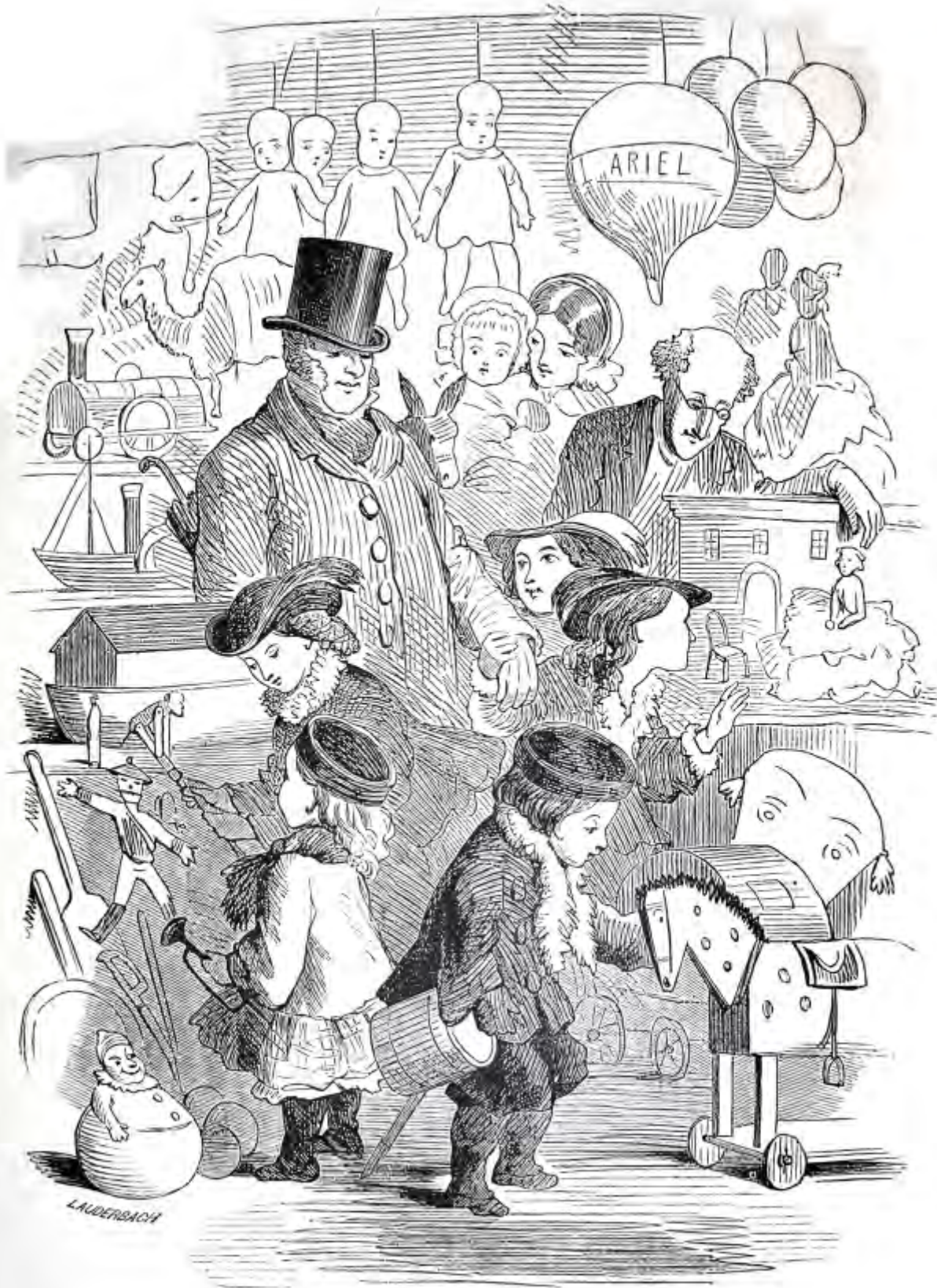


Toys and the Christmas Tree, for inspiration in making or finding accessories that look period.

1860 Godey's Ladies Book and Magazine



THE TOY SHOP.

The December 1850 issue of Godey's Ladies Book had the first depiction of a Christmas tree that appeared in any American publication. It was modeled after an illustration that previously appeared in a British publication, depicting the Royal Family's first Christmas tree as introduced to the children by the young husband from his German origins.

The identical illustration appeared in the December 1860 issue as an illustration for a short story. I have included this story, as it describes both the ornaments and the toys given to the children.

Use beads to recreate the ornaments and have your dolls celebrate a mid-nineteenth century Christmas.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY LIZZIE M'INTYRE.

(See plate.)

DR. GRANTLEY sat alone in his office, his head resting on his hands, thinking deeply. He had not been thus solitary many minutes, for a frail, delicate girl had just left him, his eldest daughter and his darling, who had filled the place of mother, and sister, too, to the younger children of the Doctor. Marion Grantley carried from this interview a heavy heart. It was the old, old story—she loved, was beloved, and her father frowned upon her lover. There was no personal dislike between Dr. Grantley and Morton Loring; but, in years long past, Amos Loring, the young man's father, and George Grantley, rivals in love, had sworn an undying, bitter hatred, and for this old quarrel, though Amos Loring was numbered with the dead, Dr. Grantley was breaking the heart of his gentle, dutiful child. Her last words, as she left him, uttered in low, pleading accents, were: "Father, you know I will never disobey you; but it is Christmas Eve; for the day's sake, by the memory of my mother, who was taken into heaven seven years ago this evening, by the love I have ever tried to show you, forget this old quarrel. Let me bring to you one who, for my sake, will be a son in your old age, who loves and respects you. Father, do not break my heart!"

In reply, the Doctor merely waved his hand toward the door, and quietly, sadly, with no violent outbreak of passion to tell her bitter grief, Marion passed out. From the office, across the entry, she went into the parlor. There was a blaze of light there, and round the centre-table were clustered four little sisters and one brother, her mother's legacy to Marion. Grace, the one next Marion, a pretty blonde, just entering her nineteenth year, looked up as her sister entered. There was no discontented, fretful glance to throw back her loving one; gentle, serene, and tender, Marion smiled upon the group, stifling back her own sorrow to give them a Christmas greeting.

"Oh, I wish it was to-morrow!" cried Eddie, the youngest, a boy of eight years old, the pet and darling of all the five sisters.

"To-morrow evening!" said Fannie, the next in order, "to-morrow evening! O such fun! A Christmas tree!"

"I am sorry I did not have it this evening,"

said Marion, "if you are so impatient; but Aunt Lizzie's box of presents from New York always comes on Christmas day, and we can make a much prettier tree if its contents are hung upon it."

"Won't it be fun to dress it!" whispered Grace, who was to be the only one admitted to this delightful task.

"Oh, Marion, will it have my work-box?" cried Hester.

"And my doll?" said Fannie.

"And my set of china tea things? You know you promised me a new set." And, fairly started, all the children joined in the list of demands, making a perfect Babel of the parlor.

The little mantel clock struck nine. As the last stroke died away, Marion pointed with a smile to the clock, and the children rose, kissed their sisters, and went merrily up stairs to bed, Fannie leading Eddie, while Hester and Lizzie, little girls of eleven and twelve, went up arm in arm.

"There is so much to do to-morrow, Gracie," said Marion, as the chamber door closed, shutting out the sound of the merry voices, "there are so many things to attend to that I think we will dress the tree this evening. We can shut the folding doors, and keep the children from the back parlor to-morrow, and it will not take many minutes to hang Aunt Lizzie's presents upon the tree, when they arrive in the morning."

"O yes, we will dress it now. I'll call father." And the young girl danced off to the office, humming a merry tune. Marion, in the mean time, went out to a closet in the entry, and brought in a large baize covering for the centre of the floor. It was green, and meant for the foundation of the beautiful show Marion's tree always made. Grace and the Doctor soon came in, and the process of making a Christmas tree commenced in good earnest.

The square of green baize being tacked down, a large stone jar was placed in the middle of it, and in this the tree stood nobly erect. Damp sand was put round the stem till the large green tree stood firmly in its place. A flounce of green chintz round the jar concealed its stony ugliness, and over the top, round the tree, was

a soft cushion of moss. It was a large evergreen, reaching almost to the high ceiling, for all the family presents were to be placed upon it. This finished, the process of dressing commenced. From a basket in the corner, Marion drew long strings of bright red holly-berries, threaded like beads upon fine cord. These were festooned in graceful garlands from the boughs of the tree, and while Marion was thus employed, Grace and the Doctor arranged the tiny tapers. This was a delicate task. Long pieces of fine wire were passed through the taper at the bottom, and these clasped over the stem of each branch, and twisted together underneath. Great care was taken that there should be a clear space above each wick, that nothing might catch fire. Strings of bright berries, small bouquets of paper flowers, strings of beads, tiny flags of gay ribbons, stars and shields of gilt paper, lace bags filled with colored candies, knots of bright ribbons, all homemade by Marion's and Grace's skilful fingers, made a brilliant show at a very trifling cost, the basket seeming possessed of unheard-of capacities, to judge from the multitude and variety of articles the sisters drew from it. Meantime, upon the wick of each little taper the Doctor rubbed with his finger a drop of alcohol, to insure its lighting quickly. This was a process he trusted to no one else, for fear the spirit might fall upon some part of the tree not meant to catch fire.

Marion, unconscious that her father's eye followed her in every movement, tried to keep up a cheerful smile, for her sister's sake, yet sometimes a weary sigh would come from her overcharged heart as the contrast between these gay preparations for festivity and the weight of her own sorrow struck her. At last, all the contents of the basket were on the tree, and then the more important presents were brought down from an upper room. There were many large articles, seemingly too clumsy for the tree, but Marion passed around them gay-colored ribbons till they formed a basket work, and looped them over the branches till even Hester's work-box looked graceful. Dolls for each of the little girls were seated on the boughs, and a large cart for Eddie, with two horses prancing before it, drove gayly amongst the top branches, as if each steed possessed the wings of Pegasus. On the moss beneath the branches Marion placed a set of wooden animals for Eddie, while from the topmost branch was suspended a gilded cage, ready for the canary-bird Dr. Grantley had purchased for the pet-loving Lizzie.

Various mysterious packages, wrapped in pa-

per and marked Grace, Marion, or Papa, were put aside, that all the delicious mystery of Christmas might be preserved.

At length all was ready, and, carefully locking the doors, the trio went up to their respective rooms.

It was Christmas evening. All the presents were on the tree, and Marion was alone in the back parlor, waiting for the Doctor's return from a professional visit, before she lighted the tree. The children were in the sitting-room, and their eager, merry voices came faintly to her as she sat sadly waiting there.

Hark! A voice in the entry. The door of the large closet opened and shut again, and then her father's voice summoned her to open the door.

"Marion," he said, taking her hands in his own, "you have thought for all the others this Christmas evening; I have a gift for you."

She said "Thank you," quietly smiling, yet without much appearance of interest.

I wish to place it on the tree myself, and then this year I will play lamplighter. You bring the children into the next room."

Dancing feet soon sounded on the stairs, and eager voices shouted "Merry Christmas," as the little ones followed Marion into the front parlor. It was entirely dark. Standing them in a row, at some distance from the folding-doors, Marion spoke to tell her father all was ready. The doors flew open. The tall tree, one blaze of light, covered with tasty gifts, stood in the middle of the room, and behind it was a figure which Marion at first took for her father; only for a moment. Dazzled and confused as she was by the sudden blaze of light, a second glance sent a full tide of happiness to her heart.

"My Christmas gift," she said, softly, stepping forward.

"And I claim mine," was the reply, in a deep, manly voice, from behind the tree, and Morton Loring came forward to where Marion had paused, awaiting him.

Christmas was surely not a time for quarrels, sanctified, too, as it was to the Doctor and Marion, and Dr. Grantley repaid long years of devotion to himself and his children by making Marion happy on Christmas.

SELF-IMPORTANCE.—We draw our map of the world after the lines of our own little life: as sailors, on their charts, lay down all the land in blanks, and mark only rocks, shoals, and sand-banks.