

PSYCHOLOGY

Uncle Sam Tells Santa Claus Latest Facts About Toys

Action and Initiative Toys, Non-Breakable Toys and Out-Door Toys Urged by U. S. Children's Bureau

TIMES have changed since Santa Claus first opened shop. So to prevent the veteran toy dispenser from falling into any old-fashioned errors, Uncle Sam this year is volunteering the latest scientific advice concerning playthings suited to the needs of American boys and girls.

Don't give children toys that make them lookers-on, is the first law laid down by recreation experts of the U. S. Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor.

"The little child is interested in making, in building, in doing—not in looking on. If he does not develop this interest early in life he may grow into the kind of person who is always a looker-on," warns a forthcoming edition of *Child Care*, in which Uncle Sam describes the approved modern method of rearing future citizens.

Men and women who can do things are necessary to the greatness of a country. Hence the government is interested in seeing constructive toys in the nurseries and yards where the men and women of tomorrow are playing.

"Blocks should be part of the equipment of every play room," continues the discussion. "Plain blocks, colored blocks, large ones and small—all blocks are worth-while toys. They are used in many ways—to build houses, barns, fences or roads. They become trucks and railroad trains. The colored ones that offer a change to experiment with patterns, shapes, and matching of colors delight children. Wooden blocks in the shape of a train of cars which can be taken apart or hitched together easily are good."

Balls, large and small, clay, paper and crayons, carpentry and gardening toys are other playthings which encourage initiative and are consequently in high favor with the child experts. For the young child, toys that can be pulled by a string are recommended, while dolls and toy animals have official approval.

Easily breakable toys fall under the stamp of government disapproval, however. Through smashing his playthings,

the child learns careless, extravagant ways, say the experts. Toys should encourage constructive, not destructive habits, they maintain.

Pastimes that are unduly confining or which strain the attention of the young child should also be avoided. When they stiched away at samplers, the little ladies of our grandmother's generation were inviting nervous ailments for their old age, psychologists today are convinced.

Toys that take the child outdoors into the fresh air and encourage him to vigorous play are desirable, on the other hand. Tricycles, wheelbarrows, sleds, and wagons big enough to ride in belong to this class of toy.

Boys Should Like Dolls

It is just as natural for small boys to like dolls as it is for fathers to be fond of their children, observation of the toy preferences of young children has convinced Miss Ella Gardner of the Recreation Division of the Children's Bureau.

When sonny howls for his sister's



BECOMING A MAN OF ACTION

The U. S. Children's Bureau advises against Santa's bringing toys that make the children on-lookers only. This youngster is beginning early his development into a man with initiative

doll, therefore, his fond parents are not to feel disgraced. And most particularly, they are not frantically to try to crush these unexpected signs of tenderness on the part of the young male by ridicule or punishment.

Far from being a warning of future sissiness, the boy's concern for a doll is probably a first expression of the protective instinct and is a characteristic of the strong defending the weak.

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BOTANY

Pioneer Plants Grow On Sterile Volcanic Ash

HUMBLE but hardy plants able to grow in a soil utterly without the all-necessary nitrogen salts are described by Prof. Robert F. Griggs of George Washington University, who has just returned from a botanical expedition to the famous Katmai volcanic region of Alaska.

When Katmai exploded, about twenty years ago, it devastated a great area of country, covering it with raw, naked volcanic ash. How plants could gain a root-hold on this new desert, devoid as it was of some of the indispensable elements for plant life, was a question that interested botanists very much.

The plants have been answering. The pioneers have been liverworts, which are a group of green creatures related to the common mosses, but a step farther down the evolutionary ladder. Though the soil they grow on contains no nitrogen the plants' bodies themselves have it. It must therefore be assumed either that the liverworts themselves capture this element from the air or that some microscopic plant or animal associated with them does it for them, just as the nodule bacteria capture nitrogen for the clovers. Prof. Griggs will endeavor to find an answer to this question.

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