

Performance of Puppet Plays

By

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On the last night of our Exhibition we had a family party with the first and maiden performance of our 24 hand puppets and 5 marionettes on the stage.

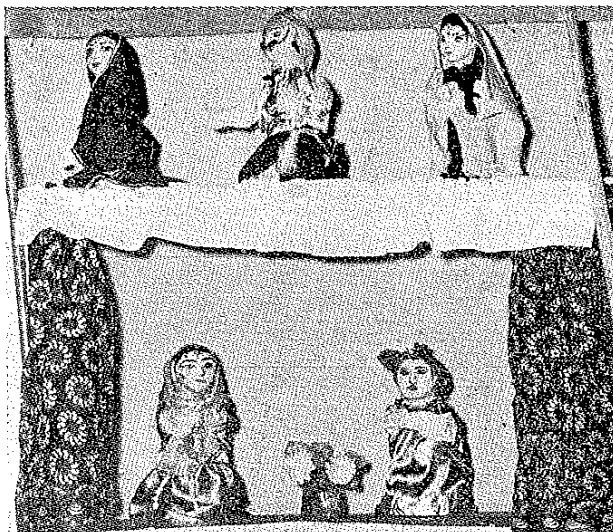
Both hand and string puppets can play an important part in health work in village, clinic, centre and hospital ward. They can entertain, be used in social education programmes, provide opportunity for dramatic self-expression and group activity as well as help to rehabilitate stiff fingers after injury and illness. Hand puppets are put on the hand like gloves and manipulated by the fingers. String puppets or marionettes are moved by means of invisible black threads from a little wooden control held out of sight above the doll.

Several weeks before the Exhibition we had started learning how to make these little actors. Miss Bani Ghose organized us into groups to make the faces; Miss Bains showed us how to make the bodies and Miss Bhuyan was in charge of guiding us in dressing them. Miss Bala showed us how to string and control them and Miss Seethalakshmi explained how simple stages may be set up in any village or school or hospital ward. She had one group practice at each type of stage. The four puppet plays were *Bishan's Bride*, *Read and Rejoice*, *The Wine of Life* and *a Fairy Tale*. The marionette play was *Chitra* by Rabindranath Tagore. The plays were either diversional or educational. Two were in Hindi.

A central play committee consisting of the chairmen of the five play groups decided the over-all programme. On the bulletin board lists of

officers for each group were posted. Each member of each group signed up for a special responsibility: Stage manager, Reading and Sound Effects, Dress Design, Make up artist, Curtain and Lights.

Our opening night arrived. A few guests, members of our College faculty and fellow students were invited. We gathered in the Assembly Hall. Everyone seemed quite eager to see the show. When the curtain went up there was applause. Bright eyes followed the actors eagerly. Our puppets responded nobly. They talked, they sang, they danced. They were colourful and gay. The audience seemed to enjoy the whole entertainment. Some members of the audience were so enchanted with the actors that they came behind the scenes to see how our puppets were made and manipulated. After answering their questions the little actors bowed their last bow and the show came to an end.



Puppets