

KINSHIP OF ALL NATIONS IS SHOWN IN THEIR TOYS



An Egyptian Doll 4,000 Years Old.

MR. KIPLING is authority for the statement that the east is east and the west is west, and never—at least in this life—the twain shall meet. Some people might say Mr. Kipling is a better poet than philosopher, and under any circumstances the east and west that he was talking about must have been the world of grown-up people. Nobody not the most ardent believer in the fundamental difference of racial characteristics can deny the similarity of children of the world over.

The casual observer, when he sees a child playing shuttlecock or dominoes or similar childish games, takes it to be merely the natural expression of the inevitable childish tendency to frolic. The student of men and customs looks deeper. He sees in the games and toys of childhood the evidence of the kinship of the human race.

All over the world and from the earliest times children have amused themselves in very much the same manner. The toys and games American children have this Christmas time are very much the same as those that amuse the children of China, Japan, and Africa. What is more, they are approximately of the same sort as those played with four thousand years ago by the brown-skinned babies over whom the Pharaohs ruled.

We acquire, as time goes on, a greater mechanical dexterity, but we never improve on the nature of the toys. They are just the same kind now as Pharaoh's daughter gave to Moses to keep him from crying when she rescued him out of the bulrushes.

Back of all this there is a possible theory of the origin of the human race which is profoundly interesting. How shall the extraordinary resemblances in traditional things like games be explained? Mr. Stewart Culin, Curator of the museum of the Brooklyn Institute, knows more about toys and their history than any man in this country, and he says that the more he studies the subject the more startling he finds the points of resemblance. In general, he holds that what are games and toys now have come down from the remote past, when these apparently trivial things possessed a deep religious significance.

"Games," he holds, "says Mr. Culin, 'must be regarded as conscious inventions but as survivals from primitive conditions, under which they originated in magical rites, and chiefly as a means of divination. Based upon certain mental conceptions of the universe, they are characterized by a certain sameness, if not identity, throughout the world. Without the confirmation of linguistic evidence they are insufficient to establish the connection of races or the transference of culture. They furnish, however, the most perfect existing evidence of the underlying foundation of mythic concepts upon which so much of the fabric of our culture is built, and are of the highest value from the wide application which may be made of the principles which they illustrate.'"

Leaving the scientific side of the question and passing to lighter matters, it is curious to find that in Japan there is not only a personage corresponding to our Santa Claus but there is also something that may be called the Japanese form of Christmas tree, associated with the New Year festivities.

When the New Year comes in Japan, outside of the house on either side of the gate or doorway, are planted young pine trees and pine branches and bamboo. The pine branches were certainly used as far back as 850 years ago. They symbolize to the Japanese courage and endurance, because they do not lose their leaves in the cold weather, while the bamboo, which is so straight in its growth, represents truth and virtue. The pine trees are decorated and hung with oranges and other things of symbolic character.

The Japanese Santa Claus is supposed to have been like our St. Nicholas, a real person, a sage who lived centuries ago. It is not, apparently, known why he has been connected with children in the popular mind. Students of the question think that the legends accounting for the origin of the Santa Claus idea are secondary matters, stories attempting to explain something already existing and that really dated back much further into antiquity than was realized.

The Chinese have a similar personage, who is supposed to bring good luck at the New Year. There is probably not a Chinese laundry in this city that will not have, when the New Year comes, a picture of the Celestial Santa Claus hung up to bless the business during the next twelvemonth.

On a certain day in the month of March in Japan, little girls receive their toys for the year. Dolls dressed in gorgeous raiment are placed on a table, arranged in tiers, with the figures of the Emperor and Empress on the top place. On the bottom tier is the toy furniture, very carefully made but somewhat perishable.

The boys have a festival on the fifth of May. They are given warlike toys very much like those of boys in America, and go about all day dressed up like soldiers of long ago, fighting with the halberds that they have received in the morning. The girls' festival is known to be a thousand years old, and the boys' certainly antedates that by five centuries.

Among the toys that the boys receive is usually a large figure of a carp. The carp is the fish which resolutely overcomes all difficulties and, it is said, can even ascend a waterfall. Legend tells that the carp is changed into the flying dragon, and in this respect it symbolizes the glorious future that is desired for the small boy who receives it.

Doll Representing a Nubian Woman, Date 1000 B. C. (To Left.)



Blind Man's Buff and See-Saw in Korea.



The Buddha Toy, Common in the Orient and in Europe.

Games and Playthings Pretty Much the Same the World Over—Dolls of the Ancients—A Santa Claus in Japan.

By explain the origin of games and toys and show them in the process of transition from the sacred to the profane stage. The children's festival, which is also the birthday of Buddha, comes on the eighth day of the fourth month, and toys are universally sold on this occasion. They

Battledore and shuttlecock is popular in the Orient. Japanese girls get them at the New Year. The battledore probably has an emblematic significance, standing, perhaps, for the woman's paddle used in washing clothes. The seed of the soapberry tree is used as a shuttlecock, and this may have a further reference to work, the woman is supposed to do in the laundry.

There is a considerable amount of material in regard to toys of ancient days by reason of the pathetic custom of burying in the child's grave the toys it most liked to play with. In opening Egyptian tombs explorers have found many evidences of the child life of ancient days. The oldest toys are about four thousand years old.

The dolls of this far-off time are quite well carved. The clothing has disappeared, if there ever was any. There are mechanical toys in the tombs—bakers that knead bread and carpenters that work a plane; alligators that open and shut their mouths, and birds that flap their wings.

Among the Greeks there were very beautiful dolls, carved like the classic statues. In the British Museum there is a seated doll, with boots beside it, and a wedding bowl and many other evidences of house-keeping paraphernalia. The dolls from Greece are less numerous than the dolls from Egypt on account of the different method of burial, but there are enough to show that in the classic age children wanted just the same things that they want now.

In the matter of games, too, to-day and long-dead yesterday are strikingly alike. On one of the monuments of Egypt there is a curious representation of children playing a hand-clapping game which would seem to be nothing more or less than our old friend, "Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold." There are many evidences of the popularity of jackstones, which was played far back in the past. An interesting point is the world-wide distribution and great antiquity of the game that Italian laborers may be seen playing any day when work is over. Two

are approximately the kind of toys our children have here, images of birds and beasts and men, with some mechanical devices, but in many cases the symbolism is still apparent.

Religion crops out in strange ways. Toys, for instance, are made of hard wood taken only from trees of the kind the first King of Korea sat under when he descended from heaven. Then there is the kite ceremony.

Kites used to be the symbol of the soul, and the kite-bird was so known among the ancient Egyptians. On the 14th of the first month in Korea it is customary to write on all kites a wish to the effect that the year's misfortunes may be carried away with them. Mothers write this for their children, with their names and the dates of their birth. The letters are placed along the bamboo frame so that they may not be seen by anyone who may see the kite later. Boys tie a piece of sulphur paper to the string of such a kite, which they light before sending it



The Japanese Santa Claus.

A curious toy which is common in Europe and less known in this country is very popular in China, Korea, and Japan. It represents a round figure with a head but without arms and legs. This is really, in its origin, a figure of Daruma, the priest who sat wrapped in a state of abstraction until his limbs disappeared.

In France this toy is called a "Pousah," which is a corruption of the Chinese word for Buddha, and in Germany it is called "Butzelman," which is probably also a corruption from Buddha. The figures retain in Japan something of their sacred character, but they have lost it elsewhere. The image that was meant to inspire religious feeling and deep devotion has become an absurd plaything.

This change of a sacred ideal into a profane plaything is the fascinating part of the study of toys. Among the North American Indians one finds toys retaining their original sacredness. With us they have wholly lost it. In the Orient they are in the half-way stage.

For instance, among the American Indians in New Mexico and Arizona there are weird dances which are celebrated at certain seasons in order, as the Indians think, to insure the perpetuation of the world. Images of the dancers at these ceremonies are made and given to the children to play with. The giving of them is a sacred ceremony, and the child in receiving the doll is taught the mysteries of the tribal religion and the necessity of maintaining the sacred rites. The children play with the dolls quite freely after this ceremony, but they are held to be sacred, and it is difficult to obtain one from a tribe, for they should not be sold.

In Africa in certain tribes girls receive dolls at their marriage and guard them as religious objects until they have children of their own. In certain other tribes a

doll is made whenever a member of the tribe dies, and the collection is kept sacredly.

Here, as with the Indian, there is the primitive point of view from which we have so widely departed. To the mind of

the so-called savage everything is full of symbolism. A poet once held up to opprobrium the person who, in "the primrose by the river's brink," saw nothing but a primrose. As a matter of fact most civilized human beings are in this un-

imaginative stage. It is the Indian, the African, who sees spirit always underlying matter.

In Korea, a country which Mr. Culin has studied with especial interest, there are many interesting survivals which part-



Fir Trees, Like Christmas Trees, Are Used in Japan All the Now Year.



A Doll of Ancient Greece with Housekeeping Utensils.

up, so that when it gets into the air the string will burn through and the kite fall. The time for kite flying is the first half of the first month. No one would risk ridicule by flying kites at any other time.

It is bad luck to lose a kite in Japan, and if they break the string, searching parties are sent for them, and a celebration held when they are found. In Japan girls do not have kites.

The children of the Orient see-saw, jump rope, swing, and play leap-frog and blind man's buff just as our children do. Swinging and see-saw are often played by grown-up people, and the tug-of-war in the country districts of Korea is very much of an institution. Villages pull against each other much as we send baseball teams to compete. The men and women pull together, and the women weight their clothes with stones to give them greater force.

men throw out their hands with a certain number of fingers extended, and guess as they do it what will be the total number of fingers extended. This game is possibly the most popular pastime in Southern Italy, and is universally used for gambling. The Japanese have an exactly similar game, and ancient monuments show the Roman soldiers before the Christian era amusing themselves in the identical fashion.

In Christian days, and in the West as well as in the East, there has been a certain religious significance about toys. There is the scissors toy that is sold around Christmas time by street fakery, a doll with a body of slats having a head at the end. The fakier grasps the handles, which have rings like the scissors, and projects and retracts the toy from the faces of the passing crowd as he cries his wares. This toy is really a sacred emblem of the Middle Ages fallen from its high estate. On such an implement the Christmas star was carried in the nativity plays several hundred years ago, the bearer elevating it and changing its position as the necessities of the masque directed.

In Catholic countries the doll assumed, in the Middle Ages, a sacred part, figuring in the often very beautiful representations of the birth of Christ, which were set forth elaborately in churches and the homes of the wealthy. Sometimes a great deal of money was spent on the scene, and the actors wore clothed in beautiful stuffs. These dolls were apparently never used as playthings afterward, and exist to-day as treasured possessions in wealthy families of Latin countries.

So here are all the nations of the earth amusing themselves, in childhood at any rate, in the same way, and here are customs and legends which seem to be distinctly Christian reappearing in the far Orient. Our Christmas tree came to us from Scandinavia by way of Germany. Where did the Japanese get theirs?

Our Santa Claus is an Italian Saint of the Middle Ages. The Japanese Santa Claus is a wise man of centuries ago. Is each Santa Claus really modeled on his supposed prototype or did they both come from some older, dimmer idea of Santa Claus back in the beginning of things? There is hardly a toy or a game that can be called peculiar to any one country.

We try to explain this universality by giving dates of a game's "introduction," to such and such a country. But they are wise and thoughtful men who look further back than that and know that by following this same road, strewn with apparently trivial things for children's entertainment, we might glimpse a weighty secret in the past, might find out, perhaps, that we are all of closer kin than we dreamed.