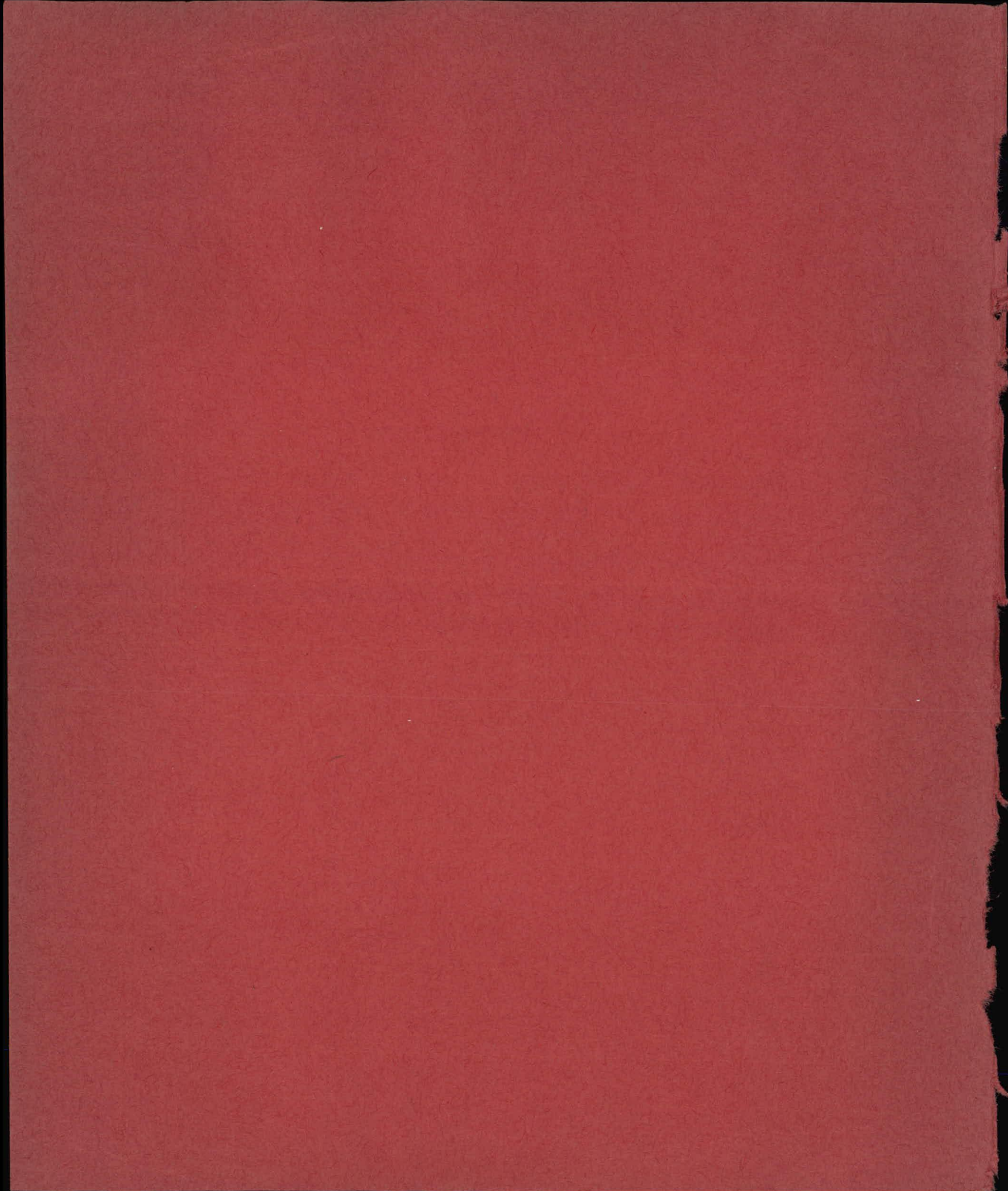


CENTRAAL MUSEUM UTRECHT



THE DOLL'S HOUSE



THE DOLL'S HOUSE

CENTRAAL MUSEUM UTRECHT

Free after Fré Dommissie, "Het Poppenhuis in het Centraal
Museum te Utrecht, 1932, by Maria A.H.van Es;
translated by J.P.W.Philipsen litt.drs.

We are much obliged to Miss K.Fremantle for her willingness to go over the text of the English translation.

Utrecht, april 1960.

The charming doll's house in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht was built as a toy for grown-up people about 1674-1690: for Adam Oortmans, brewer in "The Swan", Amsterdam, and his wife Petronella de la Court. The tobacco broker Pieter van der Beek, living on the Kloveniersburgwal, owned it in 1738; he left it to his daughter Margaretha, wife of the Aalsmeer bailiff Dirk Slob, who married to the master of the Mint of Zeeland, Martinus Holtzhey. The last owner Mrs. Judith H.C. Pipersberg-Holtzhey died in 1870, having presented the doll's house to the Utrecht municipality four years earlier. Some dates and initials on pieces of furniture serve as reminders of its history. A few objects, e.g. three French portraits, were added by Mr Slob, whose mother was related to the émigré noble family Dupuy de Montbrun. Of the original doll inhabitants a few are missing, having been presented to important visitors in former times.

The open front does not give a clear idea of the main entrance of such a house, usually placed in the centre of the façade, raised above the basement, and reached by means of a double flight of steps. Inner apartments and even the garden have been moved from the back to the front, so that each part may be clearly seen.

HALL

When entering the hall the visitor meets with the nurse, in Waterland peasant dress, which is reminiscent of the present-day bridal costume of Marken. She supports the youngest child

with the help of a leading-string. The man servant, with a basket under his arm, is about to leave to do shopping. The chequered hall pavement consists of white and black marble tiles; the whitewash of the hall is broken by marble reliefs showing mythological scenes. The hall is furnished with a carved hall bench and a grandfather clock. A silver chandelier, held by a gilded wooden arm, provides light for evening visitors.

OFFICE

A staircase leads up to the office of Mr. Constantius Popperius (a pun on the word "pop" i.e. doll), who is in the tobacco trade. Tobacco was considered a panacea, even women and tiny urchins still pent up in a baby chair smoked their clay pipes. The office serves as a study too, the book case containing, besides ledgers, devotional literature. A basket is filled with churchwarden pipes and there is a liquor case to alleviate the merchant's thirst.

ART CABINET

A salon contains the owner's collections of paintings, books, blue-and-white china, coins, and shells. Among the painters represented are Hoet, Saftleven, Van Huchtenburgh, and Van Mieris. Three folio volumes in splendid leather bindings contain engravings which are mostly anonymous, those in a few smaller books are by Hans Sebald Beham (1520). There is a statue of Mercury in the fireplace (for it is summertime), and two rich globes, representing the earth and the heavens,



Drawing-room with wall-paintings on canvas by
Frederic de Moucheron, 1633-1686



Kitchen with servant-girl making pancakes

remind us of the world-wide commercial relations of the Dutch, the "freighters of Europe", during the Golden Age. So do the sumptuousness of dresses, furniture, and precious things. Above the chimney is a Last Judgment, minutely carved in ivory, in an amber frame. Well-to-do citizens often owned paintings by the great masters. A coloured engraving showing the four elements and the points of the compass is used to represent a painted ceiling. In the parquetry floor ivory and various kinds of wood are used together.

DRAWING-ROOM

Three dilettanti, two gentlemen with violin and viola da gamba and a lady at the spinet, are playing chamber music in the drawing-room; on the top of the spinet lie flutes and music books; handwritten airs and dances are arranged on the music-stand. At the time Italian violin makers had much improved traditional methods of construction and the flute more and more took the place of the lute as an accompaniment for song. The walls, covered from top to bottom with fine hunting scenes on canvas by Frederick de Moucheron, add to the distinction of the lofty apartment. The floor covering of Spanish mats is decked with silk tapestry only when guests are expected. The chairs, which have turned walnut legs, are upholstered in flowered silk, gilded wooden eagles support the tables. On that in the foreground there are playing cards, a silver pair of snuffers, and a silver snuff box. People of every age and status were snuff addicts, and tobacconists, by putting various brands of perfumed snuff on the market, catered for many perverted tastes.

The ladies are daintily dressed in pastel-coloured silk with lace, the gentlemen in gold-braided velvet.

LINEN-ROOM

Dutch housewives always took great pride in their well-stocked linen- cupboards. Inventories comprising no less than 50 dozen of table-clothes, 150 men's shirts, 100 drawers, 60 trimmed and untrimmed bonnets, 12 nightgowns of flowered chintzes, were not at all out of the common. The habit of doing the laundry only a few times a year with the help of hired washerwomen and ironers made a large stock of linen a necessity. The linen-room in the attic is crowded with clothes-horses, presses, baskets and brooms, and it contains a washing-list which mentions both men's and women's shirts, sheets, pillow-slips, towels, aprons, bands, and loose sleeves (used when writting).

STORE-ROOM

The store-room, like the linen-room, is in the attic. There victuals are preserved in bottles and barrels, among them dried fish, peas, beans, rice and groats. Salting and pickling were the only known methods of conservation. Partitioned off from the store-room is the servant girl's sleeping room: a sparsely-furnished, cramped closet under the peat-loft.

KITCHEN

The beautifully furnished kitchen is full of pots and pans, racks for glass and china, and shining kitchen utensils.

Scouring and scrubbing never stopped. Often the servant girl had been the housewife's wet-nurse, and had accompanied her when she moved into her new home; in old age she was given a small dwelling of her own in some almshouse. Burgomaster Bicker's servant-girl was said to rule the whole of the Netherlands, for she ruled the burgomaster's wife, who in her turn ruled her husband, he Amsterdam, and Amsterdam the whole country. Servants were forbidden by law to wear artificial curls, knots of ribbon, jewels, silk, and velvet, but of course in vain. At the back of the kitchen to the left the scullery is seen with pumps, sink, pails, brooms, clogs, etc. In the cellar to the right, butter, beer and vinegar barrels are kept. Over the mantelpiece there is a striking relief in pear-wood, and in the middle of the room stands a practical table with folding leaves. On the walls are a plate-rack, a knife-board dated 1682, and a mug-rack from which blue china mugs with silver lids are hung. A glass-rack is filled with goblets, beaked decanters, a flute-glass, rummers, a winged beaker, and one which is Venetian in style. Every drink - and many were fashionable at the time - had its special glass. Drinking-cups engraved with inscriptions were favorite presents. Pewter was the material for common plate and platters. Brass and pewter were scoured with buttermilk and French chalk, and polished with salad-oil and polishing-powder. Vegetables for dinner gained favour only slowly, as part of a diet which had long consisted almost exclusively of meat and fish. Dairy products were combined only singly with bread, for it was considered a sinful extravagance to give buttered bread a coar-

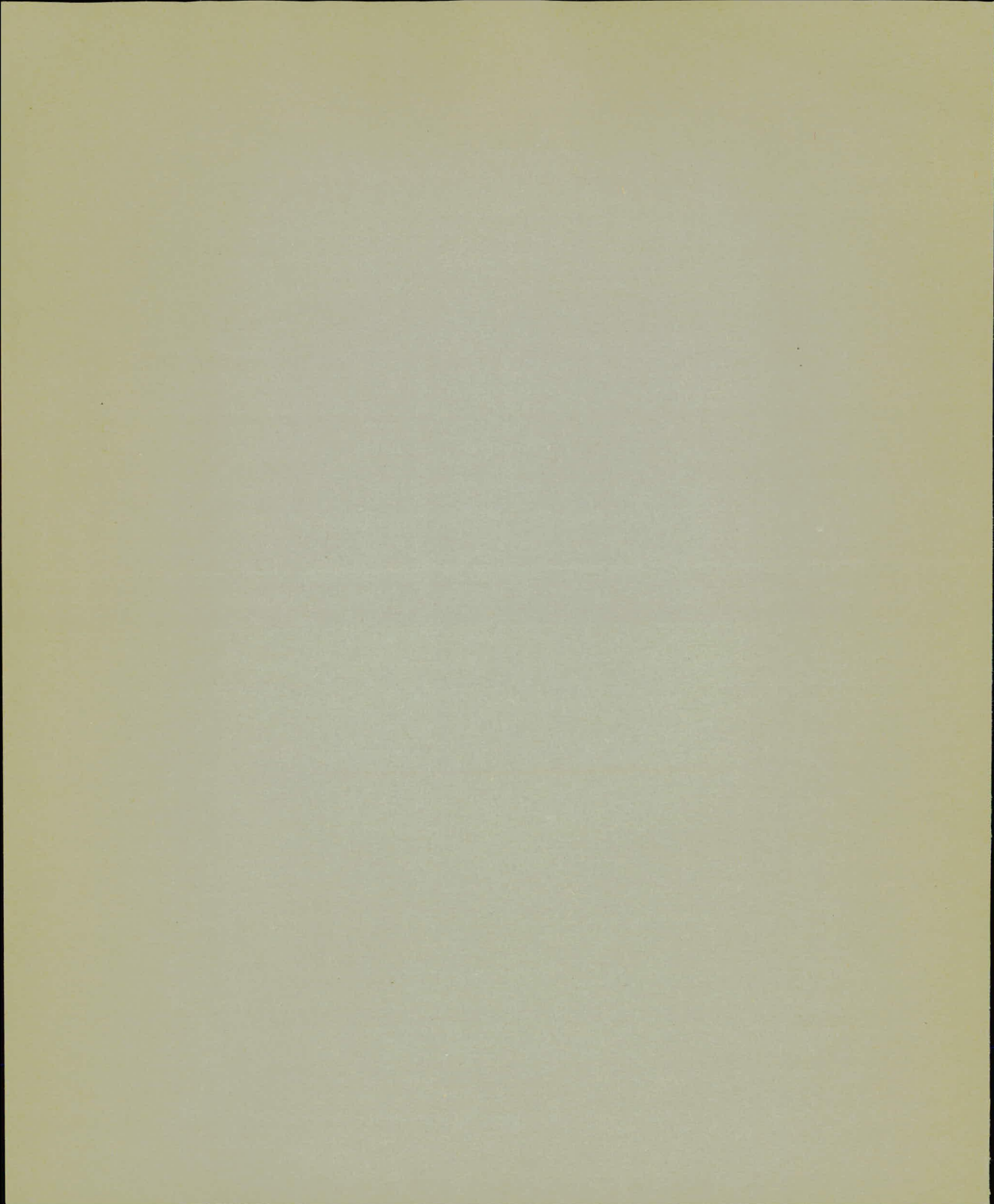
ting of cheese. People rose early, breakfasting on bread and beer, or later, milk. At twelve o'clock dinner was served. For the less well-to-do this meal consisted of rice cooked with milk, beans, turnips, cabbage, hash with lemon juice, fish, or pickled meat; the better off would have several dishes: mutton with rice, capon with lemons, pigeon with endive, buckwheat pancakes, custards, or pies. At three o'clock a light "tea" of bread, butter and cheese followed, and at eight a supper of bread and butter, with the remnants of dinner or some such dishes as mussels in sweet sauce.

NURSERY

With our modern ideas we would reject as somewhat depressing the nursery walls covered with dark red silk, the domed canopy of flowered brown silk over the bed, the wall decoration representing cavalry skirmishes, the ceiling with its autumn scene after an engraving by Goltzius. The family physician, urinal in hand (his infallible mainstay in making a diagnosis.) is visiting a sick child. Against the walls are tall cupboards, a laundry basket, a row of pegs, a book-rack, bird cages, and a lace-pillow. The doctor is often a learned and distinguished man, and is at the same time a botanist, divine, historian, astronomer, or man of letters. The child curtsies to him when he takes his leave and he charges his highest tariff of fifty cents. He visits patients on foot, in the country on horseback, and not before the eighteenth century in a doctor's brougham.



A glassrack filled with goblets, beaked
decanters, a flute-glass and rummers



A YOUNG MOTHER'S BEDROOM

This room is overcrowded and, owing to the general fear of fresh air, it is rather close there. The mother, accompanied by the nurse and wet-nurse (the latter with the baby in her lap) is receiving some lady visitors who have come to congratulate. Tea is served for them from a lacquered tray on the big table. Tea was considered to be of wonderful medicinal virtue, blanching and strengthening the teeth, purging the humors, and cooling the liver. At tea-parties visitors did not shrink from twenty or thirty cups at a time, the sick augmented their daily ration to eighty or a hundred. Comfits were served with the tea, as well as several kinds of small cakes, together with the special drink served on the occasion of such a visit, "kandeel" (Rhenish wine with beaten yolk of eggs, sugar, and spices).

The baby's outfit, here in a cupboard near the chimney, in most cases was either a grandmother's or a godmother's present. It included red taffeta upper and velvet under swaddling clothes (the former trimmed with silver lace, the latter lined with silk and trimmed with ordinary lace), satin blankets with flowered embroidery, lace bonnets, knitted miniature stockings and gloves, and a white or yellow satin pin-cushion with the baby's name in pins. The nurse had very varied responsibilities. She had to wrap the baby up stiffly, observe the many taboos and superstitions on which the wellbeing of mother and child depended. A great many works of art serve as wall decorations, among them portraits of Mazarin, Lewis XIV and his queen, and a youth thought to be Philip the Fair.

Francis of Bossuit carved the two ivory reliefs, which represent the Triumph of Bacchus and the Death of Orpheus, in 1682. A coloured engraving of Spring by Goltzius covers the ceiling. The last owner of the doll's house added the portrait of her father Martinus Holtzhey, Master of the Mint of Zeeland, under the mirror.

BEDROOM

The lady of the house, standing before her dressing-table, on which there are silver brushes and a silver-frame mirror, is dressed after the fashion of 1680 with the "coiffure" called after ~~to~~ the duchess de Fontange, who when her hair got dishevelled during a hunting-party, bound it up high with ribbons, enchanting the king and creating a new craze. The skirts of the tightly-corseted robe have gold braid and are heavily embroidered. A life sized doll, Pandora, sent from Paris on a tour through all the big towns of Europe, showed new fashions until the coming of fashion magazines at the end of the eighteenth century. Dresses were tailor-made, women needed the stadholder's express consent when starting a millinery workshop at Nijmegen as late as 1749. Even well-bred and fashionable people were of the opinion that they could do without a washstand, owing to shadowy ideas on bodily hygiene and the common superstition that grave danger to health might lurk in so innocent a habit as washing ones head. The sumptuous room has a wall-covering of striped and flowered white silk, and a silk carpet whose pattern of red roses is in harmony with the upholstery. The ceiling, again an engraving, represents the apotheosis of

the emperor Leopold I. The painting over the chimney is of a cavalry skirmish and is presumably by Van Huchtenburgh, who worked for some time with Charles Lebrun at the Paris "Manufacture des Gobelins" and was court painter to prince Eugene of Savoy. A gorgeous silver dish is used as a fire-place decoration in summer. The picture in gilded frames by Willem van Mieris, Slingelandt, Vertangen and Verwilt.

GARDEN

The formal French garden is strictly symmetrical and geometric in its arrangement, like Lenôtre's gardens of about 1700. At the end of the middle path a trellis-work roseclad arbour. There are statues representing the Elements, carved vases, orange-trees in pots, and fruit trees supported by wooden fencing. In the arbour there is a backgammon-board. There are soaring doves in a painted blue sky, and a stately peacock, pacing proudly along the fence, reigns supreme over this little paradise.

L I T E R A T U R E

- E.D.Baumann, De dokter en de geneeskunde, Amsterdam, 1915.
- P.J.Blok, Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse volk, deel III, Groningen, 1923-1926.
- H.Brugmans, Het huiselijk en maatschappelijk leven onze voorouders, Amsterdam, 1931.
- F.Dommissie, Kijkjes in een zeventiende eeuwse patriciërs poppenhuis, Maandschrift "Op de Hoogte", dec. 1931.
- I.H.van Eeghen, Het Poppenhuis van Margaretha de Ruyter, Maandblad "Amstelodamum", nov, 1953.
- F.Gill Jacobs, A history of doll houses, New-York, 1953.
- C.H.de Jonge, Het Poppenhuis, Tijdschrift "Utrecht, Sticht en Stad", 1934, no. 1.
- J.H.der Kinderen-Besier, De kleeding onze voorouders: 1700-1900, Amsterdam, 1926.
- J.H.der Kinderen-Besier, Spelevaart der mode, Amsterdam, 1950.
- E.Luzac, Hollands rijkdom, behelzende den oorsprong van den koophandel en van den magt van dezen staat, Leyden, 1780-1783.
- S.Muller Fz., Catalogus van het Museum van Oudheden, Utrecht, 1904.
- S.Muller Fz. en W.Vogelsang, Het Oud-Hollandsche huis, Utrecht, 1909.
- G.D.J.Schotel, Het oud-Hollandsch huisgezin der 17e eeuw, Haarlem, 1868; 2e druk, Leiden, 1904.
- K.Sluyterman, Huisraad en binnenhuis in Nederland in vroegere eeuwen, 's-Gravenhage, 1918; 2e druk, 1948.
- G.Snijder, Unsterbliche Meisterwerke - Ihr Weg durch die Zeit, München, 1958.
- L.Spruit, Speelgoed voor grote mensen - Een oudhollands poppenhuis, Tijdschrift "Beatrijs", jan. 1959.
- Z.C.Uffenbach, Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und England, Leipzig, 1753.
- K.Walther, Das schönste Puppenhaus, "Westermanns Monatshefte", Braunschweig, dec. 1959.
- C.van Wessem, Het musiceren en concerteren in den loop der tijden, Amsterdam, 1929.

