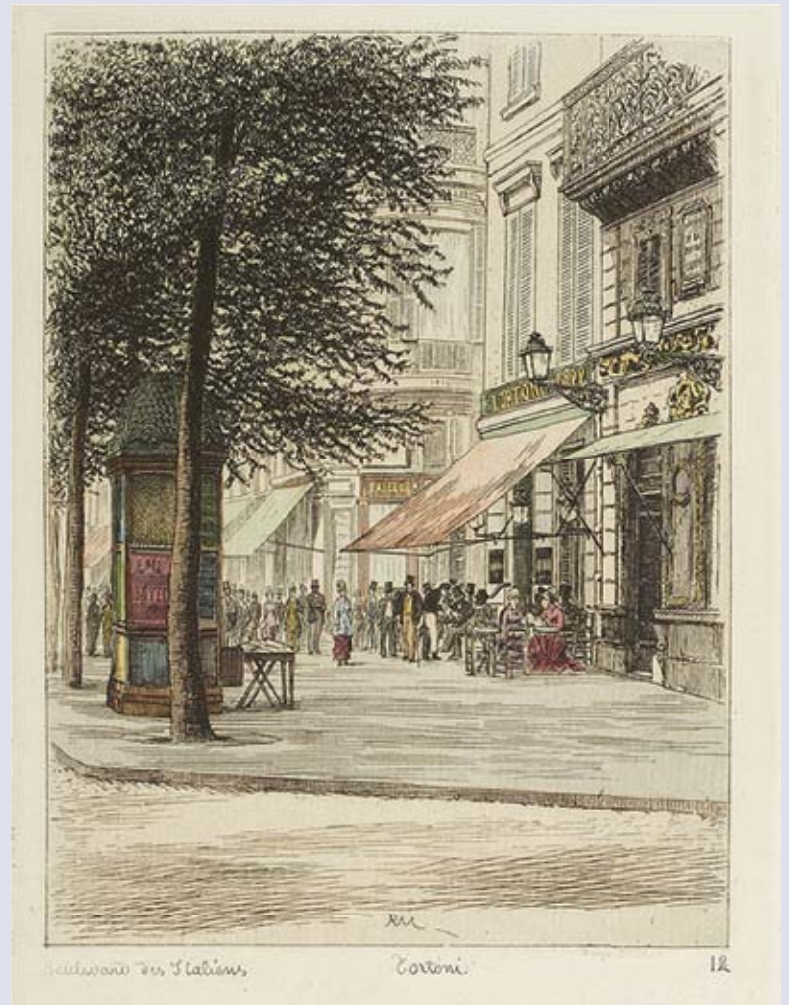
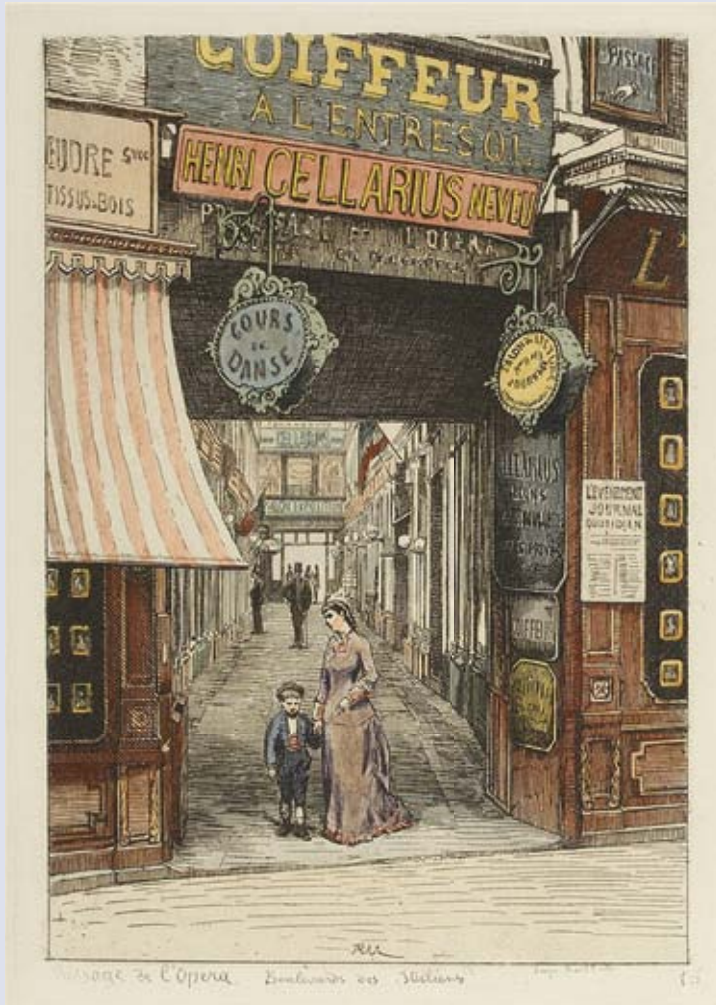


Pampered Children, Luxurious Dolls



Despite the family's many advantages, the everyday life of a wealthy child such as Louise was rather conventional and routine. She and her siblings were reared for the most part by servants and nannies, and along with stints at boarding schools, the children were also tutored at home. Children were to be seen and not heard in this era and seldom ventured very far outside the environs of the nursery. The Schiff children were indulged, however, with only the best toys, clothes, and education, and the entire family spoke German, French and Italian along with their native English.



A beautiful yet utilitarian trunk could be purchased to hold a doll's wardrobe and a myriad of accessories. Victoria's red painted canvas covered wooden trunk retains its original paper label, which reads, "Galleries de Fer, 19 Boulevard des Italiens, 22 rue de Choiseul, VERRY FILS." Among other items offered they advertise, "Jouets, Articles de Fantaisie."

Luckily for Louise (who was called "Sissy" by her siblings) the children's formal education was supplemented with the experience of worldly travel. Steam-driven trains made travel almost effortless for enterprising Victorians, and foreign countries had become more accessible and easier to navigate. For an affluent family of eight wanting to expand their horizons, travel must have been enticing and irresistible.

A surviving photograph album reflects the family's adventuresome spirit and reveals tours of Scotland, Switzerland, Germany, Florence, Rome, the Italian Lakes, the Scilly Isles, Greece and Paris. Paris alone would have provided fabulous outings such as ballet and opera at the Palais Garnier, strolls in the Tuileries and Luxembourg gardens, art appreciation at the Louvre, and tours of the amazing Palace of Versailles.

In the 1870s Louise was a young girl who had been to Paris often on her way to the Riviera, and it is most probably here that she received her special doll, Victoria. In 1853 Napoleon III had commissioned Georges-Eugène (Baron) Haussmann to renovate and modernize the medieval city, and by 1870, Paris was a brand new capital. Tourists were treated to modern buildings and wide boulevards lined with fashionable shops. People marveled at the new department stores, and advertising for fashion and fashion magazines flourished in this era.

Among the shops were dozens of toy and doll establishments designed to tempt an indulgent parent who wanted her child to have only the best.