

FINE NEW GAMES AND TOYS

Now Ready for Distribution by the
Agents of Santa Claus.

IN THE MODERN WONDERLAND

Millions Spent for the Amusement
and Instruction of Children—

Minds Active and Hands

Busy All the Time.

With the Christmas holidays less than a month distant, the agents of Santa Claus are very busy nowadays, because he intends to be very generous this year. His factories and printing presses have been running day and night, and now the toys, games, dolls, books, and other wonderful things are ready for distribution. Of course, many things have been duplicated, because they are so acceptable, but many new toys and games have been designed and prepared for the amusement and pleasure of children, and grown folk also. The storerooms have such bewildering assortments that one wonders what the effect would be on a score of youngsters, especially if the boy described by Eugene Field could be there and say again

'Most all the time, the whole year round,
There ain't no fies on me,
But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as
I kin be.

Armies of soldiers in tin, pewter, and wood rest peacefully beneath whole menageries; hundreds of dolls stare at rows of houses, quantities of tiny ranges, bathtubs, refrigerators, household utensils, furniture, toilet articles, and jewelry; trains of cars and locomotives, from the stock train to the cannon-ball express, are ready for a dash around the world; on fire engines, trucks, hose carts, and ladders are little firemen who gaze at the show of horses, wagons, dog carts, sulkies, cabs, and chariots; the guns of the white squadron are pointed toward a fleet of Japanese houseboats; in the section for savings banks, sportsmen, baseball players, and donkeys could by tricks hide pennies so quickly that the crowd of mechanical clowns and players could not detect them; woolly dogs are too tired to bark at the heels of lifelike donkeys and horses, unless somebody pulls strings, and on the shelves and under the counters are piles and piles of games competing with piles and piles of books. Catalogues of all the things have hundreds of pages, with illustrations and directions, and it is likely that even grown folk do not know that millions of dollars have been spent and thousands of active minds and hands have been at work for a year in preparing the stocks that are to be displayed soon in the retail stores. Dealers say that holiday goods are cheaper this year than ever before, and the sales at wholesale have been so large that some of the jobbers have exhausted parts of their stocks.

Among the new toys are sets of soldiers in lead, worth from 60 cents to \$2.50. Heretofore they had to be imported from Germany, but this year an American manufacturer has opened competition with home-made goods. In iron the new toys are coal carts, with mule, driver, and loads of coal, the coal being coated with a preparation that prevents dust; hansom cabs, with passenger, driver, and horse; fire engines, in which fires may be lighted, with gongs and mechanical contrivances; farming implements, plows, rakes, and mowers, drawn by horses; stoves and ranges, with nickel and oxidized trimmings; flying artillery, and safety cannons. In skin goods efforts have been made to model animals more correctly, and the lions, tigers, camels, elephants, horses, and cows are cheaper and more lifelike than ever before. In blocks and puzzles the subjects have been enlarged to include familiar tales, nursery rhymes, and instructive lessons in history, geography, &c. Nested blocks are made so that one is small enough to be placed inside another which has an opening in one side. In scroll puzzles are brownies, steamships, steamboats, locomotives, fire engines, maps, and familiar pictures of animals and scenes. For parlor games the favorite fishponds have been improved, the prices ranging from 30 cents to \$5. The latest improvement is a tank of cardboard, covered on the outside with pictures representing fish swimming in water, as seen through the glass sides of an aquarium. The fish used in the game are at the bottom of the tank, and they have wire rings in their mouths. The hook is a magnet on a line. Luck is an element in the game, because the fish cannot be seen before they are caught. An improvement in another pond is in having the fish upright on the bottom, instead of in slots. An inventive genius was puzzled in trying to keep the fish upright without heavy pieces to rest them on, but one night he had an idea, and he cut a small spring in pieces and attached one to each fish, and solved the problem.

Many new board, card, and other parlor games have been designed, and lots of old games have been improved. Every year the manufacturers hope to produce something that will be equal to lotto, tiddledy wink, authors, old maid, snap, and go bang in popular favor. One firm will put sixteen new games on the market this season. Among them are comical games, instructive games, simple games for children, and games of skill for older players, cheap or high-priced. The demand is extending beyond the holiday season to the later Winter and Spring months. In card games city life is played with cards representing good and bad characters, the competition being to secure the greatest possible number of the good, avoiding the bad, and Christmas stocking is a competition to see who shall get the greatest number of presents. The game of authors has been enlarged to include poets and the so-called queens of literature. The game of lost heir is played with cards that have the designs of the coats of arms of four large cities, and the titles of certain members of the Police Departments, with two other cards—"lost heir" and "wrong boy." The police officers must find one and avoid taking the other. Two instructive games are played with cards that have questions and answers on historical and geographical subjects. Another game is played with cards bearing flags of all nations and the flag of a pirate. The prices of these card games range from 5 cents to \$1, and it is noticeable that the demand for them is larger from the East than anywhere else.

In what are known as board games, folded or open, many new ideas have been utilized and popular subjects of the day have been introduced. Reversi is something like Go Bang, and is played with sixty-four pieces. Games in which representations of yachts are used are numerous, the moves over the courses from Newport Harbor to and around Block Island, and in New-York Harbor being governed by indicators. Horse racing has several boards, the horses being advanced along the courses according to the throws of dice or the movements of indicators. Strategy is a new game in which are combined the chances of throwing dice and the skill of using the throws. The bicycle craze has suggested two new games, one a race and the other a tour. For the race dice are to be thrown, each rider moving whenever his number appears. Setbacks and advantages that are provided add zest to the game. For the tour is provided a board, with a pictorial design representing roads, woods, rivers, and villages that surround a central clubhouse. Each player takes a wheelman and, by the spins of an indicator, endeavors to go over his course, as indicated on his route check, to the clubhouse. Football has several boards. For one, the rules follow those of the regular game as closely as possible. The players on the sides are indicated by colored pieces, and they move over a field of octagonal spaces. The moves of the players and the ball are controlled by an indicator. Pilgrim's Progress has been devised for young folk to play on Sunday. The players start from the "City of Destruction," struggle through the "Slough of Despair," climb the "Hill of Difficulty," pass through the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," and encounter the other difficulties on the way to the "River of Death," where they may see the "Celestial City." The Errand Boy and the Messenger Boy are games intended to represent the progress of boys from the time of their applications for places, and through the various employments, until they become Presidents. The Mansion of Happiness is another game for Sunday, and is a revival of a game published half a century ago.

Two games for amusement and instruction are entitled Mail, Express, and Accommodation; or, Inter-World Commerce and Race Around the World. In the former a map of the United States is used. A player must go to several States, buy commodities, and return before an opponent can complete a similar errand to other States. The commodities and markets are indicated on cards dealt by chance. The designer claims that the game gives instruction in the staples of the country, the markets where they are found, and the routes by which the markets may be reached. In the latter game are the main thoroughfares of travel and the customary routes of trade. Efforts to get attractive names have resulted in games called Latne-nit-noe, and Kan-oo-win-it. Cat and Mouse and Hide and Seek are new and attractive games. For playing baseball at home, several boards have been made. In

one game a real bat is used to strike at a real ball, pitched to the striker, and if the ball be struck it can be caught by basemen or fielders. Games intended to stir the ambition are called From Log Cabin to White House and The Road to Washington. One is a race between players from the beginning of a political career through various offices to the Presidential chair. The other is instructive in regard to travel. There are various setbacks, as in real life. Bobb is a game of skill, testing delicacy of motion with the hand that grasps a small mallet. Pieces loaded with lead are to be jumped along the top of a board by tapping the under side, the object being to lodge the "bobbs" in the holes that have the largest numbers. This is an effort to rival Tiddledy Wink.

Donkey parties are so amusing that a game has been invented and put in a box so that enjoyment can be had without the bother of supplying cloth, strips, and pins. The moves of counters are controlled by an indicator. The Horse Show, Cash, Crossing the Alps, Tally-Ho, Life, The Merry Hunt, The Store, Drummer Boy, Ali Baba, Aladdin, and Posting are the names of interesting board games. Lotto has been played for many years, and it has not lost its attractive features. It is made now in sets worth from 10 cents to \$1.25.

Books are so numerous that everybody can be suited. The latest are called shaped books, the figures of Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, Red Riding Hood, Mother Goose, &c., being represented. Many new processes have been employed to perfect and protect the covers and pages of illustrations. Lots of the old favorites and many new aspirants have appeared, and the wonder is that they can be sold so cheaply.

"Although the trade now is in goods for immediate delivery," a manufacturer said, "we are preparing material for a year hence. See that?" he asked, directing attention to a drawing on a large sheet of paper. "That is a rough sketch of a new game that will be put on the market next season. After I finish it, I shall send it to an artist, who will reduce it, and make a finished picture. This will go to a lithographer, who can print it in colors. Then it must be mounted or pasted on cardboard or wood. In the meantime, I can design the counters, or whatever may be used in playing the game."

"Do you buy designs or ideas?"

"Whenever they are worth anything, but they seldom are. I have been planning games for thirteen years, and think I know what can be done satisfactorily. If I get an idea I work at it, turn it over, twist it around, reverse it, and finally put it in shape. Very often I hit on a good thing, and a good thing is worth a good deal of money. The other manufacturers are on the lookout for something that will pay well, and we keep our designs under cover as long as possible. Anything new, if good, will be copied quickly. Very few games can be protected by patent rights, but we can copyright the directions for playing a game. Sometimes I am very fortunate in planning games. Once I had six games on paper in one week. Very frequently a little incident will suggest a game that will become popular, and occasionally old games can be changed to suit the popular notions. It is wonderful how some of the old games keep up. Generation after generation will play Lotto, Go Bang, and the like, but some of the new games are more instructive than the old games, I think. Checkers, backgammon, and bagatelle hold their places in the list of games, and I suppose they will always, although one of these days somebody may invent a game that will compete with them for popular favor."