

Why the Chimes Rang: A Play in One Act eBook

Why the Chimes Rang: A Play in One Act

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Page 1

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by Elizabeth Apthorp McFadden:

Adapted from the story of the same name:
by Raymond McDonald Alden

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PREFACE.

This little play is prentice work done in Professor George P. Baker's class, English 47 at Radcliffe College in the fall of 1908. Several years later it was staged by Professor Baker in the "47 Workshop," his laboratory for trying out plays written in the Harvard and Radcliffe courses in dramatic technique.

I am glad to acknowledge here my indebtedness to the "Shop" and its workers for this chance of seeing the play in action. Of the various advantages which a "Workshop" performance secures to the author none is more helpful than the mass of written criticism handed in by the audience, and representing some two or three hundred frank and widely varying views of the work in question. I am especially grateful for this constructive criticism, much of which has been of real service in the subsequent rewriting of the piece.

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"Why the Chimes Rang" was again tried out the next year in seven performances by the "Workshop" company in various Boston settlements. Other groups of amateurs have given it in Arlington, Massachusetts, Los Angeles, California and in Honolulu. These performances have proved that while its setting may seem to call for the equipment of a theatre, the play can be acceptably given in any hall or Sunday school room.

Suggestions for the simplest possible staging have been added to the present publication in an appendix which contains data on the scenery, music, lighting, costumes and properties for the piece.

Elizabeth Apthorp McFADDEN.

WHY THE CHIMES RANG.

CHARACTERS.

Holger....._A peasant boy_
Steen....._His younger brother_
Bertel....._Their uncle_
*an old woman**Lords, ladies, etc.*—

Time:—*Dusk of a day of long ago.*

* * * * *

Scene:—*The interior of a wood-chopper's hut on the edge of a forest.*

Why the Chimes Rang.

The scene is laid in a peasant's hut on the edge of a forest near a cathedral town. It is a dark low-raftered room lit only by the glowing wood fire in the great fireplace in the wall to the right, and by a faint moonlight that steals in through the little window high in the left wall. This window commands a view of the cathedral and of the road leading down into the town. The only entrance into the hut is the front door near the window.

The furnishings are few: two substantial stools, one near the window, the other before the fire, logs piled up near the hearth, and on the chimney shelf above a few dishes, three little bowls, three spoons and a great iron porridge pot. A wooden peg to the right of the chimney holds Steen's cap and cape, one to the left an old shawl. Near the door Holger's cap and cape hang from a third peg.

Despite its poverty the room is full of beautiful coloring as it lies half hidden in deep shadow save where the light of the fire falls on the brown of the wood and the warmer

shades of the children's garments, illuminates their faces and gleams on their bright hair.

When the curtain is raised Steen is sitting disconsolately on the stool near the fire. He is a handsome sturdy little lad of nine or ten, dressed in rough but warm garments of a dark red. Holger a slender boy some four years older, bends over Steen patting him comfortingly on the shoulder.

There is petulance and revolt in the expression of the younger boy but Holger's face is full of a blended character and spirituality that makes him beautiful. He is clad like his brother in comfortable but worn jerkin and hose of a dark leaf green. His manner to the little boy is full of affection, though occasionally he is superior after the manner of big brothers. Throughout the play, two moods alternate in Holger, a certain grave, half-mystical dreaminess and bubbling through it, the high spirits of his natural boyish self.

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Holger. Take heart, Steen, perhaps we can go next year.

Steen. Next year! Next year I'll be so old I won't want to go.

Holger. Oh, quite old folks go to the Christmas service. Come, let's watch the people going down to town.

Steen. No.

Holger. The road'll be full, grand folk! *(He crosses to the window)*
Come watch, Steen.

Steen. No!

Holger. (Looking out) Why the road's all empty again!

Steen. (In a wailing tone) Everybody's gone!

Holger. (Trying to be brave) They're lighting the cathedral!

Steen. I don't care!

Holger. Oh, Steen, come see,—like the stars coming out!

Steen. I won't see! Mother said way last summer that we could go to-night, and now—
(His voice breaks in a sob)

Holger. She meant it! She didn't know that the grandmother would be ill, and she and father'ud have to go to *her*. Be fair, Steen!

Steen. They might let us go alone. "Too little!" Bah!

Holger. (In a low almost frightened tone) Steen, come here!

(The tone, rather than the words, take Steen quickly to HOLGER'S side.)

STEEN. What?

HOLGER. *(Pointing out the window)* Look, by the dead pine yonder, an old woman facing us, kneeling in the snow, see? praying!

STEEN. *(In an awed tone)* She's looking at us!

HOLGER. She's raising her hand to us!



STEEN. She's beckoning!

HOLGER. No, she's making the Sign of the Cross.

(Both boys drop their heads devoutly.)

STEEN. Who is she, Holger?

HOLGER. I don't know.

STEEN. *(Drawing back from the window and crossing the room to the fire)* Oh, Holger, I'm afraid!

HOLGER. No, no! Look, she has turned away,—she's deeper in the shadow,—why, she's gone! *(Following STEEN with all his bright courage bubbling high again, and speaks in a bantering tone)* Just some old granny going down to town, and thou afraid!

STEEN. *(Recovering also)* And thou afraid!

HOLGER. I was not!

STEEN. *(Derisively)* Oh-h-h-h!

HOLGER. Well, I was just a little bit afraid—lest she might frighten thee. *(Steps are heard outside the house. Both boys start and look frightened again)* Hush,—steps—coming here!

STEEN. *(Backing from the door)* The old woman!

HOLGER. *(Crosses the room, looks cautiously out of the window, then cries joyously)* No,—Uncle Bertel!

BERTEL. *(Off stage)* Hullo, there,—open, Holger!

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(STEEN and HOLGER make a dash for the door, fling it open and BERTEL enters. He is a jolly robust peasant uncle of early middle life, clad in rough gray jerkin and hose, with a dark gray cloak wrapped about him. He so radiates cheer that the room seems warmer for his presence in it. Nothing to be afraid of about him, the children adore him.)

STEEN. (*Clinging to him, happily*) Oh, Uncle, Uncle, Uncle Bertel!

HOLGER. (*Seizing BERTEL on his other side*) Uncle Bertel, welcome!

BERTEL. (*Tousling their hair and shaking himself loose in pretended dismay*) Help, help!—Robbers!—I'm beset!—Gently, youngsters!—(*He goes over to the fire and stands warming himself*) Brrrrr! It's cold in the forest to-night!—Well, (*He faces them genially*) why am I come?—Tell me that!

STEEN. (*Exultantly*) To take us to the Christmas Service?

HOLGER. Uncle! How didst thou know we were not going?

BERTEL. I met a fox—who said—

HOLGER. Oh-h!—Thou hast seen mother and father!

BERTEL. (*Draws the stool nearer the fire and sits, the children promptly drop on the floor beside him*) By our Lady, yes!—and walking so fast they had only time to throw me a word from the sides of their mouths. "Go up," cried Mother,—*"I wist my boys are deep in tears!"*—and I, not wishing to see you drown in so much water—

HOLGER. (*Patting his arm*) Dear Uncle Bertel!

STEEN. (*Rising on his knees*) Come, let's go quick!

BERTEL. Patience, patience, young colt, plenty of time, mother said something else.

STEEN. What?

BERTEL. (*His eye on the shelf above the fire*) That I should find some warm porridge for my pains.

HOLGER. (*Springing to his feet*) Why, of course, there is porridge! (*He goes to the shelf*) Nice and warm it is! All ready for supper. (*He hands the first bowl to BERTEL, STEEN capers nimbly across the intervening space and seats himself on the side of the hearth, facing BERTEL, his back to the audience*)

STEEN. Supper! How could we forget supper?—Give me a *big* bowlful, Holger.



HOLGER. (*Handing STEEN his porridge*) There isn't a *big* bowlful here.

STEEN. (*Taking the bowl and hugging it*) Nice kind good supper, umh! (*Begins to eat eagerly*)

HOLGER. (*Suddenly looking toward the door*) Listen!

BERTEL. To what?

HOLGER. (*Awed, hesitant*) Someone—sobbing—at the door! (*He goes to it, the others watching him startled, he opens the door, finds nothing, closes it and comes back*) Nothing there!

BERTEL. The wind!—Thy old tricks, Holger,—always dreaming some strange thing.

HOLGER. (*Recalled by BERTEL'S words to something else*) Didst thou pass an old woman on the road—near here?

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BERTEL. Not a soul nearer than the town gate. (HOLGER *stands thinking, absorbed*) Come, boy, eat,—eat! See how Steen eats!

HOLGER. (*Breaks through his abstraction and reverts to his bright self*) Oh, Uncle Bertel,—I'm too glad to eat!

BERTEL. (*More seriously*) Thou art right, lad,—fasting were better than feasting this day in Tralsund!—they say,—do you know what they say in the town?

HOLGER. What?

BERTEL. They say—that to-night in the great church—when the offerings are laid upon the altar for the Christ child,—*something will happen!*

(STEEN *has finished his porridge, puts the bowl on the shelf near him, seizes his cloak and cap from the peg near the hearth and stands eager to be gone.*)

HOLGER. What?

BERTEL. Who can say? All day the folk have been pouring into the town as never before. The market place is crowded, every inn is full. No church but the cathedral could hold such a multitude. Never have I seen such excitement, such fervor!

HOLGER. There will be many gifts!

BERTEL. —the rich are bringing their treasure, gold and jewels, king's ransoms, aye and the King comes. (BERTEL *finishes his porridge and hands the bowl to STEEN*)

HOLGER. The King?

BERTEL. The King Himself!

STEEN. Oh, and shall we see Him, Uncle, and the fine gifts and everything?

BERTEL. Why not?—Even the poorest may go up and give—what hast thou to offer?

STEEN. (*Abashed*) I?—Nothing! (*Puts his porridge bowl and BERTEL'S on the shelf then goes restlessly to the door*)

HOLGER. (*Breaking in with eagerness*) Oh, I have, see, Uncle? (*Feels in his pocket and brings out two pennies*) See!—Last week I was gathering sticks in the forest and a fine gentleman rode past and asked the way of me. I showed him the path and he gave me these! (*Holds up the pennies*)



BERTEL. *(Rising and going to HOLGER who is in the middle of the room)* Faith, real money in the family. *(Stoops and looks at the pennies as though they were a rare sight)*

STEEN. Oh, I thought we were going to buy cakes with those, Holger.

HOLGER. But it's better to give it to the Christ Child. You see He is a little child, smaller than even you,—and I think He would like a little gift,—a little bright gift that would buy cakes for Him. *(HOLGER goes toward the window and stands looking dreamily out at the lights of the church)*

BERTEL. Aye, to-night we must think of Him,—there in His Holy Church.

HOLGER. It *is* a holy place, the church!—I feel it every time I go,—it's like God's forest,—the pillars like old oaks and the great windows all colors like sunsets through the trees.

BERTEL. 'Tis like the forest.

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HOLGER. And when the organ plays that's like a storm gathering in the mountains.

BERTEL. A storm?—Aye!—"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm and the clouds are the dust of His feet!"—Why should He not do a wonder as of old? Perhaps the great miracle will come again!

HOLGER. Oh, which, Uncle?—There are so many in the Bible!

STEEN. Yes, which?—Would there be a whale now to swallow a priest?

BERTEL. Thou goosey! This was no Bible miracle,—it happened there, *there*, where we see the lights,—hundreds of years ago. (BERTEL *has followed* HOLGER *to the window and* STEEN *joins them. As he speaks* BERTEL *slips his arms affectionately round both children and the three stand looking out. At this moment something stirs in the dim shadows that shroud the corner up above the fire-place. Suddenly out of the dark the OLD WOMAN emerges. A tall figure, if she were not so bent, wrapped in a black cloak. There is nothing grotesque or sinister in her appearance, she might have stood for a statue of old age, impressive in its pathos. As she sits on the stool near the fire she throws back the cloak disclosing the plain straight dress of gray beneath. The light of the fire reveals her crouched, swaying back and forth praying silently, her face still shaded by the heavy hood of her cloak. The others gazing intently out at the church do not see her. BERTEL continues speaking*) Surely thou hast heard of the Miracle of the Chimes?

HOLGER. I've heard folks speak of it,—but I never knew just what happened.

STEEN. Oh, tell us, Uncle Bertel.

BERTEL. Aye, listen then!—You see the great tower there?—(Both children nod *emphatically*) It goes so high into the clouds that no one can see it's top!—No one even knows how high it is for the men who built it have been dead for hundreds of years.

STEEN. But what has that to do with the chimes?

HOLGER. Hush, Steen, let uncle speak!

BERTEL. The chimes are up at the top of the tower—and they are holy bells,—miraculous bells, placed there by sainted hands,—and when they rang 'twas said that angels' voices echoed through them.

STEEN. Why doesn't someone ring them *now*?

BERTEL. Ah, that is not so easy!—They are said to ring on Christmas Eve when the gifts are laid on the altar for the Christ-child,—but not every offering will ring them, it

must be a perfect gift. And for all these years not one thing has been laid upon the altar good enough to make the chimes ring out.

HOLGER. Oh, that's what the priest was talking about to mother, then. He said it mustn't be just a fine gift for show but something full of love for the Christ-child.

STEEN. Oh, I want to hear them!

BERTEL. *We shall!*—The very air is full of holy mystery! The Spirit of Christ will be there in the church to-night! (*To HOLGER*) Thy cap, boy!



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(HOLGER stands wrapt in thought gazing out at the cathedral.)

STEEN. *(Taking the cap and cloak from the peg near the door and bringing them down and piling them into HOLGER'S arms)* Here they are, old dreamer!—*(He turns back up toward the door in such a way that he does not see the silent figure in the corner)* And hurry!

(BERTEL too turns toward his left hand and does not see the woman.)

HOLGER. *(In a tone of bright happiness, roused from his dreaming)* I'm coming!—Nothing can happen to stop us now, can it? *(As he says this he wheels to his right in a way that brings the chimney corner in his line of vision. He starts, bends forward staring as the others open the door, then he speaks in a tone that is little more than a gasp)* Steen!

(The others stop and stare at him, then in the direction of his look.)

STEEN. Oh!—The Old Woman!

BERTEL. *(Looking to STEEN)* When did she come in?

STEEN. I didn't see her!

(HOLGER crosses timidly towards her. As he approaches the OLD WOMAN turns her eyes on him and holds out her hands in pitiful appeal.)

HOLGER. What dost thou want, dame?

OLD WOMAN. *(In a voice that is harsh and broken)* Refuge—from the storm of the world!

HOLGER. Surely thou shalt rest here.

OLD WOMAN. *(Half rises stiffly as HOLGER draws nearer)* Oh, son, I am so weary and so heavy laden. *(She sways and HOLGER runs forward, catching her in his arms and supporting her on the stool. The others stand watching. She sits huddled forward in a position that suggests collapse)*

HOLGER. She's faint! *(He touches her hands)* She's so cold! Quick, Steen, build up the fire! *(STEEN goes to the fire and puts on another log, the flames blase up. HOLGER busies himself chafing the woman's hands and covering her with the old cloak that has dropped back from her shoulders)* She must have lost her way in the forest.



BERTEL. (*Stands watching the woman rather suspiciously, now comes to HOLGER taps him on the arm and draws him a little apart, speaking in an undertone*) We have scant time to lose with that old beggar.

HOLGER. What'll I do with her?

BERTEL. Leave her and come on.

STEEN. And *come*—before it is to-morrow! (*He is back by the door, his hand on the latch*)

HOLGER. (*Turns and looks at the old woman and then back to BERTEL*) Oh, I—ought we to go and leave her?

STEEN. Not go?

BERTEL. Go, of course we'll go, she'll warm herself and march along.

HOLGER. But she is ill. (*Turns to STEEN with new decision in his manner*) Thou shalt go with Uncle but I—must stay with her.



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BERTEL. Nonsense, Holger!

HOLGER. No, it isn't!—If we should all go now, the fire would go out and the light,—and she would wake up in the cold darkness and not know where to turn for help.

BERTEL. Na, by Saint Christopher!—Miss a miracle to keep company with a beggar!—Who held her hand before thou camest along? Send her packing and make haste, Holger.

STEEN. Oh, do, Holger!

HOLGER. If there were some place near that we could take her.

BERTEL. There isn't a place on the road,—they've all gone to town long ago. Bid her fare there also!

HOLGER. (*Looks at the OLD WOMAN, then at BERTEL, then back to the OLD WOMAN, then he shakes his head*) Mother wouldn't treat her so,—she'd be good to her.

BERTEL. Think of what you'll miss! (*An expression of anguish passes over HOLGER'S face, but he shakes his head and turns toward the old woman*) Well, this is idle talk, thou and I will go, Steen.

STEEN. Oh, come,—let's go!

BERTEL. (*To STEEN, but for HOLGER'S benefit*) Thou and I will see the King, perchance—The Christ! Thou art stubborn, Holger, I who am older tell thee what to do! (*HOLGER shakes his head again*) Come, Steen! (*He opens the door and goes out*)

STEEN. (*Following him*) Good-bye, Holger.

HOLGER. Good-bye! (*STEEN goes out and shuts the door. There is a moment's pause while HOLGER stands staring at the closed door, then he suddenly runs toward it*) Oh, wait, wait for me, Uncle, I will go! (*He opens the door, starts to go through it, then stops, turns and looks at the Woman, is drawn slowly backward by his gaze and comes in closing the door*) No!

WOMAN. (*Moaning*) The path—is so—steep!

HOLGER. (*Goes to her and bends over her*) Didst thou speak, dame? (*The WOMAN does not answer*) Thou art like Grandmother, and I know what Mother would do for *her*! (*Feeling her hands*) Art warmer, dame?—still cold!—The covers aren't very thick. (*He looks about the bare room, sees the old shawl hanging from the peg near the fire, takes it down and spreads it over the woman*) Thou must get warm! (*Goes to the fire and builds it higher*)



WOMAN. (*Still wandering in her mind*) Berries,—yes, find berries.

HOLGER. Oh, thou art hungry! (*He turns to the shelf, takes his own untasted bowl of porridge, brings it to her*) Dame, here is food!

WOMAN. (*Rousing*) Food, give it to me, child, I am dying for food!

(*HOLGER gives her the porridge and sits down on the floor beside her.*)

HOLGER. (*Watching her as she devours the porridge*) Ah, poor soul!—Why, thou wert starving!—Na, just see!—Mother says that's what makes my little brother so round and rosy, because he eats so much porridge,—you like it, don't you?

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WOMAN. It is life itself! *(Her voice has grown young and strong. Sinks back again as she has eaten it all)* Bless thee, Child!

(HOLGER sets the empty dish aside on the hearth and turns to feel her hands.)

HOLGER. Oh, thou art warm!

WOMAN. Aye, warm! *(In a voice increasingly rich and sweet. At this moment there comes the distant sound of organ music. HOLGER straightens suddenly in a listening attitude)* Listen,—is that music?

HOLGER. From the Cathedral!—Aye, it must be,—last summer we could hear it plain, and now with so many thousands there! *(Leaves the woman and stands in the center of the room listening attentively)* It's beginning!—*(Pause)* Everyone is there!

WOMAN. Why are they there.

HOLGER. It's the great service! *(He goes toward the window and stands looking out. He talks on half to her, half to himself)* All the world is there, the village folk, and strangers from afar, great court folk, too,—aye, and the King,—our King! And He will give a gift,—a King's gift! *(She rises erectly and follows him across the room. There is the strength and poise of youth in her walk. The heavy black hood has fallen back revealing a head covering of white linen that suggests a sister of Charity and gives her face a look of austerity and sweetness. She is strong, maternal, beautiful. Intuitively, HOLGER, in his disappointment begins to lean upon her sympathy. The music grows a little louder and floats into the room)* Look, dame, you can even see the windows gleam! It is so near! It's all beginning and—I—am not there! *(A sob creeps into his voice)*

WOMAN. Son!

HOLGER. Aye, dame? *(He turns and comes toward her, she seats herself on the stool near the window, reaches out a hand and draws him down beside her)*

WOMAN. Thou, too, wouldst go? *(HOLGER, too moved by her sympathy to speak, nods silently and puts up a hand to hide the trembling of his lips. She slips her hand to his shoulder)* Another time thou'll go!

HOLGER. *(Fighting back his tears)* It'll never be the same again! To-night the Christ comes. Bertel said—"The Christ!"

WOMAN. Nay, son, pray to the Christ-child, pray that He does not pass thee by! *(She sits facing the back wall of the hut. HOLGER kneels before her, and drops his head in*

her lap. She lays her hand gently upon his hair and makes the sign of the cross above him)

(As they have been talking together, the fire on the hearth has burned itself out and the shadows in the room have crept forward and closed around them till only a faint outline of HOLGER and the WOMAN can be distinguished in the glimmer of moonlight shining through the window nearby. There is a long pause broken only by the boy's sobbing which gradually sinks to silence. As he prays, a faint light begins to grow behind

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him. The smoke-grimed back wall of the hut has vanished and in its place appears a vision of the cathedral chancel.—One by one objects emerge from the darkness. The light touches the golden altar, the gleaming appointments upon it, the jewel-like tones of the stained glass window above, and the rich carpet under foot; it shows the marble arches at the sides and shines softly on the robe of the kneeling PRIEST. As the dim vision grows to clearness, so the music comes nearer and swells forth softly into the Christmas processional. Unconscious of it all HOLGER looks up at the WOMAN, his face swept with despair.)

HOLGER. Oh, it's no use! I'd rather be all blind and never see than miss the vision that the Christ will send!

WOMAN. (*Gazing at the vision*) Look, look what comes!

HOLGER. (*Staring at the woman's face illuminated by the light from the chancel*) Dame! (*He turns to see where the light comes from and the vision meets his eye*) Oh-h-h-h! (*He crouches back at the WOMAN'S feet, held spell-bound by the sight. As the music changes the PRIEST rises slowly to his feet, faces the congregation and makes a gesture of approach. The voices of the choir join the music, and from the left side of the chancel, people begin to enter carrying their gifts*)

(*An imperious looking man, richly dressed in black and gold comes first, bearing a heavy box. He approaches the altar, kneels and puts the chest in the PRIEST'S hands, and, that the full value of his gift may be publicly recognised, he throws back the lid, heaping up the gold coin with which the box is filled. The PRIEST turns, goes up the steps to the altar and raises the chest as high as its weight will permit. The man still kneeling awaits the chimes with superb selfconfidence. The bells do not ring. Slowly the PRIEST lowers the gold to the altar, turns, raises his hand in blessing and dismissal. The rich man rises, looking bewildered at his failure, crosses to the right and stands near the altar as the pageant moves on.)(The PRIEST turns to the next comer, A COURTIER brave in green and gold, who enters with an air of great elegance, bearing daintily a gilded jewel casket. He kneels, lays it in the PRIEST'S hands. The latter turns to go but the COURTIER detains him a second, raises the lid of the box and holds up string after string of rich gems. The PRIEST carries the jewels to the altar and offers them. The bells do not ring. The PRIEST dismisses the COURTIER, and the young man rises, turns back with assumed lightness of manner and stands at the left of the chancel, watching with great interest.)(A beautiful WOMAN clad in flame colored velvet sweeps proudly up to the steps of the altar, kneels, takes from her neck a long*

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strand of pearls and offers it to the PRIEST. The PRIEST receives the necklace, ascends to the altar and offers the jewels. The woman smiling listens tensely for the chimes. They do not ring. The smile fades as the PRIEST turns and blesses her. She rises trying to hide her chagrin in a look of great hauteur, crosses to the right and stands near the man in black and gold with whom she exchanges disdainful smiles over the next arrival.)(An old white haired man clad in a scholar's robes totters on, bearing with difficulty a large vellum bound book. The PRIEST takes a step forward to relieve the Old Man of his burden, and as he goes up the altar steps the Sage sinks exhausted to his knees, listening with straining senses for the bells.—They do not ring. The PRIEST blesses the old man and helps him to rise. He turns back and stands near the COURTIER at the left.)(A lovely young girl enters, dressed in pale green satin, her arms filled with a sheaf of white lilies. The very way she carries them and bends her head to catch their fragrance shows that to her they are the most beautiful things in the world. Kneeling she gives them into the hands of the PRIEST, and as he offers them, she listens with childish confidence for the ringing of the bells.—Still there is no sound save the organ music and the singing of the choir, subdued almost to a breath as the gifts are offered. Abashed as the PRIEST blesses and dismisses her, the young girl steps back and stands near the old Sage.)(There is a stir in the chancel, even the PRIEST turning to watch. The KING enters. He is a man of forty with tall distinguished figure and a proud face. His purple robes, richly jeweled, trail far behind him and on his head he wears his crown. Everyone leans forward watching with the greatest tension. The KING, exalted with his mood of selfsacrifice kneels, removes his crown and lays it in the hands of the PRIEST. HOLGER crouching in the shadow quivers with anticipation. Again the pantomime of hope and failure. The PRIEST turns back to the KING and raises his arm in the customary gesture. The KING starts to rise then suddenly as though overcome at this spiritual defeat sinks again to his knees before the altar and buries his face in his hands, praying. The PRIEST stands with arms crossed upon his breast, regarding him sorrowfully.)

HOLGER. *(Overwhelmed with disappointment, softly to the woman)* Perhaps there are no chimes, perhaps the Christ hears us not!

WOMAN. Have faith,—have faith in God.

HOLGER. I would that I could give my pennies to the Child.

(The KING rises from his prayer and goes sadly to the right, standing near the lady in red.)

WOMAN. *(In a low ringing voice that thrills like the call of a trumpet)* Go up, my son,—fear not—The Christ-Child waits for all!

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(HOLGER *breathless with the adventure rises and goes timidly forward out of the gloom of the hut into the splendor of the chancel, looking very small and poorly dressed beside all the great ones. He holds out his pennies to the PRIEST who bends and takes them with a tender little smile, and HOLGER, crossing himself, too abashed to stand and wait, shrinks back into the darkness and the sheltering arms of the Woman.*)(The PRIEST goes up the steps of the altar and holds the pennies high above his head in consecrating gesture, and as he does so, the organ music breaks off with an amazed suddenness for from above there comes the far triumphant ringing of the chimes, mingled with ethereal voices singing *The Alleluia.*)(A wave of awe sweeps over everyone in the chancel and as the PRIEST wheels and gestures them to their knees, they prostrate themselves quickly. HOLGER, too, kneels awe-struck but the woman rises to her full height and stands watching. From this time on, she withdraws gradually into the deeper shadows of the hut and is seen no more.)(As they all kneel the Angel enters from the right, ascends the steps of the altar and stands beside the huddled figure of the PRIEST. As she stands there, a single pencil of light shines down upon her from above, a ray of light so brilliant that everything around seems dull in comparison, and while she gives her message, the light above grows till it floods her hair and garments with a miraculous radiance. The ANGEL smiles at HOLGER and chants in a lovely voice.)

ANGEL. Verily, verily, I say unto you, it is not gold nor silver nor rich pearls but love and selfsacrifice that please the Lord. The Christ-Child was hungered and you gave him meat,—a stranger and you took Him in.

HOLGER. (*In an awed tone*) But I—I have not seen the Christ-Child.

ANGEL. Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these His Brethern, you have done it unto Him! (*The ANGEL stands with one hand uplifted, as the music rises in a great crescendo of triumph. HOLGER, quite overcome, drops his face in his hands and as the climax of the singing is reached, the whole tableau is held for a moment, then blotted out in darkness.*)

(*There is a pause, then the light on the hearth flares up revealing the boy alone, still on his knees, looking up bewildered at the back wall of the hut, where the vision had been. Swiftly he rises to his feet and turns to face the Woman.*)

HOLGER. Dame,—dame!—The Chimes,—the star—did you see? (*She is gone, he stares about him looking for her*) Gone! Gone! (*The music still rings softly*) But the Chimes! (*He turns, runs to the window, and flings open the casement. A soft light, half moonlight, half something more luminous pours in upon him. He speaks in a tone of infinite happiness, looking upward*) The stars!—God's Chimes!

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THE CURTAIN FALLS SLOWLY.

THE APPENDIX

[Illustration: Sketch of hut scene for “Why the Chimes Rang,” before the backing of the gauze drop is raised. (Everything back of the fireplace on the left, and the window on the right, is painted on the gauze, including the stool and the supporting pillar.)]

[Illustration: Sketch of chancel scene for “Why the Chimes Rang,” after the backing of the gauze drop is raised. (For simplified setting made of screens, see diagram on page 34 of appendix.)]

The accompanying scenery plates are not intended to be followed in all their elaborate detail but merely to give an idea of the effect to be worked toward in planning the scenery.

APPENDIX.

The following suggestions for a simplified staging of “Why The Chimes Rang” are offered, not to college dramatic societies or other expert amateurs but to the many young people in the secondary schools, Sunday schools and country districts, who would enjoy staging short plays if it could be done without elaborate scenery or lighting equipment and without previous experience in stage management.

Simplicity aided by imagination goes far upon the stage, and it should always be remembered that the real aim is the creation of a given emotion in the minds of the audience rather than the creation of a given thing upon the stage. If a circle of gilt paper on the head of a fine looking lad can create a vivid impression of kingly dignity, all the crown jewels of Europe cannot better the paper for stage purposes.

In producing a play, it should first be carefully read to see what main impression is to be conveyed, and what chief elements are to be emphasized to make up this impression. The details can then be worked out in harmony with the more important factors.

In “Why The Chimes Rang,” religious exaltation is the mood to be created, and the divine beauty of charity is the main theme.

Three sharply contrasted effects are called for: the wood-chopper’s hut, dark and humble; and, set against this, the earthly splendor of the cathedral chancel, which in its turn is dimmed by the miraculous presence of the angel.

It is expected that this play will be adapted, by those giving it, to the form and degree of ritual desired. Censers and candles may be used or not, altar appointments and priestly

vestments may be chosen to suit the taste of those concerned. Indeed, in all respects, a play must be suited to the conditions under which it is presented and the audience before whom it is given; and while the text may not be altered or added to, lines may be omitted if desired.

The information here given has been gathered from frequent working over of the material but at best it can only help in a general way. Any one producing a play must work out his own problems in detail. One of the things that makes the staging of plays such fascinating work is the exercise it affords the imagination in overcoming obstacles.

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SCENERY

[Illustration: Diagram showing the arrangement of screens for simplified staging of "Why the Chimes Rang."]

SCENERY.

For the sake of facing the most difficult form of the problem of amateur staging, let us suppose that this play is to be given in a parlor or hall, without platform, without proscenium arch or curtains, with the walls, floor and ceiling of such material and finish that no nails may be driven into them, and that the depth of the stage is only nine feet. It looks hopeless but it can be done.

Under such conditions the only possible form of scenery is the screen. If the "scenery-man" is a bit of a carpenter, he can build the screens himself, making them as strong and as light as possible, with four leaves a few inches shorter than the height of the room in which they are to be used, and proportionately wide.—The framework should be braced by cross pieces in the middle of each leaf, and should have stout leather handles nailed to them for convenience in lifting the screen. The right side should be covered with canvas such as is used for scenery, and the screens can then be easily repainted or recovered for later plays.

If it is not possible to have the screens made to order, ordinary Japanese screens may be borrowed or rented, and made to serve as front curtain, and framework for scenery.

Those indicated in the plan as A A and B B serve as the front curtains, the center sections (marked B B) being drawn aside by persons stationed behind them to show the interior of the hut when the play begins. The four screens marked C D and E E form the walls of the hut. In using screens it will be necessary to do without the window and the actual door unless the person in charge of the scenery is clever enough to paint in a window on one panel of the screen and make a door in another. If not, turn the end panel of the screen marked C to run at right angles with the other part, giving the impression of a passage with an imagined door at the unseen end, and wherever in the business of the parts, the children are said to look out of the window, let them instead look down this passage, as though they were looking through the open doorway.

On the right side of the room in the screen marked D, a fire-place may be constructed by cutting away a portion of the screen to suggest the line of the fire-place, putting back of this opening a box painted black inside to represent the blackened chimney, and finishing with a rough mantel stained brown to match the wall tint. Of course if the screens are borrowed the fire-place will have to be dispensed with.

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At the moment when the vision of the cathedral is to appear, the screens marked E E are parted and folded back disclosing the chancel. Perhaps some church nearby has stored in its basement an old stained glass window, which may be borrowed and used as background for the church scene. Such a window was used in a performance of "Much Ado About Nothing" given some years ago at one of the Eastern colleges. It was dimly lit from behind by electric globes and proved very successful in creating a churchly atmosphere. If this can not be done, cover two of the tallest possible screens with any rich sombre colored drapery and stand them against the back wall. In the Los Angeles production, the chancel was represented by a curtain of black velvet, flanked by two silver pillars, between them the altar. Black makes an exceedingly rich and effective foil for bright colored costumes. Whatever is used for backing in the chancel can be masked if unsatisfactory by Christmas greens, which should be arranged in long vertical lines that carry the eye up as high as possible and give a sense of dignity, or in the Gothic curves suggestive of church architecture.

Against this background, and in the center of the space, place the altar. This can be made of a packing box painted gold or covered with suitable hangings. In one performance of this play a sectional bookcase which stood in the room was hung with purple cheese cloth and served as an altar. Should the stage space be deep enough broad steps before the shrine will give an added height to the priest and the angel.

If it is possible to have real scenery the most illusive method of revealing and hiding the chancel is to have the back of the hut painted on a gauze drop, which is backed by a black curtain. At the cue for showing the chancel the lights in front of the gauze go out leaving the stage dark, then the black opaque curtain is rolled up or drawn aside and as the light is slowly turned on the chancel, the vision begins to take form through the gauze, the latter becoming invisible and transparent when there is no light in front of it. The gauze prevents Holger from actually placing the pennies in the priest's hand but if the two approach the gauze as though it were not there, and stretch out their hands so that they seem to touch, the priest being provided with additional pennies which he holds up at the altar, no one in the audience would guess that the coins had not been given him by the child.

Very few halls ostensibly built to house amateur play-giving are adequate for the purpose.—Often the stage is merely a shallow platform without curtains to separate the actors from the audience, and the ceiling and walls surrounding the stage are so finished that the necessary screws for hanging curtains, may not be driven into them. The amateur manager reaches the depths of despair when he finds that even the floor of the shallow platform offered him, is of polished hardwood and may not be marred by the screws of stage braces.

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Amateurs who have any voice in the preparation of the stage being built for them, should urge the following specifications:

1. The ceiling of the stage to be at least twice as high as the proscenium arch.
2. The depth of the stage to be at least fifteen feet, deeper if the size of the place permits.
3. The flooring, walls and ceiling of the stage to be of soft wood, into which nails and screws may be driven; or if the main construction is of brick, concrete or metal, some inner wooden scaffolding or other overhead rigging capable of supporting scenery should be provided.
4. There should be some space on both sides of the stage for keeping scenery and properties to be used later in the play, and as a waiting place for actors temporarily off the stage. The platform forming the stage proper should be continued over these wings so that actors leaving the scene may walk off on a level and not seem to plunge cellarward in making their exits.

LIGHTING.

The important thing to be remembered about the lighting is the crescendo of light which occurs as the play runs its course. First the dim little hut so lit by the firelight, that the expressions on the faces of the actors can just be seen without straining the eyes of the audience. Then the rich but subdued lighting of the chancel and finally the brilliant radiance shining on the angel.

Experiments with electricity should not be attempted by persons who do not understand its use, but if there is a competent electrician in the group putting on the play, use electric lighting by all means. No other form of light is so easily controlled or begins to give such effects for stage purposes.

The problems of theater lighting differ with each set of conditions and the best results can only be obtained by actual experiment with the means at hand. Do not feel that because you are an amateur, working with limited equipment, real beauty is beyond you. I have seen a stage picture approaching a Rembrandt in its charm of coloring and skilful use of shadows, created on a tiny stage with few appliances by an amateur who understood his lights.

If electricity is to be had, use three or four incandescent globes for the fire on the hearth, arranging logs of wood around them to simulate a fire. Additional lights as needed can be placed at the side off stage, or in the footlights; or better, if the stage has a real proscenium these supplementary lights can be put in a "trough" that protects and

intensifies them and hung overhead in the center against the back of the proscenium arch.

As all these lights are to give a firelight effect, the incandescent globes should be dipped in a rich amber shade of coloring medium which may be bought at any electrical supply house for sixty cents per half pint. If gas or oil is used a firelight effect can be obtained by slipping amber gelatine screens in front of the lamps. These "gelatines" are about two feet square and cost only ten cents apiece.

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If the fire-place cannot be made, then a charcoal brazier will serve as an excuse for light and give a sense of warmth to the scene. The brazier can easily be made by any tinsmith from a piece of sheet iron supported on three legs, and there is an illustration of it in the right hand corner of the accompanying scenery plate.—An electric torch or even an ordinary lantern can be slipped inside the little stove to give out a faint glow. A piece of one of the amber screens put over the torch or lantern will warm the light and the brazier can be placed anywhere in the hut.

The chancel may be lighted by a number of incandescent bulbs hidden at the sides of the scene, with the light so shielded that it shines on the altar and not into the hut. An especially effective place to put a strong light is inside the box representing the altar, with a hole cut in the top of the box so that the light shines up, giving a central radiance to the appointments of the altar and throwing into prominence the face and costume of each person who approaches it. If any of this light seems glaring it can be softened and diffused by masking it with amber or straw colored cheesecloth.

Some form of search light is practically a necessity for producing the heavenly radiance that shines upon the angel. If procurable, a “baby spot light” is the best appliance, but lacking this, an automobile lamp and its battery can be used.

It is important that all light in the hut should go out when the vision of the chancel appears so that the hut becomes merely an inner proscenium or dark frame around the rich picture of the altar. This of course does not mean that the lantern in the brazier need be extinguished as the light given by that is negligible.

After the angel ceases speaking the tableau of the altar scene should be held as the music grows louder and louder through the final crescendo; then, when the final note has been sung, blot out the stage by extinguishing all lights. Give a moment of darkness during which the back wall of the hut is replaced, and the old woman slips out of the nearest opening in the scenery. Then turn on the front lights which illuminated the hut during the first part of the play.

MUSIC.

The three pieces of music required for this play are as follows:

“The Sleep of the Child Jesus” part song for mixed voices by F.A. Gevaert.

Eightfold Alleluia composed for “Why the Chimes rang” by Percy Lee Atherton.

These two pieces come published together in a special edition for use with this play by The Boston Music Company. Price 15 cents per copy, postpaid.

The bell movement (in five flats) (Postlude) by J. Guy Ropartz. Published by The Boston Music Company. Price 30 cents per copy, postpaid.

For all the music, address The Boston Music Company, 116 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

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The pieces by Ropartz and Gevaert were chosen for the Workshop production by Dr. A.T. Davison, organist at Appleton Chapel, Harvard University, and are admirably fitted to the play. Mr. Atherton's Alleluia is also just what is needed, both in length and in the triumphant crescendo which carries the piece fittingly and dramatically to its close. It would be difficult to replace this finale except by other music written for the purpose.

The music is perhaps the most important single element in the play. In the original version the scene in the chancel was carried by dialogue but production showed the mistake. From the time that the music begins, it, with the pantomimic action of the actors is all sufficient to interpret the mood and meaning of the scene.

A small parlor organ is practically a necessity and can probably be procured for the cost of the cartage.

A choir of men's and women's voices is best for the singing but a good quartette will serve.

For the bells, the long tubular chimes which are suspended by one end and struck with a wooden hammer are the most satisfactory. If they seem too metallic, try covering the head of the hammer with folds of chamois skin. If such a set of chimes is not to be had a substitute can be found in the phonograph, for which there are a number of chimes records.—The tune played on the phonograph must not be a modern one; Luther's Hymn "Great God, what do I see and hear?" (A Columbia record) is the best. The tune can be disguised by lifting the needle occasionally and setting it down gently on another part of the record. As far as I know, no phonograph record presents chimes pure and simple. It should be remembered however that the phonograph record lacks the vitality of tone and the note of jubilant triumph which a good musician can bring from the bells themselves.

With the exception of the crescendo at the end of the Alleluia, the music is kept soft and dreamy throughout. It is a temptation to try to achieve this effect by placing singers and organ back, off stage, so that the sound may come from a distance but it has been found that the whole performance gains immeasurably if the organist is in front where he can watch every movement of the actors and interpret them in his playing.

The music begins on Holger's speech: "Oh thou art warm" and continues in one form or another throughout the play.—The organist commences in the middle of the Ropartz "Sortie," at the top of page 6 and continues this until the back of the hut is withdrawn when he drifts into the accompaniment of the Gevaert song, and plays it through once without the voices. As Holger cries "Dame!"—and sinks back against the woman's knee, this verse should end, and the voices of the choir take up the song with the organ.

From this point on every movement in the chancel is paced to the rhythm of the music. It has been found that a verse of the Gevaert song is just long enough to fit the following action.

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A person in the procession enters the chancel, walks to the center before the altar, kneels and presents his gift to the priest. The priest accepts the gift, turns, goes up the steps to the altar, and raises the offering high above his head holding it there a moment waiting for the chimes to ring, then brings his arms down, lays the gift on the altar, turns back to the kneeling figure, and raises his hand in blessing. The person then rises, and steps back to his appointed place to the left or right of the altar, coming to a standstill just as the music ends. As the next verse begins, the next person enters the chancel. The movements should be made with deliberation and dignity and so thoroughly rehearsed that keeping time to the music becomes instinctive, that the actor's mind may be on the expressing of the emotions of assurances that his gift will ring the chimes, and later disappointment that the chimes do not ring.

When it comes Holger's turn to offer the pennies, the music begins again as with the others and accompanies the action through to the moment when the priest holds the pennies high above his head,—here the organ and singing break off abruptly, the chimes ring out and keep pealing for a moment, without other music.

On the first note of the chimes the priest wheels swiftly and with a commanding gesture signals the people grouped about the altar to their knees. He kneels also. The organ begins again, softly playing the final Alleluia. The angel enters from the right side, stands on the step of the altar, the central figure,—all about still kneeling awestruck. As the music continues the angel half sings, half chants the speeches, and underneath her voice, which should be as lovely as possible, come in the voices of the other singers very softly at first, like an echo from afar. As the angel's voice stops, those of the other singers grow into the great triumphant crescendo of the finale. Do not be afraid of holding this tableau while the music finishes.—Indeed none of the chancel scene should be hurried. Take it with great deliberation and give whatever element is holding the scene at the moment, (whether the action or the music) plenty of time to make its effect. The Alleluia is played through twice, once softly during the angel's singing the second time in the triumphant climax. As this second singing ends, the lights on the chancel are blotted out, the back wall of the hut is replaced, the old woman disappears, the lights in the hut go up again revealing Holger standing spellbound staring at the wall where the vision had been. As he turns to speak to the woman and during his final speeches, the organ plays softly as though from a great distance and the chimes ring again but not so loudly as before. This music continues till the front screens are brought together and the play is over.

COSTUMES

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

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[Illustration]

COSTUMES.

The costumes of this play are mediaeval, picturesque and easily constructed.—The accompanying plates will give the best idea of their general appearance. The amounts of goods required for each are noted below.

First of all, in planning the costuming for a play a definite color scheme should be decided on with due regard for the scenery against which the colors are to stand out and for the lights which will greatly affect all values. Here is an opportunity for delightful study and the exercise of the highest artistic ability. Skilful lighting and a well chosen background will make cheesecloth as effective as cloth of gold. Taste and careful experimentation not money secure the best results.

Family ragbags will often yield excellent material for theatrical costumes, and of much better quality than would be bought new for the purpose. But if the stuff is to be purchased, two materials will be found especially suitable and inexpensive. For the peasants' costumes canton flannel is recommended as it has body and comes in beautiful dark reds, browns and other shades which light up well. For the dresses of the richer group in the chancel, sateen is best. It, too, comes in lovely colors and has a very rich glossy finish, though to give variety an occasional piece of cheap velvet or upholstery brocade is very effective. For trimming these richer garments, bits of fur or passementerie can be used, or the material may be stencilled or even painted freehand. Large gold beads sewed on in a simple design gives the appearance of rich embroidery, as do also flowers cut out of chintz and carefully pasted on.

All of the men's jerkins or tunics are made on the simple lines of a man's shirt, opened a little at the neck and belted in at the waist.

The most inexpensive tights for amateurs are well-fitting cotton underwear, dyed the desired color. The children and Bertel can wear their own plain soft low-heeled slippers. The rich folk in the chancel wear their own slippers and draw on over them, socks dyed to match the tights; these socks if rolled down at the top make a very passable substitute for the Romeo shoe of the period desired.

The following notes refer to the costumes of "Why the Chimes Rang" as shown in the plates, the numbers corresponding to those given the figures therein. The estimates of the amount of goods required are all calculated on the basis of yard wide goods for an adult of average size, except in the case of the two children, the costume of the older being planned for a fourteen year old boy that of the younger for a child of ten.



1. The old Woman: underrobe, cut in straight simple lines, gracefully belted, 5-1/2 yards, cloak and hood, 6 yards. If this cloak is black or nearly so it will help to conceal her entrance and exit, as black against black is practically invisible on the stage.



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2. Bertel: jerkin, gaiters and cap (all of same material), 3 yards; shirt, (under jerkin) 2-1/2 yards; cloak, 2-1/2 yards. If preferred Bertel's jerkin can be made with sleeves of the same goods instead of the white shirt showing as in the picture.

3. Holger: jerkin and cap, 1-1/2 yards; cape, 2 yards.

4. Steen: jerkin and cap, 1-1/2 yards; cape, 2 yards.

It may be easier to lengthen the skirts of the boys' jerkins almost to the knee and let them wear regular stockings and bloomers instead of tights. If long sleeves are preferred for them, a pair of stockings cut off at the ankle are easily attached at the arm hole and make very good sleeves.

5. The Angel: outer robe, 7 yards; under robe, 5 yards.

This costume is best made of creamy cheesecloth over an under robe of the same, as cheesecloth is faintly luminous in an intense light. It should be long enough to lie on the floor two or three inches all round as a trailing effect is desirable.

6. Rich Woman: dress, 6 yards.

Her head dress is easily made of stiff white paper rolled up in cornucopia shape and sewed securely, over this a long white veil or scarf is draped.

7. The Rich Man: tunic, 2 yards; shirt, 2-1/2 yards; or 1-1/2 yards if the sleeves and neckpiece can be sewed right into the tunic, doing away with the under garment. If the costumes are to have repeated wear, it will be better to have the shirts made separate and of a washable material, they can then be cleansed more frequently than will be necessary for the tunics. The Rich Man's chain can be made of the heavy brass chain that comes for draping back curtains.

8. The Priest: under robe, 4-1/2 yards; outer robe 6-1/2 yards. This costume will of course be greatly modified by the custom of the church of which he is supposed to be a representative.

9. The King: tunic, 2 yards; shirt, 2-1/2 yards; robe of office, 4-1/2 yards. The King's tunic in general cut is exactly like that of the other two courtiers (nos. 7 and 12) but handsomer in material and trimming. The robe is just a straight piece that hangs from the shoulder and trails on the ground.

10. Sage: robe, 6 yards.

11. Young Girl: dress, 6 yards.

12. Courtier: tunic, 2 yards; shirt, 2-1/2 yards.

PROPERTIES.

The following list gives the properties needed in the play.—

In the hut:

1. A porridge pot.
2. Three small bowls.
3. Three spoons. If pewter spoons are not to be had, wooden spoons can be bought cheaply.
4. Porridge. Custard or Spanish cream looks like porridge and is more easily eaten on the stage, but hot cream of wheat is also palatable if sweetened and the steam from it will lend a touch of realism to the scene.—It will save time to have it put in the three small bowls before the rise of the curtain, and the bowls can be covered with three little plates to keep the steam in till the food is wanted.

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5. Two roughly made but substantial stools, one near the window, the other before the fire. Stools are better than chairs with backs because they do not obstruct the view of the audience during the chancel scene.

6. Three large nails or wooden pegs in the walls strong enough to hold things, one on each side of the fire-place and one near the door. These would be impracticable with scenery made of screens as any weight on the screen would pull it over. A solid wooden chest, as a carpenter's tool chest, could be substituted to hold the children's wraps and the extra shawl for the old woman. The chest could be placed against the screen on the left or right as convenient.

7. Steen's cap and cape.

8. Holger's cap and cape.

9. The extra shawl Holger puts around the old woman.

10. Two bright pennies for Holger's gift.

11. Logs of firewood on the hearth. Not needed of course if the brazier is used instead of the fireplace.

In the chancel:

12. An altar cloth. This is properly a piece of fine linen edged with deep real lace. It should not be so wide as to cover the top of the altar, lest it obscure the light shining up through the hole. It should hang down in front of the altar and at the sides about eighteen inches. A very handsome looking lace altar cloth can be cut from white paper.

13. Candle-sticks.

14. Candles.

15. Two censers: Very passable censers can be made by swinging brass cups on the brass chains that come for looping back curtains.

16. Incense.

17. Charcoal to burn the incense. (This comes in the box with the incense.)

18. Matches to light the incense.

19. The chimes (or the phonograph and record.)

20. The organ.



Gifts to be put on the altar.

21. A chest full of gold coins for the rich man. (This chest should be about six by twelve inches, made of some polished wood. If difficult to find, substitute a money-bag of stout canvas for it.)

22. Gold coin for the rich man. These coins may be made of cardboard with gold paper pasted over them.

23. A gilded jewel box for the courtier (this can be made from a cardboard box covered with gold paper.)

24. Jewels to fill the gilded box. The smaller things that come for Christmas tree decorations make very acceptable stage jewels.

25. A great book bound in vellum for the sage to give. A heavy book can be covered with wrapping paper the color of vellum.

26. A pearl necklace.

27. A great sheaf of fresh lilies. These can be made at home of tissue paper or very beautiful ones can be bought from the Dennison Manufacturing Company.

28. A golden crown. Made of cardboard coated with gold paper and set with Christmas tree jewels. A more substantial crown can be made of thin sheet brass with all the edges turned like a hem, and trimmed with the inexpensive jewels which come for brass work.

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BIG-HEARTED HERBERT

Farce-comedy. 3 acts. By Sophie Kerr & Anna Steese Richardson. 7 males, 6 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Herbert Kalness, the leading character, is a selfmade man. His success and his belief in himself have unwittingly turned him into a domestic autocrat. Moreover he prides himself on being a plain man and imagines that he lives plainly, though his devoted and charming wife has modernized and decorated their home quite successfully. The day arrives when the daughter of the house becomes engaged, and at a dinner to celebrate the event, Herbert, who has been upset and worried all day about business, has a great big tantrum which even his wife can't excuse. So, the next day, when he proposes to bring his best customer and wife home to dinner—assuring them that he is a plain man—his wife turns the house plain to the nth degree and serves them a plain dinner in the plainest of ways. In a final riotous scene Herbert realizes that he is not so plain, and that his life will be happier if he is more of a father and less of a tyrant.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

FLY AWAY HOME

Comedy. 3 acts. By Dorothy Bennett & Irving White. 7 males, 6 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

A comedy hit on Broadway. The four Masters children, ranging in age from 14 to 19, are enjoying their usual summer sojourn at Provincetown. Without much enthusiasm they are looking forward to the imminent marriage of their mother to the professor who has summered next door. Then word comes that their mother, who is just completing the last two weeks of her contract as dress designer in a Hollywood motion picture studio, has invited their own father to visit them and make arrangements for a divorce. They haven't seen him for twelve years and they are determined he shan't treat them like children. James Masters, the father, comes. Although he has a sense of humor and would sincerely like to make friends with his children, he antagonizes them at once. For a week the father struggles against the professor and his influence. After the various problems have been more or less solved the children suddenly decide that they prefer their own father as a member of the family and set to work in a businesslike way to help him win their mother back.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

L.M. Montgomery's most popular novel, dramatized into a tender and amusing play in 3 acts by Alice Chadwicke. 4 males, 10 females, 1 interior set. Modern costumes.

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Mark Twain, the celebrated humorist, was so taken with the quaint charm of L.M. Montgomery's tremendously popular novel that upon reading it for the first time he said: "In 'Anne of Green Gables' you will find the dearest and most moving and delightful girl since the immortal Alice." [Anne is played by a girl in her middle teens.] And for years this fascinating book has headed the list of best sellers. It has been made twice as a movie, once a silent picture and only recently as a talkie, but it has remained for the distinguished dramatist, Alice Chadwicke, to make the first and only dramatization of this magically beautiful story. Green Gables is the home of lovable Matthew Cuthbert and his stern sister, Marilla Cuthbert. Nobody suspects that beneath her hard exterior there lurks a soft and tender heart. When Matthew, after a great deal of reflection, finally decides to adopt an orphan boy to help with his farm work, Marilla grudgingly consents. Through a rattlebrained friend of theirs, one Nancy Spencer, they agree to take a boy from the Hopeton Orphanage. Marilla makes ready to receive the boy and Matthew drives to the station to get him. Fancy his consternation when he finds little Anne Shirley waiting for him! There has been a mistake and Anne has been sent to Green Gables in lieu of a boy whom the Cuthberts plan to adopt. From the instant Anne and Matthew meet a strong attachment grows up between the little orphan and the man who has been starving for affection without realizing it. Anne, with her vivid imagination, her charitable viewpoint, her refreshing simplicity, touches the old bachelor's heart. But not so with Marilla. She determines to send Anne back to the orphanage the following day. But she reckons without Anne who is so enchanted by everything at Green Gables and who cries and begs and pleads so hard to remain that even Marilla finally gives in and consents. Anne is the sort of part that every young girl will adore playing, and the other parts offer splendid opportunities to the various members of the cast. The play breathes of youth, is thoroughly modern in spirit, very simple to prepare and present and Miss Chadwicke has written into it such an abundance of warmth, wit, and motion that it becomes an endless delight.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

GROWING PAINS

Comedy. 3 acts. By Aurania Rouverol. 7 males, 8 females, 1 set (patio). Modern costumes.

Produced originally at the Ambassador Theatre in New York. George and Terry are the son and daughter of Professor and Mrs. McIntyre who struggle valiantly to lead their children through the difficult phases of adolescence, so familiar to us all. Terry is shown outgrowing the tomboy stage, and unable to play with the boys on an equal status. She finds herself thrown back on her feminine resources; and how she tries out her "resources," makes this play an illuminating study of feminine psychology.

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George McIntyre, the boy adolescent, goes through the customary symptoms of his age—begging his parents for a car—and falling victim of the wiles of Prudence, a successful “vamp” in the neighborhood. At a party George is sent out for some more ice cream. In his rush to get back for his dance with Prudence, he passes a traffic light, and is pursued home by an officer, subsequently is hauled off to jail, loses Prudence, but discovers a new blue-eyed blonde in the neighborhood.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

THE BISHOP MISBEHAVES

Farce-comedy. 3 acts. By Frederick Jackson. 7 males, 3 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes.

Produced originally by John Golden at the Court Theatre, New York, with Walter Connolly in the leading role. Here is the story of the Bishop, an elderly and saintly dignitary, who stops by accident with his charming and quaint sister at a roadside inn just after there has been a hold-up and robbery. The Bishop has always had a secret love for detective stories and here is a chance to apply some of his choicest solutions. His sister, thrilled with the excitement of it all, eagerly joins in. The Bishop, now playing policeman, gobbles up clues and discovers the stolen jewels. Deftly removing them from a mug on the wall he leaves in their stead, one of his calling cards, and proceeds to his home to await developments. The developments arrive in the form of three ruffians, the masked hero in evening clothes, and the attractive heroine who had engineered the robbery. From now on it is a game of outguessing, turning tables, turning out lights, knife-brandishing, and gun-play, until the Bishop finally emerges triumphant to bestow his blessing on the young hero and charming heroine.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

CHARITY BEGINS

Comedy. 3 acts. By Ireland Wood. 3 males, 7 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

First produced at the Aldwych Theatre in London. The Deveral household consists of old Mrs. Deveral, her middle-aged children—Agnes who is efficient, Emily who is muddle-headed, and Henry who is fussy—and Judy Deveral, her granddaughter. Rodney Walter, Henry’s agent, is making love to Judy, and she prefers him to the young and unsophisticated Bobbie Forrester, who also loves her. It is Judy’s eighteenth birthday, and her relations feel that it is time to tell her about Aunt Catherine, the black sheep of the family, who is supposed to have run off with another woman’s husband. It

is the day of the village bazaar, and amid a lot of hustle and bustle Catherine enters—the prodigal daughter most inopportunately returned! As the day progresses Old Mrs. Deveral becomes fractious, the Fete entertainment falls through and Judy decides to run away with the unpleasant Rodney. Things are going from bad to worse when Catherine steps in. She pacifies her mother, gives a talk on her experiences to the Village audience, and convinces Judy that Bobbie is nicer than Rodney. We hear, incidentally, that she never actually eloped with her Philip after all.

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(Royalty, \$15.00.) Price, 75 cents.

THE GHOST FLIES SOUTH

Comedy. 3 acts. By Frederick Jackson. 4 males, 7 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Anita and Diana, who have been reared to regard gambling as something of a major vice, decide to gamble on the stock market regardless, and with beginner's luck they win four hundred thousand dollars. In order to keep Morgan, an anti-gambling addict and Anita's fiance, from discovering the situation they tell him that the money was left Anita by an Uncle William who died in the west. The little lies grow beyond the control of the two girls in an amusing series of climaxes. Most amusing and concerned is Grandma, who has to be convinced that she had a son William. Morgan finally sees a flaw and hires a cowboy and an Indian squaw—actors—to come and blackmail Anita for half the money. They are to represent William's partner and wife. Anita realizes what Morgan has done, so she scares the two with threats and they leave. She then tells Morgan that she gave them the money, but he can't find them. Finally the situation is cleared, and Anita is conceded to be very clever indeed.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

SPRING DANCE

Comedy. 3 acts. By Philip Barry. Adapted from an original play by Eleanor Golden and Eloise Barrangan. 6 males, 7 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes.

This gay, light, frothy comedy was first produced by Jed Harris at the Empire Theatre in New York where it found a ready audience. The story concerns a number of New England college girls in general and one, Alexandra—called Alex—Benson in particular, who finds it very difficult to attract young men of any description; primarily because she feels that she looks very much like a horse with a fly up its nose, which as a matter of fact, she doesn't at all. Alex sets her heart on Sam Thatcher, a Yale man who has turned against college and regimentation to set off for Russia with a free-thinking, free-living, rebellious companion oddly called "The Lippincott," who knows everything about women except how to get along without them. When Alex can't seem to get very far with the courtship by herself, her girl friends decide to take the matter into their own hands to secure Sam for the sad and bewildered Alex. They conspire to make Sam jealous as well as interested in things other than communism, Russia, and candid cameras, and to raise Alex to the rank of belle of the ball. Sam, a sad funny figure the world over, finally capitulates under the ministrations of the many females, and he and Alex elope to the great delight of Alex's gang.

“Spring Dance is a bright and amusing comedy, splendidly adapted, in cast, subject matter, and its collegiate background to students of high school and college.”—
American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

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"I recommend *Spring Dance* to any theatre that is still selling entertainment."—H. Miles Heberer, Director, The Manhattan Theatre, Kansas State College.

"Its youthful spirit and gay wit made it more than just good entertainment. Other Little Theatres will doubtless find, as we did, that the casting will give them a chance to capitalize on the natural popularity of young and enthusiastic actors."—Gordon Giffen, Director, Little Theatre of Duluth.

Spring Dance, when offered by colleges, high schools, or Little Theatres, draws extremely enthusiastic audiences.

(Royalty, \$35.00.) Price, 75 cents.

CRAB APPLE

Comedy. 3 acts. By Theodore Packard. 4 males, 3 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

First done at Yale and several summer theatres, *Crab Apple* is a light and amusing play of contemporary American life enlivened with up-to-the-minute allusions. "She's got a good mind," is said of one character, "she's read 'Anthony Adverse.'" The play gives a brief glimpse of everyday life in the Hunter family, with Mr. Hunter grown crotchety and weary with business cares, making life miserable instead of pleasant for the family he has toiled for. His wife meekly accepts his grumblings and his tyranny. His children frequently threaten rebellion, but their feelings smolder until the situation is brought into sharp focus by the arrival of son Jim from college with a bride. This overt act of Jim's gives courage to his brother George to bring home a radio, banned as a nuisance by the head of the family, and to sister Amy to blossom out in a low-backed evening gown and plan to step out dancing. Mr. Hunter is only brought to reason by a conspiracy which makes him believe he is seriously ill. The family coddles him into a change of heart, and then finds it impossible to believe that their jest has become earnest and that their father's health is really in danger.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN

Comedy. 3 acts. By Sidney Howard. 5 males, 4 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Produced by Gilbert Miller in New York and elsewhere, this is one of the outstanding successes of the theater season of 1932-33. The comedy has to do with a family of New Englanders who have, years before, given refuge to a great artist. The play opens some years after Bean's death, with an excited world in pursuit of his work and any

details they can gather as to his life and character. Dr. Haggett and his family, who have some of Bean's canvases, suddenly realize their value, and become hard, selfish, and ill-tempered. It is, however, Abby, the family servant, who ultimately holds them all in her power: she has one of his greatest paintings, which she cannot be persuaded into selling or giving away; it turns out that she is the only one who really understood and appreciated the artist—besides, she had been married to him! An ideal play for colleges and Little Theaters.



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(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

LADY PRECIOUS STREAM

Chinese play. 4 acts. By S.I. Hsiung. 5 males, 5 females (extras). Conventional Chinese scene for all sets. Chinese costumes.

This Chinese play by S.I. Hsiung, was produced successfully in New York, and in London, where it was performed more than 500 times. It is in every respect an authentic play written and performed in the Chinese manner with the delightful and charming conventions of that ancient institution. This beautiful romantic drama of love, fidelity, treachery and poetry is a decidedly colorful fantasy that appeals to all classes of theater goers. It tells, in varied scenes, of the devotion of a wife for her adventurous husband, of his prowess as a warrior and his ultimate return. (Not available for amateur production at present, but if interested in producing let us know and we shall notify you immediately it is released for your locality.)

Price, 75 cents.

CHARLEY'S AUNT

Farcical comedy. 3 acts. By Brandon Thomas. 7 males, 5 females. Interior, exterior. Modern costumes.

The first act introduces us to Jack Chesney's rooms in college. He is violently in love with Kitty Verdun. A chum of his, Charles Wykeham, is in the same quandary, loving Miss Spettigue. The young men at once lay their plans and ask the objects of their affections to join them at their rooms for luncheon—in order to meet Donna Lucia D'Alvadorez, Charley's aunt, who is expected to arrive from Brazil. Miss Spettigue and Miss Verdun accept the invitation, but the millionaire Donna from the antipodes sends a telegram saying that she will have to defer her visit for a few days. The problem is solved at once by forcing another undergraduate of the name of Lord Fancourt Babberley into a black satin skirt, a lace fichu, a pair of mitts, an old-fashioned cap and wig. As Charley's Aunt, then, this old frump is introduced to the sweethearts, to Jack Chesney's father, and to Stephen Spettigue. Unexpectedly the real aunt turns up, but she assumes the name of Mrs. Smith or Smythe. To attain his object,—viz., the rich widow's hand—the solicitor invites everybody to dinner. She gets his consent to the marriage of his ward to young Chesney, and eventually everybody but the avaricious solicitor is rendered overwhelmingly happy.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

DOUBLE DOOR

Drama. 3 acts. By Elizabeth McFadden. 7 males, 5 females. Interior. Costumes, 1910.

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An outstanding success on Broadway. Its theme is the battle for power that goes on in an old New York family and culminates on the verge of murder. "This one deserves especial thanks and hearty praises. It returns us to expertness and fascination and fine mood in the theater." Gilbert Gabriel, in *New York American*. "At last a play has come to town that can be heartily recommended. Sturdy theater, compelling. Once you are within the radius of *Double Door* you will remain transfixed until you know what's behind it." Bernard Sobel, *Daily Mirror*. "*Double Door* is a thriller of a new kind, beautifully written, superbly played, clean as a whistle, and arousing in its spectators a tenseness of interest I have rarely seen equaled in a playhouse." E. Jordan, *America*. Leading part acted by Mary Morris in America and by Sybil Thorndike in London. A play that will challenge the best acting talent of Little Theatres and colleges.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

THE DISTAFF SIDE

Play. 3 acts. By John Van Druten. 5 males, 8 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes.

Produced with preeminent success in London and New York. Mr. Van Druten's new play deals with the women of one family, women so unlike that they set one another off startlingly. There is the tart, querulous old Mrs. Venables, and there are her three daughters—Nellie who is married and whose life has slipped away from her in the provinces; Liz who is divorced and whose life has been brilliant and unconventional on the Continent; and Evie who is a widow and whose life has been spent being happy through others—her husband, her children, her friends. Evie's young daughter Alex is the fifth woman in the family, and the drama of *The Distaff Side* centers chiefly in her and her two suitors who represent such different things. But if the plot belongs to Alex, the honors of the play go to her mother—for seldom has a modern playwright drawn so warm and womanly and endearing a character as Evie. The family life of these people is extraordinarily human, but it is Evie that it revolves around, Evie who lights it up.

(Royalty, \$35.00.) Price, 75 cents.