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Author: Adelheid Wette

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HÄNSEL AND GRETEL: A FAIRY OPERA IN THREE ACTS ***

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GRAND OPERA UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. HEINRICH CONRIED

LIBRETTO

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Hänsel und Gretel

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HÄNSEL AND GRETTEL

A FAIRY OPERA IN THREE ACTS

BY

ADELHEID WETTE

The Music by Engelbert Humperdinck

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ARGUMENT.

Hänsel and Gretel is an opera in three acts, the music by Engelbert Humperdinck and the libretto by Adelheid Wette. It is the German version of the old nursery legend—Babes in the Wood.

The first scene discloses a wretched homestead. The two children, Hänsel and Gretel, are at work—the boy making brooms and the girl knitting stockings. They both complain of feeling very hungry, and there isn't a thing in the house. Yes, there's a jug of milk that will make nice blanc-mange when mother comes home. Hänsel tastes it and Gretel raps his fingers. He says he won't work any more and proposes they dance instead. Gretel is delighted. He is very awkward at first but she teaches him the steps and they are getting along so famously that they whirl around the room and fall exhausted on the floor. At this moment the mother enters and she is so angry at seeing them do no work that she boxes their ears for it. In her excitement she gives the milk pitcher a push. It falls off the table, breaks in pieces, and spills all the milk. At this she is beside herself and seizes a basket and tells the children to go to the wood and pick strawberries. They must not come home till the basket is full. They run off while she, weary of life, sits sobbing herself to sleep.

The father is heard in the distance with a joyous song and enters in a joyful mood. He wakes up his unhappy wife to tell that he has sold all his brooms at the fair for splendid prices and he shows his basket full of provisions. Both are thus in fine humor when he asks where the children are. She says she sent them away in disgrace to the Ilsenstein. The Ilsenstein! he exclaims, where the witches ride on broomsticks and devour little children. Exclaiming "Oh horror!" she runs out of the house, he after her, to find Hänsel and Gretel.

The second act shows a forest. Gretel is making a garland of wild roses while Hänsel is looking for strawberries. In the background is the Ilsenstein. It is sunset. Hänsel crowns Gretel queen of the wood and she allows him to taste a strawberry. He gives her one in return and little by little they devour them all. Then they are frightened. They want to pick more but it is getting too dark. They want to leave but cannot find the way. Gretel fears being in the dark but Hänsel is very brave. She sees faces in trees and stumps and he calls out to reassure her. Echo answers and he grows frightened too. They huddle together as a thick mist arises which hides the background. Gretel, terror-stricken, falls on her knees and hides behind Hänsel. At this moment a little man appears, as the mist rises, and quiets them. It is the Sandman and he sings them to slumber. Half awake they say their evening prayer and sink down on the moss in each other's arms. A dazzling light then appears, the mist rolls itself into a staircase and angels pass down and group themselves about the two sleeping children.

In the third act the scene is the same, the mist still hiding the background. The Dawn Fairy shakes dewdrops on the children. They wake, but Hänsel very lazily. They both have had dreams of angels coming to see them with shining wings. The mist now clears away and in the background is seen the witches' house with a fence of gingerbread figures. There are also seen an oven and a cage. Hänsel wants to go inside and Gretel draws him back. But Hänsel says the angels beguiled their footsteps and why shouldn't they nibble a bit at the cottage? They tiptoe to the fence and break off a bit of the cake cautiously. The witch voice from within tells them to go on nibbling. They like the gingerbread. It suits them famously and apparently suits her too as she watches them from her window.

But she comes out of the house as they are joyously laughing and throws a rope about Hänsel's neck and caresses them. Hänsel tries to get away and calls her names, while she goes on saying how she loves them both—they are such dainty morsels. Hänsel tries to run away and takes Gretel with him. But the witch casts a spell on them and they stand stock-still. Then she leads Hänsel to the cage and shuts him in and gives him almonds and raisins to fatten him up. She loosens Gretel with the magic stick and says how nice and plump she'll be when she's roasted brown. She opens the oven and puts more fagots under it and says the fire will soon be ripe to push Gretel in. In her joy she rides wildly round on a broomstick while Gretel watches from the house.

The witch calls Gretel out and opens the oven door. Hänsel tells Gretel to beware and the witch tells her to peep in the oven. Gretel pretends she does not understand. She secretly disenchants Hänsel so that when the witch bends over and peeps into the oven they give her a push and in she goes. Then they dance wildly about. Hänsel throws sweetmeats out of the window. The oven cracks open and falls into bits, while groups of children suddenly surround Hänsel and Gretel. Then they disenchant the gingerbread children who are very grateful. As they are all dragging the gingerbread witch about, the Father and Mother come in and are overjoyed at finding their children again.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PETER, Broom-maker.
GERTRUDE, his wife.
HÄNSEL,
GRETEL, their children.
THE WITCH who eats children.
SANDMAN, the Sleep Fairy.
DEWMAN, the Dawn Fairy.
CHILDREN.
THE FOURTEEN ANGELS.

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL.

ERSTES BILD.

DAHEIM.

Erste Scene.

(Dürrtige Stube. Im Hintergrunde rechts eine niedrige Thür, in der Mitte ein kleines Fenster mit Aussicht in den Wald. Links ein Herd mit einem Rauchfang darüber. Gegenüber an der rechten Wand hängen Besen in verschiedenen Formen. Hänsel, an der Thüre mit Besenbinden, Gretel, am Herde mit Strumpfstricken beschäftigt, sitzen auf Schemeln einander gegenüber.)

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL.

ACT I.

AT HOME.

Scene I.

(Small, poorly furnished room. In the background a door, a small window near it with a view into the forest. On the left a fireplace, with chimney above it. On the walls many brooms of various sizes. Hänsel sits near the door, making brooms, and Gretel opposite him by the fireplace, knitting a stocking.)

GRETEL.

GRETEL.

Suse, liebe Suse,
was raschelt im Stroh?
Die Gänse gehn barfuss
und haben kein' Schuh.
Der Schuster hat's Leder,
kein'n Leisten dazu.
Drum kann er den Gänselein
auch machen kein' Schuh.

HÄNSEL.

Eia popeia,
das ist eine Not!
Wer schenkt mir einen Dreier
zu Zucker und Brot?
Verkauf ich mein Bettlein
und leg mich auf's Stroh,
sticht mich keine Feder
und beisst mich kein Floh!

(Wirft den Besen in eine Ecke und springt auf.)

Ach, käm doch die Mutter nun endlich nach Haus!

GRETEL.

Auch ich halt's kaum noch vor Hunger aus.

HÄNSEL.

Seit Wochen nichts als trocken Brot;
ist das ein Elend! Potz schwere Not!

GRETEL.

Still, Hänsel, denk daran, was Vater sagt,
wenn Mutter manchmal so verzagt:
„Wenn die Not auf's höchste steigt,
Gott der Herr die Hand euch reicht!“

HÄNSEL.

Jawohl, das klingt ganz schön und glatt,
aber leider wird man davon nicht satt.
Ach, Gretel, wie lang' ist's doch schon her,
dass wir nichts Gutes geschmauset mehr!
Eierfladen und Butterwecken—
kaum weiss ich noch, wie die thun schmecken.

(Dem Weinen nahe.)

Ach, Gretel, ich wollt'...

GRETEL *(ihm den Mund zuhaltend)*.

Still, nicht verdriesslich sein:
Gedulde dich fein, sieh freundlich drein!
Dies lange Gesicht,—hu, welcher Graus!
Siehst ja wie der leibhaftige Griesgram aus!
Griesgram, hinaus!
Fort aus dem Haus!
Ich will dich lehren,
Herz zu beschweren,
Sorgen zu mehren,
Freuden zu wehren:

Griesgram, Griesgram, greulicher Wicht,
griesiges, grämiges Galgengesicht,
packe dich, trolle dich, schäbiger Wicht!

HÄNSEL.

Griesgram, hinaus!
Halt's nicht mehr aus!
Immer mich plagen,
Hungertuch nagen,
muss ja verzagen,

Susy, little Susy, pray what is the news?
The geese are running barefoot, because they've no shoes!

The cobbler has leather, and plenty to spare,
why can't he make the poor goose a new pair?

HÄNSEL.

Then they'll have to go barefoot!
Eia-popeia, pray what's to be done?
Who'll give me milk and sugar, for bread I have none?
I'll go back to bed and I'll lie there all day;
where there's nought to eat, then there's nothing to pay!

GRETEL.

Then we'll have to go hungry!

HÄNSEL.

If mother would only come home again!
Yes, I am so hungry,
I don't know what to do!
For weeks I've eaten nought but bread—
It's very hard, it is indeed!

GRETEL.

Hush, Hänsel, don't forget what father said,
when mother, too, wished she were dead:
"When past bearing is our grief,
Then 'tis Heaven will send relief!"

HÄNSEL.

Yes, yes, that sounds all very fine,
but you know off maxims we cannot dine!
O Gret, it would be such a treat
if we had something nice to eat!
Eggs and butter and suet paste,
I've almost forgotten how they taste.

(Nearly crying.)

O Gretel, I wish—

GRETEL.

Hush, don't give way to grumps;
have patience awhile, no doleful dumps!
This woful face, whew! what a sight!
Looks like a horrid old crosspatch fright!

Crosspatch, away!

Leave me, I pray!

Just let me reach you,

quickly I'll teach you

how to make trouble,

soon mount to double!

Crosspatch, crosspatch,

what is the use,

growling and grumbling,

full of abuse?

Off with you, out with you,

shame on you, goose!

HÄNSEL.

Crosspatch, away!

Hard lines, I say.

HÄNSEL.

When I am hungry,
surely I can say so,
cannot allay so,
can't chase away so!

mag's nicht ertragen!
Griesgram, Griesgram, greulicher Wicht,
griesiges, grämiges Galgengesicht,
packe dich, trolle dich, schäbiger Wicht!

GRETEL.

So recht! Und willst du nun nicht mehr klagen,
so will ich dir auch ein Geheimnis sagen.

HÄNSEL.

Ein Geheimnis? Wird wohl was Rechtes sein!

GRETEL.

Ja, hör nur, Brüderchen! Darfst dich schon freun,
Guck her in den Topf, Milch ist darin,
die schenkte uns heute die Nachbarin.
Mutter kocht uns, kommt sie nach Haus,
gewiss einen leckeren Reisbrei daraus.

HÄNSEL (*mit Juchzen*).

Reisbrei, Reisbrei, herrlicher Brei!
Giebt's Reisbrei, da ist Hänsel dabei!
Wie dick ist der Rahm auf der Milch!
Lass schmecken!

(*Nascht mit dem Finger.*)

Herrjemine, den möcht' ich ganz verschlecken!

GRETEL.

Wie, Hänsel, naschen? Schämst du dich nicht?
Fort mit den Fingern, du naschhafter Wicht!

(*Giebt ihm eins auf die Finger.*)

Und jetzt an die Arbeit zurück, geschwind,
dass wir beizeiten fertig sind!
Kommt Mutter nach Haus, und wir thaten nicht recht,
Dann, weisst du, geht es den Faulpelzen schlecht.

HÄNSEL.

Arbeiten? Brr! Wo denkst du hin?
Danach steht mir jetzt nicht der Sinn.
Immer mich plagen, das fällt mir nicht ein,
jetzt lass uns tanzen und fröhlich sein!

GRETEL (*entzückt*).

Tanzen? Das wär' auch mir eine Lust!
Dazu ein Liedchen aus froher Brust,
wie's uns die Muhme gelehrt zu singen:
Tanzliedchen soll jetzt lustig erklingen!

(*Klatscht in die Hände.*)

Brüderchen, komm, tanz' mit mir,
beide Händchen reich' ich Dir;
einmal hin, einmal her,
rund herum, es ist nicht schwer!

HÄNSEL.

Tanzen soll ich armer Wicht,
Schwesterlein, und kann es nicht.
Darum zeig' mir, wie es Brauch,
dass ich tanzen lerne auch!

GRETEL.

Mit den Füßchen tapp tapp tapp,
mit den Händchen klapp klapp klapp,
einmal hin, einmal her,

GRETEL.

If I am hungry,
I'll never say so,
will not give way so,
chase it away so!

GRETEL.

That's right. Now, if you leave off complaining,
I'll tell you a most delightful secret!

HÄNSEL.

O delightful! it must be something nice!

GRETEL.

Well, listen, brotherkin—won't you be glad!
Look here in the jug, here is fresh milk,
'twas given to-day by our neighbour,
and mother, when she comes back home,
will certainly make us a rice-blancmange.

HÄNSEL (*joyfully dances round the room*).

Rice-blancmange!
When blancmange is anywhere near,
then Hänsel, Hänsel, Hänsel, is there!
How thick is the cream on the milk;
let's taste it! O Gemini!
wouldn't I like to drink it!

(*Tasting it.*)

GRETEL.

What, Hänsel, tasting? Aren't you ashamed?
Out with your fingers quick, greedy boy!

(*Gives him a rap on the fingers.*)

Get back to your work again, be quick,
that we may both have done in time!
If mother comes and we haven't done right,
then badly it will fare with us to-night!

HÄNSEL.

Work again? No, not for me!
That's not my idea at all;
it doesn't suit me! It's such a bore!
Dancing is jollier far, I'm sure!

GRETEL (*delighted*).

Dancing, dancing! O yes, that's better far;
and sing a song to keep us in time!
One that our grandmother used to sing us:
sing then, and dance in time to the singing!

(*Claps her hands.*)

Brother, come and dance with me,
both my hands I offer thee;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back again!

HÄNSEL (*tries to do it, but awkwardly*).

I would dance, but don't know how,
when to jump, and when to bow;
show me what I ought to do,
so that I may dance like you.

GRETEL.

rund herum, es ist nicht schwer.

HÄNSEL.

Mit den Füßchen tapp tapp tapp,
mit den Händchen klapp klapp klapp,
einmal hin, einmal her,
rund herum, es ist nicht schwer.

GRETEL.

Ei, das hast Du gut gemacht,
ei, das hätt' ich nicht gedacht!
Seht mir doch den Hänsel an,
wie der tanzen lernen kann!

Mit dem Köpfchen nick nick nick,
mit dem Fingerchen tick tick tick,
einmal hin, einmal her,
rund herum, es ist nicht schwer!

HÄNSEL.

Mit dem Köpfchen nick nick nick,
mit dem Fingerchen tick tick tick,
einmal hin, einmal her,
rund herum, es ist nicht schwer!

GRETEL.

Hänsel, komm und gieb mal acht,
wie's die Gretel weiter macht!
Lass uns Arm in Arm verschränken,
unsre Schrittchen paarweis lenken!

Ich liebe Tanz und Fröhlichkeit
und bin nicht gern allein;
ich bin kein Freund von Traurigkeit,
und fröhlich will ich sein.

Tralala, tralala, tralala la la,
Dreh dich herum, mein lieber Hans!

(Beide umtanzen sich gegenseitig.)

GRETEL.

Komm her zu mir, komm her zu mir,
zum Ringelreigentanz!

HÄNSEL.

Geh weg von mir, geh weg von mir,
ich bin der stolze Hans!
Mit kleinen Mädchen tanz ich nicht,
die sind mir viel zu dumm!

GRETEL.

Geh, dummer Hans, geh, stolzer Hans,
ich krieg dich doch herum!
Tralala, tralala, tralala la la,
dreh dich herum, mein lieber Hans!

HÄNSEL.

Ach, Schwesterlein, ach, Gretelein,
Du hast im Strumpf ein Loch!

GRETEL.

Ach Brüderlein, ach Hänselein,
Du willst mich hänseln noch!
Mit bösen Buben tanz ich nicht,
das ist mir viel zu dumm!

HÄNSEL.

Nicht böse sein, lieb Schwesterlein,

With your foot you tap, tap, tap;
with your hands you clap, clap, clap;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back again!

HÄNSEL.

With your hands you clap, clap, clap;
with your foot you tap, tap, tap;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back again!

GRETEL.

That was very good indeed,
O, I'm sure you'll soon succeed!
Try again, and I can see
Hänsel soon will dance like me!

(Claps her hands.)

With your head you nick, nick, nick;
with your fingers you click, click, click;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back again.

HÄNSEL.

With your head you nick, nick, nick;
with your fingers you click, click, click;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back again!

GRETEL.

Brother, watch what next I do,
you must do it with me too.
You to me your arm must proffer,
I shall not refuse your offer!
Come!

BOTH.

What I enjoy is dance and jollity,
love to have my fling;
in fact, I like frivolity,
and all that kind of thing.

GRETEL.

Tralala, tralala, tralala!
Come and have a twirl, my dearest Hänsel,
come and have a turn with me, I pray;
come here to me, come here to me,
I'm sure you can't say nay!

HÄNSEL (*gruffly*).

Go away from me, go away from me,
I'm much too proud for you:
with little girls I do not dance,
and so, my dear, adieu!

GRETEL.

Go, stupid Hans, conceited Hans,
you'll see I'll make you dance!
Tralala, tralala, tralala!
Come and have a twirl, my dearest Hänsel,
come and have a turn with me, I pray!

HÄNSEL.

ich krieg Dich doch herum!
Tralala, tralala, tralala, la la,
Dreh dich doch herum, mein Gretelein!

HÄNSEL.

Tanz lustig, heissa, lustig tanz!
Lass dich's nicht gereu'n;
und ist der Strumpf auch nicht mehr ganz,
die Mutter strickt dir 'n neu'n!
Dreh dich doch herum!
Sei nicht so dumm!
Tralala, tralala u. s. w.

GRETEL.

Tanz lustig, heissa, lustig tanz!
Lass dich's nicht gereu'n;
und ist der Schuh' auch nicht mehr ganz,
der Schuster flickt dir 'n neu'n!
Dreh dich doch herum!
Sei nicht so dumm!
Tralala, tralala u. s. w.

(Mit verschlungenen Händen umtanzen sie sich immer ausgelassener, bis sie beide übereinander zu Boden purzeln. In diesem Augenblick geht die Thür auf.)

O Gretel dear, O sister dear,
your stocking has a hole!

GRETEL.

O Hänsel dear, O brother dear,
d'you take me for a fool?
With naughty boys I do not dance,
and so, my dear, adieu!

HÄNSEL.

Now don't be cross,
you silly goose,
you'll see I make you dance!

GRETEL.

Tralala, tralala, tralala!
Come and have a twirl, my dearest Hänsel,
come and have a turn with me, I pray.
Sing lustily hurrah! hurrah!
while I dance with you;
and if the stockings are in holes,
why, mother'll knit some new!

HÄNSEL.

Tralala, tralala, tralala!
Sing lustily hurrah! hurrah!
while I dance with you;
and if the shoes are all in holes,
why mother'll buy some new!
Tralala, tralala, tralala!

(They dance round each other as before. They then seize each other's hands and go round in a circle, quicker and quicker, until at length they lose their balance and tumble over one another on the floor.)

Zweite Scene.

MUTTER *(mit einer Kiepe auf dem Rücken)*.

Holla!

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL *(erschreckt aufspringend)*.

Himmel, die Mutter!

(Verlegenheit.)

MUTTER.

Was ist das für eine Geschichte?

GRETEL.

Der Hänsel....

HÄNSEL.

Die Gretel....

GRETEL.

Er wollte....

HÄNSEL.

Ich sollte....

MUTTER *(in Zorn ausbrechend)*.

Scene II.

(At this moment the door opens, the mother appears, whereupon the children jump up quickly.)

MOTHER.

Hallo!

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL.

Heavens! Here's mother!

MOTHER.

What is all this disturbance?

GRETEL.

'Twas Hänsel, he wanted—

HÄNSEL.

'Twas Gretel, she said I—

MOTHER.

Silence, idle and ill-behaved children!

(The mother comes in, unstraps the basket, and puts it down.)

Call you it working, yodelling and singing?
As though 'twere fair time, hopping and springing!

Wartet, ihr ungezogenen Wichte!

(Setzt ihre Kiepe nieder.)

Nennt ihr das Arbeit? Johlen und singen?
Wie auf der Kirmes tanzen und springen?
Indes die Eltern vom frühen Morgen
bis spät in die Nacht sich mühen und sorgen?
Dass dich! *(Giebt Hänseln einen Puff.)*

Lasst seh'n, was habt ihr beschickt?

—Wie, Gretel, den Strumpf nicht fertig gestrickt?

—Und du?—Du, Schlingel! In all den Stunden
nicht mal die wenigen Besen gebunden?

Ihr unnützigen Rangen! Den Stock will ich holen,
den Faulpelz werd' ich euch beiden versohlen!

*(In ihrem Eifer hinter den Kindern her stösst sie den
Milchtopf vom Tisch, dass er klirrend zu Boden fällt.)*

Jesses! Nun auch den Topf noch zerbrochen!

(Weinend.)

Was soll ich nun zum Abend kochen?

*(Besieht ihren mit Milch begossenen Rock; Hänsel
kichert verstohlen.)*

Was, Bengel, du lachst mich noch aus?

*(Mit dem Stock hinter Hans her, der zur offenen Thür
hinausrennt.)*

Wart, kommt nur der Vater nach Haus—

*(Reisst einen kleinen Korb von der Wand und drängt
ihn Gretel in die Hand.)*

Marsch, fort—in den Wald!

Dort sucht mir Erdbeeren!—Nun, wird es bald?

*(Treibt auch Gretel zur Stube hinaus und droht mit
dem Stocke den sich furchtsam umschauenden
Kindern.)*

Und bringt ihr den Korb nicht voll bis zum Rand,
so hau ich euch, dass ihr fliegt an die Wand!

(Setzt sich erschöpft an den Tisch.)

Da liegt nun der gute Topf in Scherben!
Ja, blinder Eifer bringt immer Verderben.—
Herrgott, wirf Geld herab! Nichts hab' ich zu leben,
kein Krümchen den Würmern zu essen zu geben;
kein Tröpfchen im Topfe, kein Krüstchen im Schrank,
schon lange nichts als Wasser zum Trank.

(Stützt den Kopf mit der Hand.)

Müde bin ich—müde zum Sterben—
Herrgott, wirf Geld herab— —

(Legt den Kopf auf den Arm und schläft ein.)

Dritte Scene.

(Man hört eine Stimme von draussen.)

Ach, wir armen, armen Leute!
Alle Tage so wie heute:
In dem Beutel ein grosses Loch
und im Magen ein gröss'res noch—
Rallalala, rallalala,
Hunger ist der beste Koch!

And while your parents from early morning
till late at night are slaving and toiling!
Take that!

(Gives Hänsel a box on the ear.)

Now come, let's see what you've done.
Why, Gretel, your stocking not ready yet?
And you, you lazybones, have you nothing to show?
Pray how many besoms have you finished?
I'll fetch my stick, you useless children,
and make your idle fingers tingle!

*(In her indignation at the children she gives the milk-
jug a push, so that it falls off the table with a smash.)*

Gracious! there goes the jug all to pieces!
What now can I cook for supper?

*(She looks at her dress, down which the milk is
streaming. Hänsel covertly titters.)*

How, saucy, how dare you laugh?

*(Goes with a stick after Hänsel, who runs out at the
open door.)*

Wait, wait till the father comes home!

*(With sudden energy she snatches a basket from the
wall, and pokes it into Gretel's hands.)*

Off, off, to the wood!

There seek for strawberries! Quick, away!
And if you don't bring the basket brimful,
I'll whip you so that you'll both run away!

*(The children run off into the wood. She sits down
exhausted by the table.)*

Alas! there my poor jug lies all in pieces!
Yes, blind excitement only brings ruin.
O Heaven, send help to me!
Nought have I to give them—

(Sobbing.)

No bread, not a crumb, for my starving children!
No crust in the cupboard, no milk in the pot—

(Resting her head on her hands.)

Weary am I, weary of living!
Father, send help to me!

(Lays her head down on her arm and drops to sleep.)

Scene III.

(A voice is heard in the distance.)

Tralala, tralala! little mother, here am I!
Tralala, tralala! bringing luck and jollity!

(Rather nearer.)

O, for you and me, poor mother,
every day is like the other;

(Am Fenster wird der Kopf des Vaters sichtbar, der während des Folgenden in angeheitertem Zustande mit einem Kober auf dem Rücken in die Stube tritt.)

Ja, ihr Reichen könnt euch laben!
Wir, die nichts zu essen haben,
nagen, ach, die ganze Woch',
sieben Tag an einem Knoch'!

Rallalala, rallalala,
Hunger ist der beste Koch!
Ach, wir sind ja gern zufrieden,
denn das Glück ist so verschieden,
aber, aber wahr ist's doch:
Armut ist ein schweres Joch!
Rallalala, rallalala,
Hunger ist der beste Koch!

(Er setzt seinen Kober nieder und tritt an die Rampe.)

Ja ja, der Hunger kocht schon gut,
sofern er kommandieren thut.
Allein was nutzt der Kommandör,
fehlt euch im Topf die Zubehör?

Rallalala, rallalala,
Kümmel ist mein Leiblikör!
Rallalala, rallalala,
Mutter, schau, was ich bescheer!

(Giebt ihr einen derben Schmatz.)

MUTTER *(sich die Augen reibend)*.

Hoho!—
Wer spek—spektakelt
mir da im Haus
und rallalakelt
aus dem Schlaf mich heraus?

VATER *(lallend)*.

Das tolle Tier,
im Magen hier,
das bellte so, das glaube mir!
Rallalala, rallalala,
Hunger ist ein tolles Tier.
Rallalala, rallalala,
beisst und kratzt, das glaube mir!

MUTTER.

So, so!
Das tolle Tier,
es ist wohl schier
stark angezecht—das glaube mir!

VATER.

Nun ja, 's war heut ein heitrer Tag!
Fandst du nicht auch, lieb' Weib?

MUTTER *(ärgerlich)*.

Ach geh! Du weisst, nicht leiden mag
ich Wirtshaus-Zeitvertreib!

VATER *(zu seinem Kober sich wendend)*.

Auch gut! So sehen wir, wenn's beliebt,
was es für heut zu schmausen giebt.

MUTTER.

Höchst einfach ist das Speisregister
der Abendschmaus—zum Henker ist er!
Teller leer,
Keller leer,
und im Beutel ist gar nichts mehr.

with a big hole in the purse,
and in the stomach an even worse.

Tralala, tralala!
Hunger is the poor man's curse!
Tralala, tralala!
Hunger is the poor man's curse!

(The father appears at the window, and during the following he comes into the room in a very happy mood, with a basket on his back.)

'Tisn't much that we require,
just a little food and fire!
But alas! it's true enough,
life on some of us is rough!
Hunger is a customer tough! *(or)*
Yes, the rich enjoys his dinner,
while the poor grows daily thinner!
Strives to eat, as well he may,
somewhat less than yesterday!

(Complainingly.)

Tralala, tralala!
hunger is the devil to pay!
Tralala, tralala!
hunger is the devil to pay!

(He puts down his basket.)

Yes, hunger's all very well to feel,
if you can get a good square meal;
but when there's nought, what can you do,
supposing the purse be empty too?

Tralalala, tralalala!
O for a drop of mountain dew!
Tralalala, tralalala!
Mother, look what I have brought!

(Reels over to his sleeping wife and gives her a smacking kiss.)

MOTHER *(rubbing her eyes)*.

Oho!—
Who's sing-sing-singing
all around the house,
and tra-la-la-ing me
out of my sleep?

FATHER *(inarticulately)*.

How now!—
The hungry beast
within my breast
called so for food
I could not rest!
Tralala, tralala!
Hunger is an urgent beast!
Tralala, tralala!
pinches, gnaws, and gives no rest!

MOTHER.

So, so!
And this wild beast,
you gave him a feast.
He's had his fill,
to say the least!

FATHER.

Well, yes! H'm! it was a lovely day,
don't you think so, dear wife?

(Wants to kiss her.)

VATER.

Rallalala, rallalala,
lustig, Mutter, bin auch noch da!
Rallalala, rallalala,
bringe Glück und Gloria!

(Nimmt den Kober und kramt aus.)

Schau, Mutter!
Wie gefällt Dir dies Futter?

MUTTER.

Mann, was seh' ich? Speck und Butter!
Mehl und Würste!... vierzehn Eier—
—Mann! Sie sind jetztunder teuer!—
Bohnen, Zwiebeln und—herrjeh!
Gar ein viertel Pfund Kaffee!

VATER *(kehrt den Kober vollends um. Ein Haufen
Kartoffeln rollt zur Erde. Beide fassen sich am Arm
und tanzen in der Stube umher).*

Rallalala, hopsassa!
Heute woll'n wir lustig sein!
Ja, hör nur, Mütterchen, wie's geschah!

*(Die Mutter kramt die Sachen in den Schrank ein,
macht Feuer im Herd an, schlägt Eier in eine
Schüssel u. s. w.)*

Drüben hinterm Herrenwald
prächt'ge Feste giebt's da bald,
Kirmes, Hochzeit, Jubiläum,
Böllerknall und gross Tedeum.
Mein Geschäft kommt nun zur Blüte;
dessen froh sei Dein Gemüte!
Sieh! wer feines Fest will feiern,
der muss kehren, schrubben und scheuern.
Bot drum meine Waren aus,
zog damit von Haus zu Haus:
„Kauft Besen! Gute Feger!
Feine Bürsten! Spinnejäger!“
Sieh, da verkauft' ich massenweise
meine Waren zum höchsten Preise!—
Schnell nun her mit Topf und Pfanne,
her mit Kessel, Schüssel, Kanne!

BEIDE.

Vivat hoch die Besenbinder!

VATER.

Doch halt—wo bleiben die Kinder?
Hänsel! Gretel!—Wo steckt der Hans?
Wo er steckt? Ja, wüsste man's!
Nur das weiss ich klar wie Tag,
dass der Topf in Scherben lag!

VATER *(zornig).*

Was? der neue Topf entzwei?

MUTTER.

Und am Boden quoll der Brei!

VATER *(mit der Faust auf den Tisch schlagend).*

Donnerkeil! So haben die Rangén
Unfug wieder angefangén?

MUTTER.

Unfug viel und Arbeit keine
hatten sie getrieben alleine.

MOTHER *(pushing him angrily away, excitedly).*

Have done! You have no troubles to bear,
'tis I must keep the house!

FATHER.

Well, well,—then let us see, my dear,
what we have got to eat to-day.

MOTHER.

Most simple is the bill of fare,
our supper's gone, I know not where!
Larder bare, cellar bare,
nothing, and plenty of it to spare!

FATHER.

Tralalala, tralalala!
Cheer up, mother, for here am I,
bringing luck and jollity!

*(He takes his basket and begins to display he
contents.)*

Look, mother, doesn't all this food please you?

MOTHER.

Man, man, what see I?
Ham and butter,
flour and sausage—
eggs, a dozen....
(Husband, and they cost a fortune!)
Turnips, onions, and—for me!
Nearly half a pound of tea!

BOTH.

Tralala, tralala,
hip hurrah!
Won't we have a festive time!
Tralala, hip hurrah!
Won't we have a happy time!
Now listen how it all came about!

FATHER *(turns the basket topsy-turvy, and a lot of
potatoes roll out. He seizes her by the arm and
dances round the room. Sits down. Meanwhile the
mother packs away the things, lights a fire, breaks
eggs into a saucepan, etc.).*

Yonder to the town I went,
there was to be a great event,
weddings, fairs, and preparation
for all kinds of jubilation!
Now's my chance to do some selling,
and for that you may be thankful!
He who wants a feast to keep,
he must scrub and brush and sweep.
So I brought my best goods out,
tramped with them from house to house:
"Buy besoms! good besoms!
Buy my brushes! sweep your carpets,
sweep your cobwebs!"
And so I drove a roaring trade,
and sold my brushes at the highest prices!
Now make haste with cup and platter,
bring the glasses, bring the kettle—
here's a health to the besom-maker!

MOTHER.

Here's a health to the besom-maker!

FATHER.

Hörte schon draussen sie juchzen und johlen,
hopsen und springen wie wilde Fohlen,
wusste nicht, wie mir stand der Kopf,
Und vor Zorn

VATER.

—zerbrach der Topf.
Hahahaha!

(Beide lachen aus vollem Halse.)

Na, Zornmütterchen, nimm mir's nicht krumm,
solche Zorntöpfe find' ich recht dumm!
Doch sag, wo mögen die Kinderchen sein?

MUTTER *(schnippisch)*.

Meinethalben am *Ilsenstein!*

VATER *(erschrocken)*.

Am Ilsenstein?—Ei, juckt Dich das Fell?

(Nimmt einen Besen von der Wand.)

MUTTER.

Den Besen lass nur an seiner Stell.

VATER *(lässt den Besen fallen und ringt die Hände.)*

Wenn sie sich verirrt im Walde dort,
in der Nacht, ohne Stern und Mond!
Kennst Du nicht den schauerlich düstern Ort?
Weisst nicht, dass die *Böse* dort wohnt?

MUTTER *(betroffen)*.

Die Böse? Wen meinst Du?

VATER *(mit geheimnisvollem Nachdruck)*.

Die *Knusperhexe!*—

MUTTER *(fährt zusammen)*.

Die *Knusperhexe!*—

(Zurückweichend, da der Vater den Besen wieder aufnimmt.)

Mein! Sag doch, was soll denn der Besen?

VATER.

Der Besen! Der Besen!
Was macht man damit? Was macht man damit?
Es reiten drauf, es reiten drauf die Hexen!

Eine Hex' steinalt,
haust tief im Wald,
vom Teufel selber hat sie Gewalt!
Um Mitternacht,
wann niemand wacht,
dann reitet sie aus zur Hexenjagd.
Zum Schornstein hinaus
entschlüpft sie dem Haus;
auf dem Besen, o Graus; in Saus und Braus!
Über Berg und Kluft,
über Thal und Gruft
durch Nebelduft
im Sturm durch die Luft:

Ja so reiten, ja so reiten,
juchheissa, die Hexen!

MUTTER.

Entsetzlich!

But stay, why, where are the children?
Hänsel, Gretel, what's gone with Hans?

MOTHER.

Gone with Hans? O, who's to know?
But at least I do know this,
that the jug is smashed to bits.

FATHER.

What! the jug is smashed to bits?

MOTHER.

And the cream all run away.

FATHER *(striking his fist on the table in a rage)*.

Hang it all! So those little scapegraces
have been again in mischief!

MOTHER *(hastily)*.

Been in mischief? I should think so!
Nought have they done but their mad pranking;
as I came home I could hear them
hopping and cutting the wildest capers,
till I was so cross that I gave a push—
and the jug of milk was spilt!

FATHER.

And the jug of milk was spilt!
Ha ha ha ha!

(Both laughing.)

Such anger, mother, don't take it ill,
seems stupid to me, I must say!
But where, where think you the children can be?

MOTHER *(snappishly and curtly)*.

For aught I know, at the *Ilsenstein!*

FATHER *(horror-struck)*.

The *Ilsenstein!* Come, come, have a care!

(Fetches a broom from the wall.)

MOTHER.

The besom, just put it away again!

FATHER. *(lets the broom fall and wrings his hands)*.

My children astray in the gloomy wood,
all alone without moon or stars!

MOTHER.

O Heaven!

FATHER.

Dost thou not know the awful magic place,
the place where the evil one dwells?

MOTHER *(surprised)*.

The evil one! What mean'st thou?

FATHER *(with mysterious emphasis)*.

The gobbling ogress!

(The mother draws back, the father takes up the broom again.)

VATER.

Ja, bei Tag, o Graus:
zum Hexenschmaus
ins Knisper-Knasper-Knuspershaus
die Kinderlein,
Armsünderlein,
mit Zauberkuchen lockt sie herein.
Doch übelgesinnt
ergreift sie geschwind
das arme Kuchen knuspemde Kind.
In den Ofen, hitzhell,
schiebt's die Hexe blitzschnell;
dann kommen zur Stell,
gebräunt das Fell,
aus dem Ofen, aus dem Ofen
die *Lebkuchenkinder!*

MUTTER.

Und die Lebkuchenkinder?

VATER.

Die werden gefressen!

MUTTER.

Von der Hexe?

VATER.

Von der Hexe.

MUTTER (*händeringend*).

O Graus!

Hilf, Himmel! die Kinder! Ich halt's nicht mehr aus!

(*Rennt aus dem Hause.*)

VATER (*nimmt die Kümmelflasche vom Tisch*).

He, Alte, so wart' doch! Nimm mich mit!
Wir wollen ja beide zum Hexenritt!

(*Eilt ihr nach. Der Vorhang fällt schnell.*)

MOTHER.

The gobbling ogress!
But—tell me, what help is the besom!

FATHER.

The besom, the besom, why what is it for?
They ride on it, they ride on it, the witches!
An old witch within that wood doth dwell
and she's in league with the powers of hell.
At midnight hour, when nobody knows,
away to the witches' dance she goes.

Up the chimney they fly,
on a broomstick they hie—
over hill and dale,
o'er ravine and vale,
through the midnight air
they gallop full tear—
on a broomstick, on a broomstick,
hop hop, hop hop, the witches!

MOTHER.

O horror!
But the gobbling witch?

FATHER.

And by day, they say, she stalks around,
with a crinching, crunching, munching sound,
and children plump and tender to eat
she lures with magic gingerbread sweet.

On evil bent,
with fell intent,
she lures the children, poor little things,
in the oven red-hot
she pops all the lot;
she shuts the lid down
until they're done brown,
in the oven, in the oven,
(*Expressively.*)
the gingerbread children!

MOTHER.

And the gingerbread children?

FATHER.

Are served up for dinner!

MOTHER.

For the ogress?

FATHER.

For the ogress!

MOTHER.

O horror!
Heav'n help us! the children!
O what shall we do?

(*Runs out of the house.*)

FATHER.

Hi, mother, mother, wait for me!

(*Takes the whisky bottle from the table and follows her.*)

We'll both go together the witch to seek!

(*The curtain falls quickly.*)

ZWEITES BILD.

IM WALDE.

Erste Scene.

(Im Hintergrunde der Ilsenstein, von dichtem Tannengehölz umgeben. Rechts eine mächtige Tanne; darunter sitzt Gretel auf einer moosbedeckten Wurzel und windet einen Kranz von Hagebutten; neben ihr liegt ein Blumenstrauss. Links, abseits im Gebüsch, Hänsel, nach Erdbeeren suchend. Abendrot.)

GRETEL.

Ein Männlein steht im Walde
ganz still und stumm;
es hat von lauter Purpur
ein Mäntlein um.
Sagt, wer mag das Männlein sein,
das da steht im Wald allein
mit dem purpurroten Mäntlein?
Das Männlein steht im Walde
auf einem Bein
und hat auf seinem Kopfe
schwarz Käpplein klein.
Sagt, wer mag das Männlein sein,
das da steht im Wald allein
mit dem kleinen schwarzen Käppelein?

HÄNSEL *(kommt hervor und schwenkt jubelnd sein Körbchen)*.

Juchhe!
Mein Erbelkörbchen ist voll bis oben;
wie wird die Mutter den Hänsel loben!

GRETEL.

Mein Kränzel ist auch schon fertig, sieh!
So schön wie heute ward's noch nie!

(Will den Kranz Hänsel auf den Kopf setzen.)

HÄNSEL *(barsch abwehrend)*.

Buben tragen doch so was nicht,
's passt nur für ein Mädchengesicht.

(Setzt ihr den Kranz auf.)

Hei, Gretel, feins Mädel!
Ei, der Daus,
siehst ja wie die Waldkönigin aus!

GRETEL.

Seh ich wie die Waldkönigin aus,
so reich' mir auch den Blumenstrauss!

HÄNSEL.

Waldkönigin mit Scepter und Kron',
da nimm auch die Erbeln, doch nasch' nicht davon!

(Reicht ihr mit der einen Hand den Blumenstrauss, mit der andern das Körbchen voll Erdbeeren und huckt, gleichsam huldigend, vor ihr nieder. In diesem Augenblick ertönt der Ruf eines Kuckucks.)

HÄNSEL.

Kuckuck! Eierschluck!

ACT II.

IN THE FOREST.

Scene I.

(The curtain rises. The middle of the forest. In the background is the Ilsenstein, thickly surrounded by fir-trees. On the right is a large fir-tree, under which Gretel is sitting on a mossy tree-trunk and making a garland of wild roses. By her side lies a nosegay of flowers. Amongst the bushes on the left is Hänsel, looking for strawberries. Sunset.)

GRETEL *(humming quietly to herself)*.

There stands a little man in the wood alone,
he wears a little mantle of velvet brown.
Say, who can the mankin be,
standing there beneath the tree,
with the little mantle of velvet brown?
His hair is all of gold, and his cheeks are red,
he wears a little black cap upon his head.
Say, who can the mankin be,
standing there so silently,
with the little black cap upon his head?

(She holds up the garland of roses, and looks it all round.)

With the little black cap upon his head!

HÄNSEL *(comes out, swinging his basket joyfully)*.

Hurrah! my strawberry basket is nearly brimful!
O won't the mother be pleased with Hänsel!

GRETEL *(standing up)*.

My garland is ready also!
Look! I never made one so nice before!

(Tries to put the wreath on Hänsel's head.)

HÄNSEL *(drawing back roughly)*.

You won't catch a boy wearing that!
It is only fit for a girl!

(Puts the wreath on her.)

Ha, Gretel! "Fine feathers!"
O the deuce!
You shall be the queen of the wood!

GRETEL.

If I am to be queen of the wood,
then I must have the nosegay too!

HÄNSEL *(gives her the nosegay)*.

Queen of the wood, with sceptre and crown,
I give you the strawberries,
but don't eat them all!

(He gives the basket full of strawberries into her other hand, at the same time kneeling before her in homage. At this moment the cuckoo is heard.)

Cuckoo, cuckoo, how d'you do?

GRETEL.

GRETEL (*schalkhaft*).

Kuckuck! Erbelschluck!

(Holt eine Beere aus dem Körbchen und hält sie Hänsel hin, der sie schlürft, als ob er ein Ei austränke.)

HÄNSEL (*springt auf*).

Hoho! Das kann ich auch! Gieb nur acht!

(Nimmt einige Beeren und lässt sie Gretel in den Mund rollen.)

Wir machen's, wie der Kuckuck schluckt, wenn er in fremde Nester guckt.

(Der Kuckuck ruft abermals. Es beginnt zu dämmern.)

HÄNSEL (*greift wieder zu*).

Kuckuck! Eierschluck!

GRETEL (*ebenso*).

Kuckuck! Erbelschluck!

HÄNSEL.

Setzest Deine Kinder aus!

Kuckuck!

Trinkst die fremden Eier aus!

Gluckgluck!

(Lässt sich eine ganze Handvoll Erdbeeren in den Mund rollen.)

GRETEL.

Sammelst Erbeln schön zuhauf!

Kuckuck!

Schluckst sie, Schlauer, selber auf!

Schluckschluck!

(Sie werden immer übermütiger und raufen sich schliesslich um die Beeren. Hänsel trägt den Sieg davon und setzt den Korb vollends an den Mund, bis er gänzlich leer geworden. Indessen hat die Dunkelheit immer mehr zugenommen.)

GRETEL (*Hänsel den Korb entreissend*).

Hänsel, was hast Du gethan! O Himmel!

Alle Erbeln gegessen, Du Lümmel!

Wart' nur, das giebt ein Strafgericht,

denn die Mutter, die spast heute nicht!

HÄNSEL (*ruhig*).

Ei was, stell Dich doch nicht so an,

Du, Gretel, hast es ja selber gethan!

GRETEL.

Komm nur, wollen rasch neue suchen!

HÄNSEL.

Im Dunkeln wohl gar, unter Hecken und Buchen?

Man sieht ja nicht Blatt, nicht Beere mehr!

Es wird schon dunkel rings umher!

GRETEL.

Ach, Hänsel, Hänsel! Was fangen wir an?

Was haben wir thörichten Kinder gethan?

Wir durften hier gar nicht so lange säumen!

Cuckoo, cuckoo, where are you?

(Takes a strawberry from the basket and pokes it into Hänsel's mouth; he sucks it up as though he were drinking an egg.)

HÄNSEL (*jumping up*).

Oho, I can do that just like you!

(Takes some strawberries and lets them fall into Gretel's mouth.)

Let us do like the cuckoo too, who takes what doesn't belong to him!

(It begins to grow dark.)

HÄNSEL (*helping himself again*).

Cuckoo, how are you?

GRETEL.

Cuckoo, where are you?

HÄNSEL.

In your neighbour's nest you go.

GRETEL (*helping herself*).

Cuckoo, cuckoo!

HÄNSEL.

Cuckoo, why do you do so?

(Pours a handful of strawberries into his mouth.)

GRETEL.

And you are very greedy too!

Tell me, cuckoo, why are you?

HÄNSEL.

Cuckoo, cuckoo!

(They get rude and begin to quarrel for the strawberries. Hänsel gains the victory, and puts the whole basket to his mouth until it is empty.)

GRETEL (*horrified, clasping her hands together*).

Hänsel, what have you done?

O Heaven! all the strawberries eaten.

You glutton! Listen, you'll have a punishment from the mother—this passes a joke!

HÄNSEL (*quietly*).

Now come, don't make such a fuss; you, Gretel, you did the same thing yourself!

GRETEL.

Come, we'll hurry and seek for fresh ones!

HÄNSEL.

What, here in the dark, under hedges and bushes?

Why, naught can we see of fruit or leaves!

It's getting dark already here!

GRETEL.

O Hänsel! O Hänsel! O what shall we do?

What bad disobedient children we've been!

We ought to have thought and gone home sooner!

HÄNSEL.

Horch, wie rauscht es in den Bäumen! —
Weisst Du, was der Wald jetzt spricht?
„Kindlein!“ sagt er, „fürchtet ihr euch nicht?“

(*Späht unruhig umher.*)

Gretel! Ich weiss den Weg nicht mehr!

GRETEL (*bestürzt*).

O Gott! Was sagst Du? den Weg nicht mehr?

HÄNSEL (*sich mutig stellend*).

Was bist Du doch für ein furchtsam Wicht!
Ich bin ein Bub', ich fürchte mich nicht!

GRETEL.

Ach, Hänsel! Gewiss geschieht uns ein Leid!

HÄNSEL.

Ach, Gretel, geh, sei doch gescheit!

GRETEL.

Was schimmert denn dort in der Dunkelheit?

HÄNSEL.

Das sind die Birken im weissen Kleid.

GRETEL.

Und dort, was grinset daher vom Sumpf?

HÄNSEL (*stotternd*).

D—d—das ist ein glimmender Weidenstumpf!

GRETEL.

Was für ein wunderlich Gesicht
Macht er soeben—siehst Du's nicht?

HÄNSEL (*sehr laut*).

Ich mach' dir 'ne Nase, hörst du's, Wicht?

GRETEL (*ängstlich*).

Da, sieh', das Lichtchen—es kommt immer näh'r!

HÄNSEL.

Irrlichtchen hüpfet wohl hin und her!
Gretel, Du musst beherzter sein—
wart, ich will einmal tüchtig schrein!

(*Ruft durch die hohlen Hände.*)

Wer da?

ECHO.

Er da!

(*Die Kinder schmiegen sich erschreckt aneinander.*)

GRETEL (*zaghaft*).

Ist jemand da?

ECHO (*leise*).

Ja!

(*Cuckoo behind the scenes, rather nearer than before.*)

HÄNSEL.

Hark, what a noise in the bushes!
Know you what the forest says?
"Children, children," it says,
"Are you not afraid?"

(*Hänsel spies all around uneasily, at last he turns in despair to Gretel.*)

Gretel, I cannot find the way!

GRETEL (*dismayed*).

O God! what say you?
Not know the way?

HÄNSEL (*pretending to be very brave*).

Why, how ridiculous you are!
I am a boy, and know not fear!

GRETEL.

O Hänsel, some dreadful thing may come!

HÄNSEL.

O Gretel, come, don't be afraid!

GRETEL.

What's glimmering there in the darkness?

HÄNSEL.

That's only the birches in silver dress.

GRETEL.

But there, what's grinning so there at me?

HÄNSEL (*stammering*).

Th—that's only the stump of a willow-tree.

GRETEL (*hastily*).

But what a dreadful form it takes,
and what a horrid face it makes!

HÄNSEL (*very loud*).

Come, I'll make faces, you fellow!
D'you hear?

GRETEL (*terrified*).

There, see! a lantern,
it's coming this way!

HÄNSEL.

Will-o'-the-wisp is hopping about—
Gretel, come, don't lose heart like this!
Wait, I'll give a good loud call!

(*Goes back some steps to the back of the stage and calls through his hands.*)

Who's there?

ECHO.

You there!
There!

(Die Kinder schaudern zusammen.)

GRETEL.

Hast Du's gehört? 's rief leise: Ja!
Hänsel, sicher ist jemand nah!
(*weinend:*)
Ich fürcht' mich, ich fürcht' mich!—O wär' ich zu Haus!
Wie sieht der Wald so gespenstig aus!

HÄNSEL.

Gretelchen, drücke Dich fest an mich!
Ich halte Dich, ich schütze Dich!

(*Ein dichter Nebel steigt auf und verhüllt den Hintergrund gänzlich.*)

GRETEL.

Da kommen weisse Nebelfrauen,
sieh', wie sie winken und drohend schauen.
Sie schweben heran!
Sie fassen uns an!
(*schreiend:*)
Vater! Mutter!

(*Eilt entsetzt unter die Tanne und verbirgt sich, auf die Kniee stürzend, hinter Hänsel. In diesem Augenblicke zerreisst links der Nebel; ein kleines graues Männchen, mit einem Säckchen auf dem Rücken, wird sichtbar.*)

HÄNSEL.

Sieh' dort das Männchen, Schwesterlein!
Was mag das für ein Männchen sein?

Zweite Scene.

SANDMÄNNCHEN (*nähert sich mit freundlichen Gebärden den Kindern, die sich allmählich beruhigen, und wirft ihnen während des Folgenden Sand in die Augen.*)

Der kleine Sandmann bin ich — s-t!
und gar nichts Arges sinn ich — s-t!
Euch Kleinen lieb ich innig — s-t!
bin euch gesinnt gar minnig — s-t!
Aus diesem Sack zwei Körnelein
euch Müden in die Äugelein;
die fallen dann von selber zu,
damit ihr schlaft in sanfter Ruh.
Und seid ihr fein geschlafen ein,
dann wachen auf die Sterne,
und nieder steigen Engelein
aus hoher Himmelsferne
und bringen holde Träume.
Drum träume, Kindchen, träume!

(*Verswindet. Völlige Dunkelheit.*)

HÄNSEL (*schlaftrunken*).

(The children cower together.)

GRETEL.

Is some one there?

ECHO.

Where?
Here!

GRETEL (*softly*).

Did you hear? a voice said, "Here!"
Hänsel, surely some one's near.

(*Crying.*)

I'm frightened, I'm frightened,
I wish I were home!
I see the wood all filled with goblin forms!

HÄNSEL.

Gretelkin, stick to me close and tight,
I'll shelter you, I'll shelter you!

(*A thick mist rises and completely hides the background.*)

GRETEL.

I see some shadowy women coming!
See, how they nod and beckon, beckon!
They're coming, they're coming,
they'll take us away!

(*Crying out, rushes horror-struck under the tree and falls on her knees, hiding herself behind Hänsel.*)

Father! mother! Ah!

HÄNSEL.

See there, the mankin, sister dear!
I wonder who the mankin is?

(*At this moment the mist lifts on the left; a little grey man is seen with a little sack on his back.*)

Scene II.

SANDMAN (*the Sleep Fairy*).

(*The little man approaches the children with friendly gestures, and the children gradually calm down. He is strewing sand in the children's eyes.*)

I shut the children's peepers, sh!
and guard the little sleepers, sh!
for dearly do I love them, sh!
and gladly watch above them, sh!
And with my little bag of sand,
By every child's bedside I stand;
then little tired eyelids close,
and little limbs have sweet repose.
And if they're good and quickly go to sleep,
then from the starry sphere above
the angels come with peace and love,
and send the children happy dreams,
while watch they keep!
Then slumber, children, slumber,
for happy dreams are sent you
through the hours you sleep.

Sandmann war da!

(Disappears. Darkness.)

GRETEL *(ebenso)*.

HÄNSEL *(half asleep)*.

Lass uns den Abendsegen beten!

Sandman was there!

(Sie kauern nieder und falten die Hände.)

GRETEL *(ditto)*.

BEIDE.

Let us first say our evening prayer.

Abends, will ich schlafen gehn,
vierzehn Engel um mich stehn,
zwei zu meinen Häupten,
zwei zu meinen Füßen,
zwei zu meiner Rechten,
zwei zu meiner Linken,
zweie, die mich decken,
zweie, die mich wecken,
zweie, die mich weisen
zu Himmelsparadeisen.

(They cower down and fold their hands.)

BOTH.

When at night I go to sleep,
fourteen angels watch do keep:
two my head are guarding,
two my feet are guiding,
two are on my right hand,
two are on my left hand,
two who warmly cover,
two who o'er me hover,
two to whom 'tis given
to guide my steps to Heaven.

(Sie sinken aufs Moos zurück und schlummern Arm in Arm verschlungen alsbald ein.)

(They sink down on to the moss, and go to sleep with their arms twined round each other. Complete darkness.)

Dritte Scene.

Scene III.

(Plötzlich dringt von obenher ein heller Schein durch den Nebel, der sich wolkenförmig zusammenballt und die Gestalt einer in die Mitte der Bühne hinabführenden Treppe annimmt. Vierzehn Engel, die kleinsten voran, die grössten zuletzt, schreiten paarweise, während das Licht an Helligkeit zunimmt, in Zwischenräumen die Wolkentreppe hinab und stellen sich, der Reihenfolge des Abendsegens entsprechend, um die schlafenden Kinder auf, das erste Paar zu Häupten, das zweite zu Füßen, das dritte rechts, das vierte links; dann verteilen sich das fünfte und sechste Paar zwischen die übrigen Paare, so dass der Kreis der Engel vollständig geschlossen wird. Zuletzt tritt das siebente Paar in den Kreis und nimmt als „Schutzengel“ zu beiden Seiten der Kinder Platz, während die übrigen sich die Hände reichen und einen feierlichen Reigen um die Gruppe aufführen. Indem sie sich zu einem malerischen Schlussbilde ordnen, schliesst sich langsam der Vorhang.)

(Here a bright light suddenly breaks through the mist which forthwith rolls itself together into the form of a staircase, vanishing in perspective, in the middle of the stage. Fourteen angels, in light floating garments, pass down the staircase, two and two, at intervals, while it is getting gradually lighter. The angels place themselves, according to the order mentioned in the evening hymn, around the sleeping children; the first couple at their heads, the second at their feet, the third on the right, the fourth on the left, the fifth and sixth couples distribute themselves amongst the other couples, so that the circle of the angels is completed. Lastly the seventh couple comes into the circle and takes its place as "guardian angels" on each side of the children. The remaining angels now join hands and dance a stately step around the group. The whole stage is filled with an intense light. Whilst the angels arrange themselves in a picturesque tableau, the curtain slowly falls.)

DRITTES BILD.

ACT III.

DAS KNUSPERHÄUSCHEN.

THE WITCH'S HOUSE.

Erste Scene.

Scene I.

(Scene wie vorhin. Der Hintergrund noch von Nebel verhüllt, der sich während des Folgenden langsam verzieht. Die Engel sind verschwunden.)

(The curtain rises. Scene the same as the end of Act II. The background is still hidden in mist, which gradually rises during the following. The angels have vanished. Morning is breaking. The Dawn Fairy steps forward and shakes dewdrops from a bluebell over the sleeping children.)

(Früher Morgen. Taumännchen tritt auf und schüttelt aus einer Glockenblume Tautropfen auf die schlafenden Kinder; diese beginnen sich zu regen.)

DEWMAN *(Dawn Fairy)*.

TAUMÄNNCHEN.

Der kleine Tau-Mann heiss' ich—kling!
Mit Mutter Sonne reis' ich—klang!

I'm up with early dawning,
and know who loves the morning,
who'll rise fresh as a daisy,

Von Ost bis Westen weiss ich—kling!
Wer faul ist und wer fleissig—klang!
Ich komm mit lichtem Sonnenschein
und strahl in eure Äugelein,
und weck mit kühlem Taue,
was schläft auf Flur und Aue.
Dann springet auf, wer fleissig
zur frühen Morgenstunde,
denn sie hat Gold im Munde.
Drum, Schläfer, auf, erwachtet,
der lichte Tag schon lachtet!

(Ab.)

GRETEL (*öffnet die Augen, richtet sich halb auf und blickt verwundert um sich, während Hänsel sich auf die andere Seite legt, um weiter zu schlafen*).

Wo bin ich? Wach ich? Ist es ein Traum?
Hier lieg' ich unterm Tannenbaum.
Hoch in den Zweigen lispelt es leise,
Vöglein singen so süsse Weise.
Wohl früh schon waren sie aufgewacht
und haben ihr Morgenlied dargebracht.
Guten Morgen, liebe Vöglein, guten Morgen!

(*Sie erblickt Hänsel*).

Sieh da, der faule Siebenschläfer!
Wart nur, Dich weck' ich!

(*Sie bückt sich zu ihm nieder und singt ihm ins Ohr*).

Tirelireli,

's ist nicht mehr früh!

Die Lerche hat's gesungen
und hoch sich aufgeschwungen.

(*Aufspringend*).

Tirelireli!

HÄNSEL (*der während des Liedes erwacht ist, reibt sich die Augen, gähnt, dehnt sich und stimmt, gleichfalls aufspringend, munter in Gretels Weise ein*).

Kikeriki!

's ist noch früh!

Ja, hab's wohl vernommen,
der Morgen ist gekommen,

Kikeriki!

Mir ist so wohl, ich weiss nicht wie;
so gut wie heute schlief ich nie.

GRETEL.

Doch höre nur! Hier unter dem Baum,
da hatt' ich einen wunderschönen Traum.

HÄNSEL.

Richtig! Auch mir träumte so was!

GRETEL.

Mir träumt' ich hört' ein Rauschen und Klingen,
wie Chöre der Engel ein himmlisches Singen;
lichte Wölkchen im rosigen Schein
wallten und wogten ins Dunkel herein.
Siehe, hell ward's mit einem Male,
lichtdurchflossen vom Himmelsstrahle;
eine goldene Leiter sah ich sich neigen,
Englein zu mir herniedersteigen,
Engel mit goldenen Flügelein—

HÄNSEL (*der ihrer Erzählung mit Zeichen lebhafter Zustimmung gefolgt ist*).

Vierzehn müssen's gewesen sein!

GRETEL (*erstaunt*).

who'll sink in slumber lazy!
Ding! dong! ding! dong!
And with the golden light of day
I chase the fading night away,
fresh dew around me shaking,
and hill and dale awaking.
Then up, with all your powers
enjoy the morning hours,
the scent of trees and flowers—
then up, ye sleepers, awaken!
The rosy dawn is smiling,
then up, ye sleepers, awake, awake!

(*Hurries off singing. The children begin to stir. Gretel rubs her eyes, looks around her, and raises herself a little, whilst Hänsel turns over on the other side to go to sleep again*).

GRETEL.

Where am I? Waking? Or do I dream?
How come I in the wood to lie?
High in the branches I hear a gentle twittering,
birds are beginning to sing so sweetly;
from early dawn they are all awake,
and warble their morning hymn of praise.
Dear little singers, little singers,
good morning!

(*Turns to Hänsel*).

See there, the sleepy lazybones?
Wait now, I'll wake him!
Tirelireli, it's getting late!
Tirelireli, it's getting late!
The lark his flight is winging,
on high his matin singing,
Tirelireli! tirelireli!

HÄNSEL (*suddenly jumps up with a start*).

Kikeriki! it's early yet!
Kikeriki! it's early yet!
Yes, the day is dawning;
awake, for it is morning!
Kikeriki! kikeriki!
I feel so well, I know not why!
I never slept so well, no, not I!

GRETEL.

But listen, Hans; here 'neath the tree
a wondrous dream was sent to me!

HÄNSEL (*meditatively*).

Really! I, too, had a dream!

GRETEL.

I fancied I heard a murmuring and rushing,
as though the angels in Heav'n were singing;
rosy clouds above me were floating—
hovering and floating in the distance away,
Sudden—all around a light was streaming,
rays of glory from Heaven beaming,
and a golden ladder saw I descending,
angels adown it gliding,
such lovely angels with shining golden wings.

HÄNSEL (*interrupting her quickly*).

Fourteen angels there must have been!

GRETEL (*astonished*).

And did you also behold all this?

HÄNSEL.

Hast Du denn alles das auch gesehn?

HÄNSEL.

Freilich! 's war halt wunderschön—
Und dort hinaus sah ich sie gehn!

(Er wendet sich nach dem Hintergrunde. In diesem Augenblick zerreißt der letzte Nebelschleier. An Stelle des Tannengehölzes erscheint glitzernd im Strahl der aufgehenden Sonne das „Knusperhäuschen“ am Ilsenstein. Links davon in einiger Entfernung befindet sich ein Backofen, diesem rechts gegenüber ein grosser Käfig, beide mit dem Knusperhäuschen durch einen Zaun von Kuchenmännern verbunden.)

Zweite Scene.

GRETEL (*hält Hänsel betroffen zurück*).

Bleib stehn! Bleib stehn!

HÄNSEL (*eine Weile sprachlos vor Staunen*).

Himmel, welch Wunder ist hier geschehn!
Nein, so was hab ich mein Tag nicht gesehn!

GRETEL (*gewinnt allmählich die Fassung wieder*).

Wie duftet's von dorten,
O schau nur die Pracht!
Von Kuchen und Torten
Ein Häuslein gemacht!
Mit Fladen, mit Torten
ist's hoch überdacht!
Die Fenster wahrhaftig
wie Zucker so blank,
Rosinen gar saftig
den Giebel entlang!
Und—traun!
Rings zu schaun
gar ein Lebkuchen-Zaun!

BEIDE.

O herrliches Schlösschen,
so schmuck du und fein,
welch Waldes-Prinzesschen
mag drinnen wohl sein?
Ach möchte zu Hause
die Waldprinzess sein!
Bei leckerem Schmause
mit Kuchen und Wein
sie lüde zur Klause
uns beide wohl ein!

HÄNSEL (*nach einer Pause*).

Alles bleibt still. Nichts regt sich da drinnen.
Komm lass uns hineingehn!

GRETEL (*erschrocken ihn zurückhaltend*).

Bist du bei Sinnen?
Junge, wie magst du so dreist nur sein?
Wer weiss, wer da drin wohl im Häuschen fein?

HÄNSEL.

O sieh nur, wie das Häuschen uns lacht!
(Begeistert.)
Die Englein haben's uns hergebracht!

Truly, 'twas wondrous fair!
And upward I saw them float.

(He turns towards the background; at this moment the last remains of the mist clear away. In place of the fir-trees is seen the "Witch's house at the Ilsenstein," shining in the rays of the rising sun. A little distance off, to the left, is an oven; opposite this, on the right, a large cage, both joined to the Witch's house by a fence of gingerbread figures.)

Scene II.

GRETEL (*holds Hänsel back in astonishment*).

Stand still, be still!

HÄNSEL (*surprised*).

O Heaven, what wondrous place is this,
as ne'er in all my life have I seen!

GRETEL (*gradually regains her self-possession*).

What odor delicious!
O say, do I dream?

BOTH.

A cottage all made
of chocolate cream.
The roof is all covered
with Turkish delight
the windows with lustre
of sugar are white;
and on all the gables
the raisins invite,
and think! all around
is a gingerbread hedge!
O magic castle,
how nice you'd be to eat!
Where hides the princess
who has so great a treat?
Ah, could she but visit
our little cottage bare,
she'd ask us to dinner,
her dainties to share!

HÄNSEL (*after a while*).

No sound do I hear; no, nothing is stirring!
Come, let's go inside it!

GRETEL (*pulling him back horrified*).

Are you senseless?
Hänsel, however can you make so bold?
Who knows who may live there,
in that lovely house?

HÄNSEL.

O look, do look how the house seems to smile!
(Enthusiastically.)
Ah, the angels did our footsteps beguile!

GRETEL (*reflectively*).

The angels? Yes, it must be so!

GRETEL (*sinnend*).

Die Englein?—Ei, so wird es wohl sein!

HÄNSEL.

Ja, Gretel, sie laden freundlich uns ein!
Komm, wir knuspern ein wenig vom Häuschen!

BEIDE.

Ja, knuspern wir, wie zwei Nagemäuschen!

(Sie hüpfen Hand in Hand nach dem Hintergrunde, bleiben wiederum stehen und schleichen dann vorsichtig auf den Fussspitzen bis an das Häuschen heran. Nach einigem Zögern bricht Hänsel an der rechten Kante ein Stückchen Kuchen heraus.)

Dritte Scene.

STIMME AUS DEM HÄUSCHEN.

Knusper, knusper Knäuschen,
wer knuspert mir am Häuschen?

HÄNSEL (*lässt erschrocken das Stück zu Boden fallen*).

GRETEL (*zaghft*).

Der Wind!

HÄNSEL (*ebenso*).

Der Wind!

BEIDE.

Das himmlische Kind.

GRETEL (*hebt das Stück wieder auf und versucht es*).

Hm!

HÄNSEL (*Gretel begehrllich anschauend*).

Wie schmeckt das?

GRETEL (*ihn beissen lassend*).

Da hast du auch was!

HÄNSEL (*legt entzückt die Hand auf die Brust*).

Hei!

GRETEL (*ebenso*).

Hei!

BEIDE.

O köstlicher Kuchen,
Wie schmeckst du nach mehr!
Mir ist ja, als wenn ich
im Himmel schon wär!

HÄNSEL.

Hei, wie das schmeckt! 's ist gar zu lecker!

GRETEL.

Vielleicht gar wohnt hier ein Zuckerbäcker!

HÄNSEL (*ruft*).

HÄNSEL.

Yes, Gretel, the angels are beck'ning us in!
Come, let's nibble a bit of the cottage.

BOTH.

Come, let's nibble it,
like two mice persevering!

(They hop along, hand in hand, towards the back of the stage; then stand still, and then steal along cautiously on tiptoe to the house. After some hesitation Hänsel breaks off a bit of cake from the right-hand corner.)

Scene III.

A VOICE FROM THE HOUSE.

Nibble, nibble, mousekin,
who's nibbling at my housekin?
who's nibbling at my housekin?

(Hänsel starts, and in his fright lets the piece of cake fall.)

HÄNSEL.

O, did you hear?

GRETEL (*somewhat timidly*).

The wind—

HÄNSEL.

The wind!

BOTH.

The heavenly wind!

GRETEL (*picks up the piece of cake and tastes it*).

H'm!

HÄNSEL (*looking longingly at Gretel*).

D'you like it?

GRETEL (*lets Hänsel bite it*).

Just taste and try it!

HÄNSEL (*lays his hand on his breast in rapture*).

Hi!

GRETEL (*ditto*).

Hi!

BOTH.

Hi, hi! O cake most delicious,
some more I must take!
It's really like Heaven
to eat such plum-cake!

HÄNSEL.

O how good, how sweet, how tasty!

He, Zuckerbäcker, nimm dich in acht,
Ein Loch wird dir jetzt vom Mäuslein gemacht!

(Bricht ein grosses Stück aus der Wand heraus.)

STIMME AUS DEM HÄUSCHEN.

Knusper, knusper Knäuschen,
wer knuspert mir am Häuschen?

HÄNSEL UND GRETTEL.

Der Wind, der Wind,
das himmlische Kind!

(Der obere Teil der Hausthüre öffnet sich leise, und der Kopf der Knusperhexe wird sichtbar. Die Kinder bemerken sie nicht und schmausen lustig weiter.)

GRETTEL.

Wart, du näschiges Mäuschen,
gleich kommt die Katz' aus dem Häuschen!

HÄNSEL.

Knuspre nur zu
und lass mich in Ruh!

GRETTEL *(entreisst ihm ein Stück Kuchen).*

Nicht so geschwind,
Herr Wind, Herr Wind!

HÄNSEL *(nimmt es ihr wieder ab).*

Himmlisches Kind,
ich nehm, was ich find!

(Sie lachen beide hell auf. Während des letzten Gespräches ist die Thüre des Häuschens aufgegangen, und die Hexe tritt, von den Kindern nicht bemerkt, daraus hervor, behutsam auf diese zuschleichend. Rasch wirft sie dem ahnungslosen Hänsel einen Strick um den Hals, eben in dem Augenblick, als die Kinder lachen.)

HEXE *(kichernd).*

Hihi, hihi, hihih!

(Die Kinder blicken sich erschrocken um.)

HÄNSEL *(entsetzt).*

Lass los!—Wer bist du?

HEXE *(Gretel übers Gesicht streichelnd).*

Engelchen!
Und du, mein Zuckerbengelchen!
Ihr kommt mich besuchen?—Das ist nett!
Liebe Kinder!—So rund und fett!

HÄNSEL.

Wer bist du, Garstige?—Lass mich los!

HEXE.

Na, Herzchen, zier dich nicht erst gross!
Wisst denn, dass euch vor mir nicht graul:
Ich bin *Rosina Leckermaul*,
höchst menschenfreundlich stets gesinnt,
unschuldig wie ein kleines Kind.
Drum hab ich die kleinen Kinder so lieb,
So lieb—ach zum Aufessen lieb!

(Sie streichelt die Kinder wieder.)

GRETTEL.

How tasty, how sweet!
It's p'r'aps the house of a sweety-maker!

HÄNSEL.

Hi, sweety-maker! Have a care!
A little mouse your sweeties would share!

(He breaks a big piece of cake off the wall.)

A VOICE FROM THE HOUSE.

Nibble, nibble, mousekin,
who's nibbling at my housekin?

HÄNSEL AND GRETTEL.

The wind, the wind,
the heavenly wind!

(The upper part of the house-door opens gently, and the Witch's head is seen at it. The children at first do not see her, and go on feasting merrily.)

GRETTEL.

Wait, you gobbling mousekin,
here comes the cat from the housekin!

HÄNSEL *(taking another bite).*

Eat what you please,
and leave me in peace!

GRETTEL *(snatches the piece from his hand).*

Don't be unkind,
Sir wind, Sir wind!

HÄNSEL *(takes it back from her).*

Heavenly wind,
I take what I find!

BOTH *(laughing).*

Ha, ha, ha!

THE WITCH *(who had meanwhile opened the whole door, and had been warily stealing up to the children, throws a rope round the neck of Hänsel, who, without any misgivings, turns his back to her).*

Hi, hi! hi, hi!

HÄNSEL *(horror-struck).*

Let go! Who are you?
Let me go!

THE WITCH *(drawing the children towards her).*

Angels both!
(And goosey-ganders!)
(Caresses the children.)
You've come to visit me, that is sweet!
You charming children, so nice to eat!

HÄNSEL *(makes despairing efforts to free himself).*

Who are you, ugly one?
Let me go!

THE WITCH.

Now, darling, don't you give yourself airs!
Dear heart, what makes you say such things?

HÄNSEL (*barsch abwehrend*).

Geh!—bleib mir doch aus dem Gesicht!
Hörst du? Ich mag dich nicht!

HEXE.

Hihhi!

Was seid ihr für leckere Teufelsbrätchen,
besonders du, mein herzlich Mädchen!

(*Lockend.*)

Kommt, kleine Mäuslein,
kommt in mein Häuslein!
Sollt es gut bei mir haben,
Will drinnen köstlich euch laben.
Schokolade, Torten, Marzipan,
Kuchen, gefüllt mit süßer Sahn',
Johannisbrot und Jungferleder
und Reisbrei—auf dem Ofen steht er—
Rosinen, Mandeln und Feigen,
's ist alles im Häuschen eur eigen!

HÄNSEL.

Ich geh nicht mit dir, garstige Frau!—
Du bist gar zu freundlich.

HEXE.

Schau, schau, wie schlau,
Ihr Kinder, ich mein's doch so gut mit euch,
seid ja bei mir wie im Himmelreich!
Kommt, kleine Mäuslein!
kommt in mein Häuslein!
Sollt es gut bei mir haben,
will drinnen köstlich euch laben!

(*Sie will Hänsel fortziehen.*)

GRETEL.

Was willst du meinem Bruder thun?

HEXE.

Gutes, mein Kind, sehr Gutes! I nun,
mit allerhand vortrefflichen Sachen
will ich ihn zart und wohlschmeckend machen
und ist er dann recht zahm und brav,
geduldig und fügsam wie ein Schaf,
dann—höre, Hänsel, ich sag dir's ins Ohr:
dir steht eine grosse Freude bevor!

HÄNSEL.

So sag's doch laut und nicht ins Ohr!
Welche Freude steht mir bevor?

HEXE.

Ach, liebe Püppchen, Hören und Sehn
wird euch bei diesem Vergnügen vergehn!

HÄNSEL.

Ei, meine Augen und Ohren sind gut,
haben wohl acht, was Schaden mir thut.
Gretel, traue nicht dem geissenden Wort.

(*Leise.*)

Schwesterchen, komm, wir laufen fort!

(*Er hat sich allmählich von der Schlinge befreit und
will mit Gretel fortlaufen; sie werden aber von der
Hexe zurückgehalten, die gebieterisch ihren Stab*

I am Rosina Dainty-mouth,
and dearly love my fellow-men.
I'm artless as a new born child!
That's why the children to me are so dear,
so dear, so dear, ah, so che-arming to eat!
(*Caresses Hänsel.*)

HÄNSEL (*turning roughly away*).

Go, get you gone from my sight!
I hate, I loathe you quite!

THE WITCH.

Hi hi! hi hi!
These dainty morsels I'm really gloating on,
and you, my little maiden, I'm dotting on!
Come, little mousey,
come into my housey!
Come with me, my precious,
I'll give you sweetmeats delicious!
Of chocolate, tarts, and marzipan
you shall both eat all you can,
and wedding-cake and strawberry ices,
blancmange, and everything else that nice is,
and raisins and almonds,
and peaches and citrons are waiting—
you'll both find it quite captivating,
yes, quite captivating!

HÄNSEL.

I won't come with you, hideous fright!
You are quite too friendly!

THE WITCH.

See, see, see how sly!
Dear children, you really may trust me in this,
and living with me will be perfect bliss!
Come, little mousey,
come into my housey!
Come with me, my precious,
I'll give you sweetmeats delicious!

GRETEL.

But say, what will you with my brother do?

THE WITCH.

Well, well!
I'll feed and fatten him up well,
with every sort of dainty delicious,
to make him tender and tasty.
And if he's brave and patient too,
and docile and obedient like a lamb,
then, Hänsel, I'll whisper it you,
I have a great treat in store for you!

HÄNSEL.

Then speak out loud and whisper not.
What is the great treat in store for me?

THE WITCH.

Yes, my dear children, hearing and sight
in this great pleasure will disappear quite!

HÄNSEL.

Eh? both my hearing and seeing are good!
You'd better take care you do me no harm!

(*Resolutely.*)

Gretel, trust not her flattering words,

gegen die beiden erhebt.)

HEXE.

Halt!

*(Macht mit dem Stabe die Gebärde des Hexenbannes.
Die Bühne verfinstert sich.)*

Hocus pocus, Hexenschuss!
Rühr dich, und dich beisst der Fluss!
Nicht mehr vorwärts, nicht zurück,
bann dich mit dem bösen Blick;
Kopf steh starr dir im Genick!

*(Neue Gebärde; die Spitze des Stabes fängt an zu
leuchten.)*

Hocus pocus, nun kommt Jocus!
Kinder, schaut den Zauberknopf!
Äuglein, stehet still im Kopf!—
Nun zum Stall hinein, du Tropf!
Hocus pocus, bonus jocus,
Malus locus, hocus pocus!

*(Leitet den starr auf den Knopf blickenden Hänsel
zum Stalle und schliesst hinter ihm die Gitterthüre,
während Gretel regungslos dasteht. Die Bühne erhellt
sich wieder.)*

HEXE (*vergnügt zu Gretel*).

Nun, Gretelchen, sei vernünftig und nett!
Der Hänsel wird nun balde fett.
Wir wollen ihn, so ist's am besten,
mit Mandeln und Rosinen mästen.
Ich geh ins Haus und hol sie schnell—
Du rühre dich nicht von der Stell!

(Hinkt ins Haus.)

GRETEL (*starr und unbeweglich*).

Hu—Wie mir vor der Hexe graut!

HÄNSEL.

Gretel! Pst! sprich nicht so laut!
Sei hübsch gescheit und gieb fein acht
auf jedes, was die Hexe macht.
Zum Schein thu alles, was sie will—
da kommt sie schon zurück—Pst! still!

HEXE (*dem Hänsel aus einem Korbe Mandeln und
Rosinen hinstreuend*).

Nun, Jüngelchen,
ergötze dein Züngelchen!
Friss, Vogel, oder stirb—
Kuchen-Heil dir erwirb!

*(Wendet sich zu Gretel und entzaubert sie mit einem
Wachholderbusch.)*

Hocus pocus, Holderbusch!
Schwinde, Gliederstarre, husch!
Nun wieder kregel, süßes Kleinchen,
rühr mir geschwind die runden Beinchen!
Geh, Zuckerpüppchen, flink und frisch
und decke drinnen hübsch den Tisch!
Schüsselchen, Tellerchen, Messerchen, Gäbelchen,
Serviettchen für mein Schnäbelchen;
und mach nur alles recht hurtig und fein,
sonst sperr ich auch dich in den Stall hinein!

(Sie droht kichernd; Gretel geht ins Haus.)

HEXE (*zu dem sich schlafend stellenden Hänsel*).

come, sister, come, let's run away!

*(He has in the meantime got out of the rope, and runs
with Gretel to the foreground. Here they are stopped
by the Witch, who imperiously raises against them
both a stick which hangs at her girdle, with repeated
gestures of spellbinding.)*

THE WITCH.

Hold!

(The stage becomes gradually darker.)

Hocus pocus, witches' charm!
Move not, as you fear my arm!
Back or forward do not try,
fixed you are by the evil eye!
Head on shoulders fixed awry!
Hocus, pocus, now comes jocus,
children, watch the magic head,
eyes are staring, dull as lead!
Now, you atom, off to bed!

*(Fresh gestures; then she leads Hänsel, who is gazing
fixedly at the illuminated head, into the stable, and
shuts the lattice door upon him.)*

Hocus pocus, bonus jocus,
malus locus, hocus pocus,
bonus jocus, malus locus!

*(The stage gradually becomes lighter, whilst the light
of the magic head diminishes. The Witch, contentedly
to Gretel, who still stands there motionless.)*

Now Gretel, be obedient and wise,
while Hänsel's growing fat and nice.
We'll feed him up, you'll see my reason,
and with sweet almonds and raisins season.
I'll go indoors, the things to prepare,
and you remain here where you are!

*(She grins as she holds up her finger warningly, and
goes into the house.)*

GRETEL (*stiff and motionless*).

O, what a horrid witch she is!

HÄNSEL (*whispering hastily*).

Gretel, sh! don't speak so loud!
Be very sharp, watch well and see
whatever she may do to me!
Pretend to do all she commands—
O, there she's coming back, sh! hush!

*(The Witch comes out, satisfies herself that Gretel is
still standing motionless, and then spreads before
Hänsel almonds and raisins from a basket.)*

THE WITCH.

Now, little man,
come prithee enjoy yourself!

(Sticking a raisin into Hänsel's mouth.)

Eat, minion, eat or die!
Here are cakes, O so nice!
*(Turns to Gretel and disenchant's her with a juniper-
branch.)*
Hocus pocus, elder-bush!
Rigid body loosen, hush!
(Gretel moves again.)
Now up and move again, bright and blithesome,
limbs are become again supple and lithesome.

Der Lümmel schläft ja nun—sieh mal an,
wie doch die Jugend schlafen kann!
Na, schlaf nur brav, du gutes Schaf,
bald schläfst du deinen ewigen Schlaf.
Doch erst muss mir die Gretel dran;
mit dir, mein Liebchen, fang ich an,
bist so niedlich, zart und rund,
wie gemacht für Hexen-Mund!

(Sie öffnet die Backofenthür und riecht hinein.)

Der Teig ist gar, wir können voran machen.
Hei, wie im Ofen die Scheite krachen!

(Schiebt noch ein paar Holzscheite unter und reibt sich dann schmunzelnd die Hände.)

Ja, Gretelchen,
wirst bald ein Brätelchen!
Schau, Schau,
wie ich schlaue bin, so schlaue!
Sollst gleich im Backofen hocken
und nach dem Lebkuchen gucken.
Und bist du dann drin—schwaps,
geht die Thür—klaps!
Dann ist fein Gretelchen
mein Brätelchen!
Das Brätelchen soll sich verwandeln
in Kuchen mit Zucker und Mandeln!
Im Zauberofen mein
wirst du ein Lebkuchen fein!

(In wilder Freude ergreift sie einen Besenstiel und reitet ausgelassen auf ihm ums Haus. Gretel steht lauschend am kleinen Fenster.)

Hurr, hopp, hopp, hopp!
Galopp, Galopp!
mein Besengaul,
hurr, hopp, nit faul!

Sowie ich's mag
am lichten Tag
spring kreuz und quer
um Häuschen her!

Bei dunkler Nacht,
wann niemand wacht,
zum Hexenschmaus
am Schornstein raus!

Aus fünf und sechs,
so sagt die Hex,
mach sieb und acht,
so ist's vollbracht;
und neun ist eins,
und zehn ist keins,
und viel ist nichts,
die Hexe spricht's.

So reitet sie
bis morgens früh—
Prr! Besen! hüh!

(Vom Besen steigend hinkt die Hexe zu Hänsel und kitzelt ihn mit einem Besenreis wach.)

Auf, auf, mein Jüngelchen!
Zeig mir dein Züngelchen!

(Hänsel streckt die Zunge heraus.)

(Schnalzend.)

Schlicker, schlecker,
lecker, lecker!
Kleines leckres Schlingerchen,

Go, my poppet, go my pet,
you the table now shall set,
little knife, little fork, little dish, little plate,
little serviette for my little mate!
Now get everything ready and nice,
or else I shall lock you up too in a trice!

(She threatens and titters. Gretel hurries off. The Witch, to Hänsel, who pretends to be asleep.)

The fool is slumb'ring, it does seem queer
how youth can sleep and have no fear!
Well, sleep away, you simple sheep,
soon you will sleep your last long sleep!
But first with Gretel I'll begin—
off you, dear maiden, I will dine;
you are so tender, plump, and good,
just the thing for witches' food!

(She opens the oven door and sniffs in it, her face lighted up by the deep red glare of the fire.)

The dough has risen, so we'll go on preparing.
Hark, how the sticks in the fire are crackling!

(She pushes a couple more faggots under, the fire flames up and then dies down again. The Witch rubbing her hands with glee.)

Yes, Gretel mine,
how well off you I'll dine!
See, see, O how sly!
When in the oven she's peeping,
quickly behind her I'm creeping!
One little push, bang
goes the door, clang!
Then soon will Gretel be
just done to a T!
and when from the oven I take her
she'll look like a cake from the baker,
by magic fire red
changed into gingerbread!
See, see how sly!
Hi hi! hi hi!

(In her wild delight she seizes a broomstick and begins to ride upon it.)

So hop, hop, hop,
gallop, lop, lop!
My broomstick nag,
come do not lag!

(She rides excitedly round on the broomstick.)

At dawn of day
I ride away,
am here and there
and everywhere!

(She rides again; Gretel meanwhile is watching at the window.)

At midnight hour, when none can know,
to join the witches' dance I go!

And three and four
are witches' lore,
and five and six
are witches' tricks,
and nine is one,
and ten is none,
and seven is nil,
or what she will!

And thus they ride till dawn of day!

(Hopping madly along, she rides to the back of the stage and vanishes for a time behind the cottage.)

Zeige mir dein Fingerchen!
(*Hänsel streckt ein Stöckchen heraus.*)
Jemine, je!
Wie ein Stöckchen, o weh!
Bübchen, deine Fingerchen
sind elende Dingerchen!

(*Ruft.*)

Mädel! Gretel!

(*Gretel zeigt sich an der Thür.*)

Bring Rosinen und Mandeln her;
Hänsel meint, es schmeckt nach "mehr!"

(*Gretel bringt in einem Korbe Rosinen und Mandeln; sie stellt sich, während die Hexe sie dem Hänsel reicht, hinter sie und macht gegen Hänsel die Entzauberungsgebärde mit dem Wachholderbusch.*)

GRETEL (*leise*).

Hocus pocus, Holderbusch!
Schwinde, Gliederstarre—husch!

HEXE (*sich rasch umwendend*).

Was sagtest du, mein Gänselchen!

GRETEL.

Meint' nur: wohl bekomm's, mein Hänselchen!

HEXE.

Hihhi! Mein gutes Tröpfchen,
da—steck dir was ins Kröpfchen!
Friss, Vogel, und stirb—
Kuchen-Heil dir erwirb!

(*Sie öffnet die Backofenthür; Hänsel gibt Gretel lebhaftes Zeichen.*)

HÄNSEL (*leise die Stallthür öffnend*).

Schwesterlein,
hüt dich fein!

HEXE (*Gretel gierig betrachtend*).

Wie wässert mir das Mündchen
nach diesem süßen Kindchen!
Komm, Gretelchen!
Zuckermädelchen!
Sollst in den Backofen hucken
und nach den Lebkuchen gucken,
sorgfältig schau—ja,
ob sie schon braun da,
oder ob's zu früh—
's ist kleine Müh!

HÄNSEL (*aus dem Stall schleichend*).

Schwesterlein,
hüt dich fein!

GRETEL (*sich ungeschickt stellend*).

Ei, wie fang ich's an,
dass ich komme dran?

HEXE.

Musst dich nur eben
ein bisschen heben,
Kopf vorgebeugt—
's ist kinderleicht!

Here the Witch becomes visible again; she comes to the foreground, where she suddenly pulls up and dismounts.

Prr, broomstick, hi!

(*She hobbles back to the stable and tickles Hänsel with a birch twig till he awakes.*)

Up, awake, my mankin young;
come show to me your tongue!

(*Hänsel puts his tongue out. The Witch smacks with her tongue.*)

Dainty morsel! dainty morsel!
Little toothsome mankin come,
now let me see your thumb!

(*Hänsel pokes out a small bone.*)

Gemini! Oho!
O how scraggy, how lean!
Urchin, you're a scraggy one,
as bad as a skeleton!

(*Calls.*)

Maiden, Gretel!

(*Gretel appears at the door.*)

Bring some raisins and almonds sweet,
Hänsel wants some more to eat.

(*Gretel runs into the house, and returns immediately with a basket full of almonds and raisins.*)

GRETEL.

Here are the almonds.

(*Whilst the Witch is feeding Hänsel, Gretel gets behind her and makes the gestures of disenchantment with the juniper-branch.*)

GRETEL (*softly*).

Hocus pocus, elder-bush,
Rigid body loosen, hush!

THE WITCH (*turning suddenly round*).

What were you saying, little goose?

GRETEL (*confusedly*).

Only—much good may it do to Hans!

THE WITCH.

Eh?

GRETEL (*louder*).

Much good may it do to Hans!

THE WITCH.

He he he, my little miss,
I'll stop your mouth with this!

(*Sticks a raisin into Gretel's mouth.*)

Eat, minion, eat or die!
Here are cakes, O so nice!

(*She opens the oven door; the heat has apparently diminished. Meanwhile Hänsel makes violent signs to*

HÄNSEL (*immer näher den beiden*).

Schwesterlein,
hüt dich fein!

GRETEL (*schüchtern*).

Bin gar so dumm,
nimm mir's nicht krumm;
drum zeige mir eben,
wie soll ich mich heben?

HEXE (*macht eine ungeduldige Bewegung*).

Kopf vorgebeugt!
's ist kinderleicht!

*(Indem sie sich vorbeugt und mit halbem Leibe
hineinkriecht, geben ihr Hänsel und Gretel von hinten
einen derben Stoss, sodass sie vollends hineinfliegt,
und schlagen dann rasch die Thür zu.)*

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL.

Und bist du dann drin—schwaps!
Geht die Thür—klaps!
Du bist dann statt Gretelchen
ein Brätelchen!

*(Hänsel und Gretel fallen sich jubelnd in die Arme,
fassen sich bei der Hand und tanzen.)*

Juchhei! Nun ist die Hexe tot,
mausetot!
Nun ist geschwunden Angst und Not!

Juchhei! Nun ist die Hexe still,
mäuschenstill,
Und Kuchen giebt's die Hüll und Füll!

Juchhei! Nun ist zu End der Graus,
Hexengraus!
Und böser Zauberspuk ist aus!

Drum lasst uns fröhlich sein,
tanzen im Feuerschein,
halten im Knusperhaus
herrlichsten Freudenschmaus!
Juchhei, juchhei!

*(Sie umfassen sich und walzen zum Knusperhaus, wo
sie alle Herrlichkeiten in Besitz nehmen. Im
Hexenofen knistert es gewaltig und die Flamme
schlägt hoch empor; dann erfolgt ein starker Krach,
und der Ofen stürzt zusammen. Hänsel und Gretel
eilen herbei, und stehen erstaunt da. Ihre
Verwunderung steigt aufs höchste, als sie die Kinder
gewart werden, deren Kuchenhülle inzwischen
abgefallen ist.)*

Gretel.)

HÄNSEL (*softly opening the stable door*).

Sister dear,
O beware!

THE WITCH (*looking greedily at Gretel*).

She makes my mouth water,
this pretty little daughter!
Come, Gretel mine,
sugar-maiden mine!

(Gretel comes towards her.)

Peep in the oven, be steady,
see if the gingerbread's ready!
Carefully look, pet,
whether it's cooked yet,
but if it wants more,
shut quick the door!

(Gretel hesitates.)

HÄNSEL (*slipping out of the stable*).

Sister dear,
have a care!

GRETEL (*making herself out very awkward*).

I don't understand what I have to do!

THE WITCH.

Just stand on tip-toe,
head bending forward;
try it, I pray,
it's merely play!

HÄNSEL (*pulling Gretel back by her frock*).

Sister dear,
now take care!

GRETEL (*shyly*).

I'm such a goose, don't understand!
You'll have to show me
how to stand on tip-toe!

THE WITCH (*makes a movement of impatience*).

Do as I say,
it's merely play!

*(She begins creeping up to the oven, muttering all the
time, and just as she is bending over it, Hänsel and
Gretel give her a good push, which sends her toppling
over into it, upon which they quickly shut the door.)*

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL (*mocking her*).

Then "One little push, bang
goes the door, clang!"
You, not Gretel, then will be
just done to a T!

(Hänsel and Gretel fall into one another's arms.)

BOTH.

Hurrah! now sing the witch is dead,
really dead!
No more to dread!

Hurrah! now sing the witch is still,
deathly still!

We can eat our fill!

Now all the spell is o'er,
really o'er!
We fear no more!

(They seize each other's hands.)

Yes, let us happy be,
dancing so merrily;
now the old witch is gone,
we'll have no end of fun!
Hey! hurrah, hurrah!
Hip hurrah! Hip hurrah!
Hurrah!

(They take each other round the waist and waltz together, first in the front of the stage, and then gradually in the direction of the Witch's house. When they get there Hänsel breaks loose from Gretel and rushes into the house, shutting the door after him. Then from the upper window he throws down apples, pears, oranges, gilded nuts, and all kinds of sweetmeats into Gretel's outstretched apron. Meanwhile the oven begins crackling loudly, and the flames burn high. Then there is a loud crash, and the oven falls thundering into bits. Hänsel and Gretel, who in their terror let their sweetmeats all fall down, hurry towards the oven startled, and stand there motionless. Their astonishment increases when they become aware of a troop of children around them, whose disguise of cakes has fallen from them.)

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL (*spoken*).

There, see those little children dear,
I wonder how they all came here!

Vierte Scene.

GRETEL (*nach einer Weile*).

Da, sieh nur die artigen Kinderlein,
wo mögen die hergekommen sein?

DIE KUCHENKINDER (*ganz leise*).

Erlöst—befreit
für alle Zeit!

GRETEL.

Geschlossen sind ihre Äugelein;
sie schlafen und singen doch so fein!

KUCHENKINDER (*leise*).

O rühre mich an,
dass ich erwachen kann!

HÄNSEL (*verlegen*).

Rühr du sie doch an—ich traue mir's nicht.

GRETEL.

Ja, streicheln will ich dies hübsches Gesicht!

(Sie streichelt das nächste Kind; dieses öffnet die Augen und lächelt.)

ANDRE KUCHENKINDER.

O rühre auch mich—auch mich rühr' an,
dass ich die Äuglein öffnen kann.

Scene IV.

THE GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*motionless and with closed eyes, as the cake figures were before*).

We're saved, we're freed
for evermore!

GRETEL.

Your eyes are shut—pray who are you?
You're sleeping, and yet you're singing too!

THE GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*always very softly*).

O touch us, we pray,
that we may all awake!

HÄNSEL (*to Gretel, embarrassed*).

O touch them for me,
I dare not try!

GRETEL.

Yes, let me stroke this innocent face!

(She caresses the nearest child, who opens its eyes and smiles.)

OTHER GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*softly*).

O touch me too, O touch me too,
that I also may awake!

(Gretel goes and caresses all the rest of the children, who open their eyes and smile, without moving; meanwhile Hänsel seizes the juniper-branch.)

(Gretel geht streichelnd zu den übrigen Kindern, die lächelnd die Augen öffnen, ohne sich zu rühren; endlich ergreift Hänsel den Wachholder.)

HÄNSEL.

Hocus pocus, Holderbusch!
Schwinde, Gliederstarre—husch!

DIE KUCHENKINDER (*springen auf, schliessen sich zu einem Ringelreigen um Hänsel und Gretel und verbeugen sich zierlich*).

Habt Dank, habt Dank
euer Leben lang!
Juchhei!
Die Hexerei
ist nun vorbei;
nun singen und springen wir froh und frei!
Kommt, Kinderlein,
zum Ringelreihn,
reicht allzumal die Händchen fein!
Drum singt und springt,
drum tanzt und singt,
dass laut der Jubelruf durchdringt den Wald,
und rings erschallt
von Lust der Wald.

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL.

Die Englein haben's im Traum gesagt
in stiller Nacht,
was nun so herrlich uns der Tag
hat wahr gemacht.
Ihr Englein, die uns so treu bewacht
bei Tag und Nacht,
habt Lob und Dank für all die Pracht,
die uns hier lacht.

DIE KUCHENKINDER.

Habt Dank, habt Dank
euer Leben lang!

Letzte Scene.

(Aus dem Hintergrund ertönt die Stimme des Vaters.)

VATER.

Rallalala, rallalala,
wären doch unsre Kinder da!
Rallalala, rallalala.—

(Er erblickt Hänsel und Gretel.)

Juch—! Ei, da sind sie ja!

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL (*den Eltern entgegen eilend*).

Vater! Mutter!

MUTTER.

HÄNSEL.

Hocus pocus, elder-bush!
Rigid body loosen, hush!

SOME OF THE CHILDREN (*jump up and hurry towards Hänsel and Gretel from all sides*).

We thank, we thank you both!

THE CHILDREN.

The spell is broke and we are free,
we'll sing and we'll dance and we'll shout for glee!
Come, children all, and form a ring,
join hands together while we sing.
Then sing and spring,
then dance and sing,
for cakes and all good things we bring.
Then sing and spring,
then dance and sing,
that through the wood
our song of praise may sound,
and echo repeat it all around!
We thank, we thank, we thank!

HÄNSEL.

The angels whispered in dreams to us in silent night
what this happy, happy day has brought tonight.

(Four Gingerbread Children at a time surround Hänsel and Gretel, and bow gracefully to them.)

GRETEL.

Ye angels, who have watched o'er our steps and led
them right,
we thank for all our joy and wondrous delight.

THE GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*who all press round Hänsel and Gretel to shake hands with them*).

We'll thank you both all our life!

FATHER (*behind the scene*).

Tralala, tralalala!
Were our children only here!
Tralala, tralalala!

(The Father appears in the background with the Mother, and stops when he sees the children.)

Ha! Why, they're really there!

Last Scene.

HÄNSEL (*running towards them*).

Father! mother!

GRETEL (*the same*).

Father! mother!

MOTHER.

Children dear!

FATHER.

O welcome,
poor children innocent!

(Joyfully embracing. Meanwhile two of the boys have

Kinderchen!

VATER.

Da sind ja die armen Sünderchen!

(Frohe Umarmung; unterdes haben zwei Knaben die Hexe als grossen Lebkuchen aus den Trümmern des Zauberofens gezogen. Der Vater stellt dieselbe vor sich hin.)

VATER.

Kinder, schaut das Wunder an,
wie solch Hexlein hexen kann,
Wie sie hart,
knusperhart
selber nun zum Kuchen ward!
Merkt des Himmels Strafgericht:
böse Werke dauern nicht!
Wenn die Not aufs höchste steigt,
Gott der Herr die Hand uns reicht!

ALLE.

Wenn die Not aufs höchste steigt,
Gott der Herr die Hand uns reicht!

(Indem die Kinder einen lustigen Reigen um die Gruppe tanzen, fällt der Vorhang.)

ENDE.

dragged the Witch, in the form of a big gingerbread cake, out of the ruins of the magic oven. At the sight of her they all burst into a shout of joy. The boys place the Witch in the middle of the stage.)

FATHER.

Children, see the wonder wrought,
how the Witch herself was caught
unaware
in the snare
laid for you with cunning rare!

ALL THE REST.

See, O see the wonder wrought,
how the Witch herself was caught
unaware
in the snare
laid for us with cunning rare!

(The two boys drag the Witch in the cottage.)

FATHER.

Such is Heaven's chastisement;
evil works will have an end.
"When past bearing is our grief,
Then 'tis Heaven will send us sure relief!"

ALL.

"When past bearing is our grief,
Then 'tis Heaven will send relief!"

THE END.

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"I know of no piano that would
give us better satisfaction, and it is my desire that the Weber
Piano shall continue to be used at the Metropolitan Opera
House."
HEINRICH CONRIED.

"Mr. Conried's letter, following as it does the tribute of Maurice Grau
to the Weber Piano when he was at the head of the Metropolitan Opera House
organization, shows the great place long ago won and always retained by the
Weber among the greatest people in the musical world, and demonstrates that
this artistic instrument has in that atmosphere the proper setting for its merits."
—*The Music Trades.*

The Weber Piano Company
Aeolian Hall, 362 Fifth Ave., near 34th St., New York
Catalog upon request, Agents in all principal cities

Weber Pianos

HEINRICH CONRIED, Director of the Conried
Metropolitan Opera Company, writes as follows:

NEW YORK, May 12, 1904.

"From time to time during the past operatic
season I have been impressed with the
wonderful resources of the Weber Pianos
which we have been using at the
Metropolitan.

"Subjected to immense usage by reason of
our numerous rehearsals, these instruments
nevertheless retain their exquisite tone-
quality.

"I know of no piano that would give us
better satisfaction, and it is my desire that the
Weber Piano shall continue to be used at the
Metropolitan Opera House."

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head of the Metropolitan Opera House organization,
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Transcriber's notes:

The title on the cover image shows "Hansel und Gretel"; this has been changed to "Hänsel und Gretel" in the transcribed text.

A missing speaker's name in the German version following "Herrjemine, den möcht' ich ganz verschlecken!" has been added.

An additional header for "Dritte Scene" in the third act has been removed.

The following is a list of other changes made to the original. The first line is the original line, the second the corrected one.

In the background is the llsensein.

In the background is the llsenstein.

For weeks I've eaten nought but bread

For weeks I've eaten nought but bread

As through 'twere fair time, hopping and springing!

As though 'twere fair time, hopping and springing!

Gracious! there's goes the jug all to pieces!

Gracious! there goes the jug all to pieces!

he wears a little black cup upon his head.

he wears a little black cap upon his head.

A thick mist rises and competely hides the background.

A thick mist rises and completely hides the background.

Rühr dich, und dich deisst der Fluss!

Rühr dich, und dich beisst der Fluss!

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