

KATE GREENAWAY

Betty Hagerman is an avid quilt maker and quilt lover. She is a frequent contributor to the quilt column in the BALDWIN LEDGER, where this article was published on August 23, 1978.

Mrs. Hagerman has been doing research into the Sunbonnet Babies quilt designs. In her research she found the Kate Greenaway designs were a possible influence on the Sunbonnet Babies as well as a frequent source of design for other quilts.

Catherine (Kate) Greenaway was born March 17, 1846, in London, the third of five children of Elizabeth Jones and John Greenaway, a prominent wood engraver and draftsman. Before she was two she was sent to live with relatives in the countryside, and she remained there for nearly two years as her mother recovered from an extended illness. At this young stage in her life she grew fond of the garden and its many flowers, and visited there frequently as she grew up.

Kate was a precocious youngster, and by age 6 was reading anything she could get her hands on. She attended, read, and understood Shakespeare at a very early age. By the time she was 12 her parents had recognized her aptitude for art and enrolled her in the National Art Training School.

The first public appearance of Kate Greenaway's art work was a watercolor and six small drawings of gnomes and sprites on wood at the Dudley Gallery in Piccadilly in 1868 when she was 22. Through the gallery, the Rev. W. J. Loftie, then editor of PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE who purchased some of her early work, and her father, Kate was able to obtain freelance work. This early commercial work consisted mostly of birthday cards, Valentines, and Christmas and New Years cards for Marcus Ward & Co. During the six years that she worked for them the style of her illustrations began to take on her distinctive touch. Her first book commission, in 1871, for Kronheim and Company, color printers, was DIAMONDS AND TOADS, a book which she particularly enjoyed as a child. These drawings, however, are not typical Greenaways.



KATE GREENAWAY design from HARPER'S BAZAR, January 28, 1882, as reproduced by Dorothy Cook, p. 6. Note similarity to the block design. This some general design, although more often accompanied by the more tailored hat, was a favorite for the mother, as it appears again and again throughout the books by Greenaway.

The early drawings were not signed. Her name appeared for the first time on a book title page when she illustrated FAIRY GIFTS by Kathleen Knox in 1874. When she did begin to sign her drawings her signature consisted of a simple KG, which appeared for the first time on the drawings in THE FAIRY SPINNER by Miranda Hill in 1875.

Kate Greenaway was a dreamer who was not happy with the dress of children in her day, either as a child or grown-up. She dressed her dolls in costumes dating many years before her birth (close to the 18th century) and carried this styling into the early greeting card designs and the later popular works. Greenaway children have rapt faces (or no faces) which makes them seem absorbed in their own private pretend world. She also drew many flowers in great detail, for which John Ruskin, her great friend and critic, chided her as being more time-consuming than necessary to accomplish her purpose.

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Edmund Evans, an excellent engraver and printer, was an old acquaintance of Kate's father. At their insistence Kate went to Witley to visit him one day in 1877 with a collection of about 50 drawings illustrating some quaint verses she had written with children in mind. They immediately appealed to Evans and he purchased them with the idea of having them ready for the 1878 Christmas season. He went to the time and expense of making fourcolor wood cuts and printed 20,000 copies, which his competition considered a ridiculously large number. The first edition was sold out before another could be printed, and the demand continues. The book is UNDER THE WINDOW. More than 100,000 copies were sold all over the world, and greatly influenced children's fashions for the rest of the 19th century. Other books followed, the best known of which are MARIGOLD GARDEN, THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS, and LITTLE ANN. She also illustrated THE QUEEN OF THE PIRATE ISLE by Bret Harte and a version of THE PIED PIPER OF HAMLIN. Holme, on page 7, quotes Kate Greenaway as saying, 'People laugh at me, I am so delighted and pleased with things, and they say I see with rose-coloured spectacles. What do you think - is it not a beautiful world? Sometimes have I got a defective art faculty, that few things are ugly to me?' in a letter to Frederick Locker after UNDER THE WINDOW had made publishing history.

Kate Greenaway was never outside England. Her books were imported to the U.S. in ever increasing numbers, and in 1893 a group of her original drawings and water colors were shown at Chicago's Columbian Exhibition. LADIES HOME JOURNAL (circulation 700,000) invited her to illustrate some verses by Laura E. Richards, and these appeared in the magazine between 1894 and 1896. She died November 6, 1901. Some Greenaway designs have been reprinted recently (1975) by Dorothy G. Cook from HARPER'S BAZAR issues of July 23, 1881 and January 28, 1882. They were reproduced by HARPER'S (with permission) but not drawn expressly for their magazine.

1 Maxene Harris, MUSEUM QUILTS, Missouri Ruralist, April 22, 1967.

2 *ibid.*

3 A postcard of the room with the quilt on the bed is available for 100 and a stamped self addressed envelope to Washington's Birthplace, VA 22575.

4 Photo of quilt on bed in McCALLS, Feb. 1972, Treasured Recipes from Washington's Day.

5 Washington's Birthplace is located 40 miles SE from Fredericksburg, just off route 3.

6 Barbara Bannister's personal correspondence to Mary Schafer.

7 Emma Lee Kurts, BUNSTON WOMAN CREATES HISTORIC BED REPRODUCTION, source unknown, August 1, 1970.

GREECE

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Our next visit was to the Meteora to see monasteries on top of the pinnacles. I photographed many icons as well as needlework.

I did find one boutique in Mykonos that carried several interesting and appliqued dresses but the work was not as sophisticated as our quilters are used to. I did buy a dress trimmed with a piece of the old embroidery.

The tour will be held again next year and I would recommend it to anyone interested in crafts, women's rights, or Greek culture. Write: THE WOMEN'S UNION OF GREECE, 34 Panepistimious St., Athens 143, Greece.

--Charlotte Patera



Two more typical Greenaway designs from the Cook book, pp.5 and 10. From these it is evident that the Corbet designs are not copies, but they could have been influenced by this very popular