

WHERE TOYS COME FROM

Most of Them the Product of Cheap German Labor.

Why the United States Can Not Make the Cheaper Kinds of Playthings—All About Dolls, Toy Locomotives, Ten-Cent Watches and Other Trifles.

"Of the dolls sold in America," said a prominent wholesale dealer in toys to a New York Times man, "nine-tenths come from Germany. Of these a large proportion are made in one little place, Sonneberg, a town of about ten thousand inhabitants in Thuringia. Almost the entire industry of this place is confined to the manufacture of dolls. The inhabitants are very poor people and are brought up to doll-making."

"Before it is completed a doll passes through many hands. The heads, hands and feet are made by one person, the body by another, the hair is fixed on by another, and the face is painted by two other different people, one doing the rough work and the second the finishing touches. The clothing is made by another person and the dresses are put on by still another. All this labor is done at such starvation prices that Americans can not compete in the manufacture, although the duty for importation is thirty-five per cent."

"To this town of Sonneberg there come every year a large number of buyers from all over the world. I go there myself and never fail to meet at least a score of Americans engaged in the same business. There are at least 500 different kinds of dolls, and the variety is remarkable. The French invent many of the most attractive, but the Germans copy them so cheaply that the world's buyers go to the latter for their stock. For the manufacture of fine dress dolls the French still hold the lead by long odds. It is only in the cheaper goods that the Germans outstep them. England furnishes very few dolls, and I can now recall only one kind that is distinctly English—the English rag doll, which is made wholly of rags, even to the face, the eyes being sewed on. There are French walking dolls, smoking men and other automatic figures, but these do not really belong to the family of dolls. They are mechanical figures, too intricate in their mechanism to be classed as mere dolls. Of the rubber dolls fully one-half are made in America, where any thing that is machine made prospers to the exclusion of imported stuffs."

"The price of dolls ranges from 1 cent to \$50, but the most popular are those that sell for 25 cents, 50 cents and \$1, although there has been a great run recently on 5-cent and 10-cent dolls."

"As with dolls, so it is with other toys. The most of them come from Germany, where they are made very cheaply. This same town of Sonneberg furnishes many of them, but more come from Nuremberg and small towns in its vicinity. It is in this district that magnetic toys, swords, guns, trumpets, horns, woolly sheep, jumping-jacks, monkeys on sticks, jacks in the box and ingenious mechanical toys are made. The carved wooden toys come principally from the Bavarian highlands, but they are brought to Nuremberg to be sold. The cheaper grades of wooden toys are made in poorer Saxony and comprise cheap arks and sets of furniture."

"How cheaply they make these things you can judge from this instance. Here is a top of furniture consisting of three chairs, a bureau, a table, a sofa and a mirror, carefully done up in a substantial pasteboard box. Now, after having paid 35 per cent duty and having allowed 20 per cent for freight and other expenses, we sell such furniture sets at 75 cents per dozen and make a reasonable profit. You can figure out the original cost if you choose."

"Porcelain toys—tea sets and things of that sort—are also made very cheaply, the waste places in the potteries being filled up with their molds without much additional cost. Toy horses, covers, elephants, cats, dogs, lions, tigers and all kinds of animals are made largely in the German prisons. Many of these are ingenious novelties, being so constructed as to be able to move heads and emit a noise resembling more or less the natural cries of each animal. The retail price of these toys runs from 50 cents to \$50, according to size and perfection. We sold a toy horse the other day for \$50 about the same time a real racer was disposed of at auction up-town for a much less sum."

"Of the wooden toys fully one-half are made in America. They include A B C blocks, building blocks and games, and are easily turned out by machinery. Iron toys are also made largely here, and so are tin toys. The tin for the latter is imported from Europe, and when the toys are finished they are exported for the European market. The majority of the rubber toys come from France, chiefly from Paris, although the manufacture of this line of playthings is constantly increasing in America, and the American rubber toys are really the best to be had. The reason that America has not taken the lead in the manufacture of rubber toys is found in the fact that the demand for other rubber goods is so great as to shut out toys. Toy watches are largely made in France and are remarkably cheap. We sell watches with chains, charms and metal hands for 35 cents per dozen, after having allowed for duty and freight."

"Of the standard games the best chessmen come from England; backgammon and checkers are made almost altogether in America; bone dominos, dice and the cheaper grades of chess come from France; toy printing presses, locomotives and all that line of goods are domestic. Toy printing presses were furnished formerly almost wholly by the Germans, but latterly the Americans have superseded their Teutonic brethren in this industry. In educational toys America leads the world, and exports large quantities. So it does also in the manufacture of out-door games, lawn tennis, croquet, base-ball, etc."

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180—acres, 7 miles east of Salem—80 acres in cultivation—50 in pasture—rest in young timber—all under fence—running water—good house—barn—2000—orchard—sell stock if wanted. \$27 per acre.

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For freight and passenger rates apply to the captains and pursons of the respective boats or to W. M. Hoag, agent, 200 and 222 Front street, Portland; Gilbert Bros., agents Salem; L. M. Adair, agent, Albany; C. A. Miller, agent, Corvallis; or to the general freight and passenger agent, Corvallis, O. & C. trains connect at Albany and Corvallis. F. W. Bowen, Superintendent, Wm. HOAG, General Manager.

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