreshoff, but Gielow, Gardner, A. Cary Smith and perhaps other designers would have a chance, and there would be a battle early in the season to see which man had turned out the best boat and then another one when that best had been selected and met the challenger.

Ed Barrow.

Manager Ed Barrow of the Toronto club of the Eastern league called on Griffith of the New York Americans recently and talked over several contemplated deals. Barrow is building up a strong team for the Canadian city, for which he once won a pennant, and he hopes to get some of the players whom Griffith decides not to take south. Manager George Stallings of the Buffalo club was another caller. He says that Frank Laporie will make good without a doubt.

A New Baseball Scheme.

President Noyes of the Washington club, who is on the rules committee of the American league, favors three strikes and three balls. It will work the deuce with young pitchers, and bases on balls will be the rule to an alarming extent. Kilfoyl of Cleveland is said also to favor it.

Glenwood M.

Glenwood M., 2:07 1/2, the fastest racing trotting stallion of the past two years, is wintering finely. He has taken on a lot of flesh since going to Thorndale farm and today is one of the grandest looking horses in America.

The Get of Sidney Dillon.

Sterling R. Holt of Indianapolis has purchased in California twenty youngsters sired by his stallion, Sidney Dillon. They will be trained by Millard Sanders, who gave Lou Dillon and others of the family their records.

HINTS FOR FARMERS

Rye For the Silo.

Is rye a good silo crop? I must say I never had much success ensiling rye, but I have not tried lately, and when I did I missed it in some points, says L. W. Lighty in National Stockman. Last winter I met a few experts at the institutes who have ensiled rye successfully, and I believe any one who is careful can succeed—at least. I shall try again when I have occasion to. The secret seems to be to cut the rye before the straw gets too hard, about the time the first blossom appears. Then cut it very fine and tramp it thoroughly in the silo. This seems reasonable, and I believe good silage can be made from rye if these three points are carefully observed. I rather prefer to cure the rye as hay and store more corn, but at times we cannot cure the rye late hay, as we have so little sunshine at this time of the year.

Symmetry of the Horse.

An experiment station says that the closer a draft horse is to the ground the better both for service and endurance. This is generally true probably, but it is possible for a horse to be too close to the ground, comments National Stockman. Very few of them are and many are too far from it. The question of breeding draft horses with short legs is not the one the breeder needs to consider. His ideal should be a symmetrical horse, and if he keeps this in mind the horse will have height enough and not too much. A symmetrical horse is a well balanced horse, doing his work with greater ease than one too far from or too close to the ground. The best specimens of draft horses to day are about right in this particular and with either shorter or longer legs would be less useful than they are.

Feeding in Mild Cases of Heaves.

Incipient heaves can be cured in most cases without medicine. Feed the horse three times a day with one peck of the cut timothy hay and oat straw soaked in hot water for half an hour, and when slightly warm mix with one quart of bran, one quart of corn and one quart of oats. Sprinkle each feed with one tablespoonful of salt. A quart of raw potatoes or carrots sliced fine may be fed once a day. No long hay must be fed. Give clean, dry wheat straw instead. Continue this feed until the horse has fully recovered. Driving horses should never be fed on musty or upon moldy hay, as it is certain to produce heaves if it is continued any length of time.—American Cultivator.

Care of Turkeys.

In many respects the turkeys need different treatment from other poultry. They will not thrive if kept long in confinement, nor do they want to be housed after they are two months old, neither by day nor by night. Give them free range where they can find grasshoppers or other insects, and they will need but little corn. It is well to give them as much grain as they will eat at night, which will not be much if they have been fortunate in their hunting. This leads them to select a roost near the house, where they are less likely to be taken by owls and other night prowlers.—American Cultivator.

Feeding Brood Sows.

Oats ground with corn, cob and all, and mixed with wheat middlings or ship stuff make an excellent combination to mix with skim milk and dishwasher, says N. A. Clapp in Michigan Farmer. The building up of the bony and muscular system of the pigs must be considered, and the oats and corn-cob will be of much value in that respect. Don't forget to give a little clover hay and a few cornstalks to chew on each day, for it is both beneficial and economical. It aids in building bone and muscle and separates the mass of grain in the stomach into small particles, making digestion more easy and complete.

The Mare Should Work.

There is nothing against a mare's being worked while pregnant—in fact, she would be better working than otherwise—but in every case her shoes should be removed, because the foot has not the sensitive feeling when the shoe is on, and after foaling she might trample on her foal. She should be gently handled and liberally fed on nutritious food, but in no case should it be of a very succulent nature. Much laxative food has a tendency to weaken the foal.—American Cultivator.

Bed the Horses Well.

Don't make the horses sleep on the hard, cold floor, but give them plenty of bedding, and it will pay you in many ways. Do not put any unnecessary cruelty on any of the faithful animals. Bedding makes the manure more valuable and the horse looks better.

Watering Horses.

Horses should be watered at least three times every day. The man who goes to the stable, waters his horses and gives them a light feed the last thing every night before he retires always has round, sleek, good looking animals.

The Old Brood Sow.

It is not wise to discard a sow because she is old, if she is doing well, unless her place can be supplied by one which is sure to do better.

Warm the Bit.

Take the bit between your teeth one of these frosty days. The same jolty sensation comes to the horse.

Dangers of Inbreeding.

Too close and long continued inbreeding of dogs tends to a rapid degeneration in nearly all instances.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE

Homemade Toilet Soap.

Oatmeal, castile soap and peroxide of hydrogen or carbolic acid are the things which enter into the making of this soap, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The oatmeal should be boiled until it has the consistency of thick jelly; then the castile soap should be shaved fine and reduced to a paste with the addition of a little water, after which the two must be mixed together in proportion of two parts castile to one part oatmeal jelly.

A vigorous stirring is then given the mixture, and during the process a small quantity of peroxide of hydrogen or diluted carbolic acid is added, a teaspoonful to each quart of the mixture.

The peroxide of hydrogen is to be preferred, for it endows the soap with such the same qualities carbolic acid gives it without being harmful under any circumstances or dangerous to use about the house.

The soap should then be allowed to cool and when hard may be cut up into cakes of the size most preferred. Ob-long pieces about an inch long and wide by half an inch thick will be found more convenient than any other size.

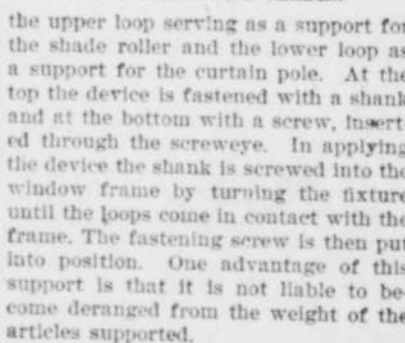
The mixture should be poured in shallow pans lined with white paper. If the skin is washed with this soap every night before retiring the worst complexion will begin to show improvement within less than a week.

Care of Flannels.

To iron flannel is a serious mistake. It intertwines and mats the individual hairs so that it is pulled up and there is no way of unfasting it. In place of ironing it, if flannels are hung evenly on the line, then pulled out smoothly and placed under such pressure as the clothes basket, with its burden for the next day's ironing, it will be found next morning that they are smooth enough to please the most fastidious, and with this treatment flannel garments will last almost twice as long as if carelessly handled.

Curtain Pole Support.

The combined window shade roller and curtain pole support herewith shown is the invention of an Ohio man. It can be formed from a single piece of metal, is readily applied to a window frame and when in place is strong and rigidly braced to properly support the shade roller and curtain pole. Preferably it can be made from round wire or of metal strips, cast and stamped. It is shaped into two parts or loops,



FOR CURTAINS AND SHADES.

the upper loop serving as a support for the shade roller and the lower loop as a support for the curtain pole. At the top the device is fastened with a shank and at the bottom with a screw, inserted through the screw-eye. In applying the device the shank is screwed into the window frame by turning the fixture until the loops come in contact with the frame. The fastening screw is then put into position. One advantage of this support is that it is not liable to become deranged from the weight of the articles supported.

Cloth For Bandages.

For the careful woman who always has bandages on hand there is nothing better to keep them in than wide mouthed glass jars with tops that screw on. The pieces of old linen and cotton should be boiled in order to have them perfectly clean, then ironed and torn into strips and each strip neatly rolled. A number of these little rolls can be put into one ordinary sized jar.

Polish For Floors.

A very fine polish for hardwood floors is made by dissolving one pound of beeswax in one quart of turpentine and then adding one quart of boiled linseed oil. The wax may be more readily dissolved if the turpentine is heated, care being taken that it does not catch fire. The polish is to be applied sparingly with a soft cloth and rubbed to a polish.

Iodine Stains.

Iodine spilled on French gingham was removed by soaking the stain in cold water for half an hour, then covering it thickly with common soda before sending it to the wash. It came home without a stain. This will work equally well on white goods.

Cure For Chilblains.

Permanganate of potash, thirty grains, dissolved in one ounce of water, applied frequently with a swab, is said to be a sure cure for chilblains.

A Cooking Hint.

When making pea soup put in a slice of bread, for it prevents the peas sinking to the bottom and burning in the saucepan.

A DELAYED LETTER

Lydia Spencer had never seen her bet or dreary at Canaan Corners before. The blistering July day was drawing to a close.

She was postmistress and storekeeper at the Corners. Day after day she had sorted over the county mails, the county papers and the letters. The day had been a busy one. Lydia had recently bought a new set of boxes to take the place of the dingy old portholes which for twenty years had done continuous service under different postmasters.

A carpenter had worked that afternoon tearing away the old case and generally overhauling the postoffice of the store.

Lydia was between forty and fifty. "Nigh on to forty-five, bein' two years older'n my boy Jerry," old Mrs. Lydville said to her friends when Lydia's age was discussed. "But, law, she don't look it, an' she don't act it. The tow headed girls never look as old as they really be."

The carpenter stopped hammering and came to where the postmistress was fanning herself. He was sliding awkwardly half a dozen letters yellow with age and somewhat eaten.

"See here, Lyddy, are these good?" asked he, holding out the letters. "I found 'em down behind the wainscoting."

The postmistress of Canaan Corners took the letters with but little interest. Twenty-five years! Yes, it had been just that long since she had seen John Butterworth—since he gave her a letter's look and then, cheerily assuring her that they would soon meet again, had gone to New York.

Their letters had been earnest and full of feeling, and finally he was asking her if she would marry him, telling her that he had not been successful in business as yet, but that she said "Yes" he would come back to Canaan Corners and they would go to Chicago.

Bravely had she penned a farward answer, and then she waited. Ah, the dying of a great hope! How tenaciously it clings to the heart! How anxiously she awaited news from John Butterworth! But she came. The summers came and went. Twenty-five years ago, and she had been thinking of John Butterworth that day!

"Looks ez if rats had chawed 'em some, don't it?" asked the carpenter. Lydia stepped closer to the window to inspect the musty letters. The first one of the lot gave her some shock—John Butterworth, Bull's Hotel, Bowery, N. Y. City.

The red sun turned back. The Canaan Corners postoffice began spinning around and bobbing up and down. A hurricane seemed to catch her at the dash her head against a distant cliff.

"There, there, Miss Lyddy," said the big carpenter, fanning her with his straw hat. "The heat's been too much for ye, I guess."

Trembling like a child, she once more looked at the letter—her own letter of acceptance—plighting her troth.

It seemed to her as if her heart would burst in agony. She knew why John Butterworth had never come back. She had appeared to him as unwilling to share his fortunes.

Lydia Spencer was a firm woman. In justice to herself she determined to make an effort to reach John Butterworth with the belated letter.

It had no postmark. Taking a marker, she removed the figures "90" and substituted "03."

Then, writing a note to the proprietor of the Bull's Head Hotel, New York city, she told him to forward the letter to Chicago. Nervously she let it fall into the gaping mouth of the mail bag. The stage took it on its way that night.

Two weeks later a gray haired man, one of Chicago's leading capitalists, was one morning opening his mail. He came to a yellowed envelope which had been forwarded from New York. It bore several rubber stamp marks and a Chicago postoffice clerk had written on it:

"Try 361 Dearborn."

"Send Jack in," said John Butterworth to his head clerk. "Jack, my boy," said the father in a low voice and nervously, "read this letter which has been twenty-five years in reaching me."

"Jack," continued the clerk after he had request had been complied with, "you will have to postpone your vacation. I'm going to take one at Canaan Corners, N. Y. I never expected to meet you again after your dear mother's death, my boy, but if the writer of that letter is alive and willing you'll have a mother inside of two weeks."