DRAMATIC READER

LAND OF MAKE-BELIEVE

GARDNER

EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

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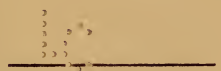
THE LAND OF MAKE-BELIEVE

A WORLD FOR LITTLE ACTORS

BY

MARY GARDNER



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PREFACE

It is not so long ago but that the youngest of our pedagogues can remember when many teachers looked askance at anything savoring of Dramatic Reproduction in the school-room.

The excuses offered were the weakest of arguments against it, reflecting more upon the teacher's limitations than the proposed new work.

"My children get so beside themselves. The room is so noisy. I have difficulty in quieting them. There is so much regular work (God save the mark!) to cover, I have no time for frills," and all the most liberal of critics admitted was that she had no deep-rooted prejudice against dramatic reproduction, but professed herself ignorant of "how to go about it."

At reproduction in narrative form, in which, too often, pupils are allowed to "but against their ands" in an endless number of sentences that have no proper connection—at reproduction with crayon, ink wash, scissors, or pencil, the most conservative teacher did not start back; but dramatic reproduction, the one form of reproduction wholly natural to the child was a bird of quite another and fearsome color.

"Dramatic Reproduction"—as it stands in the "grown-ups" vocabulary—"Let's play, Let's make believe, Let's pretend," as the child expresses it—has won its own way by proving that, if once applied, it will cure many of the worst ills to which the primary reading class is heir.

The mechanics may be and should be carefully taught, but that by no means insures a child's being able to read. He may have mastered Ward's excellent "Phonic Manual" from cover to cover. He may amaze by his agility in the word gymnastics and still be but little nearer attaining the power to read. In a word, to interpret for his own and others' pleasure, the thought he gains from the printed page.

What do we require in a good reader? First, absence of self-consciousness, else how can he enter into another's thought? Second, sympathetic expression as shown in the inflection, suited to bring out the shading of meaning.

What method more natural to bring about this desired ability than the dramatic? If he is the Pied Piper, playing rats and children to their doom, how can he be bashful, blundering Bennie? If he is the irate farmer, protesting against the thievery of the birds and crying for their blood, how can he be the boy whose voice never got much beyond his lips before?

Admonitions to "Open your mouth." "Read a little louder," "Speak more distinctly," "Raise your voice," "Stand erect," "Hold your book properly," and the like, never yet made a reader and never will.

Taking on the personality of another, as one must in dramatic reproduction, has solved many a seemingly hopeless problem of expression, inflection, voice, etc.

How would you go about it? The story part of this little volume is like all other readers and may be treated in the same way, as each individual teacher elects.

The dramatic part requires not only reading the part. The child must saturate himself with his particular part. In the case of simpler stories like *Æsop's Fables*, where

each little actor's part is shorter, the drama may be absorbed after a very few "saturations," as one learns a game after a few times playing it.

With the more difficult stories where each actor's part is longer, the drama may be read and re-read, each one taking his respective part, until after repeated readings and silent study, each one has become so familiar with his part, the story plays itself.

They tell us there is no Royal Road leading to the Multiplication Table, which statement our experience leads us to think is true, but there should be a Royal Road to anything that is so much a part of the child's life as reading, and this—"Dramatization" we believe is the name—writ large on the sign post, pointing away from the older and lower road of "Everlasting Grind" to the newer and upper road—the King's Highway—leading the child back into a Kingdom that has ever been his own, a kingdom from which he is too often kidnapped by "Cast-iron, Cut-and-dried Methods" at war with both his needs and nature.

THE LAND OF MAKE-BELIEVE

THE FAIRIES OF CALDON LOW

The Story

Once there lived a little girl called Mary. One summer afternoon her mother missed her, and though she called her many times, and looked everywhere for her little girl, Mary did not come home until the sun was high in the sky the next day.

When her mother asked her where she had been all this time, Mary said she had climbed to the top of Caldon Hill.

Her mother wondered what there was to be seen at the top of Caldon Hill, but Mary said she saw the sunshine — the golden sunshine — come down, and the merry winds play together.

Her mother asked her if she had not been lonely in all those hours of darkness that she had spent on Caldon Hill, but Mary said she heard so many things that she did not feel alone at all. She heard the drops of water as they were made, and heard the ears of corn filling.

All this sounded very strange to Mary's mother,

but she smiled at her little girl and said, "Since you *heard* so much you must have seen much as well. Perhaps you even saw the fairies."

"Oh, yes!" cried Mary. "Indeed I did! A hundred fairies danced last night to the merry music of nine harps!"

"What wonderful things my little girl has seen!" said her mother. "Now you must tell me all that happened to pay me for hunting and missing you all through the long night."

"Let me climb up into your lap, then, mother, and I'll tell you what the fairies said. I'll tell you all the wonderful things I heard."

So Mary's mother cuddled her little girl close in her arms and Mary began:

"The fairies were all such busy little people. Some played with the water-drops and rolled them down the hill to turn the great wheel for the Miller. They said there had been no water since the first of May, so the poor miller could grind no wheat for the farmers, but as soon as he saw the water in the morning what a busy man he would be. They laughed to themselves to think how the Miller would laugh till he cried when he saw the water rise and turn his wheel once more.

"But this was not all the fairies did by half. Some caught the little winds that were whistling over the hill, and put them to their mouths, like horns, blowing

on them so sharp and shrill. With every blow of the horn the winds went merrily down to where a poor old blind woman lived.

"She was very poor and raised corn to make her living, but this year the corn had not grown well at all. Mildew had come upon the stalks and kept them from growing stiff and strong. The fairies sent the winds to blow every speck of mildew from the corn.

"Though the poor old woman's life was sad and lonely she was merry enough the next morning, when she found every stalk of her corn perfectly clean of mildew. But even this was not all the work the fairies did, mother," said Mary cuddling closer.

"Still not all they did? What next?" her mother smiled.

"From somewhere the fairies came with their hands full of brown linseed and threw it all down from the hills into one field that belonged to a poor lame man, who made his living by spinning and weaving for people.

"The fairies laughed and shouted to each other, as they threw the seed in handfuls, which they said would be growing in the weaver's field by sunrise.

"The flax from which the poor old lame man spun his thread had not been growing well at all. It had been pretty dwindling and sickly for many weeks. The weaver's laugh would be long and loud when he saw his field full of flowers.

"Then the funniest thing happened — so funny that I laughed aloud and frightened every fairy off the top of the hill in a twinkling.

"A Brownie, with long whiskers on his chin, spoke up and said that he had spun all the tow he had into a piece of cloth, but he wanted some more tow to spin a little sheet for Mary and an apron for her mother. Do you wonder I laughed?" cried Mary.

"That funny, little fellow wanted to make a sheet for my little bed and an apron for you, but I am sorry that I laughed, for every fairy vanished. Not one was left. I was all alone on the top of Caldon Hill.

"It was no longer pleasant up there, for the fog rose so thick and cold and gray I could not see anything but the stones covered with moss that lay close about me, so I ran home as fast as I could."

"You don't suppose you could have dreamed all these wonderful things that the fairies did?" asked Mary's mother, when the little girl's story was finished.

"Oh, no, mother!" cried Mary. "I know it was not *all* a dream, for as I came down the hill I heard the jolly miller laugh, and saw his busy wheel go merrily round. Then, too, I peeped into the poor old blind woman's corn field, and saw the stalks of corn, that had been covered with mildew, standing stiff and green.

"I even walked down past the weaver's field before I came home, and, though I did not see the flax high in his garden, I saw him standing at his gate with such a happy look in his eyes. I knew the fairy seeds were growing well.

"Now I have told you everything I saw and heard, mother," said Mary, "so will you tuck me away in my little bed, for I am as tired and sleepy as I can be."

THE FAIRIES OF CALDON LOW

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Mary
Mary's Mother
The Miller
The Blind Woman
Fairies
The Lame Weaver
The Brownie

Mary I never went as far from home as this before. What will Mother think? But now I am so near the top of the hill, I'll go on and see what there is to be seen and hear what there is to be heard up there. I must remember all I see and hear to tell Mother, for I don't think she ever climbed as high as this. Here I am at last all out of breath. I wonder how our house will look from here. I have often looked up here from our garden and wondered how it would seem to be up so high. Now I know. Oh, I did not know before that the beautiful golden sunshine fell like rain on our little village. It is falling on our house and garden this minute, a lovely, shining shower. Hark! There's a sound I do not

know. It is like merry laughing and sweet singing, like some one whistling, like some one tooting a horn too. Let me listen a moment. Oh, now I know. It is the merry winds at play. Listen! There's another strange sound. Now what is that, I wonder? Like the babbling of laughing brooks.

Fairy You'll never be able to guess, for you are a little Earth Child, aren't you?

Mary Yes, and I do believe you are a fairy, though I never saw one before; but you look just as I'd expect a fairy to look. Are you?

Fairy Yes, and there are a hundred more like me, who will be here in a moment to dance upon the grass in this beautiful silvery moonlight. Before they come, I'll answer any questions you'd like to ask about what you have seen or heard from this very high place.

Mary I was trying to guess — just as you came up — what that could be which sounded like the babbling of laughing brooks.

Fairy Not far from here is the place where all the drops of water are made for the valley your home is in. That babbling noise you hear is the filling of the drops.

Mary You'll have to tell me more, good fairy. Since you have been talking, I have heard another strange sound. What can that be?

Fairy What does it sound like to you?

Mary As much like the shelling of peas or beans or corn as anything, though I see no garden near.

Fairy Not in sight, but not far from here is the place where the ears of corn are filled with big, fat yellow kernels. It is a very nice job — this filling the ears of corn — for each kernel must fit exactly into its little white satin bed.

Mary Oh, listen, listen! Do you hear that sweet, sweet music? It is so very soft it must be far away.

Fairy But coming nearer all the time, for it is the music of the nine harps to which the fairies are to dance.

Mary Oh, see those dear little fairies over there! They seem as busy as bees in June. With what are they playing? Can you see?

Fairy I know with what they are playing, but let us walk over near them, so you can see for yourself.

Mary They are playing with waterdrops! I can hardly believe my eyes! And rolling them down hill, as we would marbles. Why, I wonder?

Fairy Ask one of them. He'll be glad to tell you.

Mary I see you are very busy, good fairies, but I cannot see what you are doing. Will you tell me? Or don't you wish any of the Earth people to know?

First Fairy It is no secret, little girl. We are

trying to help the good Miller out of his troubles. There has been no rain since the first of May, so there has been no water to turn the great wheel.

Mary And when the great wheel can not turn the Miller can grind no wheat for the farmers. I have heard my Father talking about it.

Second Fairy So we are rolling these waterdrops down the hill to him.

Third Fairy When he sees the water rise in the morning, what a busy man he'll be.

Mary And what a happy man, too, I guess.

Fourth Fairy How he will laugh when he sees his great wheel turning once more!

Fifth Fairy Laugh? Indeed he will laugh till he cries. Now, fairies, that is water enough. We have done all we can for the Miller. Who else is there that needs us?

First Fairy I could hardly wait to finish our work for the Miller to tell you of that poor old blind woman who raises corn to make a living.

Second Fairy Is she ill?

First Fairy No; but this year her corn has not done at all well.

Third Fairy Do you know what keeps it from growing?

First Fairy Mildew has come upon the stalks and kept them from growing stiff and strong. It must be taken off so the corn can grow.

Fourth Fairy What is the best way to take it off without hurting the corn, I wonder?

Fifth Fairy The wind must do it for us. Not a strong enough wind to break the corn down, but a wind that will whip the mildew from every stalk and leave it perfectly clean. Then it will have a chance to grow stiff and strong, as it should.

First Fairy These little winds that come whistling over the hills are the very ones we want. Let us all catch some of them.

Mary Oh! Oh! How that frightened me! What was it? So sharp and shrill!

Second Fairy Some of the fairies are putting the winds to their lips and blowing them like horns. Then they set the winds free and they go merrily down to whip the mildew off from that poor old blind woman's sickly corn.

Second Fairy That poor old lady's life is so sad and lonely! We fairies are all so sorry for her and try to help her all we can.

Mary She'll be merry enough to-morrow morning, I guess, when she finds every stalk with the thick mildew, that kept it from growing, all gone.

Third Fairy Do any of you know of any one else who needs help that we can give?

Mary I know some one who has had a great deal of trouble all summer, but I fear it would take too long to help him.

Fourth Fairy Tell us about him, little girl. You know we fairies are able to do many things in a short time that Earth people have to take a long time to do. Whom do you know? Let us hear.

Mary Oh, I'll be so glad if you can do anything for him. He is a poor lame man who makes his living by spinning and weaving for people. He has one large field in which he can raise all the flax he needs for his thread, but for many weeks now the flax has been dwindling and sickly. It has not been doing well at all. Of course, if his flax does not grow he has nothing of which to make thread for his weaving. He has no other way to earn any money.

Second Fairy Oh, ho! Such an easy thing for us to do. Gather handfuls of the brown linseed, all you fairies, and throw it down into that field at the left as fast as you can. More! More! fairies — handfuls of it — until there is not room for another seed!

Mary But will it not take many weeks to grow up and ripen? I am afraid the frost will come before it does.

Third Fairy Ho! Ho! How little she knows of the way we fairies do things. That seed will be growing in the weaver's field before the sun is up to-morrow.

Mary You don't know how happy the poor lame weaver will be. His laugh will be louder than the

Miller's, for he is so poor. When his flax failed him he had nothing left.

Fourth Fairy He'll see his field full of strong, healthy plants in full blossom as soon as the sun is up to-morrow, if that will make him happy.

Brownie I want some more! I want some more! I have spun all I have, but it isn't enough. I want some more!

(*Mary laughs aloud.*)

Fifth Fairy Sh! Sh! If you laugh so loud you'll frighten every fairy off the hill in a twinkling. See them running now. The fairies are afraid of Earth people. We did not know you were one until you laughed.

Mary I am sorry, but who could help laughing at such a funny little man with such long whiskers on his chin? Of what does he want more, do you suppose?

Fifth Fairy What, is it you want, Brownie, and what have you been spinning?

Brownie I need some more tow. I have spun all I had into a piece of cloth, but I want some more.

Sixth Fairy What are you going to do with all that cloth, Brownie, if I give you more tow to spin?

Brownie I mean to make a sheet for Mary's little bed and a big white apron for her Mother.

(*Mary laughs louder than before. The last of the fairies and the Brownie vanish.*)

Mary Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I have frightened them all away now. I am sorry I laughed, but how could I help it at that funny little fellow? Fancy his making a sheet for me and an apron for Mother. Not a fairy is left. Everyone has gone and I am alone on the top of the hill. I do not find it pleasant up here any longer. I do not like to be alone with no one to talk to, and the fog is rising so thick and cold and gray that I can see nothing except the moss-covered stones that lie very near me. There seems nothing more for me to hear or see, so I'll run home to Mother. Poor Mother! She has been worrying, I fear, while I have been having so good a time.

(*Mary starts down hill.*)

Hark! Who is laughing so merrily and — Listen! There it is again.

(*Ha, ha! Ha, ha! is heard in the distance.*)

Mary And what can that roaring be I hear? Oh, now I know. The Miller is so happy over the raindrops the fairies rolled down the hill to turn his great mill wheel, and the roaring I hear is the busy mill wheel as it goes merrily round, grinding the farmer's wheat. Now I'll go round by the poor old

blind woman's cornfield, and see if the winds did their work for her as well as the waterdrops did theirs for the Miller. Yes, to be sure they have, for there stand the very same cornstalks that were covered with mildew only last night, now stiff and green as any corn need to be. How happy she must be! I'll go on down past the lame weaver's field. I hope he has fared as well as the Miller and the blind woman, for he needs help even more than they. Oh, the fence is too high for me to see into his field! Now I'll not know whether his flax is growing or not. But — look! Who is that, leaning on the gate? The weaver himself, I do believe. It is the weaver himself. Though I do not know him well enough to ask about his flax, I'll walk past and I can tell by the way he looks whether the seeds the fairies planted are doing well or no. I never before saw so happy a look in his eyes. He'd not look like that if his seeds were not doing well. Here I am at home once more. It seems as if I had been away a long time. There is Mother at the gate now watching for me. She has been worrying too, I fear.

Mother Mary, child, where have you been since yesterday afternoon? Don't you know Father and Mother were worried almost to death about you? We feared some harm had befallen our little girl, when it grew dark, and still you did not come. As soon as I missed you, I called you over and over

again. Then when Father came home we looked every place we could think of for you. We were hunting you nearly all night and did not sleep a wink. Don't ever stay away so long again, Mary. Now tell Mother where you have been all this time.

Mary I climbed to the top of Caldon Hill, Mother, and I am sorry I made you and Father worry so much about me. I was having so good a time, I forgot to come home — forgot it was growing late and forgot you would be wondering why I did not come. I'm so sorry, Mother. Will you forgive me? Indeed I did not mean to hurt you and Father so.

Mother That is Mother's good little girl — my own Mary. I know you will never do it again. But tell Mother what there was to be seen at the top of the hill that made you forget to come home to us, even when it grew dark. I should think Mother's little girl would have been lonely all those long hours, when it was dark. Were you not afraid, all alone, on the top of that high hill?

Mary Oh, Mother! You hear so many things up there that you do not hear down here. Listening to all those strange sounds kept me from being lonely. I did not feel as if I were alone a moment.

Mother Has Mother never heard any of these sounds? May Mother hear about them?

Mary Did you ever hear the little drops of water being made, Mother?

(*Mother smiles and shakes her head.*)

Mary I did, and I heard them filling the ears of corn with kernels.

Mother What a strange sound that must have been! Since you heard much you must have seen much as well. Perhaps my little girl even saw the fairies.

Mary Oh, yes! Indeed I did, a hundred fairies.

Mother As many as that?

Mary A hundred fairies danced last night on the green grass in the moonlight to the sweetest music I ever heard — played on nine harps.

Mother What wonderful things my little girl has seen! Now, begin at the beginning and tell Mother everything that happened to pay me for hunting and missing you all through the long night.

Mary Then let me climb into your lap, Mother. Cuddle your Mary close in your arms.

Mother Mother loves to hold her little girl so. Now we are ready for your story.

Mary Oh, Mother, I am so tired and sleepy I can't keep my eyes open. I want to tell you everything I saw and heard, but I can't hold my head up.

Mother Of course you can't, Mother's tired little girl. You shall save it all to tell when Father

comes home to-night. He will want to hear about all these wonderful things you saw, too. Mother will tuck you away in your little white bed and there you may sleep as long as you wish.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

The Story

The spring of the year had come in the little town of Killingworth. The birds were building their nests, singing as they worked, songs that God had taught them.

The buds on the branches were swelling and the little streams were running down the hillside, laughing and singing on their way.

The robin and blue-bird were down in the orchards, singing their merriest tunes.

The sparrows chirped the only song they knew.

The hungry crows were off by themselves — a great crowd of them — cawing every minute for something to eat.

The farmers were out in the fields ploughing and getting the earth ready to plant their crops. They did not welcome the birds as we do, for they thought them the most dreadful of thieves.

Robins and blue-birds like cherries and strawberries far too well.

The crows helped themselves to the corn as soon as it was planted.

The farmers were afraid their crops would be

spoiled by the birds, so they called a meeting of all the men to decide what was best to do.

Most of the farmers thought the only thing to do was to offer to pay so much for every dead bird brought them. They had tried to frighten the birds away with scare-crows, but the saucy things perched on his shoulders and even his tattered coat, flapping in the wind, did not alarm them.

All the town were on their way to this meeting where they should decide what was best to be done with the birds.

First came the Judge, who lived in the big white house with the red roof and the great pillars. The Judge walked slowly down the street to the new Town Hall, where the meeting was to be held.

Next came the minister, who cut off the poor daisies' heads with his swinging cane, as he came down the lane.

He was a good man, I have no doubt, but he was not gentle-hearted.

He thought it fine sport to kill the beautiful deer that bounded through the woods. There was not enough love in his heart for either man or beast.

Then, from the school-house on the hill came the teacher, watching the soft, white clouds as he walked on, thinking of many things.

After the teacher came the Deacon, dressed, as he always was, in a suit of black, with the whitest of

neckties. The Deacon went slowly, for he was a very large, heavy man.

The people of the village thought there never was anyone so wise as the Deacon, and that he might never be forgotten they had named a street in town after him.

All these men of whom I have told you, with the farmers from the country round, came together in the new Town Hall.

The Judge sat upon the platform and led the meeting. Many people spoke, telling what they thought should be done to the birds.

It seemed as if the birds did not have a friend in all that crowd.

They all talked as if they were bitter enemies of the poor little birds.

Man after man got up and told of the dreadful things the birds did.

When they had all said their say the teacher stood upon his feet to tell what he thought. He trembled and was half afraid to talk before all these people, but he knew what he had to say was the right thing to say, so he spoke out in a clear strong voice.

He made up his mind that they should neither laugh nor frown him down.

"If you kill the sweet singers of the woods," he began, "you will be like a wicked king who once drove all of the poets from his kingdom. When

people are troubled and sad the birds make sweet music for us, as David, the shepherd boy, once did for Saul, a great king.

"Have you the heart," he asked them, "to kill the thrush who sings from the top of the tallest pine-tree, as soon as it is light?

"Or the oriole who swings his nest in the elm-tree?

"Or the blue-jay who chatters noisily as he eats?

"Or the dainty little blue-bird who balances on the top-most branch and fills the neighborhood with sweetest music?

"Or the linnet?

"Or the meadow-lark?

"Or any that live in nests and have been taught to sing by God Himself?

"Why are you killing them?" he cried.

"To save a handful of wheat or rye or barley, that they might scratch up with their busy feet, as they hunt worms after a rain?"

"To save a few cherries that are not half so sweet as the songs the birds sing, while they feast on them?

"Do you never think," asked the teacher, "what wonderful little creatures birds are?

"Do you never think who made them and who taught them the songs they sing, sweeter than any music we can make?

"Do you never think of their little homes in the tree-tops as half-way houses on the road to Heaven?

"Every morning when the sun peeps through the leaf curtains of the woods, the birds are so happy because another day has followed the dark night, and they can sing again.

"Would you like to think of your woods and orchards without birds? With none but empty nests in the trees?

"Will the bleating of the sheep and the mooing of the cows make up for the songs you used to hear, when the birds followed the teams home to your doors?

"Would you rather hear the insects buzzing in the hay? Is the grasshopper's squeaky voice pleasanter in your ears than the meadow-lark's sweetest songs?

"You call the birds thieves and say they steal from you all your crops. I tell you the birds are the best policemen you could have on your farms. If they did not kill and eat and drive away grubs and harmful insects all your crops would be destroyed.

"Even the crow, that you think the blackest thief of all, crushes the beetle, the slug and the snail that would eat every green thing in your garden.

"How can I teach your children to be gentle, to help the weak, to love life which God gives, when they know you think it right to do so cruel a thing as this?"

When the teacher finished speaking, the farmers laughed and nodded, whispering among themselves.

The teacher's pleading for the birds did no good. They decided to kill all the birds and even pay the price for every dead crow brought to the Town Hall. Then came sad and dreadful days when, in the fields and orchards the poor little feathered things fell dead with the blood-stains on their pretty breasts. Some were hurt cruelly, but not killed.

These crept away out of sight to suffer and at last to die. Many young birds in the nests whose father and mother were killed, starved to death, for there was no one to bring them food.

When the hot days of summer came all the birds were dead.

Down in the orchards hundreds of caterpillars ate the leaves on the trees. In the fields and gardens insects crawled about, eating their fill, until not a green thing was anywhere to be seen.

Now the birds were gone, there was no one to stop all these bugs and insects that do so much harm to trees and gardens.

The trees along the streets were so eaten up that the worms often dropped down upon some woman's bonnet or gown, who shook them off with a scream.

The farmers soon saw that killing the birds had been a very great mistake. They changed the law, but that did little good, for it could not bring the dead birds back to life.

They could do nothing that fall, but be sorry that

they had ever thought so cruel a thing was right. The next spring it was ordered that birds should be brought from all the country round in little wicker cages.

Then a great wagon was trimmed with evergreen branches, on which were hung these wicker cages full of singing birds.

Down the street came the wagon with its strange load, and then, by order of the Mayor the door of every cage was opened, setting free the little prisoners, who flew at once to the woods or fields or orchard. Each chose the place he loved the best.

As the birds went, they sang so loudly it seemed as if their little throats would burst.

Those who lived that day in Killingworth said that sweeter music had never been heard.

From that day to this, the sunny farms and orchards of Killingworth have been full of singing birds.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Schoolmaster
Almira
Farmers
Group of Women
Mayor
Judge
Minister
Deacon

Scene I

(*Schoolmaster and Almira, walking together.*)

Schoolmaster The spring of the year has come again to our little town of Killingworth.

Almira And isn't it a beautiful time of year, when we can watch the birds, building their nests, singing as they work?

Schoolmaster Why are the birds' songs so much sweeter than any we are able to learn, I wonder?

Almira Because God taught them the songs they sing, I think. See how the buds on the trees are swelling. They grow larger almost while you watch them.

Schoolmaster And listen! How the brooks laugh and sing as they run down the hill. Let us walk towards the orchard. We'll find the robins and bluebirds down there, singing their merriest tunes.

Almira Even the poor little sparrows are trying their best to sing in this great bird chorus. Hear them! Chirping the only song they know.

Schoolmaster I believe crows must be hungry all the time. See! that great crowd of them off by themselves, cawing every moment for something to eat.

Almira There are some of the farmers in the fields. Let us go over and have a chat with them.

Schoolmaster We must not keep them talking long, for their busy time has begun. This is the time to plough and get the earth ready to plant their crops.

Almira Good afternoon, Farmer Hill.

(*Farmer Hill takes off his hat.*)

Farmer Good Day to you, Miss Almira. It does my old ears good to hear your voice once more. (*Bows to Schoolmaster.*)

Almira It is good of you to say that, Farmer Hill, but there are sweeter voices than mine to be heard to-day. We have been taking a long walk, just to listen to the birds and see all the tender green things.

Farmer The tender green things look good to farmers' eyes, too, but the song of birds is not as sweet

in our ears as in yours. We do not welcome the birds as you do.

Schoolmaster But what would a spring be without the birds?

Farmer We'd have more cherries and strawberries if we had no robins and bluebirds, for the birds like them far too well, and take all they can eat, without so much as saying, "By your leave!" We farmers think the birds are the most dreadful thieves we have to look out for. The crows are even worse than the robins and bluebirds — for they help themselves to the corn as soon as it is planted. We farmers had so much stolen last year that we were afraid all our crops would be spoiled. So we have called a meeting at the Town Hall for to-night. All the farmers and townspeople are coming. I suppose you will be there?

(*Schoolmaster nods assent.*)

We shall decide then what is best to do.

Almira What do you think can be done?

Farmer Most of the farmers think there is only one thing to do.

Schoolmaster And that?

Farmer Offer to pay so much, a few cents, perhaps, for every dead bird brought to the Town Hall.

Almira Oh! Horrible! Horrible! What a cruel thing even to think of doing.

Schoolmaster It will not be a good thing for our children — pay them for doing what they have been taught is very wrong to do.

Farmer It seems as if we had tried every other way we could think of. We have put scare-crows up in the fields to frighten the birds, the most dreadful looking things, too — terrible enough to scare people.

Almira And weren't the birds afraid of them?

Farmer Afraid of them? The saucy things perched on the scare-crows' shoulder. Even his tattered coat, flapping in the wind, did not frighten them.

Schoolmaster We must not stay longer, for we are keeping you from your work. Good afternoon.

Almira Good afternoon, Farmer Hill.

Farmer Good-by, and come again when you are out for a walk. I'll see you at the meeting to-night, I hope. We need all the men we can get, to help us decide how to protect our crops against the thieving birds.

Schoolmaster I'll come to your meeting, but I'll tell you before hand that I am on the birds' side.

Farmer Very well, but I am afraid you'll stand alone.

(*All three cry "Good-by!" again.*)

(*Almira and Schoolmaster walk off. Farmer Hill goes home.*)

Scene II

Time: *Evening of same day.*
Place: *Street corner near Town Hall.*

(*Group of women standing on street corner watching men walking on other side, on their way to the Town Hall.*)

First Woman Where can all these men be going to-night?

Second Woman Don't you remember? A meeting was called in the Town Hall to decide how to keep the birds from stealing everything the farmers can raise.

Third Woman Oh, to be sure! It looks as if all the men in town were going to be there.

Fourth Woman And all the farmers from all the country round, from the number of horses tied in front of the Town Hall.

Fifth Woman How slowly the Judge walks down the street.

Sixth Woman Where does the Judge live?

First Woman In that big white house, with the red roof and the great pillars.

Second Woman Here comes the Minister down the lane.

Third Woman He is cutting off all the poor daisies' heads with his swinging cane.

Fourth Woman I suppose he is a very good man, but he is not at all gentle-hearted, as it seems a minister ought to be.

Fifth Woman If he were as gentle-hearted as some, he'd not think it such fine sport, every Fall, to kill the beautiful deer that bound through our woods.

First Woman I don't think he has love enough in his heart for either man or beast.

Second Woman The Schoolmaster is going, too. He has just come out of the school-house and started down the hill.

Third Woman There's a man who would not cut off even the heads of the daisies. He loves them too well.

Fourth Woman I believe he is watching the clouds now, as he walks. How soft and white they are, to be sure.

Fifth Woman The Deacon will be late if he does not hurry.

Sixth Woman Then he'll have to be late, for he is too large and heavy to walk any faster than he always does.

First Woman Did you ever see the Deacon dressed in anything but a suit of black, with the whitest of neckties?

Second Woman. Never — since the day the street by the church was named for him. Before that he did not dress in a black suit, except Sundays.

Third Woman Why was a street named for him? Is he so very rich? Or so very good?

Fourth Woman The people of the village think there never was any one so wise as the Deacon. They do not wish the children who are growing up to forget him, so they called a street by his name.

Fifth Woman. The men have all gone into the meeting now. There isn't another one in sight.

Sixth Woman Yes, we have seen all there is to see. We might as well go home.

(*All walk off, separating as each comes to her own house.*)

Scene III

Time: *Directly following the close of last scene.*
Place: *Inside of Town Hall.*

(*Judge on platform leads meeting.*)

Judge This meeting will please come to order, gentlemen. Fellow citizens, we have met here to-night to hear reports as to the harm the birds do our crops every year, and to decide upon some way to protect ourselves from these thieves, who steal from us every day — from May till September. The meeting is now open to any one who wishes to speak.

First Farmer Mr. Chairman, my corn is no sooner in the ground than whole flocks of hungry crows swoop down and eat their fill. They leave very little seed to come up. The most hideous scarecrows I can make do not keep them away for more than a few hours. Crows are sharp enough to find out very soon that the scarecrows are not alive, and can do them no harm. Then the saucy things perch on the scarecrow's shoulders, cawing for something more to eat. Of corn alone I lose more than half my crop because of these noisy thieves.

Second Farmer The blackbirds are quite as bad as the crows. I, too, have tried scarecrows, and one day found the birds had been bold enough to build their nest in the breast of his tattered coat.

Third Farmer The crows and blackbirds are no worse than the robins, bluebirds and dozens of other birds. Nor is corn the only thing they steal. They scratch up my wheat and rye and barley almost as fast as I can sow it.

Fourth Farmer You remember the cherries from my trees are much talked of and called for in the city market.

Someone Indeed we do remember your cherries!

Another There are none finer to be had on any tree in any orchard.

Fourth Farmer So the robins have found, and so I was not able to send more than a third of what

I usually ship to the city. The robins even built their nests in the tree that had the finest and sweetest cherries, so they could feast at their own doorway. What they did not eat they spoiled for any one else by taking a bite and leaving it to decay.

Fifth Farmer I do not raise cherries for market, but you may have heard of my strawberries.

Someone. Indeed we have, and eaten them, too.

One The largest and sweetest I ever tasted.

One Delicious!

Fifth Farmer The robins like my strawberries quite as well as Farmer Brown's cherries, and help themselves quite as freely. Though they can't nest in my strawberry vines, they seem to spend most of their time there feasting on my berries from morning till night. Between what they eat and what they spoil I can not fill more than half my orders from the city.

Judge You have heard several reports of the harm the birds do our crops. There is no question but what they are the worst kind of thieves, stealing openly and before our very eyes, crops that we'd quickly arrest and jail men and boys for taking. I do not know why we should suffer the birds to steal on and go unpunished. I do not know why we should lose a large part of our crops each year and do nothing to stop it. The question for us to decide is — What shall we do?

Sixth Farmer There is but one way to stop them and that is, to kill them.

Seventh Farmer Offer a bounty for birds' heads, as we do for wolves' pelts.

Eighth Farmer Two cents for every dead bird brought to the Town Hall would soon help our crops.

Ninth Farmer Put that in the paper, and I promise you there'll be more to take to market this summer.

Tenth Farmer And more money in our pockets, too, for the birds pay nothing for all they take.

Schoolmaster I am not so sure of that. I am half afraid to speak before all you people, but the poor birds do not seem to have a friend in all this Hall but me. You have all talked as if you were the bitter enemies of the poor little things. You have told of all the dreadful things the birds do, but you have not told one good thing they do. Are there not some good things to be said of them? Surely the birds are not all bad. You have all had your say. Now, listen to me, for I know the thing I have to say is the right thing to be said. Laugh at me, frown on me, if you will, but listen to me, you shall.

Judge Go on, Mr. Schoolmaster. I am sure we are always glad to hear from one who is so good a friend to our children.

Schoolmaster If you carry out your wicked plan, and kill these sweet singers of the woods, you will

be like an evil king who once drove all the poets from his kingdom. The birds are our poets and make sweetest music for us when we are troubled and sad. So David, the shepherd boy, once did for Saul, a great king. As soon as it is light the thrushes sing from the top of the tallest pine tree. Have you the heart to kill the little singers? Think of all you mean to kill. The oriole, who swings his nest in the elm tree; the blue-jay, who chatters noisily as he eats; the bluebird, who balances on the topmost bough and fills the neighborhood with sweetest music; the linnet, the meadow-lark; all these and many more, who have been taught to sing by God himself, you would kill.

And why are you killing them? To save a handful of wheat or rye or barley, that they scratch up with their busy feet as they hunt for worms. The few cherries you would save are not half as sweet as the songs the robins sing while they feast on them. Think, I beg of you, what wonderful creatures birds are! Remember, I pray you, who made them, who taught them the songs they sing, songs so much sweeter than any we can sing. Think of their little homes in the tree-tops like half-way houses on the road to Heaven. If only we could be as happy as the birds are every morning when the sun peeps through the leafy curtains of the woods. Another day has followed the dark night and they can sing again.

Would you like to think of your woods and orchards without birds? Would you like to see none but empty nests in the tree-tops? Will the bleating of sheep and the mooing of cows make up for the songs you used to hear? Would you rather hear the insects buzzing in the hay? Is the grasshopper's squeaky voice pleasanter in your ears than the meadow-lark's sweet roundelay? You have called all the birds thieves and say they steal your crops. I tell you there are no better policemen to be had on the farm than these same birds. They kill and eat and drive away grubs and harmful insects that would destroy all your crops. The beetle, the slug and the snail would not leave a green thing in your garden, did not the crow, whom you call the blackest of thieves, crush them to death.

What do you expect me to teach your children? To be gentle? To help the weak? To love life because God gives it? How can I, when they know you think it right to do so cruel a thing as this? I can say no more. I thank you for listening.

(*Farmers laugh and whisper among themselves, nudging each other. Then*)

One Sounds well.

Second Farmer The schoolmaster raises no crops.

Third Farmer He does not earn his living that way. If he did, he'd talk very differently.

Fourth Farmer Then he'd think as we do, that we must protect our crops.

Fifth Farmer And that there is only one way to do it.

Judge The question of killing the birds to protect our crops has been fully discussed. Those in favor of killing the birds, vote by rising.

(*All but schoolmaster stand.*)

Judge It is carried. The birds shall be killed.

Sixth Farmer On which birds shall we set a price?

Judge The crows, anyway, we'll pay a bounty for.

Seventh Farmer And kill all the others we catch at their old tricks of thieving.

Judge If there is no other business before the meeting we are dismissed.

(*All walk out.*)

Scene IV

Time: *Late in same summer.*

(*Almira and Schoolmaster out walking.*)

Schoolmaster This is the same walk we took that beautiful Spring day, when they decided to do that cruel thing, kill the birds.

Almira Sad and dreadful days have passed since then.

Schoolmaster In the fields and orchards where they sang so gaily that day, they lie dead now. See! here is one now under the cherry tree with the blood stains still fresh on his pretty breast.

Almira At least he suffers no more. Some, I know, were hurt cruelly, but not killed. What do you suppose became of such?

Schoolmaster Poor little things! They crept away somewhere out of sight, to suffer and at last to die.

Almira I have tried to feed as many young birds left orphans in their nest as I could, but I found a nest yesterday with four little ones in it, starved to death. Father and mother had been numbered with the dead and there was none to bring them food.

Schoolmaster How the poor little things must have wondered and watched and waited when the father and mother bird came no more.

Almira I have not seen a live bird for days. They must all be dead. These hot days of summer seem more unendurable without their sweet music.

Schoolmaster Have you noticed the trees in the orchards? The hundreds of caterpillars have eaten the leaves until the branches are almost as bare as in winter.

Almira There is not a green thing to be seen in the gardens, for the insects have crawled about over everything, eating their fill.

Schoolmaster Now the birds are gone. There is no one to stop these bugs and insects that do so much harm to trees and gardens. The people will see now, perhaps, how much good the birds did in return for the little they took.

(*A scream is heard.*)

Almira Hark! What was that?

Schoolmaster A woman's scream! That woman across the street.

Almira Did something hurt her?

Schoolmaster Oh, now I see what frightened her! She just shook off a worm from her bonnet. The trees are so eaten up by worms they must often drop down on the passers-by and it happened to fall on her.

(*They meet Farmer Hill.*)

Almira Good afternoon, Farmer Hill. We were just looking at your orchards and garden and thinking they did not look as thrifty, now the birds are dead, as they did when the birds were alive.

Schoolmaster It was a mistake, wasn't it, killing the birds? For now bugs and insects have their way and they destroy much more than the birds.

Farmer Hill Yes, we farmers all see now that killing the birds was one of the greatest and saddest mistakes we ever made. We really had not known how many bugs and insects the birds destroyed.

Bugs and insects that destroy every green thing that grows. We have changed the law and we do not pay for dead birds any more and have also forbidden the shooting of any birds.

Schoolmaster Changing the law does very little good after all, for it will never bring the dead birds back to life.

Farmer Hill We can do nothing this fall.

Almira But be sorry you thought so cruel a thing was right.

Farmer Hill Next Spring we mean to do something.

Schoolmaster What is your plan?

Farmer Hill Ah! That is to be a surprise to all Killingworth next May Day. It will be a day and a night long to be remembered, I hope.

Almira It's a long while to wait, Farmer Hill.

Schoolmaster But we'll try to be patient. We must be turning towards home now, for the sun is low in the sky.

Farmer Hill Good-by, then, to you both. When you come this way again I hope my garden and orchards will be better worth looking at.

(*Schoolmaster and Almira go one way, Farmer Hill another.*)

Scene V

Time: *The next spring.*
Place: *Streets of Killingworth.*

(*Townspeople in streets, talking excitedly.*)

First Woman Which way shall we look for them?

Second Woman From which direction are they coming?

First Man They are coming from the next town to the South, so they will have to come along this road.

Third Woman How did they ever get so many birds together?

Second Man A month ago the Mayor of Killingworth ordered that birds should be brought from all the country round. He had all the birds brought to the next town South of us, so it might be a secret from the Killingworth people until today, when he means to give us this beautiful surprise.

Fourth Woman Oh, look! There they are now!

Fifth Woman Yes, here they come.

Sixth Woman What a great wagon it is and all trimmed with evergreen branches.

Seventh Woman See all the little wicker cages! Dozens and dozens of them hung on the branches.

Eighth Woman And every cage full of singing birds. How good it seems to hear them once more!

Third Man The wagon will go down this street until it reaches the Town Hall.

Ninth Woman It's almost there now with its strange load.

Tenth Woman The Mayor is speaking from the steps of the Town Hall. I wish we could hear what he is saying.

Fourth Man Sh! Hark! Listen! We can hear.

Mayor Open the door of every cage. Set all the little prisoners free.

Eleventh Woman Oh, see them go! How glad they are to spread their wings again!

Twelfth Woman Some are flying at once to the wood.

Thirteenth Woman And some to the fields and orchards. I suppose each one will choose the place he loves the best.

Fourteenth Woman Hark! Hear them sing! It seems as if their little throats must burst.

Fifteenth Woman In all my life I have never heard sweeter music than today.

Sixteenth Woman Hush! The Mayor is speaking again.

Mayor None of us, I hope, will soon forget this day, and as long as there is a Killingworth may our sunny farms and orchards ever be full of singing birds!

F. p. 51 THE PIED PIPER

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

The Story

This story is about a little town in Germany, far across the sea. All that I am going to tell you happened long years ago. Wherever you went in that little town you climbed hills.

All the hills led up—up—up to a big mountain. No roof was steeper than the side of this mountain. At the foot of the mountain a broad river ran slowly on its way to the sea.

A long time ago the people of this little town were greatly troubled with rats.

The town was full of great, big, dreadful rats. There were more rats than people in the town.

These rats were the boldest things you ever saw. They were afraid of nothing and even fought the dogs the people set upon them. Every cat who tried to catch them they easily killed. Even the poor little babies, sleeping in their cradles, were bitten by these terrible rats. They lived on the best of fare. Whole cheeses disappeared from the vats where they were made.

Cooks screamed for help when the rats jumped up and licked the soup from the ladles, as they stirred

it in the kettles. They were so strong that several of them, working together, split open kegs that held salt fish they liked.

Ladies gave up their parties, because the squealing of the rats was louder than the women's voices, as they tried to visit. The rats were growing in wonder and boldness every day. If something was not done very soon, the people could not stay in the town.

They would be driven out of their homes by the rats. So all the people went together to the Town Hall to see the Mayor. They told him that they didn't think he, nor those who helped him, knew very much, or they would think of some way to make short work of the rats.

The people thought they paid the Mayor and his men a good salary for taking care of the town.

They wanted to know if this was the best they could do. If they couldn't think of some plan to get rid of the rats very soon, the Mayor nor none of his men should be paid any more money. More than that they would drive the Mayor and his men out of town. When the people had said this they all marched out of the Town Hall and left the poor Mayor and his men to think what could be done.

They didn't know what to do any more than the people did, but they must find a way or be sent packing. So the Mayor sat with his head in his hands, thinking harder than he ever had before in

his life. Just then a gentle tap at the door made the Mayor's heart go pitty-pat, because he thought every sound he heard meant more rats. But this noise was only some one scraping his shoes on the mat outside, so the Mayor called to him to come in.

The strangest visitor you ever saw opened the door. The Mayor had never seen any one so tall and thin. His eyes were blue as the sky and bright as steel, but so small they looked like pin-points.

The smiles came and went about his lips like flashes of sunlight. The gentlest breeze lifted the light hair that lay loosely about his shoulders.

But the coat this strange fellow wore made the Mayor open his eyes the widest of all. The long queer cut coat that covered him from his heels to his head was half red and half yellow. Round his neck was a scarf that matched this odd coat. At the end of the scarf hung something like a flute.

They noticed the man's fingers were straying up and down the flute all the time as though he would like to be playing on it.

The stranger spoke first, for the Mayor was so astonished he could no nothing but stare at his queer visitor. He said he had heard that the town was overrun with rats. The Mayor nodded sadly that it was.

The man with the flute offered to rid the town of every rat, as he had other towns of ants and bats and other things that made trouble.

The Mayor jumped to his feet and asked a dozen questions at once. Who he was? Where he came from? How he was going to do it? And many others, for the Mayor was much excited.

The stranger said that men called him the Pied Piper, and that he was able to make all things that creep or swim or fly or run follow wherever he chose to lead. He asked the Mayor if he would give him one hundred dollars for clearing the town of rats.

The Mayor was willing to promise anything — even five thousand dollars — although he did not believe the man could make the rats follow him. Five thousand dollars, even, would be cheap for ridding the town of such a pest, and so the bargain was closed.

The Piper stepped into the street, smiling a little to himself. He put the flute to his lips and played a strange shrill tune, like nothing any one had heard before. As he played, he walked from street to street, and out of every house and store he passed, the rats came tumbling.

Big rats and little rats, fat rats and thin ones. Rats that were brown and rats that were black. Rats so old they were gray. Rats that hobbled and rats that frisked gaily along.

The whole Rat family — fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives — followed that strange Piper wherever he went.

He led them up one street and down another, until they came to the bank of the river. Then at the water's very edge the Piper stepped quickly aside and all those rats tumbled head over heels down the bank into the river.

All but one of those hundreds and hundreds of rats were drowned. Just one old rat was saved, because he was so big and fat he could not sink, so he swam across to the other side of the river and ran as if for his life. He never stopped, until he was miles and miles away from Hamelin Town.

Many years after the fat old rat came back and told other rats why he and all the Rat family followed the Piper wherever he led them.

He said that the first sound of the flute made all the rats think they heard the scraping of fish and the pressing of juicy apples for cider.

As the Piper played on they thought they heard pickle jars uncovered and fruit cans opened. And, as the strange tune went on, they were sure they heard corks drawn from oil casks and butter tubs broken open.

The flute seemed a voice, whispering in their ears, "Be glad, O, Rats! There will always be plenty to eat after this. You will never be hungry again. So come, munch your big dinner, and crunch your fine supper and fill yourself full at your luncheon."

Just as the food seemed near enough to taste, the

cold waters of the river rolled over the old rat, and only because he was too fat to sink, did he ever live to tell what the flute said to him.

As soon as all the rats were drowned, the bands played their liveliest tunes and the people rang the bells so hard they rocked the steeples. Cannons were fired and great bonfires were built to celebrate the freeing of the town from rats.

Suddenly the Piper came to the Mayor, as he stood in the crowded market place, and asked for his hundred dollars. The Mayor and his men looked blue, for that seemed a good deal to pay, now the rats were gone.

The Mayor knew the dead rats could not come to life, so had no notion of keeping his promise to the Piper. The Mayor blustered that the talk about a hundred dollars was all a joke.

He offered the Piper something to eat and drink — even a little money — but a hundred dollars for playing a little tune like that was indeed a huge joke. The Piper's face grew very stern. He said he did not enjoy that kind of joking. He was in a hurry as he had to be in another city by night, so once more he asked the Mayor for his hundred dollars that he might start on his way. But the Mayor shook his head angrily and said not one dollar would he give the Piper for his music.

The strange fellow said that this was the last chance

the Mayor should have to keep his promise, and, if he did not, the Piper would play another tune, the one he always played when people did not treat him fairly.

This threw the Mayor into a great rage, and he dared the Piper to do his worst, to play till his old flute burst, for all he cared. Did he think to frighten the Mayor of Hamelin Town?

Again the Piper put his flute to his lips and began to play another tune, not at all like the tune he played to call the rats. It was soft as the gentlest breeze in summer. It was sweet as the song of birds. It was so strange a tune no words could tell what it was like.

The Piper had hardly begun to play, when merry crowds of children ran to where he stood and followed after him as he started down the street. The small feet of the little ones pattered along in time with the music.

The wooden shoes some wore made a great clattering, as they hurried on after the others. Some little hands were clapping for joy. Many busy tongues were chattering like the squirrels in the tree-tops.

The children gathered about the Piper like hens in the farmyard about one who scatters the grain.

Some had cheeks as red as roses and curls as yellow as gold. Some had eyes as blue as violets and as bright as diamonds. Some had teeth like snow-white pearls.

Every child in town was in the train that skipped and tripped and ran merrily after this wonderful music. How they shouted and laughed as they followed the Piper wherever he led them.

The Mayor and his men stood as if turned to stone. The same music that set the children's feet dancing, chained the feet of the grown-up ones to the ground.

Not one step could the Mayor, or the fathers and mothers move to bring their children back.

As they watched, the Piper turned towards the river, and they held their breath for fear their children were to follow the rats into the deep waters; but, no — the Piper turned again towards the mountain.

Now their joy was great, because they knew neither Piper nor children could ever climb over the top of that high hill, so they hoped very soon to see the little ones stop.

But when the Piper and his train reached the mountain-side, a wonderful door swung wide open and let him in — the children close at his heels. When the last little one had gone in, the wonderful door swung shut, and neither Piper nor children were ever seen again.

Not a child was left in the town — all had followed the Piper save one who was lame. He was not able to keep up with the others, so did not reach the mountain, until the wonderful door had closed.

As long as this little fellow lived, he was always very sad. The town seemed so dull to him, with all his playmates gone. If you asked him why he tried to follow the Piper that day he would tell you what beautiful things the music of the flute promised to all who would come.

It sang of a land not far away where the ripest and juiciest of fruits grew. Flowers of wonderful colors blossomed in the garden. The sparrows there were bright as peacocks here, and the dogs in that land ran more swiftly than our fleetest deer.

None need fear the honey bees, for they had no stings. The horses had wings as strong and swift as the eagles.

The music was sweetest of all to the little lame boy, when it whispered that he would be able to run and play like other boys. But his lame foot carried him too slowly.

The music stopped as the wonderful door in the mountain side closed, before he could reach there, and he was left alone, the only child in Hamelin Town.

The Piper's flute was never heard again up and down the streets. The wonderful door in the mountain has never opened from that day to this.

The children never came back to their homes.

All because of the Mayor's broken promise to the Piper.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Traveller
Man He Meets
Townspeople
Pied Piper
Mayor and His Men
Children
Lame Boy
Rats

Scene I

Traveller How many miles I am from home. I have travelled for many weeks and now I find myself in this little town of Germany. Hamelin, it is called. (*Looks about.*) It seems to be a pretty place and I'd like to see more of it — but wherever one goes — one must climb a hill. All the streets seem to lead up to that big mountain. I never saw any roof steeper than the side of that mountain. How slowly the river runs at the foot of the mountain. It seems in no hurry to reach the sea. Here comes some one who lives in the town. I'll tell him what a pretty place I think it is and perhaps he will stop

and talk to me for a moment. (*The two meet.*) What a pretty spot you have for your home.

Man It is a pretty town — to be sure — and all the people who live here love it dearly, but we are afraid that we may have to leave it.

Traveller And why should you have to leave it? Is there not enough work to be had here?

Man Plenty. More than we can do.

Traveller Then what can it be that would drive you from so pleasant a home?

Man Rats! We are in great trouble because of the rats — and do not know what to do.

Traveller Rats? So many as to drive you from the town?

Man If we can't find some way to kill or drive them away, for the town is full of great, big, dreadful rats. There are more of them than there are people in this town of ours.

Traveller Where are all your cats and dogs? What are they doing to let the rats run wild?

Man These rats are the boldest things I ever saw. They even fight the dogs we set upon them, and they have killed every cat that tried to catch them.

Traveller Dreadful! And do they come into your houses?

Man Indeed they do. Even the poor little babies — sleeping in their cradles — have been bitten by the terrible things.

Traveller How can you keep them out of the pantries? I should think they'd get into the food.

Man Get into it? They carry much of it right off. Whole cheeses, big ones too, have been taken from the factory where they were made. One cook was almost frightened to death, when two great rats jumped up and licked the ladle with which she was stirring the soup. She screamed so you could hear her a block away.

Traveller I never heard anything like it in my life. How strong they must be!

Man Strong enough to split open kegs that held salt fish they liked. Several rats must have worked together to do it.

Traveller How they must frighten the women and children. Some women are even afraid of a little mouse.

Man The ladies have given up altogether the pleasant little parties they used to have, for they cannot hear themselves above the squealing of the rats.

Traveller And they grow no less in number?

Man More and more all the time, and bolder and bigger too. Unless something is done very soon we cannot stay in the town. It is pretty hard to be driven from your home and city by rats.

Traveller I never would be driven away by them.

Man But what would you do?

Traveller Drive them away to be sure.

Man Yes, but *how?* That is what we have been trying to do for weeks.

Traveller It is your Mayor's business and the men who help him — to find a way to free the city of them. Why do you have a Mayor if it is not to keep the city as it should be? Get all of the men of the town together. Go to the Town Hall and tell your Mayor he must do something

Man I believe you are right. If the town were overrun with thieves, we would expect the Mayor and police to rid the town of them. Why not rats as well? Come. Help me get all the men together at once. Let us lose no time. (*The two men go off together.*)

Scene II

Place: *Mayor's office.*

(*Mayor and Men seated at table*)

Mayor (*to townsmen who enter room*) Good-morning, gentlemen. What can I do for you?

First Man We have come to ask you and your men to rid our town of this pest of rats.

Mayor We? What can we do more than you to drive them out?

First Man We elected you to take care of the town. That is your business. Is this the best you

can do? That is what we want to know. We do not think you know your business very well if you cannot find a way at once to make short work of the rats.

Mayor But, gentlemen, if I knew any way, or could think of any, the rats would have been driven out long ago. You must know that.

First Man This we know — that unless you do think of some plan very soon that will rid our town of this pest — neither you nor your men shall be paid another cent of our money.

Mayor But, my good man — What do —

Man More than that, if you do not drive the rats away we mean to drive you and every one of your men out of the town.

Mayor But wait! What can —

First Man Now, that we have said our say, we will leave you to think what can be done.

(*Townspeople all march out, leaving Mayor and his men much perplexed*)

Mayor Do any of you know what we are to do?

First Man How should we, any more than those men?

Mayor But they mean what they say. They will keep their word if we don't find a way.

Second Man Yes, we must find a way or they will send us packing — that is sure.

Mayor But what? But how? (*Buries his face in his hands, sits perfectly still thinking — hears gentle rap at door — speaks in startled tone.*) What's that? I am afraid to say, "Come in," for it only means more trouble for us. Either more dreadful things the rats have done or else more men to tell us what we must do.

(*Another gentle rap — scraping of shoes on mat.*)

Mayor (*at last calls*) Come in!

(*Stranger enters and as Mayor stares in astonishment at stranger — men comment among themselves on stranger's appearance.*)

First Man The tallest, thinnest man I ever saw.

Second Man His eyes are as blue as summer skies and as bright as steel.

Third Man But so small they look like pin points.

Fourth Man Watch the smiles come and go about his lips. They are like flashes of sunlight.

Fifth Man There seems to be no breeze in the room — does there? And yet something lifts his light hair, as it hangs about his shoulders.

Sixth Man The coat, men — the coat he wears. Did you ever see a queerer one?

Seventh Man Or a longer one, from his head to his heels?

First Man Do my eyes see aright? Is it half red and half yellow?

Second Man The same as the scarf that is tied about his neck.

Third Man That seems to be a flute that hangs at the end of his gay scarf.

Fourth Man See how his fingers stray up and down his flute all the time.

Fifth Man As if he'd like to be playing on it. But — listen! The queer fellow is speaking to the Mayor at last.

Piper They tell me your town is overrun with rats.

Mayor (*nods sadly*) What you heard is all too true, Stranger. But why have you come to tell us what we already know only too well?

Piper I have rid other towns of rats and bats and ants and all those things which make trouble in a place. I can rid your city of every rat in it — many as there are.

Mayor (*springs to his feet — asks excitedly*) Who are you? From where did you come? How are you going to do it? What is your plan? For how much will you do it? When can you begin? How soon can you begin? Can you do it at once?

Piper Listen, a moment, Your Honor, and I'll tell you all you wish to know. Men call me the Pied Piper. I am able to make all things that creep or swim, or fly or run, follow me wherever I

choose to lead them. If you will pay me one hundred dollars I'll promise to clean your town of rats.

Mayor A hundred dollars! What is that to be rid of the rats? I am willing to give you almost anything. Five thousand, if you do it, though I do not believe you can do what you promise. I do not believe all those hundreds of rats will follow you.

Piper Five thousand, did you say, Your Honor?

Mayor Five thousand was what I said, and even that will be a cheap price to pay for getting rid of such a pest as we have had for weeks.

Piper It is a bargain then.

Mayor The five thousand shall be yours the moment the town is rid of every rat in it.

(*Piper steps to door and passes into street, playing shrill tune on his flute. Mayor and his men, all townspeople rush into street to watch.*)

First Man Look! Look! The rats are surely following — as he said they would.

Second Man See them! Tumbling out of those houses.

Third Man And watch them scurry out of those stores.

Fourth Man It must be his strange music that calls them.

Fifth Man I never knew before that rats liked music. What do you suppose the music sounds like in their ears?

Sixth Man At the rate they are following it must sound like the scraping of good salt fish — and the pressing of juicy apples for cider.

Seventh Man No doubt to some the music sounds like the uncovering of pickle jars and fruit cans being opened.

Eighth Man Or corks drawn from oil casks and butter tubs broken open.

Ninth Man Perhaps the music sings to them that there will always be plenty to eat after this and that they'll never be hungry again.

Tenth Man They are running now as though the music bade them munch their big dinner and crunch their fine supper and fill themselves full at their luncheon.

First Man Did you ever see so many rats? More coming all the time.

Second Man All kinds of rats — big ones and little ones, fat ones and thin ones.

Third Man And so many different colors. Some are brown and some are as black as a coal. The gray ones must be the old ones.

Fourth Man Yes, some are so old they hobble, while the young ones frisk gaily along.

Fifth Man That strange piper has the whole

Rat Family at his heels — fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives.

Sixth Man He has been up or down every street in town. Now where will he take them, I wonder?

Seventh Man To the river! To the bank of the river! He means to drown them of course.

Eighth Man Yes, see! He has stepped quickly aside when he has gotten them to the water's edge.

People (*shout*) Over they go! Every one of them! Down the bank into the river! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Ninth Man Now the rats are all drowned. At last our town is rid of its pest. Our homes are so we can live in them again.

Tenth Man Let us have the bands play their liveliest tunes. (*Some march about room, drumming and singing to imitate band.*)

First Man Ring the bells in all the steeples! (*Several imitate ding dong of bells.*)

Second Man Louder! Louder! Ring them so hard the steeples rock.

Third Man Fire the cannon! (*Several imitate boom! boom! of cannon.*)

Fourth Man Come! Let us build bonfires as high as the houses. We can't do too much to celebrate the drowning of those dreadful rats.

Piper (*comes up to Mayor and his men — standing together in crowded street*) I have kept my promise, Your Honor, and I have come for my hundred

dollars. I'll not ask the five thousand you promised, because you thought the rats would not follow me.

(*Mayor and men look dubiously at each other.*)

Mayor (*to men*) It seems a good deal to pay, now the rats are gone.

First Man The rats are dead. They cannot come back if we do not pay him.

Second Man Don't pay him. Tell him the hundred dollars was a joke.

Mayor Ha! Ha! So you thought I meant that little joke about the hundred dollars, did you? Oh, no! That was a joke of mine. Very funny you believed it, wasn't it? (*All laugh loudly except Piper.*) But we'll pay you something for your trouble. Go to the hotel and get a good dinner — the best you can order. We'll pay for it and here is a dollar besides, my good fellow. A hundred dollars for playing a litle tune like that! I have paid you well now — with a dinner and a dollar. More than you'd get in most cities I can tell you.

Piper I do not enjoy your kind of jokes, Your Honor. They do not seem at all funny to me. I am in a hurry to reach another city by nightfall, so do not keep me waiting any longer. Give me my hundred dollars that I may start on my way.

Mayor (*shakes head angrily, roars out*) A hundred

dollars? You beggar! Not one dollar more will I give you. Be off with you, before I call the police.

Piper I will give you one more chance to keep your word to me. Then, if you do not give me my money, I'll play another tune — the one I always play when people do not treat me fairly. For the last time I ask, will you give me my money?

Mayor Fellow! I have no money of yours. I owe you no money. I dare you to do your worst. Play — till your old flute bursts, for all I care. Do you think for one moment you can frighten the Mayor of Hamelin Town?

(*Piper, without a word more, puts flute to lips and plays, people stop celebrating to listen.*)

First Man Hark! That queer old Piper is playing again. Is he calling more rats?

Second Man This tune is not at all like the tune that called the rats.

Third Man No, indeed. This is soft as the gentlest breeze in summer.

Fourth Man It is sweet as the songs of birds.

Fifth Man But it is a strange tune. I never heard one like it before.

Sixth Man See! All the children are running to him! Crowds of them have left their play to go him.

Seventh Man And look! They are following him, as he starts down the street.

Eighth Man What a pattering their little feet make, as they keep time to the music!

Ninth Man What a great clattering their wooden shoes make, as they hurry along!

Tenth Man They all seem very happy about something, for they are clapping their hands for joy.

First Man How busily their little tongues are chattering, like the squirrels in the treetops.

Second Man They are gathering about the Piper, like hens in the farmyard about the one who feeds them.

Third Man How pretty the children of Hamelin are! Roses are no redder than their cheeks! Gold is no brighter than their curls.

Fourth Man I believe children of Hamelin are the prettiest in the world, for their eyes are as blue as the summer skies and as bright as diamonds.

Fifth Man How they show their teeth, like snow-white pearls, when they laugh so merrily!

Sixth Man I begin to be worried at our children following this strange Piper. Don't you think we should call them back, Your Honor?

Mayor Some one should certainly call them back — for they are getting farther and farther from home all the time and who knows where the strange fellow with his queer music will lead them?

Seventh Man Every child in town is in the odd procession that follows at this piper's heels.

Mayor Come, then, my men! Let us all go quickly after them and bring them home before harm befalls them.

(*All cry*) We are bewitched! Alas! Alas! The piper has bewitched us.

Eighth Man We are all rooted to the ground.

Ninth Man We must stand like men of stone while this piper steals our children before our very eyes.

(*All cry*) The river! The river! He is turning towards the river!

Mayor Can no one do anything? Our children will be drowned in the deep waters as the rats were a moment ago.

(*All cry*) He is turning again! Oh joy! He is turning away from the river.

Mayor And going towards the mountain.

First Man Our children are safe, for neither piper nor they can ever climb over the top of that.

Second Man We need not worry any more. We'll soon see our little folks stop and then turn back home, when they find they can go no further.

(*All cry*) But what is that we see? Can we believe our eyes?

Mayor The side of the mountain is opening.

First Man Surely that wonderful door was never there before.

Second Man It is swinging wide open to let him

in. I hope he will go in and never be able to get out again.

Third Man He's gone in, but ——

(*All cry*) Our children! Our pretty babes are going in too. We'll never see them again!

First Man There goes the last one now.

(*All cry*) What shall we do? The door is swinging shut!

Mayor Now it is closed. I fear, forever, and the Fathers and Mothers of Hamelin Town will never see their little ones again.

Fourth Man What a sad town ours will be!

Fifth Man The saddest one in all the world — a town that has no children in it.

(*All cry*) How can we ever live without them? Oh, our children! Come back to us!

Mayor Let the bells in all the steeples be tolled for the rest of this sad day. Let the bands play their funeral music. Let us all go into the churches and pray for ourselves and our little ones who have gone we know not where, who are lost to us forever.

Fifth Man (*angrily*) This dreadful thing that has happened is all your fault, Your Honor.

Sixth Man It would never have happened if you had not broken your promise to the piper.

Seventh Man If you had paid the fellow he would have gone off — and we should not now be crying for our lost children.

Mayor What you say is true, my people. I should have kept my promise. It was very wrong to break it. I should have paid the hundred dollars that was his and let him go his way, but how could I know he was able to do this horrible thing if I did not give him his money? Five of my own little ones followed the Piper into the mountain.

Sixth Man His Honor would never mean to harm a child.

Seventh Man No, we all know he loves them dearly.

Eighth Man Every one knows that all the children are his friends, but who is this, coming towards us?

(*All cry*) A child! O, joy! A child!

Ninth Man Where are the rest?

(*All cry*) It is little lame Hans who lives near the church.

(*Hans comes up, looking very sad.*)

Hans All my little friends are gone. I am the only child in Hamelin Town who did not pass through the wonderful door. I tried hard to get there before it closed, but I could not keep up with the others, and fell so far behind they did not even see me coming.

Mayor Tell us, my little man, why did you and all your little friends leave your homes and Fathers

and Mothers who love you, to follow this Piper whom you never saw before to-day?

Hans The music the Piper played on his flute promised such beautiful things to all who would follow him.

Mayor What were some of the beautiful things the music promised you?

Hans It told of a land so near we could easily walk to it, where the ripest and juiciest fruits grew and every child could have all he could eat. There were flowers too — of most wonderful colors, blossoming in these gardens. The sparrows that hopped about in the gardens were as gaily colored as any peacock you ever saw. The dogs that one could have for pets could run more swiftly than our fleetest deer. There were honey bees, buzzing about every flower, but we need not fear them, for not one had a sting. The horses in this wonderful country had wings as strong and swift as the eagles, but the music was sweetest of all to me when it whispered that once I reached this land I would be strong and well as other boys, able to run and play with them, but (*sadly*) my lame foot carried me too slowly. The children all passed through the wonderful door in the mountain side and it closed while I was yet a long way off. How lonely and dull I shall be all my life with all my playmates gone (*walks away*).

Mayor The only child in Hamelin Town! for

I do not think we shall ever again hear the music of the strange Piper in our streets, I fear the wonderful door in the mountain side will never open again. Our eyes will never again look upon our children's faces. Come, my poor people, let us go to our sad and lonely homes, for the night is coming on. As long as I live, I have this to remember. Had I not broken my promise to the Piper, all might have been well with our children.

THE BISHOP HATTO

The Story

Long ago before any one remembers, in a country far across the sea, the people were starving. All summer long the rain had come down in torrents, day after day.

All through the autumn it was no better. The fields were soaked with the rain. The corn could not grow nor ripen, when all the soil was so very wet.

Most of it rotted in the ground and the few stalks that lived had not ripened when winter came.

The fields that always before had been full of waving corn, were a sorry sight this year, but a sadder sight were the poor people, who, now the corn had died, had nothing to eat.

Men, women and children were dying of hunger every day.

There was but one man in all the country round who had any corn and that was Bishop Hatto.

He was a very rich man, who had great barns filled with corn that he had saved from last year's crop.

Besides his barn so full of grain, he owned one or

two palaces, and across the river a strong tower with high walls.

Every day the poor people who were starving came in crowds to Bishop Hatto's door, begging for the corn he did not need, nor did not sell, but hoarded away in his great barns, as all the neighborhood knew.

But to every one's pleading, the Bishop turned a deaf ear, and all were sent away empty-handed.

Not so much as a peck measure of corn would this hard-hearted old Bishop give to save his neighbors' lives.

So great was the surprise one day, when the Bishop sent word through all the country-side, that, if those in need of food would come to his great barn at a certain time they might all have food enough to last them through the winter.

The poor people almost cried for joy. They were so glad to think their troubles were over. They came from far and near; men, women and children, old men who could hardly walk, babies who could hardly toddle, not a person was left in the houses for miles around.

Everybody had gone to Bishop Hatto's great barn to help carry home the corn.

The Bishop waited until the barn was so full it could hold no more.

There was not even standing room for another one.

The people were packed in like so many sheep. Then Bishop Hatto, who stood outside, ordered the doors fastened and himself set fire to the great barn, burning it to the ground.

The poor people shrieked and screamed and prayed when they found they were prisoners and must burn to death. The cruel Bishop said, as he stood by, and watched the flames leap higher and higher, "It makes a fine bonfire." "The country will thank me for getting rid of all those people, for the times are hard. Food is scarce. They are like so many rats eating up the corn."

When the great barn was only a heap of ashes the Bishop went back to his palace and sat down to supper, so happy and light-hearted a man, you would never think he had just burned hundreds of poor people to death.

How could he sleep so sweetly as he did that night, when he had just done so cruel and terrible a deed, but that was the last night's rest that Bishop Hatto ever had, for in the morning as he came into his great hall a most dreadful sight met his eyes. He turned white and cold as marble and trembled so he could hardly stand, when he saw what had happened in the night.

A large picture of himself that hung against the wall had been eaten out of its frame by rats.

The Bishop was so terrified he could not move,

but stood there looking at the place where his picture had been, when a man from his farm came running in.

His face was as white as the Bishop's own, though he did not know about the picture.

As soon as he could get his breath he cried, "O Bishop! when I opened the granaries this morning, I found the rats had eaten all your corn, not so much as a grain is left."

The Bishop was to sell this corn the very next day, for hundreds of dollars, so it was a great loss to him. This man had hardly finished telling his bad news, when another came running in as pale as a ghost and cried, "You must fly, Bishop, fly for your life. Ten thousand rats are coming this way. I am afraid it is to punish you for what you did yesterday. Where can you hide?

The Bishop thought a moment.

"My tower on the river Rhine is the safest place in all Germany. I'll go there. Once I am inside its high walls nothing can get to me, for the shores are too steep for anyone to climb, and the river too swift and deep for anyone to swim," said the Bishop, as shaking with fear he hurried away. In a very little while he had crossed the river and reached his strong tower, where he barred all the gates, so that no one could get within the high walls.

Then, tired from his fright and his hurry, and feel-

ing himself safe at last, he lay down and closed his eyes for a little nap. A scream close to his ears made him jump to his feet. There, on his pillow, sat a cat, her two eyes blazing like coals of fire.

The Bishop was not so frightened when he found it was only the cat, but he listened and looked to see why she screamed. Something was making her wild with fear and her screams were terrible to hear.

What the Bishop saw at last made his heart stand still and he, too, could have screamed with a fear greater than the cat's. He could see through the window that a perfect army of rats were on the way, thousands of them.

They had swam the river he had thought too deep and swift for any one to swim.

They had climbed the banks he had thought too steep for anyone to scale, and now, as he watched, they were crawling through every hole and window in the wall. There was no way for the Bishop to escape, no way to save his life. He went down on his knees and prayed as he had not prayed in many a year.

But, loud as he prayed, he could hear the sawing of the rat's teeth, as they gnawed, sounding nearer and nearer every second.

The next moment they came in through the windows by thousands.

Some poured in through the doors. Others came even through the thick walls.

Then all at once every rat in the room made straight for the Bishop.

They came down from the ceiling and up from the floor. If the Bishop turned to the right or the left, the rats were on either hand.

From behind and before, from within and without, they came in droves.

They were over his head. They were under his feet. They were everywhere. Their sharp teeth were still sharper from being whetted against the stones as they came through the wall, so they made short work of picking the Bishop's bones, and that was the last of Bishop Hatto.

Thus was he punished for the cruel deed he did that day, when he burned the poor people, like rats in his great barn.

THE BISHOP HATTO

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Village People
Bishop Hatto
Servants of Bishop Hatto
Traveller
Soldiers of Bishop Hatto
The Rats

Scene I

Traveller (*to men hurrying along road towards palace*) Can you tell me what is going on at that palace? Why are the people coming from every direction and crowding about that one palace? Is a feast being held there and all these people the guests who are bidden? Who lives there, do you know?

First Man (*laughs bitterly*) A feast? As far from that as anything can be. Guests? Beggars, rather, praying for bread to keep them and their families from starving.

Second Man We, too, are on our way there, but little good it will do us, I fear.

Third Man Bishop Hatto lives in that palace and a hard, cruel tyrant he is. Little cares he, if

all the people in all the country round starve to death.

Traveller And is there danger of your dying of hunger? I have always heard the soil in this part of the country was so rich, you raised more than you needed every year, that you sent a great deal to market. Why is it you are without food this year?

Fourth Man All summer long the rain has come down in torrents. Day after day it has been one steady pour, pour, pour!

Fifth Man And all through the autumn it has been no better. The fields are soaked with rains.

First Man We depend upon the corn for our living in this part of the country and the corn has had no chance to grow. It has been drowned out. It could not ripen, when all the soil is so very wet.

Second Man Very little of our corn came up at all. Most of it has rotted in the ground.

Third Man The few stalks that did come up and have managed to live show no signs of ripening and winter is almost here.

Traveller I was here once before, a few years ago, and I well remember what a pretty sight your fields of corn were, bending and bowing and waving in the wind.

Fourth Man Our fields are anything but a pretty sight this year — a sorry sight indeed!

Fifth Man But a sorrier sight are our poor

people who, now the corn has failed, have nothing to eat.

First Man Not a day passes but we hear of some of our men, women and children dying of hunger.

Traveller Has no one any corn that he has stored away, that you could buy and pay for when better times come again? Has no one saved any corn from last year's harvest?

Second Man Few of us save any corn from one year to the next, for we always sell all we can spare, but there is one man and only one who has plenty of corn to keep us all from starving.

Traveller He must be a very rich man to be able to store away his corn from year to year. Does he live in that palace towards which the crowds of people are going?

Third Man Yes, Bishop Hatto is his name. Those great barns you see back of his palace are filled to the roof with corn he saved from last year's crop.

Fourth Man But those barns filled with grain are not all his riches. He owns one or two other palaces besides the one he lives in, quite as grand as that one, too.

Fifth Man Nor have you told all his wealth now. You have forgotten the strong tower with high walls that he built across the river.

Traveller Is to-day the first time the people have

begged the Bishop to sell or give his hoarded corn to them?

First Man The first time? Indeed it is not. Every day for weeks, ever since the weather has been growing cold, they come in crowds to Bishop Hatto's door, begging for the corn that will keep their families from starving.

Traveller Let us join the crowds and see if they are having any better luck to-day. Perhaps his hard heart has softened at last.

(*Traveller and five men move close to palace gate.*)

One (*cries*) Give us the corn that we may keep our wives and babies alive.

Another Give us the corn that we may fill our children's mouths, agape like hungry birds, and still their cries.

Another Give us the corn you do not need.

Another You do not sell the corn to anyone, so it cannot be that you are in need of the money.

Another If you'll not give it to us to keep us from starving, then sell it to us at your highest price and let us pay you with next season's crop.

Another What good is the corn doing you? You but hoard it away in your great barns, as all your neighbors know. Would you not rather give it to save your neighbors' lives?

Another Come out, Bishop Hatto, come out and

face us. Coward! Don't you dare stand before the hungry people your corn might save? Come out, we say, or we'll drag you out! At least be man enough to come out and tell us you will not give us help!

Bishop (*indoors*) You had better save your breath than waste it in pleading with me, for I hear you not. My ear is deaf to all your prayers. It is nothing to me, whether you eat or starve. I have more than enough for myself and my household. I care not at all whether you live or die. My barns are full of corn, as you say, but none of it shall be poured into your baskets. I send you away, every man of you, empty-handed as you came. The grain is my own. I can do what I please with my own, save it or sell it. Not so much as a peck measure will I sell. Not so much as a quart measure will I give away. Not so much as a pint measure even if it were to save all your lives. Now go, every man, woman and child of you. Out of my sight this moment! Out of my gate, before I order my soldiers to fire on you, to drive you away!

(*Crowds disperse hurriedly for fear of soldiers being ordered to fire upon them.*)

Scene II

Time: *Several days later.*
Place: *On the road near Bishop's great barn.*

(*Road filled with people, young and old, all camping baskets, hurrying on foot or in wagons towards palace.*)

Traveller (*meets men with whom he talked before.*) I can't believe that all these people I see hurrying along the road are going again to Bishop Hatto's after his cruel speech of a few days ago. Surely you can't be going there again! It will do you no good and may do you great harm, for he threatened last time, you know, to order his soldiers to fire upon you.

First Man We are as surprised to be going there again as you are to see us, but we have been invited this time, so he'll hardly order his soldiers to shoot us, I think.

Traveller Invited? After all he said that other day? And is he going to sell you some corn at last?

Second Man Give it to us! Isn't that the greatest surprise of all? Enough corn to last us through the winter!

Third Man Yesterday the Bishop sent his soldiers far and near through all the country side, to tell the people that, if any were in need of food, to come to his great barns to-day at three o'clock.

Traveller I should think the people would be afraid it was too good to be true, or else that they could not believe their own ears.

Fourth Man Most of the people cried as hard as they could for joy.

Fifth Man Others laughed until they cried. We were so glad to think our troubles were over.

Sixth Man Winter only just begun and no food to be had for our families is pretty big trouble. But look! The road is black with the people. They are coming from far and near.

Traveller It is not only the men who are going. Women and children as well, I see, are in the strange procession.

First Man Oh, yes, everybody is on the way. Old men that can only hobble, babies who can hardly toddle. Everybody is on the way.

Second Man I don't believe a person is left in any house for miles around, do you?

Third Man No, for everybody who is able to walk at all went along to help carry home the grain. It will take bushels and bushels of corn to feed all these people all winter. And it will take a great many hands to carry it all home.

Fourth Man Here we are at last! The barn is so crowded now, shall we stand outside?

Bishop (*stands just outside barn*) No standing outside allowed, my men. Push right on into the

barn if you want your share of the grain. Plenty of room yet. Crowd up, over in that corner. Stand closer in the centre. Those who can't get in can have no corn. Pack in! Move up! Stand as close as you make your sheep sometimes (*says in whisper to soldier*) Is the barn full now?

Soldier It can hold no more, my lord.

Bishop Do you see any more on the way?

Soldier Not a person is in sight on the road, my lord. There is not even standing room for another one, if there were.

Bishop Then fasten all the doors, every one of them. Do not leave a single door unlocked.

Soldier It is done, my lord.

Bishop Every door barred? You are sure?

Soldier Every one, my lord.

Bishop Then the time has come to light my great fire. I myself will set fire to the barn, full of corn to the roof, full of people to the doors.

(*People in barn shriek, scream, etc.*)

Bishop Hear the women and children scream! Hear the men curse! It will do them little good. Some are shrieking prayers, but that will not unlock the doors nor put out the flames. What a pretty sight it is, as the flames leap higher and higher! It makes the finest of bonfires. Let the rats burn. The country will thank me, I know, for getting rid of

all of them, for times are hard, food is scarce. They were like so many rats, eating up the good corn. Now the country is rid of them, for my great barn full to the roof with grain and full to the door with people is now only a handful of ashes. Now I can go back to my palace and eat my supper a happier, lighter-hearted man than I have been since these beggars first began to cry for my corn. Then when I have had my good supper, I'll go to bed and sleep more sweetly than I have any night since these crowds of people came thronging to my door, begging for corn, that their families might not starve. Now, none of them will ever be hungry again, for I have sent them where they will need no food.

(*Walks towards palace as he talks. Enters it and closes door as he finishes his speaking.*)

Scene III

Time: *Next morning.*
Place: *Bishop's palace..*

(*Bishop himself coming down the stairs.*)

Servant What is it, my lord? You are white and cold as marble. Are you ill, my lord? Speak to me and tell me what I can do to help you. You are trembling so you can hardly stand. Can't you

tell me what is the trouble that I may do something to help you?

Bishop (*points with shaking fingers*) Look! My picture! The rats!

Servant My lord! Can it be they have done that? Eaten that great picture out of its frame? Not a shred of canvas left? I did not know there was a rat in the house. I never saw any except in the barns. Do you suppose the fire of yesterday has driven the rats from the barn to the house? But who comes here? A messenger! His face is as white as your own, my lord.

Second Servant (*comes running in, out of breath, gasping*) My lord! I opened the other barns this morning, where the most of the corn is stored. It is all gone, my lord, not so much as a grain is left. The rats have eaten it all in a single night.

Bishop The rats again! They have eaten hundreds of dollars then, for I was to have sold it all this very day. It is a very great loss to me.

First Servant Look! My lord, another messenger! A bearer of bad news too, for he is pale as a ghost.

Third Servant (*runs in breathlessly, shouts*) Fly! My lord. Fly! At once for your life. You must fly, my lord, if you would live. Ten thousand rats are coming this way to devour you. I fear the rats are sent to punish you for what you did to those poor

people yesterday. Where can you hide? Is there not some place?

Bishop (*sits silently, thinking a moment*) My tower! I'll go at once to my tower on the River Rhine. There is no safer place in all Germany. Once there I can laugh at the rats, for they will try in vain to get at me there. Once inside those high walls, nothing can get to me. The shores are too steep for any one to climb. The river is too deep and swift for any one to swim. In all Germany there is no better place to hide myself.

Servant Then lose no time, my lord. Start at once, for the rats are travelling rapidly.

Bishop I'll hurry away. Once I have crossed the river I am safe (*walks hurriedly away*).

First Servant He talks bravely of being safe in his strong tower, but — did you see — he is shaking with fear.

Second Servant Yes, but if he is once inside those strong walls, I do not see that he has anything to fear, for nothing can get through those thick walls, if they succeeded in climbing those steep banks.

Scene IV

Time: *A short time later in same day.*
Place: *Inside the strong tower.*

Bishop At last, I am safe in my strong tower. The river is crossed and these thick walls are between me and all the rats in the world. I have barred all the gates and neither man nor beast can get within these high walls. I find myself very tired, and no wonder, I was hardly awake this morning before I began to hear bad news. My own picture that I saw for myself eaten by those dreadful rats. Then while I was still gazing at that in horror, the first messenger came with news that the rats had eaten up all my corn, which meant a loss of hundreds of dollars to me. The first messenger had hardly gotten his breath before a second, pale as a ghost, begged me to fly for my life, so it is no wonder between my fright and my hurry that I find myself very tired. There is no reason, now that I am safe from it all, that I should not lie down and have a nap.

(*Bishop lies down upon a couch, closes eyes, cat creeps upon Bishop's pillow, from which she looks out of window and suddenly gives terrible scream, right in Bishop's ear.*)

Bishop (*springs to feet, hands over ears*) A more

hideous scream I never heard, right in my ear, too! Enough to frighten a man to death, sound asleep as I was, though I am not so badly frightened now that I know it was only the cat. There she sits on my pillow now and so still you might think her carved out of stone, but for her eyes. They are blazing like two coals of fire.

(*Cat screams again and again.*)

O Puss! Pussy! Your screams are terrible to hear. I must see what it is that is making you scream.

(*Cat screams again and again.*)

There! There! Pussy, you have had too much meat perhaps and are having a fit.

(*Cat screams again and again.*)

Be quiet, Pussy! Nothing can harm you here. No Bowsers can get you here.

(*Bishop starts as he sees at last what puss has been seeing.*)

Oh! Oh! What a terrible sight! My heart stands still with terror. I could scream with a greater fear than yours, poor Puss. A perfect army of rats have tracked me here and are on their way to my hiding place. Thousands upon thousands of them! But when they come to the deep, swift river, they will

have to turn back. It is well for me I hurried as I did. If those rats had caught me outside of these walls, they would have made short work of me. Oh! Oh! Do my eyes see aright? I can't believe it! But yes, they are — they are swimming the river that I thought too deep and swift for any one to swim. They'll be drowned, all of them, I need not fear. They'll never reach this shore alive. Oh! Oh! What hope is left me now? They are swarming up out of the river. Only the steep banks now between me and those terrible rats. Surely they cannot scale those banks that are almost straight up and down, with never a foothold for the smallest foot in their smooth rocky sides. Rats may be able to swim deep, swift rivers, but those steep banks will turn them back. No one can scale those. Oh! My eyes! My eyes! Are you telling me true? I see them scaling the steep walk, by leaps and bounds, and coming through these thick walls at every hole and window and crack and crevice. My last hope is gone. There is no way to escape. I have come to the end. I must die. I'll try to pray, as I have not prayed in many a year. (*Bows head a moment.*) How can a man pray when the saw of the rats' teeth, as they gnaw, sounds nearer and nearer every second?

(*Bishop screams and dashes frantically about room, to escape, if possible.*)

Through the windows, hundreds of them. Through the doors, thousands of them are pouring. Through the thick walls, others are coming. They are coming for me. Now, every rat in the room is making straight for me. Down from the ceiling, up from the floor, if I turn to the right, they are there, or the left, there are as many. From behind and before, from within and without they come in droves. It is no use. I can struggle against them no longer. They are over my head, under my feet. They are everywhere, everywhere. I am almost gone. Their teeth are as sharp as knives. Gnawing through the stone walls was the best of files for sharpening their teeth. They'll make short work picking my bones. I am dying, dying, for the cruel deed I did yesterday. This is my punishment for burning those poor people like rats in a trap. I pay with my life for my wicked deed. I pay with my life for all the lives I took. It is the end.

THE STAR DOLLARS

The Story

There was once a little girl left all alone in the world. She had no brothers nor sisters and both her father and mother were dead. All the clothes she had were those she wore. All the food she had was a little bread some one had given her.

Poor little girl! She had none of the things a child needs. Mother love and father care she could never have again. She had no one to make a home for her.

There was no money to give her even food and clothes. Poor little girl! She was indeed alone.

But she said over the prayer her mother had taught her and started out into the world. She still carried the piece of bread in her hand. She did not know where she was going.

Perhaps something would show her the way. Perhaps something would turn her feet into the right path. She had not gone far when she met a poor man. He was so very old he was much bent. He was thin, as though he had never had plenty to eat.

He saw the little girl's bit of bread and begged for some of it, because he was so hungry. The little

girl gave him the whole piece at once and went on. She had gone but a little way when she met a child. The little fellow had nothing on his head, though the day was very cold.

He told the little girl that his head was aching with the cold. He begged her for something with which to cover it.

The little girl had nothing but her hood. She took that off from her own head and put it on his little aching head. When she had gone a little farther she met another child. This one had no coat. The biting wind went right through the poor thin dress she wore. The child would soon freeze to death.

The little girl took off her own warm jacket and wrapped it round the freezing child.

At the next turn of the road she came upon another child. This one's dress was so tattered and torn it was all but falling off from her.

The little girl had parted with her bread. Then her hood, next her coat. She had nothing left to give, she thought, except her dress. Even this she took off and put on the child whose dress was tattered and torn.

By this time it had grown dark, for night had fallen. The little girl found herself in a forest, but she was not afraid. It was warmer among the trees than in the road.

She was looking about to find a safe, warm place to sleep when she met another child. This poor little thing had no clothes and its flesh was blue with the cold. He was shivering so that he could hardly stand.

Poor little one! He was crying too, as if his heart would break. He was not much more than a baby.

She could not bear to see him suffer so. And yet she had nothing left to give, except her little flannel shirt. Everything else had gone. The bread to the old man, thin and bent, her hood to the child with the aching head, her coat to the child who had none, her dress to the one who was tattered and torn. The little one's crying hurt her too much.

The woods were dark. The trees would shelter her. She could surely find some snug, warm place to sleep. Off came the little flannel shirt, and as quickly it was drawn over the poor little fellow's body, blue with cold.

Before the little girl slept, she always said her evening prayer. So to-night she looked up into the sky as she said the prayer her mother had taught her.

She thought she had never seen the stars so bright and beautiful. As she looked, the stars began to fall in showers at her feet. The ground was covered with them, round and bright and shining. But they were not stars at all now. They were bright silver

dollars that could buy food and clothes for the little girl.

There was enough money to take good care of her all the rest of her life.

But that was not all. Among the silver dollars was the finest of little silk shirts. This was sent to take the place of the one she had just taken off to cover the poor child who had no clothes.

She put on this pretty little white shirt that came straight from the sky.

Then she began to gather the silver dollars that lay thick on the ground.

There were more than she would need the rest of her life. The little girl need never be cold, nor hungry, nor naked again.

THE STAR DOLLARS

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Little Girl
Old Man
Four Little Children

Little Girl Now that father and mother are both dead, I am all alone in the world. I must think what is best for me to do. How I wish I had some brothers or sisters, so there'd be some one to love me. Let me think what I have. The clothes I have on and this piece of bread a kind lady gave me, because she thought I looked hungry. I have no home and no money, so I must start out into the world to see what I can do to get food and clothes and shelter for myself. (*Walks off.*) I do not know which road to take, but perhaps something will show me the way. (*She meets a poor old man, bent and thin.*)

Old Man Oh, little girl, what wouldn't I give for a bite of the bread you carry. It is days since I have tasted food. I am dying of hunger.

Little Girl Poor old man! I am so sorry for you! Take it all. You need it more than I, for I am young and strong and can earn some more some way.

Old Man Blessings on you, child! May you never know what it is to be hungry as I am!

(*They separate. Girl walks on. Meets a child, bare-headed, crying bitterly.*)

Little Girl Poor little man! Why are you crying?

Child Oh, my head aches so hard with the cold!

Girl I should think it would this bitter day. Why did you come out without your cap?

Child Because I have none, but cap or no cap, I was made to go on this errand.

Girl (*takes off hood and puts it on child's head*) Take my hood then.

Child But what will you do then? Your head will ache with cold as mine did.

Girl No, my hair is thick and long. I shall not feel the cold as you did with your short hair.

(*They separate. Girl meets another child crying, coatless.*)

Little Girl Oh, little one, why did you come out without your coat this cold day? This biting wind must go right through the thin dress you wear. You will freeze to death without your coat this cold day.

Child If I only had a coat, but I have none, not so much as a cape or a shawl, and yet I was sent to do this errand.

(*Little Girl takes off her own warm coat, wraps it round freezing child.*)

Child You must not do this. I can not let you, for then you will be as cold as I.

Girl No, you must take it, for my dress is not thin like yours. It will keep out the cold better than yours did.

(*They separate. Girl walks on.*)

Girl (*to herself.*) My bread went to the old man who was hungry, my hood to the little fellow who had no cap, now my coat to the poor child who was almost frozen. (*Laughs.*) I have nothing left to give anyone now, but my dress, and that I can hardly spare as I did the other things.

(*Little Girl meets another child whose dress is all tattered and torn, almost falling off from her, child is crying bitterly.*)

Little Girl O child! have you no other dress that is not so ragged? The wind must get in at every hole.

Child I have none better and none worse, for this is the only dress I have in the world.

Girl (*to herself*) I thought a moment ago that I could not spare my dress, but now I remember my shirt is very warm and will protect me from the cold

much better than this ragged dress does this poor child. (*Takes off dress, throws it over child's head, who cries.*)

Child Then what will you do if you give me your dress? Have you another at home?

Girl No, but I have a good warm shirt, and you have not even that.

Child Thank you, then, I must hurry home, for it is fast growing dark.

(*They separate. Little girl wanders on.*)

Little Girl I wish I had a home to go to at night. I think I'll go into this forest, it must surely be warmer among the trees than in the road. I shall not be afraid in the forest. Nothing can harm me. (*Looks about.*) Let me find the warmest nest I can among the trees. (*Comes upon another child who has no clothes.*)

Little Girl O you poor little one! Can it be that you have no clothes? Your flesh is blue with the cold, and you are shivering so you can hardly stand. Poor baby! for you are little more than that. Don't cry so! I cannot bear to see you suffer so. Tell me, have you no warm clothes this bitter night.

Child (*shakes his head*) I crept in among the trees, because it was a little warmer. The wind does not cut quite so cruelly in the forest.

Girl (*to herself*) It hurts me so to hear him cry and know how cruelly the wind must cut his tender flesh. It is very dark here in the woods. The trees will shelter me. I can surely find some warm nest, where I can cuddle down to sleep.

(*Takes off shirt and draws it quickly over the poor little fellow's shivering body. Child walks away. Girl stands still.*)

Girl My mother taught me always before I slept to say my prayers, so I will say them now. (*Looking into the sky.*) How bright and beautiful the stars are to-night! I think I never saw them shine so like diamonds as they do to-night. Oh, look! (*Raising her voice excitedly.*) Can it be? Do I see aright? The stars are falling, coming down to earth in showers! They are falling at my very feet! The ground is covered with them as with snow, round and bright and shining. (*Picks one up.*) Why! They are not stars at all! They are bright silver dollars! Can it be they are all for me? Sent me from the sky to buy food and clothes? And still they come! (*Gathering handfuls.*) This surely must be enough money to take good care of me the rest of my life. Oh! Oh! What can this be, falling down among the silver dollars? A little shirt! (*Picking it up.*) But not at all like the one I gave away. This is such a pretty one, so soft and

white and all of silk. It must have been sent to take the place of the one I took off to put on that poor baby who had none. I'll put it right on — this pretty white shirt that came straight down from the sky to me. Now I must gather up all these siver dollars that lie so thick upon the ground. There must be more here than I shall need all the rest of my life. Just think! I need never be cold nor hungry nor naked again!

THE BROWN DWARF OF RÜGEN

The Story

A long time ago, in a pretty little town by the sea, lived a boy and girl.

All day long and every day they were always together. Sometimes they played on the beach in the sand that glistened like silver in the sunlight.

Often they waded out into the sea and let the great waves chase them back to shore.

As soon as the flowers were in bloom, you could see this little lad and lass down in the meadows, filling their baskets with the sweet spring blossoms.

The boy was strong and straight as a farmer's boy should be. The girl was as pretty a maid as you ever saw.

Her curls were yellow as gold and her eyes were as blue as the sky.

Her father, the miller, thought there never was a child quite so sweet as his little daughter. When this lad and lass lived the world was still so young it was full of dwarfs and elves and trolls. They are the little brown-faced people who have no souls.

For every man and woman who walk through the

town in the air and sunshine, there was a troll living under the ground.

For every boy and girl playing in the fields, there was an elf living down below where the sun and air never came.

One morning the miller's little daughter wandered so far away from her playmate that she found herself among the nine hills, the playground of the elves and goblins. That very day, men working in the fields said they had heard strange voices in the air. Some heard small horns blown by unseen lips. When night fell and still the Miller's daughter had not come home, everyone started out to hunt for her.

They went through all the fields and woods, calling her name at every step, but no one found any trace of her.

Some went east and some went west, but none brought back the lost girl to her father. The old women of the village shook their gray heads and said the lass had been stolen by the brown dwarfs and was down among the elves and trolls, so the Miller had prayers said in the church, and the bell tolled for his little daughter who came not again.

Five years her father lived a sad and lonely life without her, and then her old playmate, John, now almost a man, said, "I am going to find my little comrade, or at least find out whether she is alive or dead."

So he went first to the nine hills, where Elizabeth had last been seen that day now so long ago.

He watched there at night, until the brown dwarfs came singing to dance in the moonlight.

As they were making merry the leader of the trolls tossed his red cap into the air.

Quick as a flash, John caught it and put it upon his own head.

The troll knelt at his feet and cried bitterly for his cap.

"Oh, give it back to me!" he wailed. "My magic cap. It will not fit *your* great head."

John shook his head.

"No," he said. "The dwarf who throws away his magic cap must do something for the one who finds it to pay for it. Five years ago you stole my pretty Elizabeth and hid her in the earth."

John's voice grew very stern.

"I will give back your magic cap if you will open your doors underground and let me take Elizabeth home with me."

But the brown dwarf cried, "She will not come. She is one of us now. She is mine, or will be, for to-morrow she is to be my bride. Even now the great cake is baked for the feast.

"Hold your tongue!" roared John, "and may the evil spirit get you! Quick! Open the glass door in this hill that leads to your bad world, or I'll make you wish you had!

The dwarf was too frightened to do anything but obey, so John and he went down the long stairway that leads to this strange sunless country.

John could hardly believe his eyes.

He saw such wonderful sights: The streets of golden sand and palaces of precious stones made him almost forget the errand on which he had come.

The long dark passages led him into a great dining room, in which were tables loaded with good things to eat.

A young girl came to wait upon him as soon as he seated himself at one of the tables.

One look at the blue-eyed maiden told John she was no troll. One with so fair a face did not belong to the ugly trolls.

She looked so pale and sad John wondered if she had ever smiled in all her life.

When she spoke to him, John fell to wondering if he had ever before heard that low, sweet voice. Whom did he know that had golden-brown hair like this maiden's?

He looked again and then it all came to him. He knew it was his long-lost comrade, whom he had missed for years.

"O Elizabeth!" he cried, and caught her in his arms. Don't you know me? See! I am your old playmate, John, the farmer's son.

Elizabeth gave one long look, then threw her arms

about his neck and burst into tears, sobbing as though her heart would break.

"Oh, take me away!" she cried. "Take me away from this dreadful place and from these goblin folks! If I could only wander again with you through the green fields, hunting the sweet smelling flowers; if I could only feel again the soft wind fan my cheek and hear the gentle patter of the rain upon the roof. What wouldn't I give to hear again the singing of the birds or the rustling of the leaves in the wind? Even the lowing of a cow, or the bleating of a sheep would be music in my ears. And oh! if I could sit once more beside the door, upon my Father's knee — and hear the church bells ring."

Elizabeth's old playmate kissed away the tears from her pale cheeks and the sad smile from her lips, which made the brown dwarf very angry.

He groaned aloud, tearing his tangled hair and grinding his long teeth in his rage. At last John turned to him and said, "This beautiful girl has worked for you in this terrible place five long years, while all her friends thought her dead. She is going to be well paid by you for all you have made her suffer. Go quickly and bring her the most beautiful gems you have in all your rich store. When you have let us both up again through the gate of glass, I'll give you your cap."

There was nothing left for the brown dwarf to do

but obey, so grumbling all the while, he filled John's pockets and Elizabeth's apron with the precious stones.

Then they left this dreadful sunless country and passed up through the gate of glass, until their feet once more touched the soft, green grass and the warm sunshine brought the roses back to Elizabeth's pale cheeks.

The brown dwarf stretched up his crooked, claw-like fingers for his red cap, which John had tossed down to him, and the glass gate closed. As John and Elizabeth walked home through the meadows hand in hand, they thought the sunshine had never before been so bright. They knew the birds had never sung so sweet a song, nor the waves of the sea made softer music on the shore.

John led Elizabeth to her father's door, and when the Miller held his daughter safe again in his arms the bells rang out their merriest tune and the village folk were almost wild with joy.

Very soon after this John and Elizabeth were married in the church, and lived happily all their lives in a fine great house that John had built.

No other little girls of the village were ever again stolen by the goblins, as Elizabeth had been, for in the nine hills John put up a great cross of stone over the glass gate through which the elves used to come up to dance in the moonlight.

THE BROWN DWARF OF RÜGEN

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

John — a farmer's son
Lizbeth — the miller's daughter
The Miller
Workmen
Townspeople
The Leader of the Dwarfs

John (*yodelling for Lizbeth*).

Lizbeth (*heard yodelling in distance comes into sight.*)

John Where have you been all this time? Didn't you hear me calling you this long while?

Lizbeth No, I answered as soon as I heard you. I drove part way to the mill with Father. Then he put me down and I ran back as fast as I could to play with you. Papa likes to have me go part way with him. He says it is a long drive to take all alone every day.

John Where shall we go to play to-day? Shall we go out into the fields for wild flowers? Those warm days must have brought many out.

Lizbeth After a while we'll see how many flowers

we can find to carry home, but let's run down to the beach now and play in the sand. Wouldn't you rather do that than anything else?

John Yes, playing in the sand is always great fun, and I love the smell of the sea, too, don't you?

Lizbeth Indeed I do! and don't you like to hear the boom of the surf, as the great waves break on the shore?

John Yes and how like live things the waves seem chasing each other to land. It looks as if they were running a race to see which would reach the beach first.

Lizbeth Here comes a big wave now.

John The one behind it is larger. Let's go as close to the water's edge as we dare and then run back when we see a big wave coming.

(*Children go cautiously to water's edge many times run back shouting and screaming.*)

John Oh! Oh! The waves are chasing us.

Lizbeth We're playing tag with the sea, aren't we?

John Yes and it's more fun than with boys and girls. Run! Quick, Lizbeth! or they'll have you.

Lizbeth That one almost drenched me. My hair is wet with the spray. I'm all out of breath. Let's play in the sand awhile.

John How like silver the sand looks this morning.

Lizbeth It is the sun that makes it glisten so. Lie down, John, and I'll bury you in it.

(*John lies down. Lizbeth heaps sand upon him. Both laughing and shouting gaily.*)

Lizbeth (*sings in chanting fashion*) Now you are buried you must be good, must be good.

(*John suddenly springs up, throwing off sand.*)

John Now let me bury you, Lizbeth. Lie down.

(*Lizbeth obeys, John throws sand all over her.*)

Lizbeth (*screams*) My eyes! Oh, my eyes, John! The sand is getting in them.

John You must shut your eyes as tight as you can.

Lizbeth (*wails*) I can't shut them tight enough, but what the sand gets in them. And my ears, too. Oh, John! stop and let me get up.

John That's just like a girl. Very well. Jump up and we'll dig canals.

(*Lizbeth jumps up and both dig quietly for awhile using pail and spade.*)

John I'll dig all the sand from this place and you carry it over there in your pail.

Lizbeth And make a fort of it, shall I?

John Yes, and a wall on this side of the canal.

Lizbeth Is that the canal you are digging now, John?

John No, this is a big lake I am making. You dig a small bay the other side of this strip of land.

Lizbeth Oh, now I see where you are going to dig the canal!

John You see there must be some way for the boats to get from the big lake into the bay.

Lizbeth So we'll cut the canal through this strip of land, won't we, to join the lake and bay?

John Now let's get some chips for boats and see if they can go from the lake through our canal into the bay.

(*They sail chips.*)

Lizbeth (*clapping hands gleefully, jumping up and down*) Yes! Yes! They do. Now the boat has landed at the city on the bay. Don't let's dig canals any longer, John.

John What shall we do then?

Lizbeth Let's go down in the meadow and hunt for wild flowers.

John Very well, we will, and see if we can get our pails full before it is time to go home.

(*Both run hand in hand to meadow, as they near it Lizbeth cries*)

Lizbeth A violet! A violet! I spy the first violet (*picks it*).

John Jack-in-the-pulpit for my pail — three of them close together.

Lizbeth Dear little hepaticas! I do believe you are the prettiest of all.

John Ho! Ho! Look, Lizbeth! Dutchman's breeches.

Lizbeth I was hunting for marsh marigolds and almost stepped on this little dog tooth violet. It never holds its head up, does it?

John Oh! it is much too early for cowslips, Lizbeth. Many of the early spring flowers are gone before they come. We better be going home, Lizbeth. It must be growing late. See, all those workmen on their way home to supper.

(*Both run out into road and join workmen, many of whom they know.*)

First Man Hello, little ones! What have you been doing all day?

John Hunting wild flowers in the field.

Lizbeth And see how many we found (*holding pail up for him to see*).

Second Man A whole pailful! I didn't think there were so many in blossom.

Third Man It must have taken you hours to find so many.

John Only a few moments. We've been down on the beach most of the day.

Fourth Man And what do you little people find to do down there? Sail your boats?

Lizbeth Sometimes, but we like better to play tag with the waves.

John And bury each other in the sand.

Fifth Man (*to companions*) Hadn't we better tell the children never to go as far away from home as the Nine Hills?

First Man Yes, I think we ought. It might not be safe for a little maid with curls like gold and eyes as blue as the sky to go as far as the Nine Hills.

Second Man Nor for a lad as strong and straight as John. We must warn them to keep away from there.

Third Man Listen, children. Do you ever go as far away from home as the Nine Hills?

John Isn't that where the elves and goblins play at midnight and dance in the moonlight?

Third Man Yes, it is said to be their playground and to-day while we were at work near there, we heard strange voices in the air.

Fourth Man And we heard small horns blown by lips we could not see.

Lizbeth And do you think it could have been the elves and goblins?

Fourth Man Who else could it have been in that spot.

John How are dwarfs and elves that people talk so much about, different from us? Do you know?

Fifth Man They are the little brown-faced people who have no souls as Lizbeth and you and I have.

Lizbeth Are there as many of them as there are of us?

Sixth Man Exactly the same number; no more, no less. For every man and woman who walks through our town in the fresh air and sunshine there is a troll living under the ground.

John And are there trolls for all the little girls and boys, too?

First Man Yes, for every little lad and lass playing in the sunshine there is an elf living deep down in the earth.

Lizbeth Ugh! How dark it must be down there! I'd not like to be an elf.

Second Man I don't believe you would. Just think of it! The sun and air never come to the home of the trolls and elves.

Lizbeth Oh! I see Papa coming. I'll run to meet him and get a ride. Good-night, John. Good-night, everybody.

(*Lizbeth runs on ahead.*)

Third Man The Miller thinks there never was a child quite as sweet as his Lizbeth.

Fourth Man It would break his heart if anything happened to her.

John This is where I live. Good-night and

thank you for telling us about the queer little brown-faced people, who have no souls.

Men Good-night, lad.

First Man And remember, don't go as far away from home to play as the Nine Hills.

(*All separate.*)

Scene II

Time: *The next night.*
Place: *The village street.*

(*People walking up and down, talking excitedly, John wanders aimlessly about, crying bitterly.*)

First Person Isn't this a dreadful thing that has happened to our little Lizbeth?

Second Person Almost night now and she has not been seen since morning.

Third Person Poor John! Poor boy! He has cried himself sick.

Fourth Person Lizbeth and he were the best of chums.

Fifth Person And always had such good times together. Haven't you seen Lizbeth at all to-day, John?

(*John shakes head, still sobbing bitterly.*)

Sixth Person When did you see her last, John?

John Yesterday. We had been playing together all day and as we were coming home at supper time she saw her father and ran to meet him and get a ride. That was the last I saw of her, running to meet her father.

Seventh Person The woman who keeps house for the Miller says that Lizbeth started out early this morning to find John and then they were going to some new place they had heard of, to play, but she did not say where it was.

Eighth Person Hark! What is that?

(*"Lizbeth! Lizbeth! Lizbeth!" is heard repeatedly in the distance.*)

First Person Oh! all the men of Rügen have gone out to hunt for the poor little lost girl. They are all through the woods and fields, calling her name at every step. Listen! You can hear them again. They must be coming back.

(*"Lizbeth! Lizbeth! Lizbeth!" is heard coming nearer all the time.*)

Second Person Some went east, some went west; others north and south.

(*Large groups of men come in sight.*)

Women (*cry*) No news? No word? Have you no trace of our little lost girl?

(*Men shake heads sadly.*)

First Man We have nothing to tell her poor Father.

Second Man We have not brought him his little lost girl, nor have we brought any word of her.

Woman Poor man! Poor man! His heart will surely break.

Second Woman How is he ever going to live without her?

(*Group of very old women of the village come along.*)

First Old Woman We know you have not found our little Lizbeth. We can tell by your faces. You would not look like that if you had good news of her.

First Man No, we found no trace of the poor little one.

Second Woman None will ever find our Lizbeth.

(*Men and women crowd about the Second Old Woman.*)

Second Man Why do you say so? What do you think has happened to her? Do you think she is dead?

Second Old Woman She had better be dead, hadn't she, than stolen by the Trolls?

Third Man You really think our Lizbeth has been stolen by the little brown-faced people?

Fourth Man I never heard of their stealing our children.

Second Woman Yes, once before did this same thing happen to a child of Rügen. It was even before my day. My mother was a child herself then, and never forgot how her little playmate was snatched from them.

Fourth Man Then you believe our Lizbeth is down among the elves and trolls this minute, shut away from the fresh air and sunshine forever?

Second Old Woman We shall never know whether my words be true or not, but as for myself, I know what has befallen our poor little Lizbeth.

Fourth Man Hark! (*A bell is heard.*)

Third Woman What can that bell mean? That they have found her?

Fifth Man It would not toll as for the dead, if they had found her.

Third Old Woman The Miller ordered prayers to be said in the church for his little daughter who comes not again, and the sexton is tolling the bell while they are being said.

Sixth Man The poor Miller! This is a sorry day for him.

Seventh Man No doubt he'd gladly give all his money if it would bring back his little daughter.

First Man What a sad, lonely life he will lead without the one who filled all his days with sunshine.

Second Man And how empty his big house will seem without Lizbeth in it. She was always here, there and everywhere, busy as a bee.

Third Man Since we can do nothing for the Miller, I suppose we might as well go to our homes.

(*All separate.*)

Scene III

Time: *Five years later.*
Place: *Miller's Home.*

(*Miller sits disconsolately, resting head on hand. John enters room.*)

John Good-day, O Miller of Rügen. Do you remember me?

Miller (*rising, puts hand affectionately on John's shoulder*) Remember you, my boy? Lizbeth's old playmate, her best of chums? Remember you? Indeed I do, and think of you more often than of anyone in town, because my Lizbeth loved you.

John I have grown so tall. There are many who do not know me now. They are still expecting to see the little boy I used to be.

Miller And you almost a man! But I can see, as if it were but yesterday, Lizbeth and you hand in hand, off for the beach or the meadows. Those were happy days, Boy,

John The happiest of all our lives, but we shall see some more happy days before we die.

Miller (*shakes head sadly*) You may, I hope. You ought, for you are young, but now Lizbeth has gone, I have no one to bring me happiness.

John Then we must try to bring Lizbeth and with her will come happiness.

Miller Bring Lizbeth back? Are you mad, Boy? She has been dead these five years.

John You do not know that she is dead, nor do I, nor does any one, for none saw her lying dead.

Miller Then why would she not come to us she loved, if she still lives?

John How can she if she is held a prisoner underground by the Trolls?

Miller And you believe that old woman's tale?

John I do not know whether I do or not, but I came to tell you that I am going to find my old playmate, or at least find out whether she be dead, as you think, or alive and a prisoner, as all the old women of Riigen think.

Miller I can see no way for you to find out, my boy, but a father's heart is glad and thankful that you are going to try to get word of her we both loved. If I were a younger man, you should not go alone.

John Then wish me success, good Miller, and I'll be off.

Miller Indeed I do wish you success! I shall sit here in my chair where you found me, and pray for you until you come again.

John Good-by.

Miller Good-by and God bless you, my dear boy — my Lizbeth's good comrade!

(*They shake hands and John goes out.*)

Scene IV

Time: *Midnight of that same evening.*
Place: *The Nine Hills.*

John (*hidden in some bushes says to himself*) The last that was seen of Lizbeth she was coming towards this playground of the Trolls. I suppose what those workmen said, of hearing strange sounds all that day as they worked, made her think she'd come and hear them, too, or perhaps even catch sight of a Troll. There they come now, the little brown-faced things.

(*Groups of Trolls come into sight, singing and dancing and making merry.*)

John That must be the leader who wears the red cap, and that same red cap is a magical one, I've heard. I'll watch my chance, snatch it away from him, and see what happens.

(*The leader tosses cap into air. Quick as a flash, John jumps from hiding place and catching it, puts it on his own head. Troll kneels at John's feet and cries bitterly.*)

Troll My cap! My cap! Oh, give it back to me! I pray you, give it back to me! My magic cap! It is of no use to you. It will not fit your great head. I beseech you, give it back to me!

John (*shakes head*) No, I shall not give it back to you for all your pleadings. The Dwarf who throws away his magic cap must do something for the one who finds it. You must pay well for your cap if you wish it back.

Dwarf What is it you want me to do? Tell me quickly how you wish me to pay for it that I may get it again.

John Five years ago you stole my pretty Lizbeth and hid her away in your dark home, under the ground. Now, I will give you back your magic cap, if you will open the door to your underground home and let me take Lizbeth back to her Father. No other way will you ever get your cap from me.

Dwarf Lizbeth would not come with you now. You could not coax her, for she is one of us. She is mine alone, or will be, for to-morrow Lizbeth is to be my bride. Even now the great cake is baked for the wedding feast.

John (*roars out very angrily*) Hold your tongue! And may the evil spirit get you! Quick! Open the glass door in this hill that leads to your bad world!

(*Both stand silent.*)

John (*in threatening tone and slowly*) Open that door, I say, or I 'll make you wish you had.

Dwarf If I must then, come. (*Opens door in hill. Both go down stairs.*)

John (*to himself*) Does this long stairway lead to his strange, sunless country, I wonder? Is he taking me there or into some dungeon where he will make me his prisoner? No. This must be the Land of the Dwarfs. I can hardly believe my eyes. The streets are all of golden sand, just as the story books tell us. What makes those great palaces sparkle and glow I wonder? If my eyes tell me the truth they are made of precious stones. (*To Dwarf.*) Where does this long, dark passage lead me?

Dwarf Follow it and you'll come to the dining room, where you may have all the good things you can eat. I must leave you now for a little, but call for anything you'd like to eat and it will be brought to you.

John (*enters dining room and seats himself at table, says to himself*) I never in all my life saw so much to eat at one time, so many tables and everyone loaded with good things.

(*John looks long at girl, who comes up to take his order.*)

Girl If you'll give me your order, I'll bring you what you wish.

John (*continues to look at her, suddenly says*) You are no Troll!

Girl What makes you think I am not?

John No one with eyes as blue as yours and face as fair, ever belonged to the ugly Trolls. I do not like to see one so beautiful looking so pale and sad.

Girl I have enough to make me look pale and sad. I have nothing to make me look rosy and happy.

John Did you ever smile and were you ever happy in all your life, I wonder?

Girl There were few who laughed more merrily or lived happier days than I did once.

John It seems as if I must have heard your voice before somewhere.

Girl How could that be?

John Or else I have known some one else who speaks in the sweet, low voice you use. And your hair, too — who is it I know that has just such golden brown hair as yours?

(*John thinks earnestly, looking at girl, who stands silent by table, then suddenly gives a great cry of joy*)

John O Lizbeth! Lizbeth! Now it all comes to

me. My long-lost comrade (*catches her in his arms*). Don't you know me, Lizbeth? See! I am your old playmate. Don't you know me? Your best chum, John, the farmer's son.

(*Lizbeth looks long at John, then throws arms about his neck, bursts into tears, sobbing as if her heart would break.*)

Lizbeth O John! take me away! Take me away! If you love me, take me away from this dreadful place and these goblin folk! Remember how we used to love each other, and take me away!

John Dear Lizbeth, that is what I came to do. To find you, if I could, and take you back to the village that still mourns for you, though five long years have passed.

Lizbeth If I could only wander again with you, John, through the green fields, hunting the sweet smelling flowers, that I have not seen for all these years, how happy I would be!

John And so you shall, Lizbeth, now that I have found you, for I shall never leave this place until I take you with me.

Lizbeth If I could only feel again the soft wind fan my cheek, and hear again the gentle patter of the rain upon the roof.

John So you shall, dear; very soon, under your Father's roof.

Lizbeth What wouldn't I give to hear again the singing of birds, or the rustling of leaves in the wind?

John My poor Lizbeth! I begin to see something of all you have missed these years we have been mourning you, for sun, nor wind, nor rain, nor song of bird, nor breath of flowers is never known in this strange dreary land.

Lizbeth Even the mooing of cows, as they go through the lanes at milking time, or the bleating of sheep, would be music to my ears.

John You shall soon have again all you have lost, dear Lizbeth, except the five lost years that cannot be recalled.

Lizbeth And oh! most of all, John, do I long to sit once more beside my Father's door cuddled close in his arms and hear the church bells ring.

John Even that, too, Lizbeth, shall you do. Your Father is waiting for you and the church bells, that tolled so sad a measure when you were taken from us, will ring a merry chime to welcome you. So let me kiss away the tears from those pale cheeks and that sad smile from your sweet lips. Hark! What was that? I hear some one groaning, Lizbeth.

Lizbeth Yes, see, it is the Brown Dwarf. When he is very angry he always groans aloud that way, and tears his tangled hair and grinds his long teeth.

John Brown Dwarf, listen to me. This beauti-

ful girl has worked for you in this terrible place five long years, while all her friends thought her dead. She is going to be well paid by you for all you have made her suffer. Go quickly, Brown Dwarf, and bring her the most beautiful gems you have in all your rich store. Then, when you have let us both up again, through the gate of glass, I'll give you your magic cap, which I still have.

Brown Dwarf (*grumbling*) Nothing else for me to do. I must get back my magic cap at any price.

(*Grumbles and mutters, as he fills John's pockets with precious stones.*)

Brown Dwarf May there be holes in every pocket that the stones will slip through and be lost.

John (*laughs*) Not a hole will you find in all my pockets, Brown Dwarf. I have too good a mother for that. Every stone you give me will reach home safely, you may be sure. There, my pockets will hold no more. Now, Lizbeth, make a bag of your apron, for you'll need it no more. The Miller's daughter will not be a waitress when she reaches her Father's home.

Brown Dwarf May the cloth be tender and the stones so heavy that it tears and your treasure is lost on the way.

Lizbeth Have no fear, Brown Dwarf. This is a new apron of the stoutest cloth. Every stone you

pour into it shall be emptied out on my Father's table.

John Now, Lizbeth, we are ready to leave this dreadful, sunless country. Pass us up through the glass gate, Brown Dwarf.

(*Brown Dwarf shows them the way upstairs.*)

John There! Our feet once more touch the soft, green grass. The rest is easy now. Do you feel the warm sunshine, Lizbeth? It is even now bringing the pink roses back to your pale cheeks.

Brown Dwarf My cap! My cap! You promised me my cap if I would let you through the glass gate. My cap! My cap! Give me my magic cap!

Lizbeth Toss it to him quickly, John, that we need not see his crooked, claw-like fingers, stretching up for it.

John Oh, yes! I was so glad to get you above ground once more, I had forgotten his cap. Here, Brown Dwarf, look sharp! I'll toss it to you.

Lizbeth Did he catch it?

John Yes and closed the glass gate. Now for home, Lizbeth, the shortest way, through the meadows.

Lizbeth Surely, John, the sunshine was never as bright as this before.

John Poor Lizbeth! It is because you have not seen it for so long.

Lizbeth But the birds, John, did their song ever before sound half so sweet?

John No, but I was never before in all my life so happy. Maybe that is it.

Lizbeth Hark! What is that other softer music I hear? It seems to come from a distance. Ah! now I know—the waves on the shore, John — the shore that used to look like silver in the sunshine.

John We are almost home, Lizbeth. Does the old house look the same to you?

Lizbeth (*runs on ahead*) There sits my Father in the door as of old. I can hardly wait to get to him. My feet carry me all too slowly. (*Cries as she throws herself upon Father.*) Father! Father! Take your Lizbeth! Hold me close!

Miller (*cries*) Lizbeth! My little daughter! Can it be after all these lonely years that I hold you to me once more? My arms have been so empty. Can it be they hold my Lizbeth at last? (*To John.*) The bells! We must have them ring their merriest chimes, because our Lizbeth, whom we mourned as dead, has come back to us. Yes, the bells shall ring right merrily — the same bells that tolled so sadly for you, my daughter — and our friends and neighbors must be told the good news at once, John. The whole village will be wild with joy.

John (*takes Lizbeth's hand. Both stand before Miller*) Now I have found her, O Miller of Rügen, is

she not mine? Will you not give me your Lizbeth for my wife?

Miller I cannot say, "No," to you John, nor do I wish to, for you will make my Lizbeth the best of husbands. Very soon we'll have a grand wedding for you in the church and all the village shall see you married.

John I mean to build a fine home for Lizbeth and me where we'll live happily all our days. And then, in the Nine Hills, I mean to build a great cross of stone over the glass gate through which the goblins come to dance in the moonlight. I do not mean that any more of our children shall be stolen by the Dwarfs and suffer as our Lizbeth has suffered.

THE MILLER OF DEE

The Story

There once lived a miller who had three children. One beautiful night he thought he would take them all for a ride.

They had no carriage, but the Miller mounted his big, bay horse, Dobbin, and pulled the children up behind him. The moon was high in the sky and it was long past the little folks' bedtime, but the Miller thought it was too fine a night to spend sleeping.

As Dobbin trotted out through the barn gate one of the children cried, "O Father, doesn't the moon look like a golden boat to-night?"

"Yes," said the Miller, "and the sky is blue enough to be the sea on which it floats."

Very soon they came to the toll gate, where an old man lived in a little house and took the toll from travellers as they passed through.

"Good-evening, O Miller of Dee! Where are you going so late at night?" asked the old man, coughing and sneezing as he always had, since the children could remember.

The Miller paid his toll, whipped up his horse and

rode on as though he had not heard the old man's question.

This made the old man very angry and he told himself the Miller could not be out so late on any good errand.

"It must be either fear or shame that kept him from answering so harmless a question as that." The old man had not been able to walk far in many a day, but he thought he must follow the Miller and find out where he was going, since he would not tell.

The moon was still high in the blue sky when the old man started out after the Miller.

The poor old man's breath came so short, that he fell to coughing and wheezing, bending almost double as he tried to hurry on.

He passed a milkmaid standing at the farmyard gate, who asked him, as he had asked the Miller, where he was going.

The old man, like the Miller, did not answer her question by so much as a word. To be sure, he had no breath to spare for talking.

He had little enough breath with which to chase after the Miller of Dee.

The milkmaid grew angry, as the old toll man had done, when her question was not answered.

"Since he'll not tell me where he is going," the milkmaid said, "I'll follow him and find out for

myself; so she started out, not stopping even to put her pail of milk in the house.

She had not gone far when she passed the minister's house.

There under an old oak tree sat the minister himself, reading.

He looked up from the book in his hand to ask the milkmaid where she was carrying her pail of milk, but she was in so great a hurry that she could not stop to answer.

The minister feared there was something wrong about her going, since she would not even say where she was bound.

Surely as a minister of the village it was his duty to know, and how could he know, unless he followed her, which he did at once.

They made quite a procession on the road, each following the other, the Miller, the old man, the milkmaid and now the minister.

The minister's wife, seeing him go out of the yard and not wishing to be left behind, made still another who followed the Miller of Dee that day.

The sexton who took care of the church, seeing both the minister and his wife go, joined the procession.

The policeman seeing the sexton start off thought there must be trouble somewhere that he ought to know about, so he came next in line. Two ragged

boys, half afraid of the policeman, ran as close at his heels as they dared, to see who was going to be arrested.

Bringing up the rear of this queer procession was a little black dog with only one eye, who trotted along because one of the ragged boys was his little master.

There was no bright moon high in the blue sky now. The clouds had gathered. The wind blew a gale and the rain fell in such torrents that the river of Dee was rising.

It was a wild night to be so far from home.

The Miller thought so, too, as he made his horse wade across the river and climb the hill to find a shorter way home.

After him, wherever he went, like boys playing "Follow the leader," the strange procession came.

Just as the clock struck twelve the Miller rode into his own yard and jumping down from old Dobbin, lifted his three children to the ground.

As he turned to go into his house, whom should he see coming into the gate, but those who had followed him on his ride that night. The pouring rain had splashed and spattered them from head to foot.

They were as muddy and wet and bedraggled as people well could be, and so tired they could hardly put one foot before the other.

When they had crawled up the hill to where the

Miller stood the minister frowned at him and said, as cross as could be, "What do you mean, man, by doing as you have done to-night?"

The Miller of Dee smiled a little and then he said, "It was a nice, cool night for a ride, so I took my three children with me on old Dobbin, as I have done many a time before."

For a moment no one said anything.

Then the Miller asked, "I would like to know, my friends, why so many of you followed me all the way?"

Every one in that strange procession, from the old man to the little black dog with only one eye, looked first at each other and then at the Miller.

It was plain to be seen no one knew what to say, but at last the minister spoke.

"The night was so fine we were out for a walk," and all the rest cried, "Yes, a nice, cool walk."

The Miller of Dee laughed softly to himself, as he went into his house, while the strange procession straggled back down the hill in the pouring rain.

THE MILLER OF DEE

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

The Miller
Three Children of the Miller
Old Tollman
Milkmaid
Minister
Minister's Wife
Sexton
Policeman
Two Ragged Boys
One Eyed Dog
Dobbin — the old bay horse.

Miller This is too beautiful a night to go to bed, children.

First Child We think so, too, Father. What shall we do? Sit in the garden?

Miller How would you all like to go for a ride?

Second Child Oh, so much, Father, but how could we? We have no carriage.

Miller We have our big bay horse, Dobbin. I'll mount him and pull you all up behind me.

Third Child Oh, Goody! Goody! What fun we'll have!

Miller Then come to the barn with me and let us start as soon as we can; for the moon is high in the sky.

First Child It is long past our bedtime now, isn't it, Father? We'll be up very late to-night.

Miller Yes, I know you will, but it is too fine a night to spend sleeping.

(*Miller mounts and pulls each child upon Dobbin's back. Each child gives a little shriek as she jumps.*)

Miller Now are we all ready?

First Child All ready, Father.

Miller Remember to keep fast hold of each other. Don't let go for a moment, or you may fall off.

Second Child Oh, Father, see the moon! Doesn't it look like a golden boat to-night?

Miller So it does and the sky is blue enough to be the sea on which it floats. Now we are coming to the toll gate.

Third Child Does that old man have to stay here all the time and take the toll, Father?

Miller Yes. He lives in that little house by the gate and takes the toll from every traveller who passes through.

First Child Does he always have a cold, Father? He coughs and sneezes as he is doing now every time I have seen him since I can remember.

Miller Sh! Sh! We are so near, he may hear you. Perhaps it is because he is so very old.

(*Miller drops toll in old man's hand and whips up horse.*)

Old Man Good-evening, O Miller of Dee! Where may you be going so late at night? (*After a pause.*) He rides on as if he had not heard me. (*Louder.*) Where are you going, O Miller of Dee? Still he does not answer me. We'll see whether you will or not, O Miller of Dee, for you have made me very angry and now I am sure you are not out on any good errand so late. He must be either afraid or ashamed not to answer so simple a question as that. I have not walked more than a block in many a day, but I think I ought to follow that Miller, if I can, and find out where he is going, since he will not tell. O my! O my! My breath is so short! This walking makes me cough so hard. And how I wheeze, but I must hurry on.

Milkmaid (*standing by gate*) O Tollman old! I did not suppose you were able to walk as far as this and up hill too. Where are you going so late? (*After a pause.*) Well, you are not very polite, old man. Can't answer a civil question. To be sure, the poor old fellow has not much breath to spare for talking, but it makes me angry not to be answered at all; but I'll find out where you are going, old man,

for I'll follow you and see for myself since you will not tell me. I'll not stop to put my pail of milk in the house. I'll carry it with me that I may lose no time.

Minister (*reading under tree in his own yard*) It is very late to be delivering milk. I wonder where the milkmaid can be going with it this time of night. (*To milkmaid.*) What brings you out so late, my pretty milkmaid? Is someone ill to whom you are carrying milk? Are you in too great a hurry, even to answer me? There is something all wrong about this, or she'd be willing to tell where she is going. I believe it is my duty as her minister to find out about this. But how can I unless I follow her? That is exactly what I'll do and at once.

Minister's Wife comes out of house into yard) I thought my husband was reading under the tree. I saw him but a moment ago. Where can he have gone? How strange that he did not come tell me he had a call to make! Ah! There he is, up the road, almost running. I'll follow and try to catch up with him, for I don't like to be left alone in the house as late as this.

Sexton Who is sick, or dying, or perhaps dead, I wonder? Both the minister and his wife are going up the road as fast as their feet will carry them. I must follow them and see who is in trouble.

Policeman What sends all these people out on the road at this late hour, I wonder. And all going the same way, and all in a great hurry. I saw the minister start out as if he were in great haste, then his wife and now the sexton. They must have had word of an accident somewhere. They may need me. How do I know but it is something I ought to attend to? If I hurry, I may be able to catch up with them and find out.

First Boy Look! There's a cop! running along the road like a deer. I'll bet he is chasing a thief. Let's hurry after him and see him arrest someone.

Second Boy Come on! Maybe there's a fight!

First Boy Or a fire!

Second Boy Run faster, can't you? Perhaps there's a runaway.

First Boy And maybe someone was killed.

One-eyed dog I'll have to trot along as fast as I can, for the boy with the red cap is my little master and I always go wherever he does, though what all this queer procession means, I don't know, nor where they are all going, nor why they are hurrying so, but then I am only a dog. Perhaps my little master knows why we are following all the rest.

(*Miller's Children speak*)

First Child Where is our bright moon now, Father?

Second Child It was high up in the blue sky when we started.

Third Child Where's it gone, Father? It was so pretty.

Miller Thick, dark clouds have covered it, so we cannot see it. I am afraid there is going to be a big storm long before we can get home.

First Child How the wind blows, Father!

Miller Yes, a perfect gale.

Second Child Here comes the rain. We'll get very wet, won't we, Father?

Miller It is coming down in such torrents the River of Dee will rise and we'll have a hard time getting home. I am sorry now we came so far, for it is a wild night to travel. Dobbin, you'll have to wade the river whether you like it or not. Hold fast to each other, and to Father, children. Now, Dobbin, you must climb this hill, for it will take us a much shorter way home.

First Child Father, there are so many people following close behind us.

Miller One or two, you mean, child, not many this wild night, for few travel this road even in the daytime.

Second Child Yes, Father, Sister did see many people. I looked just now and saw them, too.

Third Child Where can they be going? To our house, Father?

Miller No, no, child, but here we are at home and glad I am to get you back safely, though you are all as wet as drowned rats.

(*Miller jumps his children down from Dobbin's back.*)

First Child Oh, look, Father! All those people Sister saw following us are turning in the gate.

Miller Never mind. I'll stay here to meet them. You run to Mother and get dry clothes. I'll see what the people want of us.

(*Miller watching people come slowly up hill, says to himself*)

Miller They are splashed and spattered from head to foot, even worse than we were. They are as wet and bedraggled as people well can be. And so tired they can hardly put one foot before the other. What can it be that has brought them so far in this pouring rain? (*To people as they come nearer*) What can I do for you, Friends?

Minister (*frowns on Miller, speaking angrily*) You can tell us this, then. What do you mean by doing as you have done to-night?

Miller It was a nice cool night for a ride, before the storm came up, too fine a night to sleep, so I took my three children for a ride on old Dobbin's back, as I have done many a time before.

(*Long pause. All silent.*)

Miller Now I too would like to know something. Why have so many of you followed me all the way?

(*Long silence. Each looks at the other and then at Miller, not knowing what to say.*)

Minister The night was fine, as you said, and we were out for a walk.

All (*in chorus*) Yes, a nice, cool walk.

Miller (*laughs long and loud*) Good-night, my friends, you have a nice, wet walk before you, in the pouring rain. I bid you good-night, my friends.

(*Miller goes into house. Procession straggles back the way they came.*)

THE CROW'S CHILDREN

The Story

One day in early fall a hunter carrying his gun was walking through a field whistling a merry tune.

On the topmost branch of a dead tree sat the blackest of black crows, who called out to the hunter:

"I know you have started out with your gun to kill all the birds who steal your corn and I don't blame you one bit. I would, too, if I were a farmer and raised corn, but don't you dare hurt any of my family."

The hunter stood still near the dead tree, till the crow had finished, then he said:

"The only birds I am after are those that are eating up my crops. If your young ones are thieves, I promise you my gun will stop their stealing once and for all."

The Crow ruffled her black feathers as if she did not like what the hunter said.

"It is very plain to be seen that you do not know my children at all. There are no better youngsters than mine in all the world. There isn't one among them all that would steal so much as a grain of your corn or any other man's."

"Very good," said the hunter, "but how am I to know which birds are yours? Have they beautiful black satin coats like yours?"

"Oh, dear, no!" screamed the crow. "My children are much better looking birds than I am. Black satin coats, indeed! though that is a very nice way to speak of my sad colored feathers. They are the whitest birds that ever flew — as white as the snow, when first it falls, as pure as the lily.

"I cannot fail to know them now, Mother Crow," said the hunter.

"I'll remember to spare all the snow-white birds I see, for they do not steal my corn, you say."

"Not a grain! Not one grain!" cawed the crow, while the hunter went on his way, whistling a merry tune.

Bang! Bang! All day long the Crow heard his gun in the woods, but she did not worry in the least, for hadn't she told the hunter exactly how her beautiful birds looked? And hadn't he promised not to kill the snow-white things? Why need she worry indeed? But there was the Hawk, her neighbor, whose children were all such dreadful thieves. When night came the hawk might find few of her strong-winged birds would ever come home again.

And there was her other neighbor, too, that saucy blackbird, who might not whistle so merry a tune

when she found that many of her bold children had stolen their last grain of corn.

Mother Crow was feeling almost sorry for her neighbors and the trouble their wicked youngesters brought them, when she saw the hunter coming home from his day in the woods.

The poor Crow almost fell from her perch on the topmost branch of the dead tree, when she saw what was hanging down his back. She had to look the second, and even the third time, before she could believe her eyes, but it was only too true.

A string of dead crows as long as his arm was what the poor Mother saw.

Her children, her pretty birds, her good youngsters that never stole so much as a grain of corn, all dead.

"Alas! Alas!" cried the Crow. "What in the world have you done?

"This morning you promised to spare my pretty birds. This evening you have killed them, every one!"

"Your birds?" said the hunter, looking as puzzled as could be. "How can they be your birds? I found these ugly birds stuffing themselves in my cornfield and you told me that your children would not steal so much as one grain. These birds I killed are as black and homely as any that ever flew. You said I'd be sure to know yours, because they were

as white as snow, when first it falls. How can it be, then, that I have killed your birds?"

The Mother Crow was so angry she screamed at the hunter. "You are the stupidest man I ever knew! Go away! Go away! I say. Get out of my sight! No one but a Mother knows how good and fair her children are."

"Oh, now, I see! I see!" said the hunter. "But I can't see quite as you do, however hard I try, for it is only a Mother who can love her children so well that black looks white to her."

THE CROW'S CHILDREN

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Hunter
Mother Crow

Crow (*on topmost branch of dead tree*) Who is this comes walking through the field so early? Not Farmer Gray, I know, for he never whistles so merry a tune as that. He must be a hunter, for I see he is carrying a gun. But what would he find to hunt about here unless it were the thieving birds that steal all the farmer's corn. That must be what he is going to do. (*Calls to hunter.*) I know you have started out with your gun to kill all the thieving birds that steal your corn and I don't blame you one bit. It is exactly what I'd do myself, if I were a farmer and raised corn for market. But, Mr. Hunter, don't you dare hurt so much as a feather of any of my family.

Hunter The only birds I am after, the only birds at which my gun shall be aimed, are those that are eating up my crops faster than I can raise them. If your young ones are thieves, I promise you my gun will stop their stealing once and for

all. They'll never live to scratch up another grain of corn.

Crow Your words do not please me, Mr. Hunter. It is very plain to be seen that you do not know my children at all. There are no better youngsters than mine in all the world. I like not to hear them called thieves, for there is not one among them who would steal so much as a grain of your corn or any other man's.

Hunter Very good, I'm glad to hear so good a report of any birds, but how am I to know which birds are yours? Have they beautiful black satin coats like yours?

Crow Oh, dear, no! Oh, dear, no! Indeed they have not! If you call my old black coat beautiful you should see theirs. If you admire mine, I do not know what you will say, when you see theirs My children are all much better looking birds than I am. Black satin coats indeed! Though that is a very nice way to speak of my sad colored feathers. My children are the whitest birds that ever flew, as white as the snow when first it falls, as pure as the lily.

Hunter Well, then, I cannot fail to know them, now, Mother Crow, if I but use my eyes. I'll not forget to spare all the snow-white birds I see, for they are your children, and do not steal my corn, you say.

Crow Not a grain! Not one grain of your corn or any other farmer's corn.

Hunter Very well, Mother Crow. Now I must be on my way again, for I have a long day's work before me, to catch and kill, before the sun sets; all the bold thieving birds that have been helping themselves to my corn, every day since it was planted.

Scene II

Time: *Late in afternoon of same day.*
Place: *Same tree where crow was sitting in morning. Crow still seated on topmost bough.*

Crow There it goes again! Bang! Bang! Bang! All day long I have heard that hunter's gun in the woods. If I had not told the hunter exactly how my beautiful children look, I'd worry every time I heard his gun, for fear he had shot some of them by mistake. But now, I do not have an anxious moment, when I hear his gun banging in the woods, for he promised me not to kill any of my snow-white darlings. But I can't help feeling sorry for my neighbor, the Hawk. Her children are all such dreadful thieves. The hunter will surely catch some of them stealing his corn, for they do it from morning till night. So I am afraid when night comes the poor Mother Hawk will find that few of

her strong-winged birds will ever come home to her again.

Then there is that other neighbor of mine, the blackbird. Though she has been very saucy and rude to me more than once, I can't help feeling sad for her. Whistle that merry tune as long as you can, poor Mother Blackbird. Your tune will not be so gay when night comes, I fear. The farmers all say there are no thieves in the fields any bolder than her children, when night comes, and it is time for her to call her brood home, she'll find many of her young ones will not answer, will never again come at her call, nor will they ever steal again. They have stolen and eaten their last grain of corn, many of her children, I fear. My poor neighbors! How sorry I am for you ! How fortunate a Mother is to have children like mine! How happy and thankful I ought to be. Wicked children can bring so much trouble to their Mothers (*screams*). Oh! Oh! It can not be! I almost fell from my high perch at what I thought I saw, but I must be mistaken. It can not be true. My eyes must deceive me. It is the hunter, the very same hunter with whom I was talking this morning. Of that I am sure, and — hanging down his back — oh, no, no, it cannot be! I will not believe it. Let me look again, the second time. My old eyes may not be very bright to-day. I'll not believe this dreadful thing until I look the

third time. The air to-day is not very clear for seeing things at a distance. Oh, my pretty, pretty children! It is only too true. Mother's snow-white birds all dead. My good youngsters, who never stole so much as a grain of corn, killed, instead of those bold, thieving birds who do nothing but steal from morning till night. What can it all mean? (*Shrieks at hunter.*) Alas! Alas! What dreadful thing is this you have done? What terrible mistake have you made? Or are you a bad, wicked man whose promise is good for nothing? Only this morning under this same tree, you promised to spare my pretty birds. This evening you have killed my beautiful children, every one.

Hunter Your birds? I do not understand you. Of what birds are you speaking?

Crow Of my beautiful birds, to be sure, that you promised not to kill, and then shot at them all day.

Hunter How can these be your birds, Mother Crow? I found these ugly fellows, stuffing themselves in my cornfields, so I felt sure they could not be yours, for you told me your birds would not steal so much as a grain of corn. These birds on my back are as black and ugly as any that ever flew, so I was sure they could not be yours, for you said yours were as white as the snow when first it falls — as pure as the lily. How, how can it possibly be that I have killed your children, Mother Crow?

Crow You are the stupidest man that ever lived, the dullest man that ever was born, the dumbest thing I ever knew! Go away! Go away! I say. Out of my sight before I tear your eyes out with my claws, your blind eyes that cannot tell black from white. Oh, you cruel man! You wicked man! You have broken my heart! My beautiful children! My pretty birds! No one but your Mother knew how good and fair you were.

Hunter Oh, now I see at last! I see, but I can't see quite as you do, however hard I try. There is no one but a Mother who can love her children so well that black looks white as the snow when first it falls, as pure as the lily to her.

Crow Out of my sight, I say, you blind man! Out of my sight, before I scratch out your eyes that can't tell one color from another! Oh, my pretty snow-white birds! My good children! How can Mother ever live without you!

KING SOLOMON AND THE ANTS

The Story

Once there lived a great king whose name was Solomon. His people thought him the wisest man in all the world. Not far from King Solomon's country lived a Queen, called the Queen of Sheba.

She had heard Solomon called the richest as well as the wisest of Kings.

So the Queen of Sheba came to pay King Solomon a visit that she might see whether all the wonderful things she had heard of him were true.

One day King Solomon with all his soldiers rode out of the city with the Queen of Sheba that she might see the beautiful country before she went back to her home.

She was a very proud Queen and always dressed in robes of purple and gold. She rode at the king's side and sat her beautiful horse as well as the king did his.

The Queen of Sheba had heard that King Solomon knew the language which all the birds and animals and insects spoke.

People said he was so wise he understood everything that was said by all the creatures that lived upon the earth.

The great and small, those that walked and those that swam, those that flew and those that crawled, spoke a language that King Solomon knew.

As this wise King and proud Queen rode on that day, with a long line of soldiers following, their path led across an ant hill.

King Solomon heard the small Ant folk say: "Here comes that king men say is so wise and good and just. How can he be, when he means to crush us and our homes in the dust? He does not seem to see that he will ride over us, but perhaps he would not care if he did.

The great king, who had been listening to all the Ant folk said, told the Queen of Sheba what he had heard them say.

The Queen's eyes opened wide with surprise that he was able to understand what these little black bugs said.

"O king!" she whispered. "They should be happy even to be stepped upon by one so wise and great as you. How do these crawling things dare speak against you whom God gave a crown, against you, to whom even Kings bend the knee."

"No," said King Solomon, shaking his head very slowly. "The wise and strong should take care of the weak. That is the right way," and, as he spoke, he turned his horse sharply aside.

All the long line of soldiers saw what their King

had done, and, though they did not know why, they all did the same. Every rider turned his horse sharply aside, when he came to the ant hill, so neither the ants nor their home were harmed in the least.

The Queen of Sheba bent her proud head.

"O King!" she said, "now I know why people call you good and wise and just. No wonder this country is a happy one, when its ruler listens more carefully to the troubles of his poor people than all the flattering things the rich may say to him.

KING SOLOMON AND THE ANTS

The Play

Dramatis Personæ

Queen of Sheba
King Solomon
Soldier
Ants

Soldier I bring greetings to the great King Solomon from the Queen of Sheba, who is even now on her way to pay a visit to her neighbor-king.

Solomon Of the beauty of your Queen I have often heard. It is good news indeed, and a very great honor that she is about to pay us a visit. I, myself, with my soldiers, will go forth to meet and welcome her. Soldiers! To horse! Every man of you! and bring to me my milk-white steed with its crimson trappings, for the best and the finest we have in our kingdom will be none to good in which to welcome this beautiful Queen.

Soldier The milk-white steed with its crimson trappings waits for you to mount, my lord.

Solomon Then, let us start forth with all speed, for I would welcome the Queen of Sheba just without the walls of the city.

(*All ride off together in haste.*)

Second Soldier We were none too soon, my lord, for look! the beautiful Queen is already in sight, upon the road with her attendants following.

Solomon A Queen indeed she is! One would know that by the way she sits her beautiful horse. A proud Queen, too, I know by the way she holds her lovely head. She is dressed as a Queen should be, too, in robes of purple and gold, even on this dusty road. (*Says to Queen*) Welcome to the beautiful Queen of Sheba! Welcome to my kingdom! We are honored indeed to receive a visit from one so great.

Queen Greetings! O King! I live not far from your country and I have wished for some time to pay you a visit and see for myself, if all the wonderful things I hear of you are true.

Solomon What are some of these wonderful things you have heard of me? I am glad of them, whatever they are, since they have brought me a visit from so beautiful and good a Queen.

Queen Your people think you are the wisest man in the world. I have heard you called the richest as well.

Solomon My people love me and think everything I do is right. Perhaps they talk too much of my wisdom to those who do not know and love me as they do. My kingdom is a very rich one. I have more gold than any man needs.

Queen But that is not all. The most wonderful

thing I heard of you is yet to come: that you knew the language which all the birds and animals and insects speak. People say you are so wise that you can understand everything that is said by all creatures that live upon the earth, great and small, those that walk and those that swim, those that fly and those that crawl, you understand the language that all of these creatures speak. Is it true, O King, that you are even as wise as that?

Solomon It is not as hard as you think it is to study languages different from the one we speak. It does not take a very wise man to understand what birds and animals and insects are saying, if he is willing to watch them and listen patiently for awhile.

Queen What a beautiful part of the country this is through which we are riding.

Solomon We'll ride in this direction a little farther before we turn towards home, so you may look down into the valley.

(*While King and Queen ride on in silence, ant folk talk among themselves.*)

First Ant Here comes that king men say is so wise and good and just.

Second Ant How can he be, I'd like to know, when he means in another moment to crush us and our homes in the dust? When by turning his horse but a few inches out of the path, he need not

kill us nor ruin the homes we have worked so hard to make.

Third Ant He does not seem to see that he will ride over us, if he keeps on.

Fourth Ant Perhaps he would not care if he did ride over us, killing us and crushing our homes.

Fourth Ant O. Ants! we have wronged a good kind king when we said he'd not care if his horse's hoofs did trample us in the ground, for see what he has done!

Fifth Ant Turned his own horse sharply aside, and of course every soldier will do whatever his king does, though he may not know why.

Sixth Ant Yes, every soldier all down the long line, turns his horse sharply aside, when he comes to the place where the king turned his.

Seventh Ant He is the wise good king we have always heard he was, to be sure.

Eighth Ant We were only some little black ants to him, but he went out of his way to spare our lives and our homes.

Ninth Ant What other king would ever do that? I never heard of one that would.

Solomon Why are you so silent, O Queen? Am I taking you too long a ride? Perhaps you are tired. We can turn back any time you wish.

Queen I am not in the least tired, and do not wish to turn back, but I have been wondering why

you and all your soldiers turned your horses aside when you came to a certain place in the road.

Solomon Did you see those little black ants we just now passed? As we came towards them, I heard one say, "Here comes that king men say is so wise and kind. How can he be, when he means in a moment to crush us and our homes in the dust?" Another said, "He does not seem to see that he will ride over us," and still another thought I'd not care if I did kill them and ruin their homes. I would have turned my horse aside for the busy little things, if I had not heard a word they said, they are such patient toilers.

Queen O King! The ants ought to be happy even to be stepped on by one as wise and great as you. How dare those crawling things speak one word against you, whom God has given a crown! You, to whom even kings bend the knee!

Solomon (*shakes head slowly*) No, no. The wise and strong ought to take care of the weak. That is the right way.

Queen My proud head is bowed before you, O King! Now I know why people call you good and wise and great. No wonder this country is a happy one. It is not strange your people love you as they do. There are few rulers in the world who listen more carefully to the troubles of his poor than to all the flattering things the rich may say to him.