

The German Toy Industry.

Although the little Thuringian town of Sonneberg, the center of the modern toy industry, is commonly considered as the birthplace of toy-making, it appears, according to Kuhlows's Journal, Berlin, that the first attempts in the art were made by the village of Judenbach, situated further to the northeast. By reason of its favorable situation near the Nürnberg Sachsische Geleitsstrasse, a road much frequented ever since the thirteenth century, and the only means of communicating with Leipzig and Nuremberg, the village could always readily dispose of its crude wooden house and kitchen utensils, and later of its little chairs, tables, animals, cross-bows, swords, guns and musical instruments. Even long after the art of making woodenware had been introduced in Sonneberg, Nuremberg was still the market for these peasant products, and continued to make the most of the transaction. Not without reason did the city call Sonneberg its Goldtochlein (little gold daughter). Not until the thirty years' war had destroyed all the regular trade communications did the Sonneberg tradesmen themselves begin to travel about with their wares. The inhabitants of Judenbach, on the other hand, would never leave their native village in order to sell their products. While in Judenbach the toy industry did not attain great proportions, in Sonneberg the trade, as early as the seventeenth century, had grown to such an extent that when public markets were established in Frankfurt-on-the-Main the merchants of Sonneberg were granted equal exemption from taxes and duties with the merchants of Nuremberg. Till the eighteenth century toys were covered with poisonous bismuth paints. An important step in the development of the industry was the endeavor to make those parts which were difficult to carve out of some doughy substance (rye flour mixed with lime water). This substance, however, softened and mildewed when moistened. A decided advance was recorded only when Friedrich Müller, a citizen of Sonneberg, began to use paper mache, a substance of which he heard from a French soldier. The figures were no longer modeled as before, but the plastic mass was now pressed into shape by moulds. By means of this new substance Sonneberg produced its wares with almost mechanical rapidity. Toys are no longer made in the peasants' homes but in factories. The cost of these new wares was, moreover, considerably reduced—a most significant factor in the manufacture of toys. In the making of dolls but little progress was made. Not until a new method was introduced into Sonneberg, which came from China, by way of England, can any great improvement be recorded. From the first Chinese dolls of 1852, with the movable limbs, sprung together by cords drawn through the joints, developed the so-called "jointed dolls." In coloring the faces of these dolls, white lead, a poisonous paint, was long employed until by legislative action its use was prohibited. Nowadays the innocuous zinc oxide and similar harmless colors are used. The hair of dolls, after many failures of other materials, is now made of mohair and the fur of Angora goats. In this manner the toy industry slowly developed to its present state. How numerous are the varieties of toys now made may be inferred when it is considered that

the design room of a Sonneberg factory contains from 12,000 to 18,000 designs. In order to maintain the position which they have reached, toy makers are compelled constantly to bring forth new models, and to adapt their products to the tastes and peculiarities of foreign purchasers. Years ago the chairman of the Sonneberg chamber of commerce proposed the collection of toys made by foreign manufacturers in order that Sonneberg toy makers might thus be able to acquaint themselves with the wants and peculiarities of foreign markets. Such a collection of models has now been made, and does good service for the manufacturers as well as for the students at the various industrial schools of Thuringia.

Besides Sonneberg, the towns and villages of Watterhausen, Friedrichsroda, Omdorf, Hildburghausen, Schleusingen and Koburg are engaged in the industry. Toy factories are now scattered more or less over one-half of Germany: they are distributed from the Black Forest and the Palatinate of the Sudetic mountains and the province of Brandenburg. Of particular importance are the Erzgebirge of Saxony, which, on account of their forests and abundant water power, have enabled the manufacturers of Saxony to produce many of the more common toys formerly made in Sonneberg. The most recent statistics show that Germany has exported toys to the value of 40,500,000 marks (£2,925,000), while in 1895 the value was only £1,500,000. Including the toys sold in Germany, the product of the entire German industry is probably worth 50,550,000 marks (£2,500,000), from which 750,000 marks (£37,000), representing the value of toys imported from foreign countries, must be deducted. Sonneberg undoubtedly produces half the toys made in Germany. The two largest buyers of German toys are America and England. To the development of toy manufacture and to the rise of doll making it due the increase in the number of export houses in Sonneberg. In the sixties there were about thirty export firms. By 1880 the number had increased to forty-eight, and by 1896 to seventy. According to the latest statistics there are 40,829 persons engaged in German toy manufactories, of which number 44 per cent are employed in Sachsen, Meiningen. In the region of Sonneberg about 34 per cent of the population are engaged in toy making, not including those who, in addition, are otherwise employed.

Skunk Farming.

To establish a successful skunk farm it is necessary to have land particularly adapted to the nature of the animals: there should be running fresh water, including a few ponds in which frogs can thrive, as frogs form a very necessary part of the food of the American skunk; their other food, however, consists of old meats of any kind, refuse from a slaughter house being especially desirable, part of the land should also be well timbered. The skunk is a burrowing animal, and if raised in quantity the "farmer" should build small mounds of earth, braced with boards and stones, in which the animals may readily burrow. The entire enclosure should be trenched, the trench to be about twenty inches deep and carefully filled with small stones to prevent the animals from escaping by burrowing; on top of this stone trench there should be erected a close-mesh, heavy wire fence enclosing the entire farm. The skunks require a great deal of ground, as they are subject to skin

diseases of a contagious nature, and consequently when one is affected, no matter how slightly, it should be at once removed and destroyed. Skunks will mature and begin breeding at the age of one year; they breed twice a year, having litters of from four to eleven. To regulate a farm well it is advisable to keep the females and slaughter the males, or a large proportion of them, each year. A special process is adopted by which the odor skunk is removed from the young skunks, so that when they are ready to be killed for their skins the usual skunk odor is not present. The killing of the skunks is also an important feature, and those engaged in the work have to exercise the greatest care to prevent being bitten, as the bite of a skunk is almost certain to result in hydrophobia. In slaughtering a large number at one time there is some danger on account of the fact that when the animals become excited they are quite vicious, and it is necessary, therefore, to have a separate killing pen sufficiently large to hold the number of animals intended to be killed at one time. This pen may be excellently arranged by being built with a zinc floor, which can be heavily charged with electricity, so that as soon as the animals step upon it they will be electrocuted.—*Far Trade Review.*

Mining Matters.

A steam hoist has been ordered for the Gold Panner, and it is expected that it will be got in over the winter road.

The November clean up of the Athabasca mine was \$11,600, from 380 ton of ore, an average of little over \$30 a ton.

All placer claims and lease hold claims in the Nelson, Ainsworth and Arrow Lake Mining divisions are laid over until May 1st, 1900.

Local men have launched the Victor—another gold mining company, to take up and develop properties in the Lake of the Woods district.

Application will be made to the legislature for an act to incorporate a company to operate tramways in the districts of Kootenay and Yale.

R. C. Clute, Q. C., is conducting an investigation into certain grievances of the miners in Slocan district on behalf of the Dominion government.

The Rambler and Cariboo Consolidated Gold & Silver Mining Company has paid its December dividend, and declared another of like amount, one cent per share.

Notice is given that the Poorman Gold Mining Co., of Nelson, is in liquidation, W. W. Botsford, of Vancouver, being liquidator, and C. C. Bennett, inspector.

An inspection of the bottom of the shaft at the Rainy River Co.'s Electro-chemical property shows that the ore is increasing in richness. The property looks better than ever it did.

Much satisfaction has resulted in Greenwood over the fact that the C. P. R. track-laying machine has started work laying steel on the spur line to the Mother Lode mine, Deadwood Camp, and that work will be pushed as rapidly as possible to completion. Rails have been laid on the spur to within four miles of Phocnix. The C. P. R. will undertake the construction of three spur lines to the smelter for bringing in ore for delivery, coke and coal for furnaces and one to carry the products of the smelter to the main line.