



POLLY EVANS' FOR BOYS AND GIRLS STORY PAGE



Playtime in Paris: How the Children keep happy

There is no more charming way to spend a Sunday afternoon in Paris than to loiter through the Luxembourg Gardens and to watch the children at play.

One could fancy one's self transported back to the time of the childhood of our grandmothers. The French children play decorously, prettily, and their games are of a simplicity suggestive of the dainty souvenirs of the children of 1850 or 1860 in our own country, to be found occasionally in Godey's Lady's Book and other journals of this period.

From 2 to 5 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon the gardens of the Palace of Marie de' Medici present the aspect of a small carnival. The catch-penny booths presided over by the typical old women in zephyr shawls and lace and ribbon caps present their most alluring aspect. The counter is spread with the tough gingerbreads, the cornucopias of bonbons, the jars of sweets and a few of the fruits in season. The sides are hung with the fascinating implements of play—hoops of all sizes, horse lines with or without sleigh-bells, all kinds of balls hung up in a "falet," rackets, shovels and pails, toy balloons, and the few other simple amusements which present to the little French child the possibilities of a mad whirl of pleasure.

Early in the afternoon the children arrive, singly with their parents or their nurse, but often in squads of fifteen, marshaled by two sisters from the convent where they undergo the process of education.

There is a mellow old story of an English schoolmaster who brought his charges for an outing into the country. No sooner had they arrived upon the site selected for the day's pleasure than the master addressed them thus:

"Now, boys, I've brought you out here to enjoy yourselves, and if you don't enjoy yourselves in less than no time I'll give you all a thundering good thrashing."

The quickness with which these little kiddies from the convents set about their play suggests sometimes a similar stimulus. They cast themselves upon the nearest benches, unpack their toys and off they go, rolling their hoops, skipping their ropes, tossing their balls or pairing off into couples for a game of ragnette.

The children are happy in Paris—that is an undoubted fact. There is no lack of amusement for them, the gardens of the city are their domain, and there they find pastimes and treasures of all sorts. For the favored of fortune—for the "riches"—the Champs Elysees is the playground best appreciated. There you see beautifully dressed tots playing with the earth with their little gloved hands, the small girls racing their hoops, but always careful not to disturb the harmony of their frocks or of their curly locks. The "chevaux de bois," or merry-go-rounds, are taken by assault, and future soldiers of the French army there take their first ride.

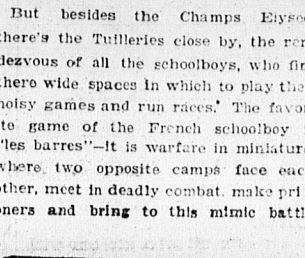
Such are the simple outdoor pleasures of the well-to-do children who are daily to be seen sporting themselves in the Champs Elysees; but there are others even less expensive and yet perhaps more sought after, such as "Guignol," the popular entertainer of the little world. All day long "Guignol" is crowded with spectators, some seated on the little benches for which a very moderate charge is made, while others who have not the wherewithal to enter the sacred precincts stand outside beyond the ropes that serve as a boundary to the miniature theater. The entertainment offered is of the most varied order and gives pleasure to both young and old. You can hear the shouts of happy laughter



La Froude, form of Ring-shak. Hoop with Ball.

"Salt! Vinegar!"

Skilled in "Diabolo"



Out with Nurse

But besides the Champs Elysees there's the Tuilleries close by, the rendezvous of all the schoolboys, who find there wide spaces in which to play their noisy games and run races. The favorite game of the French schoolboy is "les barres"—it is warfare in miniature, where two opposite camps face each other, meet in deadly combat, make prisoners and bring to this mimic battle-

head" has to be repeated by its body, and the poor little "tail" has to display much agility and skill if it does not want to be caught by its enemy.

Games of Grace.

The "volant" or battledore and shuttlecock is one of the favorite games of French children, and they acquire surprising skill in lightly throwing the winged projectile from bat to bat. "Les graces" well deserves its name, for can there be anything more graceful than the sight of two prettily dressed mites, with their arms extended, each holding a stick, with which they endeavor to catch and throw back little velvet covered hoops. This very old French game is played every afternoon by many little French girls in the fashionable parks and avenues.

The Gamins in the Street.

In the streets of Paris children's play still goes on in spite of the restricted space. A very popular game for the Parisian "gamin" is called "le bouchon," and the stakes, we regret to say, are real pennies. The "bouchon" or cork, which is the target, is set up on the sidewalk, the pennies are placed around it, and the purpose of the game is to knock it down by means of small round

the top square is called "heaven" and the bottom square "hades." Hopping on one foot, the players have to push a small, flat disk from square to square, but must manage to slip over "hades." If by misfortune the disk falls into that fatal place, there it has to remain until joined by another unlucky one, which will give freedom to the little player and permit him to at last reach "heaven" and rest.

On the wider streets, the boulevards, the "sabot" reigns supreme. This name is given to a wooden top which is spun by means of a little whip. The "sabot" is lightly planted in the earth, the whip is quickly rolled round it, and with a smart twist of the hand it is set spinning. The children seem to take especial delight in whipping the "sabot" up, and it is a matter of pride with them to keep it going longer than that of their playfellows.

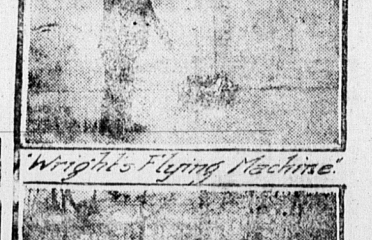
Thus the little French children desert their mothers and spend the sunny hours of the afternoon in the parks, on the boulevards, in the wide streets, of which they seem to take entire possession. But when the rain falls and they have perforce to remain indoors, what are their favorite amusements? The girls seem to



Riding Mechanical Horses



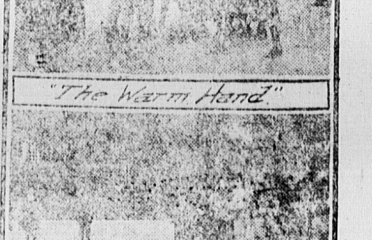
Little girls jumping rope



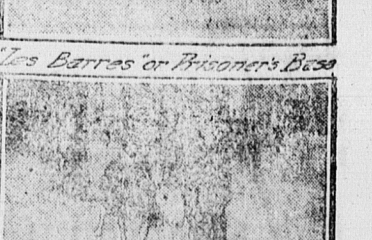
Whip's Flying Machine



Wind Mills Bull



The Warm Hand



Les Barres or Prisoner's Base



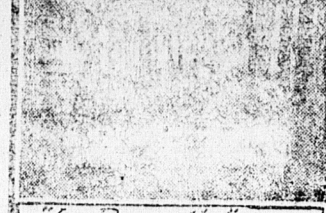
Traveling Donkey-back



Knuckle down, Marbles



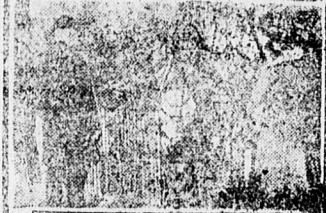
Spinning Top



La Raquette



Leap frog



Merrily Swinging



Toy Booth, Champs Elysees



La Balle au Chasseur



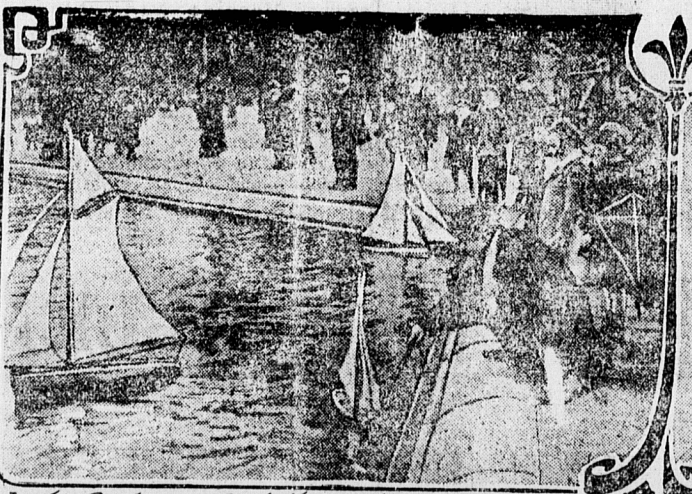
Football



Driving in the go-cart



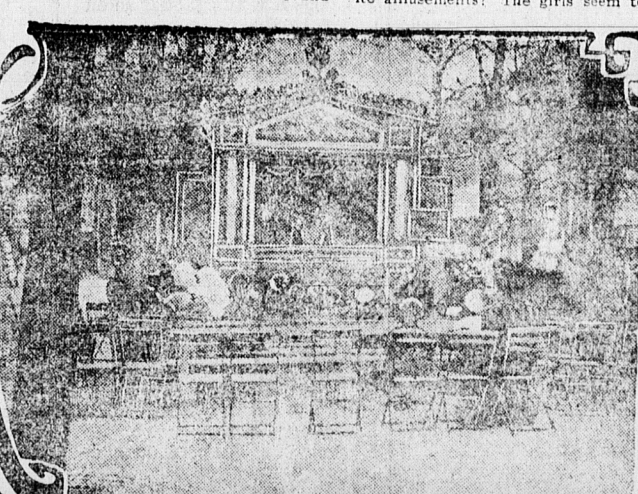
Le Furet



Little Captains Sail their Ships. Basin of Tuilleries



Whipping his Sabot



Before "Le Guignol" - Notice - The benches are reserved for children, if you please.

ing lessons. The "chevaux de bois" are the delight of the little ones, and even the older child in deign to patronize them. Great is their pride when, in spite of the fiery ardor of their steeds, they succeed in threading over the miniature swords with which they are provided a long line of rings skilfully caught as they race by. All honor to the most successful! A sugar stick is awarded to him and he then knows the first glories of triumph.

Goat and Donkey Rides.

Close by the "chevaux de bois" are the little carriages drawn by goats, the equipages most loved by the Parisian babies. Their older brothers and sisters are provided with little donkeys, gaily harnessed, on which they take long rides beneath the chestnuts of the avenue.

Little wooden stalls filled with candies, cakes and toys afford still more delight to the children. Truly, the Champs Elysees may be said to be their paradise—nothing is wanting to bring joy to their hearts, from the skipping rope with which they perform feats of skill known as "doubles" and "vinaigre," to the little ball which serves to make innumerable rows of "petits pates" (little pies) beloved of children all the world over.

When 5 o'clock comes merry groups of little Parisians surround the "marchand des gaufres," who finds it hard to satisfy the numerous demands of his eager little customers with his hot sugared wafers.

and the loud plaudits of the youthful spectators from afar.

Guignol is, in effect, our Punch and Judy show, but so developed, so imaginative, as to quite outclass the clumsy efforts of that well-loved pair of by-gone days. All praise for the ingenuity of the proprietor who makes the dialogues and manipulates the players.

Sometimes a little old man with a harp furnishes the orchestra and plays an overture, after which the ensuing silence is broken by a loud rapping, to which the children respond: "Entrez." Thus invited, a little puppet stage manager makes his appearance, and in a thoroughly professional manner announces the title and character of the piece to be presented.

There is a logical plot, something quite homely, such as the summary ejection of a tenant who refuses to pay his rent and whose goods are confiscated by the proprietor after much publicity and a good deal of struggling.

There are still more temptations in the shape of the wares carried by the "marchands des ballons" pacing up and down the paths frequented by the beribboned "nourous" and their little charges, who gaze with wide-open, longing eyes at the gaily colored balloons, the wind-mills, the toy sunshades and the little mechanical toys that are often the handwork of the "marchand" (merchant) himself.

all the ardor and courage of veritable warriors.

"La balle au chasseur" has also many adepts. Any number of children can join in it. One of the players throws a ball at another, but the ball must strike him on the back; the one who received the ball must pick it up and run until in his turn he finds an opportunity of hitting one of his comrades, who then takes his place. The games of "cache-cache" and "chat perche" are but a variety of "tag" and are mostly given over to the younger ones. Marbles or "cochonnet" is the game preferred by the calmer spirits, while the more turbulent and more skilful consider that the game of "sautemouton" is equalled by none.

"The Wolf's Tail."

"La queue du loup" is adored by the little Parisiennes, although it is likely often to destroy either dainty frock or pinafore. It is a game played most frequently in the convents, where it is held in special favor. The children place themselves in Indian file, each one holding the edge of the skirt of the child in front of her. This Indian file is protected and led by a bigger girl, who, with extended arms, tries to prevent the "wolf's tail"—that is to say, the last one on the file—from being caught by the "hunter." What turnings and twistings and races are made before the "hunter" finally catches his prey! Every movement made by the "wolf's

tail" has to be repeated by its body, and the poor little "tail" has to display much agility and skill if it does not want to be caught by its enemy.

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have a special fondness for "osselets," or bones, with which every child in every country is certainly acquainted. Then there is the "jeu d'oeil," "le loto," the games of patience, and the blocks, over which they spend hours of enjoyment.

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Another kind of Raquette. Playing with a ball



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