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Tiny Plays for Children, by Lady Florence Eveleen Eleanore
Olliffe Bell**

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Title: Nursery Comedies: Twelve Tiny Plays for Children

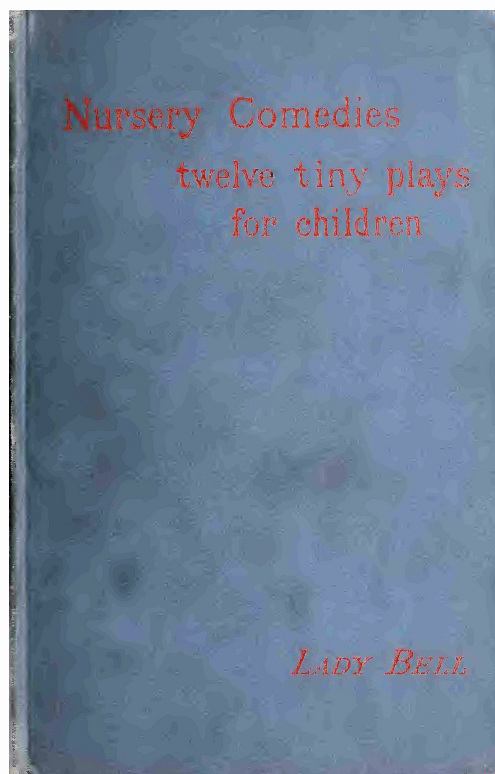
Author: Lady Florence Eveleen Eleanore Olliffe Bell

Release date: December 9, 2014 [EBook #47609]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Delphine Lettau, Paul Dring & the online
Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at
<http://www.pgdpcanada.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NURSERY COMEDIES: TWELVE
TINY PLAYS FOR CHILDREN ***



NURSERY COMEDIES.

Twelve Tiny Plays for Children

BY

LADY BELL

NEW IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
1911

TO

Hugo, Elsa and Molly.

*
* * Four of the following little plays, viz.: "Cat and Dog," "The Wigwam," "Rather a Prig," and "Foolish Jack" (from Grimm), are adapted from the *Petit Théâtre des Enfants*, by the same author. Three of them, "Cinderella," "The Golden Goose," and "What Happened to Henny Penny," are versions of well-known stories.

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WHAT HAPPENED TO HENNY PENNY.

CHARACTERS.

HENNY PENNY. DUCKY DADDLES.
COCKIE LOCKIE. GOOSEY POOSEY.
TURKY LURKY. MR. FOX.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HENNY PENNY.

H. P.—Oh dear me! Oh dear me! What was it, I wonder? What could it have been? I must scream for help. Help! Help!

Enter COCKIE LOCKIE.

C. L.—What's the matter? Henny Penny, what is happening?

H. P.—Oh dear me! I don't know what it was, that is the worst of it.

C. L.—You don't know what it was?

H. P.—How should I, when I never saw it? It fell on to my head.

C. L.—*What* fell on to your head? What a stupid hen you are!

H. P.—I was under a beanstack pecking about, and suddenly something fell from the top of the stack on to my head. I thought at first it was a bean or a piece of stick, but now I think of it, I am sure it was something much heavier—a piece of the sky, or something of that sort.

C. L.—A piece of the sky falling out! But, Henny, this is serious.

H. P.—Of course! That's what I feel. That's why I screamed at once for help.

C. L.—You see, if the sky is coming to bits, I think the Queen of England ought to know it.

H. P.—I think she ought. Let's go and tell her!

C. L.—Agreed! We'll start at once. I'll just crow first very loud that everybody may know something is happening.

H. P.—Very well, and I'll cluck.

(They crow and cluck.)

C. L.—Now, then, we can start.

(A voice outside is heard.)

VOICE.—Hullo there! Cockie Lockie! Henny Penny!

C. L.—There's that stupid Ducky Daddles.

Enter DUCKY DADDLES.

C. L.—Well, Ducky Daddles, what do you want?

D. D.—I just wanted to come and have a chat. I saw you and Henny Penny starting off for a pleasant walk together, and I thought I'd come too.

C. L.—Ah! but this is no common walk.

H. P.—Indeed it is not.

D. D.—Why, where are you going to?

C. L.—We're going to London to see the Queen.

D. D.—The Queen! What for?

H. P.—To tell her a most important piece of news.

C. L.—A great piece of the sky fell out close to Henny Penny's head, and nearly killed her.

D. D.—Dear me! That is important. The Queen ought to know it at once. I'll come with you.

C. L.—You! Do you think you can walk so far?

D. D.—Oh, dear, yes! Besides, I daresay, we shall find some place on the road where we can get slugs or snails, or something of that sort, in case I feel faint.

C. L.—Very well, then, are you ready? Now we'll start.

D. D.—Come on, then. I'll just quack first to let people know where I am.

(Quacks. They prepare to start off arm in arm. A voice outside is heard.)

VOICE.—Hullo! Cockie Lockie! Henny Penny! Ducky Daddles!

C. L.—Now, what is it? We shall never get off at this rate.

D. D.—It is that silly Goosey Poosey.

Enter GOOSEY POOSEY.

G. P.—There you are, Ducky Daddles! I've been looking for you everywhere!

C. L.—What do you want?

G. P.—I just wanted to see what you were doing, and have a chat. What a horrid day it is! the roads are so dry there is no walking in them.

D. D.—Well, I am sorry I've not time to stay with you. I'm just off to London to see the Queen.

G. P.—You, Ducky Daddles! Something very strange must have happened to make you go so far.

D. D.—Indeed it has, and what do you think?

C. L.—Guess what fell on to Henny Penny's head.

G. P.—An acorn, or perhaps even a chestnut.

D. D.—A chestnut! Oh, if that were all! No, my friend. It was a piece of the sky, a great, solid slab of blue sky, that fell *clump* on to the top of poor Henny Penny's head, and nearly killed her.

G. P.—Oh, how terrible! Have you sent for the police?

C. L.—No, we're going to London to tell the Queen. We think she ought to know.

G. P.—Indeed she ought, and at once. I'll come with you to see what she

says.

C. L.—Very well! Only you must not keep waiting to splash about in all the puddles, then.

G. P.—Of course not, when I'm out walking on business.

C. L.—Very well, then, we'll start without losing any more time.

G. P.—I'll just hiss first in case there's an enemy in the road. (*Hisses.*) Now, then, I'm ready.

C. L.—Then let us start.

(COCKIE LOCKIE *arm in arm* with HENNY PENNY. GOOSEY POOSEY *arm in arm* with DUCKY DADDLES. *A voice outside is heard.*)

VOICE.—Cockie Lockie! Henny Penny! Goosey Poosey! Ducky Daddles!

C. L.—Dear me! We shall never get to London.

G. P.—It's that gobbling Turkey Lurky!

Enter TURKY LURKY.

T. L.—Ha! ha! my friends. This is very nice. Oho! Aha! Where are you all off to so merrily?

C. L.—Not merrily, indeed! Our business is most serious.

T. L.—You make my feathers stand on end. What *is* the matter?

G. P.—Haven't you heard? The most terrible thing has happened!

H. P.—One half of the sky fell on me as I was sitting under a haystack, and we don't know what is going to happen next.

T. L.—Oh dear! This *is* terrible! Suppose the other half were to come down?

C. L.—Exactly! That's what we're afraid of. We're going to the Queen of England to see what she can do.

T. L.—A very good thing to do! I'll come with you and explain it all to her. Oho!

C. L.—Are you sure you're not too fat to walk so far?

T. L.—Too fat! Aha! On the contrary, I shall make you look respectable. We shall be admitted to the Queen at once. I'll just gobble first to let her know we're coming.

(*Gobbles. They prepare to start as before, TURKY in front. A voice outside is heard.*)

VOICE.—Stop! Stop! Good people, one moment, if you please.

D. D.—Why it's Mr. Fox!

H. P.—Is it safe to let him come?

T. L.—Oh dear, yes! There are quite enough of us to be a match for him. Oho! Aha!

Enter MR. FOX.

MR. F.—Good afternoon, my friends. What a pleasant gathering you have here! You look as though you were going to enjoy yourselves.

C. L.—Alas! No! Nothing so festive. We are going to London on most serious business.

MR. F.—To London?

G. P.—Yes, indeed! The whole sky has got loose and is slipping about in the most dangerous manner.

D. D.—It would have killed Henny Penny if she hadn't got under a beanstack.

MR. F.—Oh how horrible! What shall we do?

C. L.—We're going to London to tell the Queen.

MR. F.—To London! Why, that is capital! I'm going there myself.

D. D.—Are you, indeed!

MR. F.—And what's more, I know a short cut to London, that will get you there in less than half the time.

C. L.—Oh, then, pray show it to us. Every minute is precious.

MR. F.—You can't possibly mistake the road. Directly you get out of here, you will see a dark path to the right, that looks rather like the entrance to a cavern. However, you may be sure it leads to London, and you'll find the Queen sitting at the other end of it.

T. L.—Ah! that's capital! Oho! Aha! Hurrah!

MR. F.—You all go on in front, and I'll bring up the rear, in case a lion comes up behind us.

C. L.—We'll go in single file this time.

(Exit, each making his own noise. Fox follows, slyly dancing.)

(After a minute all their voices heard together, then a pause. Fox re-enters covered with feathers. He crosses the stage silently, with a smile.)

MR. F.—Henny Penny was the nicest! The others were rather tough!

CURTAIN.

LITTLE PETSU.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. SIMONDS. MRS. ROBERTS. PETSU.

LITTLE PETSU.

MRS. ROBERTS *discovered, in walking things.*

MRS. R.—I wish Mrs. Simonds would appear! It is so rude to keep people waiting in this way when they come to see you. (*Looks at books, etc.*) Well, I wonder how much longer she's going to be. I would not have come if I had not wanted to explain to her about that bazaar we are getting up.

Enter PETSY with toys.

Ah, how do you do, darling? How are you? Will you shake hands? (*PETSY turns away.*) You don't know my name, do you?

P.—I do, then.

MRS. R.—You do? Who am I?

P.—You're Mrs. Roberts. I know it, because the maid came and told Mamma so, and then Mamma said, "Mrs. Roberts, bother!" and she told me to come and say she would be here in a minute.

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) Delightful child, this. (*Aloud.*) Then as you know my name, won't you shake hands?

P.—Shan't.

(*Makes a face at Mrs. R., and turns her back to her.*)

Enter Mrs. SIMONDS.

MRS. S.—Ah, my dear Mrs. Roberts, I am so glad to see you.

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) So I understand!

(*They shake hands.*)

MRS. S.—I am so sorry to have kept you waiting. I was just taking off my things.

(*Draws forward chair for Mrs. R., they sit.*)

MRS. R.—Oh, not at all. I've not been here very long.

MRS. S.—I sent down my little Petsy to amuse you.

MRS. R.—Oh, thank you, yes, she came.

MRS. S.—It is impossible to feel dull where she is. Such an original child, so full of life!

MRS. R.—Oh, indeed! I came to see you, Mrs. Simonds, about the charity bazaar at Wandsworth.

MRS. S.—The bazaar, yes.

P.—(*Loud.*) Ma! Ma! How long is she going to stay?

MRS. S.—(*Smiling.*) Oh, dear, dear, Petsy, Mrs. Roberts will be quite shocked at you! She will really, won't you, Mrs. Roberts?

MRS. R.—(*Tries to smile.*) Oh, dear no! Sweet child!

(*PETSY goes on making a noise with drum, while Mrs. ROBERTS tries to speak.*)

MRS. R.—(*Obliged to shout.*) It seems—there has been some difficulty—about the hall.

MRS. S.—About the hall—yes. (*Looking round at PETSY.*) She is such a

merry child, it makes one quite happy to see her!

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) I am glad it has that effect upon some one!

MRS. S.—You were saying about the hall—

P.—Ma! Mamma!

MRS. S.—Yes, darling, yes. About the hall—

P.—Ma! Ma! Ma!

MRS. S.—I don't know why there should be any difficulty—

P.—Ma! Ma!

MRS. S.—What is it, my dear one? What do you want?

P.—May I play with the silver inkstand?

MRS. S.—If you'll take great care of it, yes. (*To MRS. R.*) Did you ever hear such ideas as the child has? Such an active mind, never quiet!

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) Well, perhaps now she's got the inkstand she'll be quiet.

MRS. S.—You have no idea what quaint things she says sometimes. You must get me to tell you some of them next time we meet.

MRS. R.—Oh, thank you! Then you think we shall be able to get the hall?

P.—(*Goes up to MRS. ROBERTS and pulls her cloak.*) Why do you wear this ugly cloak?

MRS. S.—Oh, really, Petsy! I don't know what Mrs. Roberts will think! Such a pretty cloak, too.

P.—No, it isn't. It's hideous, and so is her bonnet. It's like Miss Jane's cloak in the poem.

MRS. R.—In the poem?

MRS. S.—Yes, that's a little poem she has learnt. You can't think what a memory she has for that kind of thing. I should like you to hear her recite it. You can't think how prettily she does it.

MRS. R.—Does she, indeed.

MRS. S.—Petsy, will you say your poetry to Mrs. Roberts?

P.—No, I shan't.

MRS. S.—Oh, now do! Mrs. Roberts would like it so much, wouldn't you?

MRS. R.—Oh, of all things.

MRS. S.—She stands on a chair and says it. You can't think how pretty it looks. Come now, Petsy, won't you?

(MRS. S. *puts her on a chair, Petsy jumps down and kicks away the chair.*)

MRS. R.—Well, never mind—don't worry her about it now.

MRS. S.—Oh, but I should so like you to hear her. Come, Petsy, you needn't stand on a chair—stand there with your hands behind you. Now begin: "Pretty Miss Jane——"

P.—I won't, then! (*Gives her mother a thump.*) There!

MRS. S.—She's so unexpected, isn't she? (*To Petsy.*) If you won't say the

poem to Mrs. Roberts, you will play the violin to her, won't you?

MRS. R.—(*Horrified.*) The violin!

MRS. S.—Yes, she does show such talent! You'll be quite surprised.

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) Yes, I shall be quite surprised if she does.

MRS. S.—Of course, it's a little squeaky at times—but, after all, she's such a child, it's a wonder she plays at all.

MRS. R.—It is indeed. (*Aside.*) Especially to visitors who don't want to hear her. (*Aloud.*) I am sorry I can't stay to-day, I just came to see about that hall.

MRS. S.—Ah, to be sure, the hall, yes—we've settled nothing. Do stay and have tea with us.

MRS. R.—Tea.... I am afraid it is rather late.

MRS. S.—Oh, do stay, we shall be so snug, just we three—for Petsy always comes in. There she sits in her high chair, and keeps me alive with her prattle.

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) Ah, that quite decides me. (*Aloud.*) I am afraid I can hardly do that to-day. I have an appointment at five. (*Looking at watch.*)

P.—Ma! (*Twitching* MRS. S.'s *gown.*) May I have butter as well as jam on my toast?

MRS. S.—Oh, oh! my dear child! Really! (she knows her own mind, I assure you!)

MRS. R.—(*Aside.*) So it appears. (*Aloud.*) I am afraid I can't stay longer to-day. Good-bye.

MRS. S.—Good-bye. I'm so sorry you can't stay to tea.

P.—I'm *so* glad!

MRS. S.—Oh! Oh! really, dear Petsy. She likes being alone with her mother, that is the fact.

MRS. R.—No doubt. Then you will let me know about the bazaar, won't you?

MRS. S.—Oh, of course, I will, and then you must come here that we may have a good talk and settle everything—and we will persuade Petsy to sing her song, and dance her dance! she dances like a fairy, I assure you.

MRS. R.—I have no doubt of it. Good-bye.

MRS. S.—Good-bye.

P.—Good-bye, old Mother Roberts, good-bye!

MRS. S.—(*Playfully.*) Oh, Petsy, little Petsy!

(*Exit* MRS. S. *showing* MRS. R. *out.* PETSY *pulling* MRS. S.'s *skirts to hold her back.*)

CURTAIN.

RATHER A PRIG.

CHARACTERS.

ELEANOR. WALTER.

RATHER A PRIG.

ELEANOR.—(*Calling outside.*) Walter! Walter! (*Running in.*) Here you are, at last! Do come and play in the garden!

WALTER.—(*Who is walking about with a book.*) Certainly not! Don't you see I am deep in study?

E.—But it's play-time.

W.—I dislike play-time.

E.—What a dull creature! Do you mean to say that you never play?

W.—As seldom as possible.

E.—What a pity! I have just got some new reins, and I wanted to play at horses. I do love being a horse.

W.—That is a natural preference. The horse has ever been a favoured companion of man. It is even on record that the Roman Emperor, Caligula—

E.—I will not talk about Roman Emperors during play-time. Come along, I will drag the cart and you shall drive standing up, if you like, as they do at the circus.

W.—That is a custom which dates from the most remote antiquity. Pictorial representations of standing charioteers are found on the Assyrian friezes and the Egyptian tombs—

E.—(*Stopping her ears.*) I *will not* talk about the Egyptians during play-time. Come, will you drive the cart?

W.—Certainly not.

E.—Then shall we skip? Look, I have a new skipping-rope, which my father gave me last week.

W.—The hemp from which that rope was made was doubtless derived from the flax grown in the province of Ulster, in Ireland, especially in the county of Antrim, of which the principal towns are Belfast, Lisbon, and Carrickfergus.

E.—Oh, bother the county of Antrim and the province of Ulster! I don't care to know where the skipping-rope grew. I want to skip with it.

W.—That is quite a savage instinct; the remarkable agility of the South Sea Islanders—

E.—I won't talk of the South Sea Islanders during play-time. You won't skip, then?

W.—Certainly not.

E.—Then let's be soldiers. I love playing at soldiers.

W.—That is somewhat of an unfeminine instinct, although it is justified by more than one example in history. Thus, Boadicea—

E.—Oh, shut up, or I will run you through with my sword! It's just like a real one. It's made of the most beautiful steel.

W.—Then the blade probably came from the district of Cleveland in Yorkshire, where the iron and steel industries may be seen in their greatest development. You have, doubtless, heard of the steel works of Eston, and the blast furnaces of Middlesbrough?

E.—I don't know what a blast furnace is.

W.—Allow me to describe that ingenious construction to you.

E.—No, thank you, not in my play-time. I am going to get some daisies to make a daisy-chain.

W.—You doubtless have a herbarium?

E.—No. I don't believe they grow in this garden.

W.—Oh, too ignorant girl! A herbarium is not a flower, it is a collection of dried flowers and plants.

E.—Ah, well! I haven't one then.

W.—That is a mistake. You should carefully dry the plants and stick them in a book, with a minute description of each specimen written on the opposite page.

E.—I can't stick anything in a book, because Mamma doesn't like me to use her gum, and I have only fish-glue.

W.—Fish-glue is, for certain purposes, a most valuable substance. It has even been known to cure cecity or blindness. Thus, Tobit—

E.—Don't talk about Tobit. Are you coming to make a daisy-chain?

W.—Never.

E.—Shall we play at battledore? I have a heavy shuttlecock and a light one, whichever you like best.

W.—That is because the density of cork varies in a very marked manner. That brought from the West Indies—

E.—Don't talk about the West Indies during play-time. Are you coming to play at battledore?

W.—On no account.

E.—Very well, then, you may stay with your Egyptians, your South Sea Islanders, and your West Indies, while I go and play in the garden. I think you are rather a prig. (*Exit.*)

W.—(*Looking after her, surprised.*) A prig! How odd! I wonder what makes her say that?

CHARACTERS.

JACK. JANET.
MABEL. AUNT MARY.

THE MONSTER IN THE GARDEN.

JANET.—Come, I want to go into the garden.

MABEL.—We must have Tiny with us.

JAN.—Of course, where is he, I wonder? Tiny! Tiny!

M.—Tiny! Tiny! Stupid little dog! He is always away when one wants him.

JAN.—Perhaps he is in the garden already.

M.—Perhaps he is. We'll go and see.

JAN.—Ah! here is Jack, perhaps he has seen Tiny.

Enter JACK.

M.—Have you seen Tiny?

JACK.—Tiny? No, I haven't, indeed. Oh dear me! I am so frightened.

JAN.—What's the matter?

JACK.—I've seen the most terrible monster in the garden.

M. and Jan.—A monster!

JACK.—A monster, in the garden.

JAN.—Oh, Mabel, hold my hand! (*To JACK.*) Did you see him?

JACK.—Well, I did not see him exactly, because he was inside that clump of laurels, but I certainly heard him growl.

M.—(*Getting very close to JANET.*) Growl? Oh dear!

JACK.—Then I believe I saw two great eyes looking at me.

M.—Two great eyes?

JACK.—Then I am certain I saw the point of a hairy ear, the sort of point that a great monster's ear would be sure to have.

M.—Then, of course, now we won't go into the garden.

JAN.—I've just thought of the most terrible thing!

JACK.—What is it?

M.—What is it?

JAN.—(*Covering her face.*) That Tiny is in the garden!

M.—And he will be eaten alive!

(Covering her face with her hands, and sobbing loudly.)

JAN.—What shall we do? We can't leave him to die.

JACK.—*(Valiantly.)* No, we can't. I will go and save him.

M.—Oh, you brave boy! We'll come too.

JACK.—Come, then! I've got my knife.

(Pulls his knife out of his pocket.)

JAN.—And I'll take my new scissors.

M.—And what shall I have? Oh, I'll take two large hairpins to stab him with.

JACK.—That's right. We'll stab him through the heart.

Enter AUNT MARY.

AUNT MARY.—Why, my dear children! How warlike you look!

JACK.—And well we may! We're going into the garden to kill the most terrible monster.

A. M.—Oh, I see, you are pretending to be warriors.

JAN.—No, indeed! We are not. It is a real monster in the garden. Jack has seen him—part of him, at least.

A. M.—And what was he like?

JACK.—He's an enormous animal, with great flaring eyes, and long hairy ears.

JAN.—And probably horns and tusks, but we're not quite sure, because he was behind the bushes.

M.—And we are so dreadfully afraid he will kill Tiny.

A. M.—Oh no! He won't find Tiny—Tiny is hidden behind the laurels near the conservatory, eating a mouse which he has just caught.

JACK.—Behind the laurels near the conservatory! Then he will certainly be killed! The monster is there too! That is where the growls came from!

A. M.—Ha! ha! Now I see it all! Why, the monster that Jack saw and heard, is simply Tiny, who was growling because he feared his mouse would be taken away from him.

JACK.—Are you sure?

JAN.—Was the monster Tiny?

A. M.—Evidently. I've just seen him there myself.

M.—Oh, how delightful! let us go and tell Tiny there is no monster in the garden!

(Exeunt running, followed by AUNT MARY.)

CHARACTERS.

TOWSER. PUSSY.

CAT AND DOG.

TOWSER.—What a night! I am tied up in the yard, and told to bark if I hear a noise. Suddenly I hear a screeching and pecking in the poultry-yard, fowls flapping about in all directions. Of course I bark as loud as I can, my master comes out to see what it is about, he finds one of the hens missing, and beats me as if I had killed it. I do call that hard on a steady, respectable dog like me.

Enter PUSSY without seeing TOWSER.

PUSSY.—Well, I do call it hard! Everything that is broken in the house, they say is done by the cat. Now, this morning, again, a beautiful Venetian looking-glass is broken, and so my mistress would not give me a saucer of cream for breakfast.

T.—(*Seeing PUSSY.*) Bow! Wow!

P.—Mew! Mew!

T.—Good-morning, Mistress Pussy.

P.—Good-morning, Mr. Towser. I hope you're well.

T.—I am very tired. I had to bark a great deal in the night.

P.—Really! I am sorry to hear that. You must do as I do, come and sleep on the hearth-rug during the day.

T.—I only wish I could, but I am much too busy a dog for that.

P.—Are you? What do you do all day?

T.—First of all, I have to be ready to bite the postman's legs when he comes at eight, and then to bark at him as he goes across the road.

P.—It must be difficult to bark—I am sure I should never manage it.

T.—It is very difficult indeed—I am the only person in the house that can manage it. Then when the postman has gone, I go into the kitchen to help the cook to get rid of the bones and scraps that are left.

P.—The worst of bones is, they are so dreadfully hard. I much prefer a saucer of milk, or a fish's tail. Oh how delicious that is!

T.—Oh, I couldn't touch a fish's tail. Then when my master is at breakfast, I have to beg, and that is very hard work, as I am on my legs all the time, balancing things on my nose.

P.—If I were you, I would arch my back instead, and rub myself against the master's legs.

T.—Of course I could arch my back if I wanted to do so, but I don't care to. Then after breakfast, I have a few minutes' rest before the fire.

P.—Oh, isn't that comfortable! Rolled round in a basket. It is so nice to

purr a little, and then gradually go off to sleep.

T.—To tell the truth, I don't care to purr, I think it is so stupid. One might as well be a kettle or a bumble bee at once. What I like to do is to come and scratch at the door, just after it has been shut, to smell round the rug, to turn round two or three times, and then lie down quietly.

P.—To curl round with one's head nestled in between one's fore-paws.

T.—Oh, I like to sleep with my paws straight out.

P.—The result is, you don't sleep nearly so long.

T.—Because I haven't time. Then when my mistress goes out driving, I have to bark at the pony when he starts. And I have to go out with the carriage, and pay visits, and I jump upon strange people's laps, and make their dresses all muddy in front.

P.—That must be delightful! But I shouldn't care to go with the carriage, I would rather stay at home and enjoy myself, and scratch the visitors who come here. By the way, can you draw in your claws?

T.—Draw them in! Certainly not.

P.—You don't mean to say you can't do such a simple thing as that?

T.—Of course I could if I liked, but I don't choose. I think you ought to make up your mind either to have claws, or not to have them: not to be popping them in and out as you do.

P.—But it's so convenient when I walk about at night, to be able to steal about gently and then shoot out my claws when I see a mouse.

T.—Oh, how tempting that sounds! Then it's always at night you hunt?

P.—Oh, always. There is no one to see or to disturb you.

T.—Exactly. Now, when I go out with my master, if I go after a hen or a rabbit, I am beaten at once.

P.—Fancy being beaten for a hen!

T.—Isn't it absurd! Just for an idiotic bird like that!

P.—Who can't lap, or scratch!

T.—Nor bark, nor do anything!

P.—Never mind. I killed one last night, I am glad to say.

T.—You killed a hen?

P.—Certainly.

T.—Well, I do call that hard on me! My master beat me as hard as he could because of that hen.

P.—Well! Were you beaten for that wretched, tough old hen? That *is* funny!

T.—Yes, that is a good joke, madam, I dare say! But we shall see.

P.—Don't be angry about such a trifle.

T.—I will be revenged still more. I have already broken a Venetian looking-glass, to show my indignation.

P.—Was it you who broke the looking-glass?

T.—Certainly it was.

P.—Then we are quits. My mistress insisted that I had broken it, and would not give me my saucer of cream.

T.—Oh, that really is funny! We are quits, then. Shall we be friends again?

P.—Certainly, if you like.

T.—And, as a proof of our friendship, next time you come to kill the hens, I won't bark.

P.—That's a bargain. I'll steal two more to-night, and give you one.

T.—Oh, what a good plan! Let's go and choose them.

P.—Two nice fat ones!

*(He offers her his arm. He says "Bow! Wow!" She says "Mew! Mew!"
They go out.)*

MISS DOBSON.

CHARACTERS.

BERTHA. EVA.
DOROTHEA. FANNY.

MISS DOBSON.

ALL entering together.

BERTHA.—Are we very late, Miss Dobson?

(Looking round them.)

DOROTHEA.—Why, there is nobody here!

FANNY.—Where can she be?

EVA.—Perhaps she is late.

B.—Miss Dobson is never late.

F.—What is that letter on the table? Why, it's her writing! It's a letter from Miss Dobson!

F.—With our names written on it!

D.—It must be to say why she has not come.

B.—Quick! Let's open it.

E.—*(Snatches at it.)* No, no, I'll open it.

D.—Let us all open it together, and read it at the same time.

ALL.—Capital!

(They all rush at the letter which they tear in two.)

D.—Now, then, what shall we do?

B.—We shall have so much less to read.

E.—Let us see what is on this piece.

ALL.—*(Reading together.)* "My dear children, I am obliged to go off to Clapham by the ten o'clock train, to see my mother who is ill."

D.—Go to Clapham!

F.—By the ten o'clock train!

B.—To see her mother who is ill!

E.—Oh, how delightful!

B.—How delightful that her mother should be ill?

E.—No, of course not. I mean, how terrible!

ALL.—Poor Miss Dobson's mother!

D.—Come, let us see what else she says.

ALL.—*(Reading.)* "I shall not be back until the evening."

F.—She won't be back until the evening!

E.—We shall have a holiday then! *(All dancing round.)* A holiday! A holiday!

D.—Here's the other piece of the letter which we haven't read.

(They pick it up and read it.)

D.—*(Reading.)* "I hope you will be good children, and work by yourselves."

ALL.—Work by ourselves!

D.—*(Reading.)* "You can prepare your German, history, and geography, and do some drawing and practising."

F.—I never heard such a thing.

B.—I do call that a shame!

D.—It's horrid doing one's lessons alone.

E.—But still, it's nice not being scolded when one makes mistakes.

F.—I am quite sure I can't do my geography alone, because I never can find the additional towns on the map.

E.—Besides, Mamma does not like us to bend over the atlas, she says it is bad for the eyes.

D.—As for the drawing, we certainly can't do it, because Miss Dobson has got the key of the cupboard, where the soft pencils are.

B.—And as for the German, I never can find the words in the dictionary.

E.—And I certainly can't practise alone, because I never know where to

put my thumb in the scale of F sharp minor.

F.—And I never know where to put my little finger in the scale of B.

D.—Then the only thing we can do alone is the history.

B.—And there will be quite time enough for that this afternoon.

F.—Then, in that case, we have our whole morning free.

B.—Oh, how delightful!

E.—Let's play at hide-and-see*k*.

F.—You all hide, and I'll come and look for you.

(Hides her face in her hands. The others go towards the door. A bell is heard. They stop.)

F.—*(Uncovering her eyes.)* A bell!

E.—Who can it be?

(They listen.)

E.—Suppose it were Miss Dobson!

B.—I'll go and see.

(Exit.)

F.—What shall we say if it is Miss Dobson?

D.—That we were going to play at hide-and-see*k* instead of doing our lessons!

E.—The point is, what will she say!

D.—She'll say a good deal.

Re-enter BERTHA.

B.—It is Miss Dobson! Her mother is much better. Her sister sent a telegram, and so she did not go to Clapham after all.

F.—What shall we do?

D.—Let's go and tell her how glad we are she has such good news.

B.—Yes, and let's ask for a holiday to celebrate her mother's recovery.

F.—Excellent! Let's go and meet her.

(They rush out to meet her, calling, "Miss Dobson! Miss Dobson!")

THE WIGWAM; OR, THE LITTLE GIRL FROM TOWN.

CHARACTERS.

ELSIE. MARY. FANNY.

THE WIGWAM; OR, THE LITTLE GIRL FROM TOWN.

ELSIE.—Isn't it delightful that Fanny is coming from London to spend the day with us.

MARY.—Indeed it is. We must show her everything as soon as she comes.

E.—Yes, directly—and the first thing must be the wigwam.

M.—Of course it must, and we will tell her all about it, and that it is our own hut in the garden that we have arranged ourselves.

E.—Or shall we make her guess who made it?

M.—Oh yes! That would be lovely! We will take her there, and tell her to shut her eyes quite tight.

E.—Then she won't be able to see the wigwam.

M.—No, that's true. Then she must have them shut all the way through the garden.

E.—And when she gets there, we will say: "Open your eyes, and guess whose wigwam this is".

M.—And, when she has guessed that, we will say: "Now guess who painted it".

E.—And, when she has guessed that, we will say: "Now guess who furnished it".

M.—And, when she has guessed that, we'll say: "Guess who papered it".

E.—She'll be rather stupid if she does not guess that time whose it is.

M.—But, you know, little girls from London are very often stupid, when they come into the country.

E.—That's true. Do you remember when Amy came, she did not know the difference between a goose and a duck?

M.—And she was afraid of the turkey-cock!

E.—And she looked at an oak, and said how very small the chestnuts were!

M.—There's the door-bell. There they are! Now, mind, I am the eldest, so I shall say: "Now, I am going to show you the wigwam" as soon as she comes in.

E.—Before we shake hands?

M.—No! no! After we shake hands.

E.—I think I ought to say it too, you know.

M.—It would be absurd both saying it together, she won't understand.

E.—Oh, yes! she will, if we say it loud and slowly, like this, now then you say it with me (*both together*): We-are-going-to-show-you-the-wigwam!!

M.—Capital! There she is!

Enter FANNY.

E. and M.—(*Running round her.*) How do you do? How do you do?

(FANNY *smooths her dress which they have crumpled.* ELSIE and MARY *look at each other.*)

E. and M.—(*Together.*) We are going to show you the wigwam. (*Very loud and distinctly.*)

(FANNY *puts her hands over her ears.*)

F.—Oh, how loudly you talk! One at a time, if you please. It makes me ill when you shout like that.

E.—We said we were going to show you the wigwam.

F.—What's that? I hate insects.

M.—It isn't an insect! it's a hut in the garden.

F.—That's not so bad. Dear me! how tired I am. (*Looks round for a chair.*)

E.—(*Giving her a chair.*) What has tired you so much?

F.—Why, we walked all the way from the station.

M.—The station! Why, it's barely five minutes from here.

F.—I don't care how long it is, it tired me all the same.

E.—We'll go to the wigwam when you are rested.

F.—How far is it?

M.—Just across the garden, on the other side of the lawn.

F.—If I walk across the grass I shall get my feet wet.

E.—Then we'll go by the gravel walk, it's only a few seconds longer.

F.—If I walk on the gravel I shall spoil my kid boots.

M.—You ought to have strong boots like ours for the country.

F.—I can't bear those clumsy boots!

E.—Then how are you going to get to the wigwam?

F.—Why should we go there at all?

M.—Because we wanted to show it to you.

F.—Why?

M.—We want you to guess who furnished it.

F.—The carpenter, I suppose, or the upholsterer, or whoever does those things.

M.—No, we did it.

F.—You!

M.—We papered and painted it all ourselves.

F.—Oh how disgusting!

E.—Disgusting! it was delightful. We did it with paste and with Aspinall.

M.—I love Aspinall.

F.—I don't. I hate having paint on my fingers.

E.—And the paste is quite clean—it's only flour and water.

F.—Flour and water! Ugh! I can't bear things that make one's fingers sticky.

E.—After all, it is very easy to wash off.

F.—I don't like to wash my hands too often, it spoils my skin.

E.—Besides, of course, *you* need not touch either the paste or the paint.

F.—What shall I do then?

E.—You shall sit down and look round you.

F.—Sit on what?

E.—On an old packing-case covered with chintz! You have no idea what a comfortable seat it makes.

F.—A packing-case! I am sure there would be nails in it that would catch on my dress. I would rather sit in the house on a proper chair.

E.—But you surely don't want to stay in all day, when the sun is shining like this?

F.—That's just it, I don't like to sit in the sun. I shall get freckled.

M.—Do you like to be out in the damp, then?

F.—Oh no, indeed! It takes the curl out of my hair.

M.—What shall we do, then? It's so dull sitting in here.

F.—Very! but I knew before I came it would be dull.

M.—(*Aside.*) Isn't she rude!

E.—(*Aside.*) Hush! (*To FANNY.*) I'll tell you what we will do. We'll go into the poultry-yard, it is shady there.

F.—Well, what is there to see in the poultry-yard?

E.—Oh, all sorts of things. We can look for eggs and bring in some for breakfast.

F.—I think the servants ought to do that.

M.—Or we can feed the hens.

F.—I wouldn't for worlds! I hate things that come flapping and pecking round my feet.

M.—Then let's go into the stable and we will show you our ponies.

F.—Oh, no! Stables are so smelly, I can't bear them.

E.—Well, is there anything you would like to do? What do you do in London?

F.—I like driving through the streets in an open carriage and looking at the shops.

M.—In that case, you had better have remained in London, as there are no streets here and no shops.

F.—Very well! I shall go and tell my mother that I want to go back.

M.—You had better! (*Exit FANNY R.*) Come, Elsie, let us go to the wigwam.

(*They go out L.*)

FOOLISH JACK.

CHARACTERS.

JACK. HIS MOTHER.

FOOLISH JACK.

MOTHER.—(*Alone.*) Jack! Jack! Where is the boy? He can never stay in the house. He must always be running round to all the neighbours. Ah, there he is at last!

Enter JACK.

J.—Well, mother, how are you?

M.—I was getting anxious about you. Where have you been all this time?

J.—Oh, I've been seeing the neighbours.

M.—I thought as much. Which neighbours?

J.—First I went to see Father Clumpylump.

M.—Indeed! Father Clumpylump! Honest man! And what did he say to you?

J.—He gave me a needle for a present.

M.—A most useful present! Where is it?

J.—I stuck it into a bundle of hay that was standing in a cart, and then I could not find it again.

M.—I should think not, indeed! You ought to have stuck it into your sleeve.

J.—That's just what Father Clumpylump said.

M.—And he was quite right. And then?

J.—Then I went to call on Goody Grumbles.

M.—Indeed! Goody Grumbles, dear, old soul! And what had she to say?

J.—Not much; but she gave me a knife.

M.—A knife! Another most useful present! Where is it, then?

J.—I stuck it into my sleeve, and it fell out on the way.

M.—Of course it did. You ought to have put it into your pocket.

J.—That's just what Goody Grumbles said.

M.—And she was quite right. And then?

J.—And then I went to see Uncle Crabstick.

M.—Uncle Crabstick! Did he give you anything?

J.—Yes, he gave me a lamb.

M.—A lamb! How delightful! Where is it, then?

J.—I crammed it into my pocket, and it was stifled.

M.—I should think it was! Into your pocket! Good heavens! Whoever thought of putting a lamb into his pocket! You should have tied a rope round its neck and led it carefully along.

J.—That's just what Uncle Crabstick said.

M.—I should think he did! And then?

J.—Then I went to see Auntie Jumblewig.

M.—That was quite right. Did she give you anything?

J.—She gave me a splendid ham.

M.—A ham! I *am* glad. That *will* come in useful. Where is it?

J.—I tied a rope to it, and led it carefully along the road, but some dogs ate it up while I was not looking.

M.—Of course they did, you foolish boy! You should have carried it on your head.

J.—That's just what Auntie Jumblewig said when she saw me start.

M.—Of course she did! and then?

J.—I went to see Cousin Peter.

M.—Cousin Peter! And what did the good man say to you?

J.—Not much; but he gave me a calf.

M.—A calf! How generous! Where is the calf then?

J.—I tried to carry it on my head, but he kicked my face, so I let him go.

M.—Serve you right! How could you be so foolish as to carry a calf on your head? You should have taken him to the cow-house and settled him in a nice warm corner, with plenty of straw.

J.—That is just what Cousin Peter advised me to do.

M.—He was quite right. And then?

J.—I went to see Rose.

M.—I am glad you went there. Rose is a charming girl. Was she well disposed towards you?

J.—Very. Indeed, she came here with me.

M.—Where is she, then?

J.—I took her to the cow-house, and settled her in a nice, warm corner,

with plenty of straw.

M.—In the cow-house! Rose! Wretched boy! You should have brought her into the best parlour, and asked her to marry you.

J.—That's just what she said.

M.—And she was quite right. Quick! Quick! Let us fetch her.

J.—I should like that very much.

M.—Come, then, at once! Oh, you foolish Jack!

(*Exeunt.*)

QUITE BY OURSELVES.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. VERNON. JANET. RALPH.

QUITE BY OURSELVES.

MRS. VERNON.—(*Alone at writing table.*) What a long time it is since the children have been into the room! It must be nearly five minutes! They don't seem to be having as many "good ideas" to-day as they generally do. So I may as well do my accounts. (*Begins to add up.*) Ah! there they come.

Enter RALPH and JANET, hurriedly.

JANET.—Mammy! Mammy!

RALPH.—We have such a good idea.

MOTHER.—(I thought so!) What is it?

J.—We're going to surprise you very much.

M.—Are you? How delightful!

R.—We're going to invite you to a tea party of our very own!

J.—We are going to get it ready and arrange it quite by ourselves!

R.—Isn't that a lovely idea?

M.—It is, indeed.

J.—And the surprise is going to be that you are going to receive an invitation from us, just like the real invitations you get from your friends.

M.—I see!

R.—But the thing that will surprise you most will be that we are going to do it ourselves, won't it?

M.—(*Smiling.*) Yes, I must say that will be the most surprising thing of all.

R.—Then, first, here's the invitation.

M.—Oh, this is most exciting. (*Reads.*) "Ralph and Janet request the pleasure of your company at their very own tea-party on Wednesday afternoon."

R.—Isn't that a surprise for you, Mammy?

M.—It is, indeed, most astonishing. Now I must answer this, I suppose?

J.—Of course you must, just as if you were writing to strangers, you must end it "your loving Mrs. Vernon," or something stiff of that sort.

R.—Of course you mustn't put "your affectionate Mother," as you do when you really write to us, you know.

M.—Not for worlds! Now, then, I had better write the letter, and then do my accounts, while you get the tea ready.

R.—Oh, yes, that will be delightful.

(Goes to writing-table. RALPH and JANET discuss in a low voice, looking round them helplessly.)

R.—(*Aside to JANET.*) We had better ask Mammy, I think.

J.—Much better.

R.—(*Aloud.*) Mammy, there is just one thing we want to ask you.

M.—Yes? What is it?

J.—Where do you think we had better have tea?

M.—Wherever you like. What do you say to the dining-room?

R.—The dining-room is so common.

M.—You may have it in here if you like.

J.—Oh, that would be the very thing!

R.—What table shall we have it on?

M.—(*Looking round.*) Let me see—would that one do?

R.—Oh, beautifully. Thank you so much, Mammy.

(They pull out the table and open it, while the mother writes.)

J.—Now, what next?

R.—The cloth, of course.

J.—I wonder where we can get one.

R.—Mammy!

M.—Well?

R.—What about a table-cloth?

M.—Hadn't you better ask Susan for one of the dining-room ones?

R.—Susan is always cross when we ask her for that kind of thing, she seems to think we make jam and cocoa stains on the table-cloths.

M.—Dear me, I wonder what can make her think that?

R.—I think it must be because Janet always spills the jam at breakfast.

J.—You needn't talk, for once you dropped a whole cutlet on to your knicker-bockers.

R.—But as we are not going to have cutlets, you needn't talk about it now.

M.—I don't think people ought to quarrel when they're giving a tea-party.

R.—No, we'll quarrel after tea, we're too busy now.

J.—Much!

R.—Well, what about the table-cloth, then?

M.—If you don't want to ask Susan I might lend you that embroidered five o'clock tea-cloth which I bought at the bazaar the other day.

R.—Oh, that would be the very thing! May we have it?

M.—Yes, if you like, it is in that drawer.

R.—Which drawer?

M.—The bottom one.

(RALPH opens the top one. JANET and he look in and look wonderingly at each other, and then shake their heads.)

R.—Mammy, we can't find it.

M.—Are you quite sure you are looking in the right drawer?

R.—Quite. You said the top drawer, didn't you?

M.—No. I said the bottom drawer.

R.—Oh, I thought you said the top drawer. *(They look in. To JANET.)* I wonder where it can be! *(After a moment.)* Mammy, I am so very sorry—we can't find it.

M.—*(Gets up.)* How very odd. I saw it there yesterday. Why, there it is just at the top, you little noodles!

R.—Oh, so it is, I hadn't seen it.

J.—Nor had I.

R.—Thank you so much, Mammy. *(She goes back to her writing. To JANET.)* Now, we must have our own cups and saucers out of the toy cupboard.

(They open the toy cupboard, and they both sit down on the ground. JANET takes out a trumpet and RALPH a drum. They blow the trumpet and beat the drum.)

M.—*(Looking round.)* My dear children, is that how you are laying the table?

R.—Oh, Mammy, I am so sorry! I forgot we were getting out our cups and saucers. *(RALPH takes out cups and saucers and gives them to JANET.)* Here they are, three cups and three saucers.

J.—Now I'm Susan!

(JANET arranges the cups and saucers close together at one side of

the table.)

R.—You stupid girl, that is not how they ought to be arranged. Susan always put them quite apart from each other, and the tea-pot at one end of the table like this.

J.—Do let me have the tea-pot in front of me.

R.—Certainly not, it must be in front of me.

J.—Mammy, don't you think I ought to have the tea-pot in front of me? because I am a girl.

R.—No, I'll have it in front of me, because I am a boy.

M.—Suppose you put it in the middle of the table where you can both reach it. I shall sit at the side like a guest, and you can take turns.

R.—That will be delightful. We will put the tea-pot here, then.

J.—Where is the tea-pot?

R.—That's true, yes, we haven't got one of our own. Mammy, what tea-pot are we to have?

M.—Won't you have the one we always have at tea?

R.—No, it's too common. It won't seem like our own tea-party, then.

J.—I suppose we mightn't have one of the beautiful little tea-pots out of the china cupboard, just for once?

M.—Just for once, you may, if you take care of it.

(RALPH goes out L. Then comes back.)

R.—I am afraid I am not tall enough to reach the cupboard.

J.—You don't think, I suppose, you could come into the next room and get it for us?

M.—*(Getting up.)* I daresay I might.

J.—You see it is not our fault if we are not as tall as you, is it?

M.—Not quite, I daresay.

(She goes out. They watch her through the door.)

R.—Isn't Mammy tall when she stands on a foot-stool!

J.—I mean to be just the same size as Mammy is when I grow up.

R.—That's just like a girl, to say that sort of stupid thing. You don't know in the least how tall you will be when you grow up.

J.—Well, if girls are stupid, they are not so rude as boys.

R.—Girls are rude sometimes. It was very rude of you to talk about my dropping the cutlet into my lap.

M.—*(MOTHER coming in with two tea-pots.)* You don't mean to say you are still discussing that cutlet! Now, which of the tea-pots is it to be?

R.—Oh, Mammy, I have such a good idea! Let's have them both, one at each end, and then we can both pour out tea.

M.—Very well.

(They put tea-pots on table. They walk round the table looking at

them. The MOTHER goes on writing.)

R.—Oh, this is capital. Now, we must get the things to eat. We shall want milk and sugar.

J.—And bread and butter and biscuits.

R.—And jam and cakes, perhaps—because, as it is our own tea-party, it ought to be a grand one.

J.—Of course.

R.—I've got some sugar that I put in my pocket this morning for the raven.

(Feels in his pocket, and brings out string, knife, etc., finally four lumps of sugar, one at a time.)

J.—Four lumps, will that be enough?

R.—I wonder how many Mammy will want. Mammy, do you like your tea very, very sweet?

M.—No, I don't like sugar in it at all.

R.—Oh, that's capital. Now, Janet, we can have two lumps each, one in each cup of tea. You can't have more. It's horrid to be greedy, you know.

J.—*(With a sigh.)* Well, I suppose that will have to do.

R.—Now, there's the milk, we'll ask the cook for that.

J.—And we shall want some spoons and knives.

R.—Susan will get out those.

J.—I should like to have some toast, too.

R.—We'll ask nurse to make that, they make such nice toast in the nursery.

J.—And then the biscuits.

R.—And the jam. We must ask Mammy what we may have. Mammy!

M.—What is it now?

R.—We may have some biscuits and some cakes, as well as bread and butter, mayn't we?

M.—Oh yes, you may look in the dining-room cupboard for what you want, if you don't take too much.

R.—Oh, how delightful! Come, Janet.

M.—*(Alone.)* Perhaps in the meantime I shall be able to add up my accounts!

(Writes intently. After a minute the children burst in again, carrying spoons, and knives, and plates.)

R.—Oh, Mammy, there are such a lot of things in the dining-room cupboard, we don't know which to choose.

J.—I wish you would come and help us.

R.—I suppose you're too busy, aren't you?

M.—Oh, I daresay I can manage it. *(Gets up.)*

R.—(*Who is laying the table.*) You know really, Mammy, the best thing would be that you should look into the dining-room cupboard, while Janet and I finish the table; we are so very busy, you see.

M.—(*Smiling.*) I will go and look in the cupboard and see what I can find.
(*Exit Mother.*)

R.—Now, this is getting on splendidly, isn't it Janet? Let me see, have we remembered everything?

J.—I think so. The cook is making the tea and getting the milk.

R.—Susan is cutting the bread and butter.

J.—Nurse is making the toast.

R.—Mammy is choosing the cakes and the jam. I must say I do feel proud of doing it all by ourselves, without giving anybody extra trouble.

J.—Yes, it makes me feel as if we were such good children.

R.—So it does me.

J.—I should like to feel like this every day.

R.—Oh, I think one would soon get tired of it, you know. Oh, here comes Mammy! (*They both run up to her as she comes in.*) Well, Mammy, well?

M.—Well, you had better go into the dining-room and see if you approve of my choice.

R.—Oh, thank you. Now we must have some plates to put the cakes upon.

J.—Mammy, may we just for once have those beautiful little plates out of the china cupboard?

M.—Just for once then, if you take good care of them.

R.—Then, Mammy, I think you had better get them out for fear we should break them.

M.—Very well, let's go and get them.

(*She gives a hand to each.*)

J.—Oh, are you not pleased with us for arranging our tea-party all by ourselves! (*They go out.*)

CURTAIN.

THE BEST CHILDREN IN THE WORLD.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. MONTGOMERY. HARRY. PHŒBE.

THE BEST CHILDREN IN THE WORLD.

MRS. MONTGOMERY.—(*With her bonnet on, putting on her gloves, etc. HARRY and PHŒBE playing on the floor.*) Good-bye, my children, I shall be back soon. (*HARRY and PHŒBE get up.*)

HARRY.—Where are you going, Mammy?

MRS. M.—Only to pay two visits.

PHŒBE.—How long will that take?

MRS. M.—About three-quarters of an hour, if the people are at home.

P.—You would be very sorry if they weren't at home, wouldn't you?

MRS. M.—Oh, of course.

H.—What stupid questions Phœbe asks, doesn't she!

MRS. M.—Well, never mind, everybody is stupid sometimes. What are you going to do while I am away?

H.—We are going to play, I suppose.

MRS. M.—Hadn't you better go to the nursery then?

H.—Oh no, Mammy! it's so babyish to stay in the nursery! It's much nicer to stay in the drawing-room by ourselves, as if we were you and Pappy.

MRS. M.—Only Pappy and I don't get into mischief when we are left in the drawing-room.

H.—We won't either. You tell us what we mustn't do in here, and we will be the best children in the world.

MRS. M.—Well, now, let me see: you are not to have a pillow fight with the sofa cushions.

H.—Of course not.

P.—What an idea!

MRS. M.—You are not to play with my reels of cotton, or to throw them about.

P.—Certainly not.

MRS. M.—You are not to build houses with the books, or to drop them on the ground.

H.—No, we won't.

MRS. M.—And, above all, you are not to touch that box.

H.—Why mustn't we touch that box?

MRS. M.—Never you mind that.

H.—Oh Mammy! is it a great secret?

MRS. M.—Perhaps it is. Now, mind you remember all I've told you.

H.—Of course we will. Good-bye, dear Mammy. (*They kiss.*)

MRS. M.—Good-bye.

P.—Look at us out of the window. (*They go and stand at the window and wave their handkerchiefs.*)

H.—(*Turning from the window.*) Now, what shall we do?

P.—I think it's rather dull staying in the drawing-room. Let's go into the nursery.

H.—No, that's so babyish—you talk as if we were little children. Let us stay here, and do exactly what Pappy and Mammy do.

P.—Very well—I'll sit here and work, and you sit in that chair with your legs crossed, and read the newspaper to me.

HARRY *sits and crosses his legs, takes a newspaper.*

P.—I wish I had some work to do. I wonder if I may do some of Mammy's?

H.—I should think so. She didn't say anything about her work, she only said you weren't to play with the reels of cotton, you know.

P.—Well, of course, I shan't do that. (*Takes a piece of embroidery.*) Oh dear, I've unthreaded the needle! I shall never be able to work with this thick thread, I must get a finer reel. (*Gets out two or three reels which she puts in her lap. Tries to thread the needle.*)

H.—Now, I'll tell you what, I'll read out loud just as Pappy does. (*Begins to read.*) "The threatening aspect of the political outlook has undergone no recent modification—" what on earth does that mean?

P.—I don't know in the least what modification means.

H.—It isn't modification, you stupid! *mod-i-fi-cation.*

P.—Well, what's the difference?

H.—How should I know?

P.—Then you are as stupid as I am.

H.—No, I am not. Boys are never as stupid as girls. But I'll look it out in the dictionary.

(*Puts a sofa cushion on a chair and stands on it to get down the dictionary. Jumps down and knocks down chair, and falls down with books.*)

P.—Great clumsy creature you are!

H.—You are not to call me names.

(*Throws the sofa cushion at her.*)

P.—Naughty boy!

(*Jumps up, reels fall off her lap, and picks up the cushion. He tries to drag it away from her. While struggling, they knock over the box their mother told them not to touch. It drops. It is full of sugar plums. They are all spilt on the ground.*)

H.—Now look what you've done!

P.—Sugar plums!

H.—That's the box Mammy told us not to touch.

P.—We must pick them up as quickly as possible, and put them in again.

(*They begin putting them in again.*)

H.—I wonder whether they are really sugar plums?

P.—I'll tell you what. Let's lick the outside of one and see if it's sweet.

H.—(*Licks it.*) Yes, they are sugar plums.

P.—(*Licking one.*) Are you quite sure?

H.—Yes, I think so. I'll just lick it again to be quite certain. Oh yes, they are sugar plums, there's not a doubt. (*They put them into the box.*)

P.—I think it's rather horrid to put them back into the box again after we have licked them.

H.—I think it is. Let us take out the ones we licked, and eat them. That will be cleaner, won't it?

P.—But they are all mixed! I don't know which they are now!

H.—Oh, you are a stupid girl! Well, we must eat all that are in the box, there is no help for it.

P.—I really think that would be the safest plan.

(*Their mother comes in while they are sitting on the floor eating the sugar plums.*)

MRS. M.—I've come back for my card-case which I have forgotten. Why, what have you been doing? Oh, Harry! Oh, Phœbe! I thought you were going to be so good!

P.—So we were! We were trying to be very, very good.

H.—Awfully good.

MRS. M.—Good, indeed! I told you not to play with my work-basket, or the books, or the sofa cushions, or that box, and you have disobeyed me in everything! My reels are on the floor, my books on the floor, the sofa cushion on the floor, the box that I particularly asked you not to touch upset and emptied! I must say I think you have been very naughty.

H.—Dear Mammy, I am so sorry! We really didn't mean to play with any of the things. We were going to be like you and Pappy. So I began to read the paper to Phœbe.

P.—While I did your work.

MRS. M.—(*Horried.*) My work!

H.—And, then, because I didn't understand what we were reading about, I got a dictionary to look out the words, and I dropped it, and Phœbe said I was clumsy.

P.—So then he threw a sofa cushion at me.

H.—Only because she called me names, you know. It wasn't a pillow fight in the least.

P.—And I jumped up, and the reels rolled off my lap, and I tried to take the cushion away from him, and somehow we knocked over the box.

H.—But we didn't mean to in the very least. It was quite by accident.

MRS. M.—Then, how did those sugar plums get into your mouths? That was by accident too I suppose.

H.—No, that was because we thought it was so dirty to put back the sugar plums we had licked.

P.—We just licked them to make sure they were sugar plums.

MRS. M.—I see. Well, those sugar plums were for you. Your uncle sent them, and I was going to give them to you this evening, but now I shall

throw them away instead.

H.—Throw them away! Oh, Mammy, what a pity!

MRS. M.—Yes, it is a pity I can't trust two children of six and seven years old in a room by themselves. Come, let me see you safely in the nursery before I go out again.

P.—It *is* a pity, just when we were trying to be the best children in the world! (*They go out.*)

THE GOLDEN GOOSE.

A PLAY IN FOUR SCENES.

CHARACTERS.

A WOODCUTTER. TOM. }
HIS WIFE. JACK } *Their Sons.*
THE LITTLE GREY MAN.

Two hours elapse between Scenes I. and II. Twenty-four hours between Scenes II. and III. An hour between Scenes III. and IV.

THE GOLDEN GOOSE.

SCENE I. FATHER, MOTHER, TOM, *and* JACK. *A room in a cottage.*

FATHER.—What a bore it is I sprained my ankle in the wood.

MOTHER.—Aye! That indeed it is. If you can't manage to go and sell some more fagots at the market, we shall soon be starving.

F.—One of the boys will go instead of me.

JACK.—I'll go, Father, willingly.

TOM.—You, you stupid! what do you know of wood-cutting? you will be cutting down blackberry plants, or something, to make firewood of.

F.—Tom can go.

M.—What! Send that precious boy to stand in a damp wood all day!

T.—I must have a good lunch, then, to take with me. A mutton cutlet, a sausage, an apple tart—a hamper full of nice things.

M.—Of course you shall, my pretty dear.

F.—Well, I don't think there will be much work done—he will be much too busy with his sausage and apple tart.

T.—Well, Father, you don't want me to starve, I suppose!

F.—I think it would do you a great deal of good.

M.—Oh, fie! How can you be so cruel with the darling child!

F.—We'll wait and see how much work he can do, and if he doesn't succeed, Jack will have to go.

M.—Ah, Jack, it is a great pity you're too stupid to make yourself useful, or else you might have gone, and saved your dear brother the trouble.

J.—I could do it quite well.

M.—No, you wouldn't, you are a great deal too stupid. (*To Tom.*) Come, let me lace your boots for you, darling.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II. *A wood. TOM alone, a large hamper by his side.*

T.—Well, this isn't such bad fun after all, as long as one can rest. I haven't chopped much wood yet, I thought I'd do it after luncheon. I shall feel so much stronger then, and be able to work twice as hard. Let me see, it must be time to lay the table. (*Opens lid of hamper and looks in.*) Ah, this does look good! Sausage rolls, chicken sandwiches, a salad, jam tarts, all kinds of nice things! I am so glad there is no one to share it with me! I How much nicer it is to lunch by one's self.

VOICE.—Ahem! (*From behind the tree.*)

(*TOM shuts the lid of the hamper quickly, and looks round.*)

T.—What's that?

(*The sound is repeated. He looks round. A little old man, dressed all in grey, with a pointed hat, appears.*)

GREY MAN.—Good morning, young sir.

T.—Good morning, old creature.

G. M.—You seem to be having a picnic all by yourself.

T.—Yes, fortunately I am all alone. I don't like picnics with other people.

G. M.—That's a pity. I was just going to ask if I might join you.

T.—You!

G. M.—Yes, the fact is I am a long way from my home, and I am hungry, and seeing that large hamper I thought you might be able to spare some food for the tired wayfarer.

T.—Well, I am sorry to say I can't; there happens to be just enough for myself in that hamper.

G. M.—What, can you not even spare me a crust of bread?

T.—No, I shall have to eat it up all myself in order to keep up my strength while I am cutting wood this afternoon.

G. M.—(*Lifting up his hand and speaking in a loud, warning tone.*) Take care, young man, lest your meal and your wood-cutting come to an untimely end. (*He goes away.*)

T.—Tiresome old creature! He's gone, at any-rate. Now I can lunch in peace. (*Opens lid of hamper. Starts.*) Oh, what has happened? Where has everything gone? My beautiful luncheon has disappeared! The sausage rolls have turned to sticks! (*Throws out sticks, leaves, etc., as he speaks.*) The

salad into dead leaves! The chicken sandwiches and jam tart into brown paper! Oh, what an unfortunate youth I am! Now I shall have no luncheon. It is all because of that horrid grey man. He was an enchanter, I suppose, or a fairy of some kind. Why didn't he say so at once? Then I might have given him a piece of chicken. Well, it's too late now, I suppose. Perhaps I had better cut some wood, there's nothing else to do. There's a tree that would be easy enough.

(Goes out R. carrying his axe over his shoulder. A cry is heard.)

Oh, dear! Oh, dear me! *(Comes in again holding his arm.)* Oh, I've chopped my hand nearly off! Oh, what a day of misfortunes this is! I must go home and send for the doctor, while my mother makes me some jelly and arrowroot.

(Ties handkerchief round his neck as a sling. Puts left hand into it. Exit carrying hamper and axe.)

CURTAIN.

SCENE. III. *The same.*

Enter JACK with a small basket.

J.—Ah, now I think I'll sit down and have my luncheon. Working so hard has made me rather hungry. *(Looks off L.)* That's a great heap of wood, I must say, to have cut in two hours. I wonder what my mother has put into the basket? Tom took such good things away with him yesterday—but my mother said she had nothing for me except some bones the dog had left, and some stale pieces of crust that had been thrown away. *(Looks into basket.)* Never mind, a good appetite and a good conscience make everything taste well. So here goes!

(Sits down. Draws handkerchief over his knees.)

VOICE *(Heard behind him.)*—Ahem!

J.—*(Looks round.)* What's that? Somebody about? I am going to have a companion it seems.

G. M.—*(Coming out.)* Good morning, young gentleman.

J.—*(Getting up and taking off his hat.)* Good morning, sir.

G. M.—What! Were you picnicking alone in the wood?

J.—I was, yes.

G. M.—Do you object to be joined by a companion?

J.—On the contrary, I should like it—the more the merrier.

G. M.—To tell you the truth, I am very hungry. I have been out all day, and am far from my home.

J.—I only wish I had some food for you more worthy of your acceptance—but such as it is, you are heartily welcome to it. Pray take it all. There is not much, but what there is you are quite welcome to have—I can wait till I get home again.

G. M.—Generous youth! Your kindness of heart shall be rewarded. Look again at the contents of your basket, and you will find them better than you imagined.

J.—*(Looking into the basket.)* Oh, how exciting! What do I see? Mutton cutlets, cold partridge, cheese-cakes, grapes, bananas! Oh, how delightful! Now you will share with me, won't you?

(*Holds out the basket to the old man.*)

G. M.—No, my dear boy. I only asked you for some to prove you—and seeing how deserving you are, I will reward you still further. (*Points off L. at the wood.*) Take your axe and cut down that tree. You will find a bird at the root: she is yours. Farewell, and luck go with you.

(*Exit.*)

J.—Why, he must be a magician! What a delightful person to meet! I must go and cut down that tree at once. I'll just have a cheese-cake to keep me going.

(*Crams a cheese-cake into his mouth and goes out. Sounds of chopping heard. JACK rushes in again with a golden goose in one hand and a nest with golden eggs in the other.*)

J.—It was a golden goose, sitting on a nest of golden eggs! Oh, how splendid! Now my father need never cut wood again—we shall all be rich. I must rush home, and show them what I have found. (*Exit hurriedly with the goose and the nest.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV. Same as Scene I.

FATHER, MOTHER, TOM (*lying on a couch*).

M.—How are you, my dear boy? Feeling better?

T.—A little better. I think I could eat a jam puff now, and some almonds and raisins.

M.—You shall have them at once.

F.—In the meanwhile, I hope Jack is cutting more wood than you did, or I don't know what will happen.

M.—It's very unlikely that Jack should do anything better than Tom. If he has, it will be the first time it has ever happened.

Enter JACK.

F.—I think I hear him. Well, have you brought us back any wood?

J.—Indeed, I have. But first, I must show you this glorious bird—my golden goose!

M.—A golden goose! Where did you find it?

J.—It was sitting at the root of a tree I cut down.

M.—Why, Tom, how was it you didn't find it?

T.—Because of my accident, of course. If I hadn't hurt my hand I certainly should have found it in another minute.

J.—It was a little grey man with a pointed cap who told me where to look for it.

T.—(*Aside.*) Horrid little creature! I wish I had offered him some luncheon! (*Aloud.*) He told me all about it. He intended it for me, so you had better hand it over.

(*TOM grasps at the goose. JACK pulls it away. TOM gets up with it.*)

T.—What has happened to the thing? I can't get away from it!

M.—Oh, my dear boy, what can have happened!

(*Tries to drag TOM away, but sticks.*)

T.—Go away, Mother. Don't hold on to me any more.

M.—I can't get away. (FATHER *tries to drag them away.*)

M.—Go away, Father!

F.—I can't, I'm stuck fast.

M.—I knew something stupid would happen if Jack went into the wood! bringing birds you stick to like fly-paper instead of proper faggots.

J.—(*Smiling.*) You shouldn't have tried to take my goose away from me.

T.—Well, now, you have had your joke, call your goose off, please.

J.—I can't call it off! I don't know how.

(*Enter GREY MAN.*)

G. M.—I am the only person who can do it, because I am a powerful magician, and that golden goose is mine.

M.—Yours!

G. M.—Yes, and I gave it to Jack to reward him for a good, hard-working, generous boy, instead of being a lazy, selfish, unmannerly one like his brother yonder.

T.—Of course, if I had known who you were, I should have been civil to you.

G. M.—I daresay, yes, but you will find it more useful as you go through life to be civil to strangers, even when you don't know who they are. And now Jack, come with me and you shall live in a beautiful palace, where you shall marry a princess. As for you, you may let go the golden goose for ever (*they all fall back*), for you will remain humble wood-cutters all your lives. And, remember, it is only the deserving—especially the polite—who find the Golden Goose.

CURTAIN.

CINDERELLA.

A PLAY IN FOUR SCENES.

CHARACTERS.

THE MOTHER. THE FAIRY GODMOTHER.
MABEL. THE PRINCE.
LUCY. HERALD.
PEGGY (called CINDERELLA).
LORDS and LADIES at BALL, etc.

CINDERELLA.

SCENE I.

(The mother sitting with daughters.)

MOTHER.—*(To LUCY.)* What are you reading, my darling child? How sweet you look, lying there, buried in your book.

LUCY.—Yes Mamma, I thought I did. It's the story of a beautiful prince.

M.—Delightful, my dear! The story of a prince—yes, just the story for you to read. *(To MABEL.)* And you, my poppet, what is it you are doing?

MABEL.—I am thinking, Mamma.

M.—Thinking? Yes, that is just like you. Ah, you were always so clever, my chickabiddy. *(To PEGGY.)* As for you, what are you doing here, plain, stupid girl, wasting the time, when you ought to be doing your work?

PEGGY.—I am very sorry, I thought there was nothing to do at this present moment.

M.—Nothing to do indeed! A pretty story! Is all the house-work done?

P.—Everything.

L.—Are the buttons sewn on my long white gloves, for the ball to-night?

P.—Yes, they are.

MAB.—And is my beautiful ball-dress laid out on the bed?

P.—Everything is ready.

M.—Very well, my children, you had better go and dress.

L.—*(Jumping up with joy.)* Oh, how delightful! Come along, Mabel!

MAB.—*(Delighted.)* Oh, what fun it will be!

M.—Now, Peggy, what are you doing? Go and help them to dress, you know their frocks lace behind.

P.—*(Going.)* Very well. *(Stopping at door.)* Mamma!

M.—Well, what is it? What a long time you waste in chattering always!

P.—I suppose I might not go to the ball for a little while?

M.—You, Peggy, you at the ball? *(Laughs.)* I never heard anything so absurd.

L.—And what would you wear, pray? A dish-cloth, trimmed with dusters?

MAB.—No, no, my dear girl, you are very well in your place—that is, the chimney-corner. I would stay there if I were you.

M.—Now, come along, stupid, and don't forget the safety-pins.

P.—Oh, I wish I were going too!

CURTAIN.

SCENE II. *The Same.*

(PEGGY *alone.*)

P.—I had better go to bed, I suppose—there is nothing else for me to do. Well, I do think it is a shame to leave me here alone, while they are enjoying themselves at the ball! I should so like to have a smart gown that laced behind—it would make one feel so grand to have a gown one couldn't fasten one's self. But, alas! that is a pleasure I shall never know. (*Hides her face in her hands.*)

Enter GODMOTHER.

GODMOTHER.—Why Peggy, you little Cinderella! What's the matter now?

P.—Oh!

G.—Do you know who I am?

P.—I am sorry to say I don't.

G.—Well, I'll tell you presently who I am. In the meantime, you tell me why you are sitting all by yourself in this way, looking into the fire in that dismal manner.

P.—I am unhappy because I am not at the ball. I should like to have a fine dress, and drive off in a coach with the others.

G.—Nothing is easier. I'll manage that for you in five minutes.

P.—You! Oh, how delightful! Is it possible?

G.—Certainly. I am your fairy godmother, so I can give you anything you wish for.

P.—Oh, how enchanting! Then, the first thing I wish for is a beautiful dress.

G.—You shall have it. Go inside that dark cupboard, close your eyes, then turn round three times, while I repeat a spell—and come out and see what has happened.

P.—Well, this is exciting! (*Goes into cupboard.*)

(GODMOTHER *waves her wand and repeats verse.*)

Wavy, wavy, Wando Wum,
Fairy powers hither come,
Come to turn the world about,
Topsy-turvy, inside out,
Turn the darkness into light,
Turn the rags to silver bright.
Wavy, wavy, Wando Wum,
Fairy powers quickly come.

(CINDERELLA *comes out in a beautiful dress.*)

P.—Oh, am I not like a princess?

G.—You are indeed! Now, what next?

P.—Next, I must have a coach to go to the ball in.

G.—Of course. Look out of the window, and tell me what you see, and if there is anything we can make a coach of.

P.—I'm afraid not. I can only see a pumpkin lying on the ground, and two large brown rats behind it, and six little mice darting in and out.

G.—The very thing! That will do perfectly. Now, I am going to repeat another spell, and while I wave my wand, you look out of the window and tell me what happens.

(Repeats last two lines of spell and waves wand.)

P.—Oh, Godmother! Quick! The pumpkin has turned into a beautiful, glass coach!

G.—I thought it would! *(Waves wand again.)* Anything else?

P.—Yes! Yes! The two brown rats have changed into a coachman and footman.

G.—*(Waves wand.)* Anything else?

P.—Yes! Yes! The little mice have turned into six beautiful horses with long tails and harness shining with silver.

G.—Well, will that do to drive you to the ball, do you think?

P.—Oh, Godmother, how delightful! Let me get into it and drive off!

G.—One moment, Cinderella! I must make a condition before you start. You must promise not to remain at the ball after midnight. If you are there after the last stroke of twelve, your beautiful silver clothes will disappear, and you will have on your rags again.

P.—Oh, I promise, dear Godmother. Of course I will leave before twelve.

G.—Then come, Princess Cinderella! your glass coach stops the way.

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.

A ball-room. People walking about. LUCY and MABEL, in ball-dresses, sitting one on each side of their mother.

L.—How very odd it is that nobody comes and asks us to dance!

MAB.—I can't understand it at all.

L.—It isn't as if we were not beautiful.

MAB.—It seems so strange we are not singled out.

M.—My dear girls, the fact is, you are so beautiful, and so well dressed, that people don't dare to ask you. I am sure that is what it is.

L.—I saw the prince looking longingly at me a little while ago, but just as he was going to invite me to dance, he was called away to meet a foreign princess.

MAB.—Of course, if she were a princess, he couldn't help going to meet her. I wonder who she was? She had on the most beautiful silver shoes.

M.—Here is the Court herald, passing through the hall, ask him her name. Oh, sir! I beg your pardon!—

(HERALD stops.)

Can you tell me who the lady in silver was, who was dancing with the prince just now?

HERALD.—She was announced as the Princess of the Silver Mountain.

M.—The Princess of the Silver Mountain! Indeed!

L.—She looked like it, I am sure.

M.—The reason why I ask is, the prince had been going to dance with my daughter, and he was obliged to leave her for this lady.

H.—Oh, indeed!

L.—So, you see, I have no partner in consequence.

H.—What a pity!

M.—My girls are both passionately fond of dancing.

H.—Indeed! that is a charming taste.

MAB.—It is not surprising we should like it, we dance very beautifully.

H.—I congratulate you. I hope I shall have an opportunity of seeing your performance.

(Bows and passes on.)

L.—Oh, what a very rude man!

MAB.—I can't understand it at all. I quite thought we should have been the belles of the ball.

M.—Then suppose, my children, we go to the refreshment-room and have some ices? Perhaps we may find some partners there. *(Gets up.)*

L.—Come, then.

M.—Oh, here comes the princess, leaning on the prince's arm.

(Enter the PRINCE and CINDERELLA. LUCY, MABEL, and the MOTHER make sweeping curtseys.)

CINDERELLA.—What strange-looking ladies!

(Mother and daughters start.)

PRINCE.—They are, indeed! But let us talk of yourself, princess. *(They go on speaking in low voices.)*

MAB.—Did you hear her, Mother? Did you hear those insulting words?

M.—Never mind, it's no good quarrelling with princes. Come and have some strawberry ice.

(They go out.)

P.—Now, tell me about this wonderful place where you live, for I have not heard of it before. The Silver Mountain! What an enchanting spot it sounds! It must be Fairy-land!

C.—It is, indeed, in Fairy-land!

P.—I was sure of it—a fit abode for so ethereal a being as yourself. You were nourished, I feel sure, on no mortal food—your dainty, beautiful clothes were woven by no mortal hands—they were spun by elves and fairies in some enchanted, far-away spot.

C.—Indeed, I believe they were.

P.—Adorable creature! Come, tell me where this Silver Mountain is, that I may find my way to it over every obstacle.

C.—But there is the music beginning again! We should be dancing, your highness.

P.—What delicious simplicity! Are you then so fond of dancing?

C.—I love it, but I so seldom get a chance.

P.—Of course, yes, you are hedged in, I daresay, by the etiquette of your court.

C.—Precisely.

(Dancers waltz in.)

P.—Come, then, let us join the dance too.

(They dance. The MOTHER, LUCY, and MABEL look enviously at the dancers. They curtsey as the PRINCE passes them. The clock begins to strike twelve. CINDERELLA starts.)

P.—What, tired already!

C.—No, no, but I must go at once! instantly!

(She rushes out, leaving a slipper behind her.)

P.—What! she has gone! and in such haste, that she has left one of her dainty slippers behind her. I must fly to restore it to her. Princess! Adored one! come back! *(Rushes out.)*

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV.

Room in the cottage, same as in SCENES I. and II.

MAB.—*(Yawning.)* Oh dear, I am so tired!

L.—I do wish you would leave off saying that. That is the ninth time you have yawned during the last five minutes.

M.—My dears, going to a ball doesn't seem to have improved your temper.

MAB.—I don't quite see why it should.

C.—I suppose it was dancing so much that tired you?

L.—Of course it was—we had to dance the whole time, from the moment we entered the room.

MAB.—There were many people we were obliged to refuse, and they were heart-broken.

L.—But, of course, when the prince asked us, we were obliged to throw over the others.

C.—*(Smiling aside.)* And the prince danced with you a great deal, then?

L.—Indeed, he did, nearly all the time, till a strange princess came, then he was obliged to leave us.

C.—A strange princess! What was she like?

M.—Now I think of it, she was something like you—was she not, girls?

MAB.—*(Laughing.)* Ha! ha! so she was!

L.—Only she was beautiful, and you are very ugly.

MAB.—And she had beautiful silver clothes.

C.—I should like to wear silver clothes.

M.—Peggy, do not let me hear you say such foolish things again. It's all very well for your step-sisters to wear such clothes, but for you!!

(A sound of a trumpet heard.)

MAB.—Why, what can that be?

(Mother and daughters rush to back to look out of window.)

C.—*(Aside.)* Oh, if it were the prince!

M.—It is a magnificent herald—the herald we saw last night! He is reading a proclamation to the people, and the prince is behind him!

C.—The Prince!! *(Waves to PRINCE, unseen by the others.)*

(The HERALD stops outside the window.)

H.—*(In a loud voice.)* "Be it known to all the loyal subjects of Prince Charming, our lord and master, that yesterday evening, at the ball, an embroidered silver slipper was picked up. The prince has commanded that the said slipper shall be carried through the length and breadth of his dominions, until he finds the owner of it. When the owner of it is discovered, that said owner shall become the Princess Charming, and shall share our lord and master's throne."

M.—My dear girls, what a chance for you! If you can put on the shoe, you will become the princess.

MAB.—The herald is stopping before this door. Quick! quick! Let us sit in pretty attitudes.

(LUCY and MABEL group themselves picturesquely.)

L.—But Peggy must not be here, Mother! Go away, Peggy, quick!

M.—Rush, child, rush! Don't let any one see you.

C.—May I not stay to see the silver shoe?

M.—You! Of course not! Why the very look of you would spoil all our chances. *(Pushing her.)* Quick! quick! they are just coming in.

(Bundles PEGGY out of door L. just as the HERALD comes in R. He blows trumpet.)

H.—His Royal Highness, Prince Charming.

(Enter PRINCE. MOTHER, LUCY, and MABEL curtsey.)

M.—Oh, your highness, this is too kind, pray sit down.

(She advances a chair. The other two curtsey, one on each side of him.)

H.—We wish to know if any lady in this house lost a shoe at the ball last night? For, if so, her shoe has been found.

M.—*(Eagerly.)* What a singular thing! Now you mention it, one of my daughters lost a shoe—indeed, they both did.

H.—Indeed! Is it anything like this? *(Produces shoe.)*

L.—Why, that looks to me like the very one.

P.—Try it on, please, madam.

L.—(*Holding out her foot, making faces while the HERALD puts it on.*) Why, of course, that is mine, it fits me exactly.

M.—It fits the darling girl as if it had been made for her. Walk round the room in it, my love.

(*LUCY hobbles round the room, limping violently.*)

M.—Oh, there is no doubt, your highness, that that is hers.

P.—Didn't I notice a slight limp as she walked?

M.—Oh dear no, your highness, I don't think so.

P.—All the same, I think she had better take it off.

M.—And you, Mabel, didn't you say you had lost one of your shoes?

MAB.—Yes! I remember when I undressed noticing that I had lost it.

M.—Then, of course, it must be yours.

(*The HERALD kneels beside her, tries to force on the shoe, while MABEL makes faces of agony.*)

MAB.—Oh, not a doubt, that is mine. (*Stands up.*)

H.—Your heel is quite out of it still.

MAB.—That is how I always wear my shoes.

M.—That is what gives her such a springy, graceful walk.

(*MABEL tries to walk round the room, clattering the shoe behind her.*)

P.—No, I am afraid that won't do at all.

MAB.—(*Shaking it off.*) It's very hard not being allowed to have my own shoe back again.

P.—(*To the MOTHER.*) Are there no more young girls in this house, whom the shoe would be likely to fit?

M.—Alas, these two fair ones are my only joys.

P.—Yet, I thought, as I passed the window, I saw another.

M.—Oh, your highness, I beg your pardon—that was only our scullion, looking out to see you. Naughty thing!

P.—I wish to see her.

L.—Oh, really, your highness!

MAB.—She is a most unprepossessing girl!

P.—Send for her instantly, or I will have you all beheaded.

M.—(*Quickly.*) Anything, anything, to oblige your highness.

(*Calls PEGGY.*)

(*CINDERELLA appears in the doorway, with her eyes cast down. PRINCE jumps up and bows very low. LUCY, MABEL, and MOTHER, turn away their eyes in disgust.*)

H.—Sit down here, fair maiden, and try on this silver shoe.

P.—Nay, no one shall kneel here but me. (*Kneels in front of CINDERELLA, who puts on the shoe without difficulty.*) There, I think, is the foot it fits,

there is no doubt about that.

M.—I fear your highness is being imposed upon—that shoe could never have belonged to that ragged Cinderella.

C.—Indeed it did—I have the fellow to it.

(Pulls the other out of her pocket. Gets up and dances round in it.)

P.—There is no doubt to whom the slipper belongs. Come, Princess Charming, let me lead you to your palace!

M.—One moment, if you please, your royal highness! the girl is a scullion!

L.—You have only to look at her clothes!

MAB.—Mine would be far fitter to adorn a throne!

Enter FAIRY GODMOTHER.

G.—The clothes are my business—I will see that Princess Charming is not dressed like a scullion.

C.—My fairy godmother!

ALL.—Her fairy godmother!

G.—The same. So, Cinderella, if you will step into that dark cupboard while I recite a magic spell, you shall be changed into a beautiful princess.

(CINDERELLA enters the cupboard. The FAIRY GODMOTHER recites spell, waves wand. CINDERELLA comes out dressed as she was at the ball. Mother and daughters start.)

G.—Now, my child, no one can say you look like a scullion.

L. and M.—The Princess of the Silver Mountain!

G.—The same, whom you left sitting in the ashes, but who went to the ball after all—

P.—And was the most beautiful princess there.

(Bows and kisses her hand.)

M.—I wish, my darlings, I had chosen a fairy for your godmother, instead of those silly aunts of yours.

L.—I must say, it is very hard on us that a chit like that should have the best of everything.

G.—Come, if you say one word more, I will repeat my spell backwards over you, and then all your clothes will change to rags.

M.—Come, then, my pretty poppets, come away with me, you are not appreciated here as you deserve.

L.—No, we are not admired as we ought to be.

P.—Pray, madam, do not let us turn you out, as we are going ourselves. Come, my princess.

(Offers his hand.)

H.—*(Loudly.)* Bring forward the princess's golden coach!

G.—*(Waving wand.)* Be happy, my Cinderella!

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Missing punctuation has been silently added. The publisher's advertising has been moved to the end. The following three substantive changes have been made and can be identified in the body of the text by a grey dotted underline. The corrected version is on the right:

MRS. S.—If you'll take great care of it, yes. (<i>To</i> MRS. S.) Did you ever hear such ideas as the child has?	MRS. S.—If you'll take great care of it, yes. (<i>To</i> MRS. R.) Did you ever hear such ideas as the child has?
<i>Hides her ace in her hands. The others go towards the door.</i>	<i>Hides her face in her hands. The others go towards the door.</i>
That just what Goody Grumbles said.	That's just what Goody Grumbles said.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NURSERY COMEDIES: TWELVE TINY PLAYS FOR CHILDREN ***

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