

Sisters of Santa Claus

By Lillian Jeffreys Petri.



HEREVER the story of the Christ Child is told the great corps of workers inspired by the Christmas spirit devise, invent and labor for weeks and months to carry out the orders that Santa Claus deputed for less and arms, and a finished for the cheering and entertaining of the world on the twenty-fifth of December.

Among these are some who catch the spirit of the time better than others, who have the peculiar skill to express their understanding in quaint or lovely objects suitable for gifts at Yuletide.

One of these members of Santa Claus' intimate council is Kaethe Kruse. To her one evening, when she had put her child to bed, came the inspiration to make a human faced doll.

The doll was rather crude at first. It had, however, what Kaethe-Mother deemed the essentials of a humanlike doll, a wobbly head and loose, limp limbs. It was only a potato head wrapped in a towel, the four corners pulled out for legs and arms, and a burnt match painted face, but Kaethe-Mother worked over her human faced doll until she evolved the sweet creature now familiar to lovers of dolls. It is made over a cast of a famous Italian baby head known as the Flamingo head, an art treasure handed down from the Middle Ages, this being covered with canvas and hand painted. The body is a copy of the chubby form of Kaethe Kruse's own little child. The dollies are named, some of the prettiest having the names of Mother Kaethe's babies, as Jockerie and Hannele and Michel.

They are not like "store dolls," for the little child who first desired them had never asked for a "doll," she distinctly said a "Christ Child." Her artist father had a great deal to do with the inspiration, too, because he insisted that the Christ Child must be mother-made to satisfy the longings of the little mother heart.

In another corner of the world there was a little girl with snapping black eyes and a message of cheer in her heart. She was lame and had to be wheeled about by her brothers and sisters, but her heart was full of love. One Christmas she sat making a little elephant of white felt, with red and white layers of felt to stand upon, between which were tacked pins and needles and other useful things. A tiny, pale blue satin saddle cloth with initials embroidered in white upon it lay over Jumbo's back. The name of the lame girl was Margarete Steiff, and she sat sewing deftly before the old fashioned open fireplace so that her gift might be ready for her mother that evening when the big tree was lit.

Santa, on his rounds, must have seen Margarete as she was finishing the elephant with real ivory tusks and decided that she was the very person to help him.

Of all the toy workers in the world Margarete Steiff is perhaps the most active. She thinks and works and works and thinks all her days, ever evolving fresh delights for the children. The popularity of this animal brought prosperity and fame to the obscure, quaint old town where Margarete Steiff dwelt. Her great factories house the most thriving industry of the place, and nearly every cottage for miles around contains one or more toy-makers. More than three thousand different kinds of toys have come from Margarete's factories. She gets up nearly all the marvelous toy window displays that are seen in the great shops near Christmas time. In Chicago, for instance, this year is her huge Noah's Ark. I have seen a circus, with clowns, trapeze performers, fancy riders and all the rest of the bright paraphernalia, almost life size, worked by electricity with fascinating results; a county fair, where carrouzels and big swings filled with doll children moved merrily to the organ that a dolly organ-grinder (turned assiduously) where a big man doll swung a huge hammer, driving the weight high to the top of the pole, gauging his strength, and many other stunts such as are seen at a real county fair or at Coney Island. I have seen an enormous store space turned into Toyland, with elves going in and out of caves, dolls chopping trees in the forest, bears wagging their clumsy heads and lions roaring.

One day an artist named Rose O'Neill dreamed a dream of Kewpies. She thought she was awake, but was not quite sure. She seemed to peep half frightened over the coverlet at a merry, innocently mischievous, scampering horde of round, pink, baby Kewpies, with wide, rolling eyes, sweetly impish smile, and above all, a top knot. Rose O'Neill says they seemed to be "young, toddling cousins of that earlier illustrious family of Brownies" that Mr. Cox long ago created to the joy of countless children and grown-ups. She asserts, however, that a Kewpie meeting a Brownie face to face would be quite overcome with respect.

Suddenly she found a tiny Kewpie in the palm of her hand. It felt cool to the touch, yet soft like a bird, and it seemed comfortable for it jiggled with its feet, looking at her sideways and chuckling. In her words:—
"The Kewpie whistles up at nights.
All gayly singing rummy tum;
Like puddings, they are pleasant sights.
Well rounded at the tummy tum."
They turned somersaults, played leap-frog, snipped the whip, and tucked each other in little hollows of the bed cover, examined the books at the side of her bed, and sat in a row on the foot board smiling at her. One mite stood guard at the head of the bed, a soldier's cap upon his top knot, a gun in his right hand. There was a host of them. Rose O'Neill awoke the next morning filled with thoughts of them. The little "Yoricks," as she calls them, seemed so innocent and kind; they seemed to teach a lesson of humanity, tolerance and good sense without even knowing they had a "mission." She began making verses about them and drawing them.

Children everywhere cut out Kewpies and played delightedly with them. So Miss O'Neill got her message from Santa Claus to make Kewpie paper dolls and send them out broadcast into the world. Then she modelled the forms of her pets in clay, travelling to the land where everybody loves to make toys, and discussing the making of Kewpie dolls with grave men. She said that she wanted them made perfectly, especially the tiny cheap ones that would be likely to go to poor children.

Kate Jordan had the Baby Happifut put the ugly Grouch on the head and coat to him till he had to smile. Then he laughed and finally he disappeared and left a thistle in his place. There are Teeny, Weeny and Queeny Happifut. Queeny wears a rose wreath. Weeny is sporty and athletic, wearing a sweater with a big H on it. Teeny is the leader, the brainy one, the thinker. He wears an Early Victorian costume and a cap with a tassel.

Santa Claus has had "September Morn" made up into cunning dollies. Little Cuddle Kiddie is a dolly that squeaks no matter what one does to her or how she moves. Character dollies imitate or caricature every human disposition and weakness. The Kewpie dollies come from the heart of the dark forest. They are cute-eye dollies, dollies that move their tongues, some that have real eyebrows inserted from the back so that baby hands cannot pull them out, some have "peep" teeth made of glass, some mohair wigs made from Angora goat skin.

Magic lanterns have now grown to moving picture shows for the home, and the doll houses have developed a hundred styles of architecture.

The old game of parchesi has a picturesque origin. Long ago, in the land of perpetual sun, the kings and princes used to invite each other to one another's palaces to play the game of parchesi, which had a wonderful rogue among them. The courtyard was marked off with different colored tiles into sections

like the parchesi board. Instead of wooden figures there were the required number of slave girls. These were moved about the courtyard as one moves the little "men" around the board, the object being, of course, to win the beautiful slave girls away from each other.

Once in Chicago a woman artist was very blue. In desperation she made a sort of infant Boddin. She called him "the god of things as they ought to be" and put him upon her mantel "for luck." He brought her luck, for he was the widely known Billikin statuette that amused the world, and the Great Toy Man came and got him. A clever man of our own country, who had spent his life in making toys for children found a poor old man from the land of the Bear who had invented an unbreakable material for the making of dolls, and he promptly acquired it, building up a wonderful doll industry here, where it was thought it couldn't be done.

Between her love for her children and that of her work of toy modelling Mrs. Helen Fox Trowbridge scarcely knows which makes her happiest. It is such a congenial work that even the men who travel for the Very Smart Man are caught in the contagion of good cheer. She thinks the work as entertaining to grownups as the dollie to the children, and she is a strong advocate of specialized home industries for women.

Mrs. Trowbridge first specialized in child portraiture. From that to the making of models for more life-like dolls was but a short step, as the picture of "Baby-suck-a-thumb" shows. She and the clever man are putting their heads together, continually trying to produce a better and more artistic doll at a low price. The dolls' heads are of an unbreakable velvety material, almost as soft as the skin of a child. The features are painted by hand, one man putting on nothing but eyebrows, another the lashes, another the eyes, and another the white spots which form the high lights of the eyes. The best worker of all puts on the rosy cheeks with an atomizer. The clothes are made carefully, that they may stand many dressings and undressings by childish fingers.

Mrs. Trowbridge is making new models for dollie all the time, sometimes even going to hospitals to get originals of all nationalities to copy. Her greatest joy is in catching the winsome whimsicalities of children. To South America she took skinned dolls, to Japan a beautiful Japanese model. Every country likes to see its own types portrayed.

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ROSE O'NEILL WILSON



MARGARETE STEIFF



KAETHE KRUSE



MARGARET STEIFF



MRS. HELEN FOX TROWBRIDGE



KAETHE KRUSE



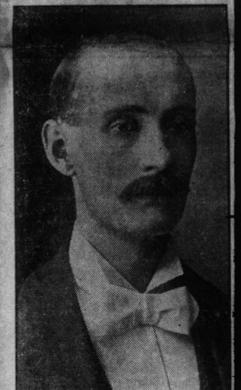
KATE JORDAN



Italy A QUIET ELECTION POSSIBLE

Nominations To Take Place on Monday Morning Next. Mayor Spence is Likely to Get an Acclamation.

Monday is nomination day for the annual municipal elections, and the present time of writing there seem few signs of activity. It is quite possible, however, that there will be the same old number of nominations, the same old wards, the same old withdrawals, possibly some acclamations, and possibly some contests. As regards the mayoralty, it seems assured that Mayor Spence will be accorded the usual term without the fuss of any opposition at the polls. It is said in various quarters that His Worship will not meet with any organized attempt to prevent him from continuing service in the Mayor's chair—a service which has been exemplary. In fact, few people know



Mayor Spence, who will probably be accorded an acclamation for a second term.

the amount of work which has fallen on the Mayor's shoulders during the year, and all his duties have been conscientiously performed. The election of a Board of Education this year adds a new feature to the situation, and it is said a big fight may be seen in this contest. The trustees must be elected by the entire city, and in order to give the new method of school management a good chance to work with success, good men are needed.

It is also reported that there may be an election for Water Commissioner. Mr. A. G. Montgomery's term being up. The latter gentleman, however, is anxious to continue as a member of the board. The waterworks by-law raise \$100,000 will, of course, go before the property-owners in all the wards.

That there will be changes in the aldermanic personnel is admitted. Ward One Mr. George Sigman may retire, leaving Ald. Calbeck and Ald. Quinlan, with quite possibly Mr. Fr. Ott as a new man.

In Ward Two Ald. Pitcher will again stand, and possibly Ald. Wood, although the latter has intimated to his friends a desire to retire. Ald. Minshall, it is expected, will be in the field, with others, too.

In Ward Three there is a possibility of an acclamation. In Ward Four Ald. Broadbent is the only old member for re-election, while Messrs. Jesse Bartie and Freeborn will be in the field.

In Ward Five Ald. Ward, Ald. Wood, Mr. Phil Senn and Mr. Symons are mentioned. The following are the places where nominations will be held:

- For Mayor and Water Commissioner—At City Hall, 10 to 11 a.m.
- For Aldermen, 12 to 1 o'clock:
 - Ward 1—9 Colborne St.
 - Ward 2—McKenna's store.
 - Ward 3—City Hall.
 - Ward 4—Thos. Poulton's, 368 D'house St.
 - Ward 5—Capt. Kerr's, 155 P' Ave.