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Home Made Toys for Tiny Tots

Clara Jordan
Iowa State College

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A Little of yarn, a piece or two of faded old gingham, a yard or so of unbleached muslin and lo—as though some fairy had waved her magic wand, the Christmas tree is turned into a fascinating bower from which peep characters of fairyland and Mother Goose fame.

The endless supply of toys which is taken from the sheltering arms of the tree will never cease to fill the little tots with wonderment and thrill, and will make Christmas last not only for a day, but for a whole season, Christmas tree is turned into a fairyland and Mother Goose fame. In many Christmases have done, but will last long after the day is over.

What old “Mister Hard Times” or the inevitable “High Cost of Living” interfere with the children’s happiness at this time of the year? Try a touch of originality, combined with just a small amount of ingenuity and a few cents, and behold, the problem is solved. Besides the very nicest toys and the very best beloved ones are those funny, comforting ones, made by mother and cherished through babyland, childhood and even beyond.

There is a whole realm of fairyland and a whole lore of secrets from the land of make-believe that can be brought near and dear to the children, and will mean something more to them than mere bisque bodies and purely mechanical apparatus, which are too far advanced for their powers of reasoning. Entire doll houses can be made and a story of human interest told to draw and bind the family together in the child’s mind. Likewise when fables and tales from fairyland may be made realistic to him.

Too often toys are of one or two types. They are either too realistic or they are too decorative. The first class amuses the children while fancy lasts but they soon become weary of the placid faces of the dolls or the monotonous workings of the toys. The second class awakens and scares them by gruesome details or queer countenances. There is a happy medium in toys and the best way to obtain this medium is to make the toys at home.

The manner of making these toys is very simple and requires but little time. Patterns of a doll’s body may be cut out, according to the proportions desired. Unbleached muslin serves as a good foundation for the body, but any plain material or an old stocking will serve the purpose as well. When the two portions have been sewed together on all sides except one, cotton batting or rags may be used to stuff the body, and the open part may be sewed down by hand. Top clothing of little gingham petticoats and striped dresses can be made. The simpler they are the better. Decorative faces of pleasing proportion and relation may be either embroidered on or sketched and hair can be made by using bits of yarn and placing them on top of the head in such a manner as to suggest their purpose.

Fantasy and loveliness may be put into the doll, in as many ways as there are children to love them. The only limit to their imagination is the parents mind. They can be made realistic or fantastic, but in the hands of a great artist they will be the charm and splendor of every child’s life. The child will delight, will play tag with French girls and with Belgian orphans.

Little boys must have their share too. Also a charming doll or decorative button will constitute his bright eye and pieces of wire placed in button molds will make legs and feet. A bunch of bright colored feathers collected from old Sunday best hats will form a bewitching tail. Menageries of all the animals ever heard of or written about may be made in the same manner as the dolls with voluminous ears and twisted tails placed at precarious angles. Woolly lambs, whose composition consists of unbleached muslin bodies covered with cotton and added feathers, will play gracefully together and not disturb the more ferocious lions, alligators, bears and elephants of the circus.

If any one is in the least way acquainted with manual training, quaint bits of wooden furniture may be carved in catchy decorative manner. An old apple or orange box, turned on end and painted and fitted up with the furniture just mentioned, quaint curtians at holes in the side of the box for windows and rugs made from left over carpets or braided from old rags makes a doll’s house to delight the heart of any little girl.

The Most Beloved Toys are the Funny Comforting Home-made Ones

By CLARA JORDAN

THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

(Continued on page 20)