

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue Giving a Show eBook

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue Giving a Show by Laura Lee Hope

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CHAPTER I

"Look at the skylight!"

With a joyful laugh, her curls dancing about her head, while her brown eyes sparkled with fun, a little girl danced through the hall and into the dining room where her brother was eating a rather late breakfast of buckwheat cakes and syrup.

"Oh, Bunny, it's doing it! It's come! Oh, won't we have fun!" cried the little girl.

Bunny Brown looked up at his sister Sue, holding a bit of syrup-covered cake on his fork.

"What's come?" he asked. "Has Aunt Lu come to visit us, or did Wango, the monkey, come up on our front steps?"

"No, it isn't Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey and Aunt Lu didn't come, but I wish she had," answered Sue. "But it's come—a lot of it, and I'm so glad! Hurray!"

Bunny Brown put down his fork and looked more carefully at his sister.

"What are you playing?" he asked, thinking perhaps it was some new game.

"I'm not playing anything!" declared Sue. "I'm so glad it's come! Now we can have some fun! Just look out the window, Bunny Brown!"

"But what has come?" asked the little boy, who was a year older than his sister Sue. He was a bright chap, with merry blue eyes and they opened wide now, trying to see what Sue was so excited about.

"What is it?" asked Bunny Brown once more.

"It's snow!" cried Sue. "It's the first snow, and it's soon going to be Thanksgiving and Christmas and all like that! And we can get out our sleds, and we can go skating and make snow men and—and—and——"

But she just had to stop. She was all out of breath, and she didn't seem to have any words left with which to talk to Bunny.

"Oh! Snow!" exclaimed Bunny, and he said; it in such a funny way that Sue laughed.

Just then in came her mother from the kitchen where she had been baking more cakes for her little boy.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Sue?" asked Mrs. Brown. "Do you want some more breakfast?"

"No, thank you, Mother. I had mine. I just came in to tell Bunny it's snowing. And we can have a lot of fun, can't we?"

"Well, you children do manage to have a lot of fun, one way or another," said Mrs. Brown, with a smile.

"Is it snowing, Mother?" asked Bunny, too excited now to want to finish his breakfast.

"Yes, it really is," answered Mrs. Brown. "I was so busy getting enough cakes baked for you that I didn't notice the snow much. But, as Sue says, it is coming down quite fast."

"Hurray!" cried Bunny, even as Sue had done. "Do you think there will be lots of the snow?"

"Well, it looks as though there might be quite a storm for the first snow of the season," replied the mother of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. "It's a bit early this year, too. It's almost two weeks until Thanksgiving and here it is snowing. I'm afraid we're going to have a hard winter."

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"With lots of snow and ice, Mother?" asked Bunny.

"Yes. And with cold weather that isn't good for poor folks."

"Oh, I'm glad!" cried Bunny. "Not about the poor folks, though," he added quickly, as he saw his mother look at him in surprise. "But I'm glad there'll be lots of ice. Sue and I can go skating."

"And there'll be lots of ice for ice-cream next summer," added Sue.

Mrs. Brown laughed. Then, as she saw Bunny racing to the window with Sue, to push aside the curtains and look out at the falling white flakes, she said:

"Come back and finish your breakfast, Bunny. I want to clear off the table."

"I want to see the snow, first," replied the little boy. "Anyhow, I guess I've had enough cakes."

"Oh, and I just brought in some nice, hot, brown ones!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown.

"I'll help eat 'em!" offered Sue, and though she had had her breakfast a little while before, she now ate part of a second one, helping her brother.

It was Saturday, and, as there was no school, Mrs. Brown had allowed both children to sleep a little later than usual. Sue had been up first, and, after eating her breakfast and playing around the house, she had gone to the window to look out and wish that Bunny would get up to play and have fun with her.

Then she had seen the first snow of the season and had run into the dining room to find her brother there eating his late meal.

"May we go out in the snow and play?" asked Bunny, when he had finished the last of the brown cakes and the sweet syrup.

"Yes, if you put on your boots and your warm coats. You don't want to get cold, you know, or you can't go to the play in the Opera House this afternoon."

"Oh, we've got to see that!" cried Bunny. "I 'most forgot; didn't you, Sue?"

"Yes," replied the little girl, "I did. Maybe it will snow so hard that they can't have the show, like once it rained so hard we couldn't play circus in the tent Grandpa put up for us in the lot."

“Yes, it did rain hard,” agreed Bunny. “And it’s snowing hard,” he added, as he squirmed into his coat and again looked out of the window. “Will it snow so hard they can’t give the show, Mother?” he asked.

“Oh, I think not,” answered Mrs. Brown. “This play isn’t going to be in a tent, you know. It’s in the Opera House, and they give shows there whether it rains or snows. I think you may both count on going to the show this afternoon.”

“Oh, what fun!” cried Bunny.

“Lots of fun!” echoed Sue.

Then out they ran to play amid the swirling, white flakes; and it is hard to say whether they had more fun in the first snow or in thinking about the play they were to see in the Opera House that afternoon.

At any rate Bunny Brown and his sister Sue certainly had fun playing out in the yard of their house and in the street in front. At first there was not snow enough to do more than make slides on the sidewalk, and the little boy and girl did this for a time. They made two long slides, and men and women coming along smiled to see the brother and sister at play. But these same men and women were careful not to step on the slippery slides made by Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, for they did not want to slip and fall.

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As for Bunny and Sue, they did not mind whether they fell or not. Half the time they were tumbling down and the other half getting up again. But they managed to do some sliding, too.

"Come on!" cried Bunny, after a bit. "There's enough now to make snowballs!"

"Could we make a snow house, too?" asked his sister.

"No, there isn't enough for that. But we can make snowballs and throw 'em!"

"Don't throw any at me!" begged Sue. "'Cause if you did, an' the snow went down my neck, it would melt and I'd get wet an' then I couldn't go to the show an' you'd be sorry!"

This was rather a long sentence for Sue, and she was a bit out of breath when she had finished.

"No, I won't throw any snowballs at you," promised Bunny.

"Oh, here come Harry Bentley and Charlie Star!" exclaimed Sue.

"I'll throw snowballs at them!" decided Bunny. "Hi!" he called to two of his boy chums. "Let's throw snowballs!"

"We're with you!" answered Charlie.

"I'm not going to play snowball fight," decided Sue. "I see Mary Watson and Sadie West. I'm going to play with them."

So she trotted off to make little snow dolls with her girl friends, while Bunny, with Charlie and Harry, threw soft snowballs at one another. The children were having such fun that it seemed only a few minutes since breakfast when Mrs. Brown called:

"Bunny! Sue! Come in and get washed for lunch. And you have to get dressed if you're going to the play!"

"Oh, we're going, sure!" exclaimed Bunny. "Are you?" he asked Charlie and Harry.

"Yes," they replied, and when Sue ran toward her house with Bunny she told her brother that Sadie and Mary were also going to the play that afternoon in the town Opera House.

"Oh, we'll have a lot of fun!" cried Bunny. "Will it be a funny play?" he asked Uncle Tad, who had promised to take the two children.

“Well, I guess it’ll be funny for you two youngsters,” was the answer of the old soldier. “But I guess it isn’t much of a theatrical company that would come to Bellemere to give a show so near the beginning of winter. But it will be all right for boys and girls.”

“It’s a show for the benefit of our Red Cross Chapter,” said Mrs. Brown. “That’s why I asked you to take the children, Uncle Tad. I have to be with the other ladies of the committee, to help take tickets and look after things.”

“Oh, I’ll look after Bunny and Sue!” exclaimed Uncle Tad. “I’ll see that they have a good time!”

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were so excited because of the first snow storm and because of thinking of the play they were to see, that they could hardly dress. But at last they were ready, and they set off in the family automobile, which Uncle Tad drove. Mrs. Brown went along also, but Mr. Brown had to stay at the office. The office was at the dock where he owned a fish and boat business.

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It was still snowing, and the ground was now quite white, when the automobile drew up at the Opera House, which was where all sorts of shows and entertainments were given in Bellemere, the home of the Brown family.

"We can have a lot more fun in the snow to-morrow!" whispered Sue, as she and her brother passed in, Uncle Tad handing the tickets to Mrs. Gordon, who smiled at them. She was one of the committee of ladies who, like Mrs. Brown, were helping with the entertainment. There were to be speeches by some of the men of Bellemere, but what would be more enjoyable to the young folks was the performance of a number of vaudeville actors and actresses, said to come all the way from New York.

"There's a juggler who holds a cannon ball on his neck," whispered Charlie Star to Bunny, when the Brown children had found their seats, which were near those of some of their friends.

"He means a juggler," said George Watson.

"Yes, that's it—a juggler," agreed Charlie.

"And there are a little boy and girl who do tricks and sing," added Mary Watson. "I saw their pictures."

"Oh, it'll be lovely!" sighed Sue. "I wish it would begin!"

The boys, girls and grown folks were still coming in and taking their seats. The curtain hid the stage. And how the children did wonder what was going on behind that piece of painted canvas! The musicians were just beginning to "tune up," as Uncle Tad said. The ushers were hurrying to and fro, seating the late-comers. One of the men who worked in the Opera House, sweeping it out, attending to the fires in winter, and sometimes selling tickets, got a long pole to open a skylight ventilator, to let in some fresh air.

Just how it happened no one seemed to know, but suddenly the long pole slipped and there was a crash and tinkle of glass. Nearly every one jumped in his or her seat, and some one cried:

"Look at the skylight! It's going to fall!"

Bunny Brown, his sister Sue, and every one else looked up. True enough, something had gone wrong with the skylight the man had tried to open. It seemed to have slipped from its place in the frame where it was fastened in the roof, and the big window of metal and glass looked as though about to fall on the heads of the audience directly under it.

"Oh, Bunny, let's run!" cried Sue. "It's going to drop right on us!"



And truly it did seem so. Slowly the big skylight was slipping from its fastenings, and several in the audience screamed.

CHAPTER II

"Let's give A show!"

Just when it seemed as if a bad accident would happen and that some one would be hurt by the fall of the roof-window, the man who had been using the long pole thrust it under the edge of the sliding skylight and held it there. Then he called:

"I have it! I can keep it from falling until somebody gets up on the roof and fixes it. Hurry up, though!"

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"I'll go up and fix it!" said another usher. "Guess the first snow was too heavy for the skylight! Keep still, everybody!" he added. "There's no danger now!"

The man had to shout to be heard above the screams of the frightened and excited people, but he made his voice carry to all parts of the Opera House, and finally it became more quiet. Then a man stepped from behind the curtain and stood on the front part of the stage. He held up his hand to make the people know he wanted them to be quiet, and when his voice could be heard he said:

"There is no danger now. There was some, but it has passed. The man will hold the skylight in place until it can be fastened. And while he is doing that I wish those who are sitting under it would move quietly out into the aisles. Don't crowd or rush. You children can pretend it is like the fire drill you have at school."

"Oh, we do have fire drill at our school, don't we, Bunny?" cried Sue, in a rather loud voice. Her words carried to all parts of the theater and many laughed. This laugh was just what was needed to make the people forget their fright, and soon the place directly under the loosened skylight was clear. Bunny and Sue, with Uncle Tad and their boy and girl chums, moved out into the aisle, and soon the men began the work of fastening the skylight back in place. And you may be sure they fastened it tight.

While this is being done I will take a few moments to tell my new readers something about the two Brown children. As you may have guessed, there are other volumes which come before this one. The first is called "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue."

Bunny and Sue lived with their father and mother in a pretty house in the town of Bellemere. Bellemere was on the seacoast and also near a small river. Mr. Brown was in the boat and fish business, and he owned a dock, or wharf, on the bay and had his office there. He had many men to help, and also a big boy, who was almost a man. The big boy's name was Bunker Blue, and he was very good to Bunny and Sue. Living in the same house with the Browns was Uncle Tad. He was Mr. Brown's uncle, but Bunny and Sue thought they owned just as much of the dear old soldier as did their father. Besides Uncle Tad, the children had other relations. They had a grandfather and a grandmother, and also an aunt, Miss Lulu Baker, who lived in a big city.

Bunny and Sue Brown had many friends in Bellemere. Besides the few boys and girls I have mentioned there were many others. And there was also Jed Winkler, an old sailor who owned a monkey, and, lately, he had bought a green parrot from an old shipmate of his. Jed Winkler had a sister, a rather cross maiden lady who did not like the monkey very much. And the monkey, whose name was Wango, seemed to know this, for he was always playing tricks on Miss Winkler.

The second volume of the series is called "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue on Grandpa's Farm." There, you can easily imagine, the little boy and girl had lots of fun.

During their visit to the farm they got up a circus, and there is a book telling all about it. They had a real tent, which their grandfather got for them, and in it they and some of their friends gave a very funny performance.

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When Bunny and Sue went to Aunt Lu's city home they had many wonderful times, and when they went on a vacation to Camp Rest-a-While so many things happened near the beautiful lake that the children never tired talking about them.

It was after the children had spent such a happy time in the camp that they went to the "Big Woods," as Bunny and Sue called them, and, after that, their father and mother took them on an auto tour, when many strange things happened. "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony" is the name of the book just before the one you are reading now, and after many adventures with the little horse the two children planned for winter fun. Going to the show in the Opera House was part of this fun.

It did not take very long for the man who had gone up to the roof to fix the broken skylight. The children could see him away up above their heads as they sat in the theater, or stood there, for those who had places directly under the skylight would not use the seats until the roof-window was fixed.

"There! It's all right now," said the man on the stage. "There is no more danger. Take your seats and the show will begin."

From all over the Opera House you could have heard delighted "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" from the children. There was a rustling of programs, a swish of skirts, several coughs, and one or two sneezes. Then the fiddles squeaked, there was rumble and boom of the drums, and the orchestra played the Star-Spangled Banner.

Every one stood up until the national air was ended and then the musicians began to play a dance tune which was so lively that the feet of every one, old and young, seemed to be tapping the floor.

Then came a pause, the lights in the Opera House were turned low, and at last the curtain went up. Bunny Brown and his sister Sue held tightly to the arms of their seats, lest they might slip out during the excitement that was to follow. And it was exciting for the children, as you may easily guess.

The first act was the juggler, or the "jiggler," as one of the boys had called him. He placed a pole on his chin, and on top of the pole a glass of water. Then with three balls he did a number of odd tricks.

"And all the while, mind you!" exclaimed Bunny, telling his father about it afterward, "the man held the water, on the pole on his chin and he didn't drop it once."

"Yes, that must have been wonderful," said Daddy Brown. "If he had dropped the pole he'd have broken the glass, wouldn't he?"

"And he would have spilled the water, too!" exclaimed Bunny's sister. "And it was real water!"

“No!” cried Mr. Brown, in fun, making believe he didn’t believe this.

“Yes it was, really!” declared Sue, and Bunny nodded his head also.

The juggler did many other tricks, even tossing balls up into the air and letting them fall in a tall silk hat he wore. The hat had no crown to it, but it had a funny little door, or opening, cut in front, and as fast as the juggler would toss the rubber balls into his hat, they would roll out of the little door in front. My, how the children did laugh! But the juggler never even smiled.

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The next act was that of an old man who, on the programme, was called an "Impersonator."

"What's that mean?" asked Bunny of Uncle Tad. "Does he do juggles too?"

"No, he dresses up like some persons you may have seen in pictures. He pretends he's General Washington, or the President, or some great soldier. He tries to look as much like these persons as he can, so they call him an impersonator. Watch, and you'll see."

When the "Impersonator" came out on the stage he did not look like any one but himself. He made a few remarks, but Bunny and Sue did not pay much attention. They were more interested in what he was going to do. The man, who wore a black suit, "like the minister's," as Mary Watson whispered to Sue, suddenly stepped over to a little table, on which were two electric lights and a looking glass.

The children could not see exactly what the man did. They noticed that his hands were working very quickly, but he had his back toward them. All at once his black hair seemed to turn white, and in a moment he caught up from a chair a coat of blue and gold; he slipped this on. Then he turned suddenly and faced the audience.

"Oh, it's George Washington!" cried a boy, and the audience laughed. And, to tell the truth, the man on the stage did look a great deal like our first president, as you see him in pictures. The man had put a white wig on over his black hair, and had put on the kind of coat George Washington used to wear.

I wish I had time to tell you all the different persons this actor made up to appear like, but I can mention only a few. From Washington he turned himself into Lincoln, and then into Roosevelt. Then he made up like some of the French and English generals, and afterward he made himself look like General Grant, smoking a cigar.

Every one applauded as the man bowed himself off the stage. There was a thrill of excitement when the next number was announced. A little girl was shown on the stage. She did not seem much older than Sue, but of course she was. She began to sing in a sweet, childish voice, and in the midst of her song a boy dressed in a suit of bright spangles suddenly appeared from the side. Without a word the boy began turning handsprings and somersaults and doing flipflops in front of the girl.

Suddenly she stopped her song, stamped her little foot, and in pretended anger cried:

"What do you mean by coming out here and spoiling my singing act?"

"Why, the man back there," said the boy, pointing behind the scenes, "told me to come out here and amuse the people," and he seemed, to smile right at Bunny Brown and Sue.

“He told you to come out and amuse the people, did he? Well, what does he think I’m doing?” demanded the girl.

“I don’t know. I guess he thinks maybe you’re making ‘em cry!” was the boy acrobat’s grinning answer.

“Well, I like that! The idea!” exclaimed the girl. “I’m going right back and tell him I won’t sing another song in this show! The idea!” and she hurried off the stage.

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“Oh, won’t she sing any more?” whispered Sue to Uncle Tad.

“Yes,” answered the soldier with a smile. “That’s just part of the act—to make it more interesting.”

“Now that she is out of the way I’ll have more room to do my flipflops,” said the boy acrobat, and he started to do all sorts of tricks. But, just as Uncle Tad had said, the girl was only pretending, for pretty soon she came back again with a prettier dress on, and she danced and sang while the boy did handsprings to the delight of Bunny Brown, his sister Sue, and all the others in the audience.

I haven’t room to tell you all that happened at the show that afternoon, for this story is to be about a show Bunny and Sue gave. But I will just say every one liked the entertainment, and when Bunny was coming out, walking behind Sue, he suddenly said:

“I know what we can do!”

“What?” asked the little girl.

“Let’s give a show ourselves—like this!” Bunny pointed toward the stage.

Sue looked at Bunny to make sure he was not joking. Then she answered and said:

“We will! We’ll give a show ourselves!”

CHAPTER III

TALKING IT OVER

One evening two or three days after the performance in the Opera House, where Bunny and Sue had so much enjoyed the impersonator, the juggler, the boy acrobat, and the girl singer, a number of ladies called at the home of Mrs. Brown. As it was early Bunny and Sue had not yet gone to bed so they could hear the talk that went on.

“I think we did very well, Mrs. Brown,” said Mrs. West, the mother of Sue’s playmate, Sadie. “We cleared nearly two hundred dollars for our Red Cross Chapter from the Opera House show.”

“That’s splendid!” exclaimed Mrs. Brown. “I didn’t think we would make quite so much. But we could use still more money.”

“Yes, if we had more money we could do more good,” said Mrs. Bentley. “I don’t suppose we could have another performance soon. The people would not come.”

Bunny and Sue, who were in another room looking at picture books, glanced at one another. Then they smiled. Bunny slid down off his chair, followed by Sue.

“Shall we tell ‘em?” asked Bunny.

“Yes,” nodded Sue.

So the two children walked slowly into the room where their mother and the other ladies were talking about the Red Cross Society. Mrs. Brown was just saying something.

“No,” she remarked, “I hardly believe we could arrange to give another show right away. It would be too much like——”

“Mother!” interrupted Bunny, speaking in a low voice.

“Yes, Son!” answered Mrs. Brown. “But run away now, dear. Mother is very busy. I’ll speak to you in just a minute.”

“But we want to talk about the show, Mother,” persisted Bunny.

“Oh, but I haven’t time,” said Mrs. Brown with a smile. “You saw the show, and that’s enough. Now run away, like a good boy. And you and Sue must soon get ready for bed.”

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"But it's about another show, Mother!" insisted Bunny. "We heard what you said, Sue and I did—and we want to help you get more money."

"Isn't that sweet of them!" exclaimed Mrs. Bentley.

"Well, our Red Cross Chapter certainly needs money," remarked Mrs. Brown, with a sigh; "but I'm afraid you can't help us any, Bunny."

"Oh, yes we can!" said Sue.

"Why, what are you children thinking of?" asked Mrs. Brown, in some surprise. "How can you help us get money for the Red Cross?"

"By a show!" cried Bunny, and he almost shouted the words he was so excited. "That's what we're going to do, Mother—give a show—me and Sue—I mean Sue and I," he added quickly, as he saw his mother look strangely at him, for she had often told him he must learn to speak correctly.

"What do the children mean?" asked Mrs. Newton.

"I'll tell you!" went on Bunny, speaking very fast, for he feared he and Sue would be sent to bed before they had a chance to explain. "We thought of it after we saw the show in the Opera House. We boys and girls can get up a show, and we can charge money to come in. We had a circus once, in a tent, didn't we, Mother?" and Bunny appealed to Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, they once gave a show in a tent at their Grandpa's farm," said Mrs. Brown. "And it was quite good, too, for children. But I'm afraid a show like that, given in town here, wouldn't bring in much money for the Red Cross, my dears," and she smiled at Bunny and Sue.

"Oh, we weren't going to give a show like the circus one!" declared Bunny. "This will be different! We'll have some singing, like the girl did in the Opera House—I guess Sue can sing. And I can do some somersaults, like those the boy did."

"And maybe we could get Uncle Tad to dress up like General Grant or Washington," added Sue.

"They have it all thought out!" exclaimed Mrs. West, with a smile.

"Oh, but that isn't all!" said Bunny. "There's lots of other things we can do. We told some of the boys and girls about it and they want to be in it. Please, Mother, couldn't Sue and I get up a show?"

"No, my dears, I don't believe you could," Mrs. Brown answered with another smile. "It is very good of you to want to help the Red Cross, but getting up a show is very hard work. I hardly think little boys and girls could do it."

"If ever we big folks get up another show we'll let you children have part in it," promised Mrs. Star.

"Oh, but we want to give a show of our own!" said Bunny. "And I guess we can, too. How much does it cost to buy the Opera House?" he asked.

"Oh, you don't have to buy it to give a show," said Mrs. West. "It can be hired for one or two nights. But when are you going to give your show?" she asked Bunny.

"Maybe 'bout Christmas," he said. "Folks have more money then, and we could get more for your Red Cross. Please, Mother, mayn't we give a show?"

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"Oh, well, I'll see about it," said Mrs. Brown, more with the idea of getting Bunny and his sister off to bed than because she really thought they could ever give a show. She had an idea they would forget all about it by morning.

"Oh, goodie!" cried Sue, for when her mother said: "I'll see about it," it generally meant that something would happen. But of course giving a show was different, even though Bunny and Sue had once held a circus. You may read about that in the book of which I have spoken.

"Well, trot along to bed now, my dears," said Mrs. Brown. "We ladies have business to attend to. We'll talk about your show to-morrow."

"It's going to be a fine one," declared Bunny. "I'm going to learn how to do some back somersaults like that boy's on the stage."

"Well, be careful you don't get hurt," begged Mrs. West.

"Cute little dears, aren't they," said Mrs. Bentley, as Bunny and his sister Sue went out of the room.

"I should think they would keep you busy trying to guess what they will do next, Mrs. Brown," remarked Mrs. Star.

"They do," sighed the mother of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. But she smiled as she sighed, for her little boy and girl never made her any real trouble.

"Do you think they really will give a show?" asked Mrs. Bentley.

"You never can tell," was Mrs. Brown's answer. "We didn't think they'd actually give a circus performance, but they did. However, a show in a real theater is quite different, and I hardly believe Bunny and Sue will go on with the idea."

But Bunny and Sue did—at least they started talking it over the first thing next day, and when school was over quite a gathering of boys and girls assembled in a room over the Brown garage.

"Now, girls and fellows," said Bunny, as he stood in front of the crowd of his playmates, who were seated on old boxes, broken chairs, and other things stored away in the garage, "we're going to get up a show to make money for the Red Cross."

"Do you mean a make-believe show, and charge five pins to come in?" asked Harry Bentley.

"No, I mean a real show, like in a theater, and charge real money," went on Bunny. "Pins aren't any good for the Red Cross. They get all the pins they want. They need

money—my mother said so. Now we could get up a regular acting play—like that one we saw at the Opera House. We could have some singing in it, and some jiggling and some of us could do tricks and stand on our heads.”

“Going to have any animals in it?” one boy wanted to know.

“Yes, we could,” answered Bunny. “They have animals on the stage just like in a circus, only it’s different, of course. We could have our dog and cat in it.”

“I’ve got a goat!” cried another boy. “He butts you with his horns, only maybe I could cure him of that.”

“We could use Toby, our Shetland pony,” added Sue. “He eats sugar out of my hand.”

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"And we could have my trained white mice," said Charlie Star.

"If you have mice in it I'm not going to play!" exclaimed Sadie West. "I don't like mice at all!"

"Neither do I!" added Jennie Harris.

"Well, we could get Mr. Jed Winkler's parrot, maybe," suggested Bunny.

"And his monkey!" some one added.

"Oh, yes!" cried all the children.

Suddenly the door of the room opened and in burst Tom Milton.

"Say!" he cried, "Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey is loose in Mr. Raymond's hardware store, and you ought to see the place! Come on! Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey is loose again!" and he jumped up and down he was so excited.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLIMBING BOY

Tom Milton had been invited by Bunny Brown to come to the meeting in the room over the garage and talk about the play which Bunny and his sister wanted to give. But, for some reason or other, Tom had not come with the other children. Many, including Bunny, had wondered what kept Tom away, but now, when Tom rushed in with the news that Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey was loose, none of the children thought of anything but the long-tailed animal with his funny, wrinkled face.

"How'd he get loose?" asked Bunny Brown, as he jumped down off a box on which he had been standing.

"Did he hurt any one?" asked Sue.

"Is he smashing everything in Mr. Raymond's store?" Charlie Star wanted to know.

"I should say so! You ought to see!" cried Tom. "I was coming past on my way here when I heard a lot of yells and saw a big crowd in front of the store. I looked in, and the monkey was banging a frying pan on a coffee grinder and making a big racket. Mr. Raymond was trying to get him down off a high shelf, but Wango wouldn't come. Then I ran on here to tell you about it."

"I'm glad you did," said Bunny Brown.

"We'll have this meeting again after we see the monkey," he said. "The meeting is—it's—er—well, I don't know what it is my mother says when her meetings are stopped, but this meeting about the show we're going to give, is stopped while we go to see Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey."

"Oh, won't it be fun to see him drum with a frying pan!" exclaimed Sue.

"Maybe he won't be doing that when we get there," said Tom Milton. "But I guess he'll be doing something just as good."

"That monkey is always doing something," declared Charlie Star. "How'd he get loose, Tom?"

"Don't know!"

"Maybe Miss Winkler let him loose," suggested Sadie West. "She doesn't like Jed's monkey."

"And I guess she doesn't like his parrot very much, either. It makes a lot more noise than her canary bird," said Mary Watson. "I was in there the other day, and the parrot screeched like anything!"

"Well, come on, we'll go see the monkey!" called Sue.

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There was a scramble among the children for hats and coats, for the weather was cold, though there had been no more snow storms since the first one. As Bunny, Sue, and the others passed along the side of the house on their way out of the yard, Mrs. Brown called to them.

"Where are you going, children?" she asked.

"To see Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey," answered Bunny.

"Are you going to have him in your show?" Mrs. Brown wanted to know, for she had not forgotten the circus the children once gave.

"We were talking about it," explained Sue, "when Tom Milton come and told us the monkey was loose."

"And he is in the hardware store," added Bunny. "We're going to see him!" he cried, his eyes shining.

"Well, button up your coats, for it's cold," warned Mrs. Brown. "I guess this will be the end of the show business," she added to Mrs. Watson who had stopped in for a few minutes' talk. "The children will forget all about their play after they see the monkey. And I shall be just as well pleased. Their circus was fun, but it meant a lot of work, and if they give a show, as Bunny and Sue talk of doing, it will mean more work."

"I don't believe they'll do it," answered Mrs. Watson.

But she hardly knew Bunny Brown and his sister Sue.

On to the hardware store hurried the group of children. As soon as they turned the corner of the street leading to Mr. Raymond's place they saw a crowd in front of the store.

"Oh, come on! Hurry!" cried Bunny. "Maybe he'll be all through doing things when we get there! Hurry!"

The boys and girls began to run, and when they reached the store they heard, from inside, a clanging and crashing sound.

"I guess Wango is doing things yet!" cried Sue.

"I guess so," agreed Tom Milton. "Come on, let's go in the side door and we can see better," he proposed.

Tom seemed to know the best way to this “free show,” and he led the others. Bunny, his sister, and their boy and girl friends went down a little alley, and thus into the store by a side entrance.

As they stepped into the hardware place there was another crash of pots and pans, and Sue cried:

“Oh, I see him! He’s got an egg beater now in one paw!”

“And some pie pans in the other!” exclaimed Bunny.

“Where is he? I don’t see him!” said Mary Watson.

“Right up on the shelf by the cans of paint,” replied Bunny, pointing. “Say, if he opens any cans of paint and splashes that around won’t it be fun!” he laughed.

“Hi there, Bunny Brown!” called Mr. Raymond, the hardware man, when he heard the little boy say this. “Don’t be suggesting such things! That monkey might hear you and try it. I don’t want my store all splashed up with red and green paint. Come on down now, Wango!” he called, snapping his fingers at the old sailor’s queer pet. “Come on down, and I’ll give you a cookie.”

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"I guess he'd rather have a cocoanut," suggested Sue. "My mother has some cocoanut for a cake, and there's a picture of a monkey on the paper, and he's eating cocoanuts."

"But I haven't any cocoanut to offer him," said Mr. Raymond. "I wish Jed Winkler would come and get his old monkey down! Wango would come to him."

"How'd the monkey get in here?" asked Bunny.

"I don't know," confessed Mr. Raymond. "First I knew, I heard the lady I was selling a coffee strainer to exclaim, and I looked up and there was Wango skipping around on the shelves. I guess Jed must have left a window open and the monkey got out, though he doesn't generally skip around outdoors in cold weather. Then he must have come along the street until he got to my place, and, when he saw the door open, in he popped. Jed's house is only a few steps from here. But I wish Jed would come and get his Wango."

"Here he is now!" cried a chorus of children's voices, and, looking toward the front of his store, Mr. Raymond saw the old sailor coming in.

"What's all the trouble here?" asked Mr. Winkler.

"It's your monkey again, Jed," answered Mr. Raymond. "Lucky my place isn't a china store, or you'd have a lot of damages to pay for broken dishes. As it is, Wango can't break any of my pots and pans, though he certainly is mussing them up a lot!"

Well might this be said, for, as the hardware man spoke, the monkey leaped from one shelf to another and, in so doing, knocked down a lot of tin pans which fell to the floor with a clatter and a bang.

"Can't you do something to stop him?" cried Mr. Raymond.

"Well, yes, I suppose I can," said Mr. Winkler slowly. "I didn't know he was loose till a minute ago, when some one came and told me. I was down on the fish dock, talking with Bunker Blue. But I'll get Wango down. I'm real glad he isn't in a china store, for he surely would break things! Here, Wango!" he called, holding out his hand to the monkey, now perched on a high shelf. "Come on down, that's a good chap! Come on down!"

"He doesn't seem to want to come," suggested a man with a red moustache.

"Oh, I'll get him. He needs a little coaxing," returned the old sailor. "Come on down, Wango!" he went on.

Wango looked at the egg beater he held in one paw, and then, seeing the little handle which turned the wheel, he began to twist it. To do this he dropped the pie pans he held in the other paw and they fell to the floor with a crash.

“Land goodness, he certainly makes noise enough!” said one of the women in the store, covering her ears with her hands.

Perched above the heads of the crowd, and paying no attention to the calls of Jed Winkler, the monkey began turning the egg beater. He seemed to like that most of all.

“Maybe he thinks it’s a hand organ,” suggested Bunny Brown, and the people in the store laughed.

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"Come on, Wango! Come down!" cried Mr. Winkler, but the monkey would not leap down from the high shelf.

"Guess you'll have to climb up and get him yourself, Jed," suggested Mr. Reinberg, who kept the drygoods store next door. He had run in, together with other neighboring shopkeepers, to see what the excitement was about.

"I could get him down if I had something to coax him with," returned the old sailor.

"I promised him a cookie," said Mr. Raymond.

"He'd rather have a piece of cake—cocoanut cake would be best," went on Mr. Winkler.

"I'll go home and get some," offered Bunny Brown. "My mother baked a cocoanut cake yesterday, and I guess there's some left."

"You don't need to go all the way back to your house after the cake," said Mrs. Nesham, who kept a bakery across the street from the hardware store. "I'll get one from my shelves."

She hurried across the way, and soon came back with a large piece of cocoanut cake.

"If the monkey doesn't take it I wish she'd give it to me," said Tom Milton.

"Oh, Wango will take this all right," said Jed Winkler. "Here you are, you little rascal!" he called to his pet. "Come down and see what I have for you." He held up the piece of cake. Wango saw it and this seemed to be just what he wanted. He dropped the egg beater, which fell to the floor with another clatter and clang, and then the monkey began climbing down the shelves.

He had almost reached the old sailor, his master, when the front door of the hardware store opened to allow a new customer to come in. Whether this frightened Wango, or whether he thought he had not yet had enough fun, no one knew. But instantly he snatched the piece of cake from Mr. Winkler's hand, and, holding it in his paw, skipped out the door.

"There he goes!" cried Bunny Brown. "He's loose again!"

"And he's up in a tree out in front!" added Tom Milton, who had rushed out ahead of the others in the store.

Surely enough, when the crowd got outside, there was Wango perched high in a big, leafless tree, eating cake.

[Illustration: *There was Wango perched high on A big tree.
Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Giving a Show. Page 42]*

“Well, how are you going to get him down out of there?” asked Mr. Snowden.

“Looks as if I’d have to climb after him,” said Mr. Winkler. “When I was a sailor on a ship, and had Wango for a pet, he used to climb up the mast and rigging and I’d go after him. That was when I was younger. I don’t believe I could climb that tree and get him now.”

“Do you want me to do it for you, mister?” asked a new voice.

Bunny, Sue, and the other children turned to see who had spoken. They saw a boy about twelve years old, with bright, shining eyes standing beside Mr. Winkler and pointing up at the monkey in the tree. The strange boy seemed to have arrived on the scene very suddenly.



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"Do you want me to climb the tree and get your monkey for you?" asked the boy. "I'll do it, if he doesn't bite."

"Oh, he doesn't bite—Wango is very gentle," said Mr. Winkler. "But can you climb that high tree?"

"I've climbed higher ones than that," was the answer. "And ropes and poles and the sides of buildings. I can climb almost anything if I can get a hold. I'll go up and get the monkey for you!"

As he spoke he took off his coat; and though the day was cold Bunny noticed that the strange boy wore no overcoat. Hanging his jacket on a low limb of the tree which held Wango, the boy began to climb. And, as he did so, Sue pulled her brother's sleeve.

"Do you know who that is?" she whispered.

"Who?" asked Bunny Brown.

"That boy climbing the tree. Don't you 'member him?"

"No. Who is he?"

"Why, he's the boy who turned somersaults in the Opera House show!"

CHAPTER V

A COLD LITTLE SINGER

Bunny Brown was so excited in watching to see how the strange boy would climb up and get the monkey that, at first, he paid little attention to what Sue said. The boy by this time was beginning to scramble up the trunk of the tree. Sitting on a branch, high above the lad's head, was Wango the monkey, eating the piece of cake.

"It's the very same boy, I know it is!" declared Sue.

"What same boy?" asked Sadie West, while the other boys and girls watched the climber.

"The same one who was with the little girl that sang songs in the Opera House show. Don't you remember, Bunny?" asked Sue.

This time Bunny not only heard what his sister said, but he paid some attention to her. And, noting that the climbing boy was half way up the tree now, Bunny turned to Sue and asked her what she had said.

"This is the number three time I told you," she answered, shaking her head. "That's the boy from the show in the Opera House!"

Bunny looked closely at the climbing lad.

"Why, so it is!" he cried. "Look, Charlie—Harry—that's the acrobat from the show!"

The boy in the tree was in plain sight now, over the heads of the crowd, as he made his way upward from limb to limb, and several of Bunny's chums were sure he was the same lad they had seen in the show.

"But what's he doing here?" asked Bunny. "Mother read in the paper that the same show we saw here was traveling around and was in Wayville last night. I wonder why that boy is here?"

"And where's his sister that sang such funny little songs?" inquired Sadie West.

"We'll ask him when he comes down," suggested George Watson, who used to be a mean, tricky boy, making a lot of trouble for Bunny and Sue. But, of late, George had been kinder.

Higher and higher, up into the tree went the "show boy," as the children called him. Wango still was perched on the limb of the tree, eating his cake. He did not climb higher or try to leap to another tree, as Jed Winkler said he was afraid his pet might do.

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Up and up went the boy, and a moment later he was calling in a kind and gentle voice to the monkey and holding out his hands.

“Come on, old fellow! Come on down with me!” invited the climbing boy. “They want you down below! Come on!”

Whether Wango was tired of his tricks, or whether he had eaten all his cake and thought the only way he could get more was by coming down as he was invited, no one stopped to figure out. At any rate the old sailor’s pet gave a friendly little chatter and then advanced until he could perch on the boy’s shoulder, which he did, clasping his paws around the lad’s neck.

“That’s the way! Now we’ll go down!” said the boy.

“He’s got him! He’s got your monkey, Mr. Winkler!” cried the children standing beneath the tree.

“He’s a good climber—that boy!” said the old sailor. “He’s as good a climber as I used to be when I was on a ship.”

Down came the boy with the monkey on his shoulder. Of course Wango himself could have climbed down alone had he wished to, but he didn’t seem to want to do this—that was the trouble.

“There you are!” exclaimed the boy, as he slid to the ground, and walked over to Mr. Winkler, with Wango still perched on his shoulder. “Here’s your monkey!”

“Much obliged, my boy,” said the old sailor. “It was very good of you. Do you—er—do I owe you anything?” and he began to fumble in his pocket as if for money, while Wango jumped from the lad’s back to the shoulder of his master.

“No, not anything. I did it for fun,” was the laughing answer. “I’m used to climbing and that sort of thing. I like it!”

“Didn’t you used to be in the show that was in the Opera House here last week?” asked Harry Bentley.

“Yes,” answered the boy, as he put on his coat. “I was with the show.”

“Why aren’t you with it now?” asked Bunny.

“And where’s your sister—the one that sang?” added Sue.

The boy’s face turned red, and he seemed to be confused.

“Well, we—er—I—that is we left the show,” he said. “Maybe I ought to say that the show left us. It ‘busted up,’ as we say. There wasn’t enough money to pay the actors, and so we all had to quit.”

“That’s too bad,” said Jed Winkler. “It was a pretty good show, too. But say, my boy, I feel that I owe you something for having gotten my monkey down out of the tree. If you haven’t been paid by the show people, perhaps—maybe——”

“Oh, no, thank you! I don’t take pay for doing things like climbing trees after pet monkeys,” was the answer. The boy started to laugh, but he did not get very far with it. “You don’t owe me anything. And now I must go and get my sister,” he added.

“Where did you leave her?” asked Mrs. Newton, one of the ladies who had been in the store when the monkey began “cutting up.”

“I left her sitting on a bench in the little park down near the river front,” answered the boy.

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"That's a cold place!" exclaimed Mrs. Newton. "Why don't you take her where it's warm?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know where to take her," said the boy. "We just had money enough left to pay our trolley fare from a place called Wayville, where we played last night, to this town. We thought we'd come back here."

"To give another show?" asked the hardware man.

"No, I guess our show is gone for good," was the boy's answer. "But I sort of liked this place, and so did my sister. I thought I might get work here, at least until I could make money enough to go back to New York."

"Got any folks in New York?" asked Mr. Winkler, as he stroked the head of his pet monkey.

"Well, no, not exactly folks," replied the show boy, as he brushed some bits of bark from his trousers. "But it's easier to get a place with a show if you're in New York. They all start out from there."

"That boy looks to me as though the best place for him, right now, would be at a table with a good meal on it," said Mrs. Newton. "He looks hungry and cold."

"He does that," agreed Mrs. Brown, who had followed Bunny and Sue to see that they did not get into mischief. "I'm going to invite him to our house." She stepped up closer to the lad who had got the monkey down out of the tree, and asked: "Wouldn't you like to come home with me and have something to eat?"

The boy's face flushed and his eyes brightened.

"Thank you," he said. "I really am hungry. I'll be glad to work for a meal. There wasn't money enough for breakfast and car fare too, but I thought there was a better chance for work here than in Wayville, and so my sister and I came on."

"And where did you say she was?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"I left her sitting in the little park down by the water front, while I came up into the town to look for work. Then I saw the crowd around the tree and——"

"Poor little girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Now, you two are coming home with me!" she went on. "We'll talk about work later. Come along, my boy. I've got children of my own, and I know what's good for 'em. Take me to where you left your sister. And don't all of you come, or you might bother the poor child," she added, as she saw the crowd about to follow. "I'll tell you all about it later."

"Can't we come, Mother?" asked Bunny Brown.

"Yes, you and Sue come with me. Mrs. Newton," she went on, turning to a fat lady, "I wish you'd go to my house and start to get something ready for these starved ones to eat. I'll be right along with them."

"And I'll take my monkey back home," said Jed Winkler. "My sister might be worried about him," and he smiled as the crowd laughed, for it was well known that Miss Winkler did not like Wango, though she was not unkind to him.

"Now show me where your sister is," said Mrs. Brown to the boy, as she walked along with him and her own two children. "By the way, what's your name?"

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"Mart Clayton," he answered. "That's my real name, but my sister and I sometimes have stage names. Her real one is Lucile."

"That's a nice name," said Sue. "I like it better'n mine. Your sister sings, doesn't she?"

"Yes," answered the boy. "There she is, now!" he added, pointing to a bench in a little park that was not far from Mr. Brown's boat and fish dock.

"The poor, cold little singer!" murmured Mrs. Brown. "I must take care of them both!"

When they approached the bench the girl, who was about a year younger than her brother, looked up in surprise.

"Did you find any work?" she asked Mart eagerly.

"Well, no, not exactly," he answered.

The girl seemed much disappointed.

"But we're going to eat!" he added. "This lady has invited us to her house. After that I'll have a chance to look around and get a job to earn money to pay her and take us back to New York."

"Oh, you are the guests of Bunny and Sue for the meal. Guests don't pay," Mrs. Brown said, smiling at the strangers.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lucile. "That is—it's very kind of you," she said.

"You poor thing! You're cold!" exclaimed Bunny's mother. "No wonder, sitting here without a jacket! Where's your cloak?"

"I—I guess it's with our other baggage," was the girl's answer. "The boarding house kept it because we couldn't pay the bill when the show failed!" and tears came into her eyes.

"Never mind! We'll look after you," said motherly Mrs. Brown. "Come along, Bunny and Sue. Mrs. Newton will be at our house by this time."

As the five of them started down the street Bunny stopped suddenly.

"What's the matter?" asked his mother.

"I—I forgot something," he said. "I've got to see Mr. Winkler!" and he started off on a run.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Mart Clayton, the boy who had climbed the tree to get down Mr. Winkler's monkey, looked first at funny Bunny Brown, who was trotting downstreet, and then he looked at Bunny's mother.

"Shall I run after him and bring him back?" asked Mart.

"O, no. Bunny will come back if I call him," was the answer. "But I wonder why he is in such a hurry to see Mr. Winkler? I'll find out," she went on. Then, making her voice louder, she called: "Bunny, come back here, please, come back."

"But, Mother, I've got to see Mr. Winkler!" exclaimed Bunny, as he paused and turned around. "It's about our show."

"That will keep until later," said Mrs. Brown with a smile. "I want you to come back with me now and help entertain the company," and she smiled and nodded to Mart and Lucile Clayton.

"Oh, yes. I—I didn't mean to be impolite," said Bunny, as he walked slowly back. "But I wanted to ask Mr. Winkler if we could have his monkey in our show."

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"Oh, are you going to have a show?" asked Lucile, as she walked along with Sue, while Mrs. Brown, Bunny and Mart followed.

"Yes!" exclaimed Bunny, who heard the question. "We had a circus once, and we made some money. And after we saw the Opera House show you were in, we wanted to have one ourselves. So we're going to get one up. Sue can sing and I can turn somersaults. Not as good as you, of course," he said to Mart. "And one boy has some trained white mice and if we could get Mr. Winkler's monkey and——"

"And his parrot! He's got a parrot, too!" exclaimed Sue.

"Yes, if he'll let us have the parrot we could have a dandy show!" agreed Bunny.

"I hope it will be a better show than the one we were in," said Mart, with a sad little smile. "It isn't any fun to go traveling with a troupe and then have it 'bust up' on the road as ours did."

"Aren't you children very young to be traveling alone?" asked Mrs. Brown. "Haven't you any—well, any folks at all?"

She did not like to mention "father or mother," for fear both parents might be dead and to speak of them might cause sorrow to Mart and Lucile. But surely, Mrs. Brown thought, the boy and girl ought to have some one to look after them.

"Oh, we weren't exactly alone," said Lucile, who was not as old as her brother. "We were like one big family until the show failed. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson were in charge, and Mrs. Jackson was very good to us. But people didn't seem to like our performance, and we didn't make enough money to keep on playing."

"I liked your show," said Bunny.

"So did I!" exclaimed his sister Sue. "It was grand."

"Yes, if we had done as well everywhere as we did in this town I guess we'd have been all right," said Mart. "But we didn't. We got stranded in Wayville—that's the next largest town to this, I heard some one say, and we couldn't go any farther. Some of our baggage had to go to pay bills. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson left us at a boarding house while they went to New York to see if they could raise money."

"But I guess they couldn't," added his sister. "Anyhow they didn't come back, and we didn't have any money. So the boarding house lady kept what few things we had left, and Mart and I came away."

"I made up my mind I'd have to do something," went on the climbing boy, as Bunny and Sue thought of him. "I'm strong, and if I could get work I'd soon earn enough money to

take me and my sister back to New York. Perhaps you could tell me where I could get a job,” he added to Mrs. Brown.

“We’ll talk about that after you get warm and have had something to eat,” said she.

“Yes, maybe that would be better,” agreed Mart. “It makes you feel sort of funny not to eat.”

“I know it does,” put in Bunny. “Once Sue and I went to Camp Rest-a-While, and we got lost in the woods, and we didn’t have anything to eat for a terrible long while.”

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"It was 'most all day," sighed Sue. "And we were terrible glad when daddy and mother found us!"

"I should say you were—well, very glad," laughed her mother. "But here we are at our house. Now come in, Lucile and Mart, and make yourselves at home."

"And after you get warm, and have had something to eat, maybe you'll tell us about how to get up a show in a theater—not one in a tent like a circus," suggested Bunny.

"Yes, we'll help you all we can," promised Lucile.

Mrs. Newton, coming to the Brown house ahead of the others, had got a nice lunch ready, and from the way Mart and his sister sat down to it and ate it was evident that they were very hungry. It was nice and warm in the Brown house, too, and the children from the vaudeville troupe seemed to like to be near the fire.

"Now if you have had enough to eat, perhaps you will tell me a little bit more about yourselves," suggested Mrs. Brown, when the two visitors were ready to leave the table. "I want to help you," she went on, "and I can best do that if I know more about you. My husband is in the boat and fish business here in Bellemere," she said, "and though he is not as busy in winter as he is in summer, he may find work for you," she added to Mart.

"I hope he can!" said the boy. "Well, I'll tell you about myself and my sister. You see we come of a theatrical family. Our father and mother were in the show business up to the time they died."

"Oh, then your father and mother are dead?" asked Mrs. Brown kindly.

"Yes," went on Lucile. "We hardly remember them as they died when we were little. We were brought up by our uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie. They were in the show business, too, and they traveled under several different names.

"Sometimes we traveled with them, and again we'd be off on the road by ourselves. But whenever we went alone that way Uncle Simon would always get some one, like Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, to look after us and take charge of us. So we didn't have it so hard until Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie went away."

"Went away!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Where did they go?"

"That's what we can't find out," answered Mart "They left their address for us with Mr. Jackson, but he lost it, and now we don't know where our uncle and aunt are."

"But surely some one knows!" said Mrs. Newton.

“Well, yes, I guess Uncle Bill knows, but we can’t find him,” said Mart.

“You seem to belong to a lost family!” exclaimed Mrs. Brown, with a smile. “Who is Uncle Bill, and where is he?”

“We don’t know where he is, but he’s blind,” put in Lucile. “The last we heard of him he was going to some Home for the Blind, or to some hospital to be cured. But we don’t know where he is. If we could find him he’d have Uncle Simon’s address, for Uncle Simon used to always write to Uncle Bill. Of course Uncle Bill had to get some one to read the letters to him. But we haven’t seen either of our uncles for a long time.”

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"You poor children!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "This is too bad! We must see what we can do to help you. Where do you think your Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie went to?" she asked.

"It was over to England or France, or some place like that," answered Mart. "It was just before the war started, and maybe their ship was sunk. Anyhow, we haven't heard from them since then, and Mr. Jackson lost their address," he added.

"But your Uncle Simon knew where Mr. Jackson was, didn't he?" asked Mrs. Newton with interest.

"Well, maybe he did and maybe he didn't," answered Mart. "You see Mr. Jackson and his wife travel about a lot. Lots of times letters get lost, so Uncle Simon may have written about us, and Mr. Jackson might never have got the letter."

"Yes, that's so," agreed Mrs. Brown. "Well, when my husband comes home we'll talk with him and see what is best to do. You had better stay here until then and make yourselves at home. Hark! There's the doorbell."

"Who do you suppose that is, Mother?" asked Sue.

"I can't tell that, Sue, from here."

"I'll go and see who it is, Mother," offered Bunny, as he ran through the hall. The others heard the front door open and the sound of a man's voice mingling with that of Bunny's. In a moment the little fellow came running back.

"Who is it?" asked his mother.

"General Washington," was the surprising answer.

CHAPTER VII

"Down on the farm"

For a moment Mrs. Brown did not know whether to laugh at Bunny for playing a joke or to tell him he must not do such things when there were visitors at the house. But Bunny looked so serious that his mother thought perhaps he did not mean to be funny.

"Who is it?" she asked again.

"General Washington," replied the little boy.

"Bunny Brown!" cried Mrs. Newton, "what do you mean?"

“Well, it’s the man who made believe he was General Washington in the Opera House show, anyhow!” declared Bunny. “Course he doesn’t look like General Washington now, but——”

Lucile and Mart did not wait for Bunny to finish. Together they ran to the front door.

“Bunny Brown, you aren’t playing any jokes, are you?” asked his mother.

“No’m! Honest I mean it!” cried Bunny, his eyes shining with excitement. “It’s the same man who was General Washington and General Grant and a lot of other people at the show in the Opera House! He’s at our front door now, and he wants to know if the Happy Day Twins are here.”

“The Happy Day Twins?” exclaimed Mrs. Brown.

“That’s the name the boy and girl went under on the programme, you know,” explained Mrs. Newton. “The same children you have been so kind to—Lucile and Mart Clayton. They took the name of the ‘Happy Day Twins’ on the stage you know. Did the impersonator want them, Bunny?” she asked.

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"I didn't see any 'personator," answered the little boy. "He was General Washington, I tell you, only he wasn't dressed up."

"I must go and see," declared Mrs. Brown.

As she went down the hall she met the brother and sister coming back. They seemed much excited.

"It's our friend, Mr. Treadwell," explained Mart. "He heard we had started for this town, and he followed us. He heard about my climbing the tree after the monkey, and some one told him my sister and I had come to your house, Mrs. Brown. May I ask him in? It's Mr. Samuel Treadwell, and he's a good friend of ours."

"Certainly, ask him in," said Mrs. Brown, with a smile. "Perhaps he is hungry, too," she said to her friend Mrs. Newton, Mart having gone back to the front door. "I've heard that actors are often hungry."

"But he's General Washington, too, isn't he?" demanded Bunny, following Mart.

"Yes, he pretends to be all sorts of famous people—on the stage," kindly explained Mart to Bunny. "You'll like him, he can do lots of tricks."

"Can he jiggle—I mean juggle?"

"Yes, but not as good as the other man in the play."

By this time Mrs. Brown had reached the door. On the steps stood an elderly man, with a pleasant smile on his face. Mrs. Brown recognized him at once as the impersonator, though of course he had on no wig or costume now. He looked just like an ordinary man, except that his face was rather more wrinkled.

"I'm sorry to trouble you, madam," said the man, "but I have been looking for my little friends, the 'Happy Day Twins,' as they are billed. Their real names are—well, I suppose they have told you," and he smiled at Lucile and Mart, who were standing in the hall.

"Yes, we have been learning something about them, but we would be glad to know more, so we could help them," said Mrs. Brown. "Won't you come in? We have just been giving the children a little lunch, and perhaps, if you have not eaten lately, you will be glad to do so now."

"More glad than you can guess, madam," said the man with a bow. "I am, indeed, hungry. We have had bad luck, as perhaps Lucile and Mart have told you."

“Yes, they spoke of it,” said Bunny’s mother. “And now please come in, and while you are eating we can talk.”

“Say, we could have a regular show here now!” whispered Bunny Brown to his sister Sue. “We have three actors now, and you and I would make two more.”

“Oh, I don’t want to be in a show now,” said Sue. “I want to hear what they’re going to tell mother.”

Bunny did also, and when Mr. Treadwell had seated himself at the table the children listened to what followed.

“When you rang I was just telling Mart that perhaps my husband could give him some work, so enough money could be earned for the trip to New York,” said Mrs. Brown. “Is it true that no one knows where these children’s uncle and aunt can be found?”

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"Well, I guess it's true enough," said Mr. Treadwell. "There are two uncles and one aunt, according to the story. William Clayton, who is a brother of Mart's father, is blind, and in some home or hospital—I don't know where, and I guess the children don't either," he added.

Lucile and Mart shook their heads.

"Simon Weatherby and his wife, Sallie, are brother and sister-in-law of Mrs. Clayton's," went on the impersonator. "The last heard of them was that they sailed for the other side—England, France or maybe Australia for all I know. We theatrical folk travel around a good bit. Anyhow, Simon Weatherby and his wife left in a hurry, and they gave the care of the children over to Mr. and Mrs. Jackson.

"Now Mr. Jackson is all right, and a nice man, but he is careless, else he wouldn't get into so much trouble, and he wouldn't have lost the address of Mart's Uncle Simon. But that's how it happened. So the children have some relations if we can only find them, and what they are to do in the meanwhile, now that the show is scattered, is more than I know."

"Well, I know one thing they're going to do, and that is stay right here with me until they are sure of a home somewhere else," said Mrs. Brown.

"I'm glad to hear you say that!" exclaimed Mr. Treadwell, as he finished his lunch. "I heard they left the boarding house, and that they had no money. Well, I haven't any too much myself, but I followed them, hoping I could find 'em and help 'em. Now I've found my little friends all right," he said, looking kindly at Lucile and Mart, "but some one else has helped them."

"They helped some one else first," said Mrs. Newton, with a smile. "Mart got Mr. Winkler's monkey down out of a tree."

"I heard about that," returned Mr. Treadwell, with a laugh. "Well, now that I have located you, I suppose I'd better travel on, though where to go or what to do I don't know," he added with a sigh. "I'm not as young as I once was," he added, "and there isn't the demand for impersonators there once was. If I could get back to New York——"

He paused and shook his head sadly.

"Why don't you stay here and look for work, just as I'm going to do?" asked Mart. "If you get to New York there won't be much chance. All the theater places are filled now for the winter season."

"That's so!" agreed the impersonator. "But I don't know what sort of work I could do here."

"You—you could be in our show!" interrupted Bunny, who, with Sue, had been listening eagerly to all the talk. "We're going to have a show, and you three could be in it!"

"Going to have a show, are you?" asked Mr. Treadwell, with a smile.

"Yes, a real one," declared Sue. "Once we had a circus, but this show is going to be in the Opera House, maybe, and we'll give all the money we make to our mother's Red Cross."

"That will be nice," said Mr. Treadwell, with a smile. "But I'm afraid I'd be too big to fit into your show."

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"Oh, no!" exclaimed Bunny. "We're going to have Bobbie Boomer in it, and he's a big fat boy."

Mr. Treadwell laughed and Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Newton joined in.

"What sort of play are you going to have?" asked Mr. Treadwell.

"Well, we were just talking about it, in our garage, when Tom Milton told us that Mr. Winkler's monkey was loose," explained Bunny, "and we didn't talk any more about it until just now. But the show is going to be different from the circus."

"Where are you going to have it?" asked Mrs. Newton.

"I don't know," confessed Bunny. "Maybe my father will let us have it in the boat shop. That's a big place."

A step was heard in the hall, and Bunny and Sue cried:

"There's our daddy now!"

Mr. Brown walked in, kissed the children and seemed quite surprised to see three strangers present. Matters were quickly explained to him, however, and he welcomed Mr. Treadwell, Lucile and Mart.

"Do you think you could find work for them?" asked Mrs. Brown, when the stories had been told.

"Well, I might," slowly answered Mr. Brown. "I need some help down at the dock and office to get things ready for winter."

"Don't make 'em work so hard they can't help in our show," begged Bunny.

"Oh, you're going to have another circus, are you?" asked his father, with a smile.

"No, it isn't going to be a circus, it's going to be a regular Opera House show!" cried Sue.

"What about?" her father wanted to know, as he caught her up in his arms.

"We don't know yet," Bunny said. "But maybe the play will be about pirates or Indians or soldiers."

"Why don't you have some nice quiet play that would be good for Christmas?" asked Mr. Brown. "Why not have a play with a farm scene in it? You have been down to

Grandpa's farm, and you know a lot about the country. Why not have a farm play and call it 'Down on the Farm'?"

"That's the very thing!" suddenly cried Mr. Treadwell. "Excuse me for getting so excited," he said, "but when you spoke about a farm play I remembered that we have some farm scenery in our show that failed. I believe you could buy that scenery cheap for the children," he said to Mr. Brown. "There are three scenes, one meadow, a barnyard with a barn and an orchard; and the last had a house with it."

"Oh, Daddy! get us the farm theater things for our new play!" cried Bunny Brown.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCENERY

Daddy Brown looked at his two children, and then, as he glanced across the table at the actor who made believe he was George Washington and other great men, Daddy Brown laughed.

"These youngsters of mine will be giving a real show before I know it, with scenery and everything," he said.

"Well, a show isn't much fun unless you have some scenery in it," said Mr. Treadwell, "and the scenery I spoke of, which was part of our show, can be bought cheap, I think."

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"Say, Daddy, is the sheenery in a show like the sheenery in a automobile or one of your motor boats?" asked Sue.

"Oh, she's thinking of wheels and things that go around!" laughed Bunny. "That's *machinery*, Sue, and *scenery* is what we saw in the Opera House—make-believe trees, and the brook, you know."

"Oh!" exclaimed Sue. "Well, can we have that—that *sheenery* for our play?" she asked her father.

"I'll see about it," he answered, and Bunny and Sue looked happy, for, like their mother, whenever their father said "I'll see," it almost always meant that he would do as they wanted him to.

"I'm afraid, though," said Mr. Brown, "that getting up a show in town will be harder, Bunny and Sue, than getting up a circus. In the circus you could use your dog Splash and some of the animals from Grandpa's farm. But a theater show, or one like it, hasn't many animals in it. You ought to do more acting than you do trapeze work."

"Oh, we can do it!" cried Bunny Brown. "They're going to help, aren't you?" and he looked over at Lucile and Mart.

"We'll help all we can," Mart promised. "That is, if we're here, and I don't see how we can get away, for we haven't any money to pay our fare on the train."

"That's my trouble, too," said Mr. Treadwell, with a smile. "I'd offer to help too, if I thought I was going to be here."

"Oh, then we'll be sure to have a show!" declared Bunny. "You can be General Washington and maybe some soldier, and we'll pretend you came down to the farm to see us. Then I'll turn somersaults and Sue can bring me out some cookies to eat, 'cause I get hungry when I turn somersaults. And you can do tricks like those you did in the Opera House," he added to Mart.

"What do you want me to do?" asked Lucile, with a smile.

"Oh, you—you can help Sue bring out the cookies for Mart and me," decided Bunny. "And—oh yes—you can sing—those songs you sang in the show we went to see, you know."

"All right, I'll help all I can—if I'm here," said Lucile.

"Well, suppose we talk a little about the trouble you good theater folks are in," suggested Mr. Brown. "The show Bunny and Sue are going to give can wait for a while. Now what do you want to do—get back to New York, all three of you?"

“Well, New York is the place almost all show people start from,” said Mr. Treadwell, “but I don’t know that there’s much use going back there now. All the places in other shows will be taken. If I could get some sort of work here for the winter I’d stay.”

“So would I!” declared Mart. “I like to stay in a place two or three weeks at a time, and not have to move to a new town every night, like a circus. Have you any work you could let me do?” he asked Mr. Brown.

“I was going to speak of that,” replied the father of Bunny and Sue. “One of the young men in my office is going on leave, and I could hire you in his place. The wages aren’t very big,” he said, “but it would be enough for you to live on and take care of your sister.”

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"I suppose I could board here in Bellemere," suggested Mart.

"You can stay right here—you and Lucile!" cried Mrs. Brown. "Our house is plenty large enough, and there's lots of room. Do stay here—at least until you locate your uncle and your aunt."

"That's very kind of you," said Lucile softly, and she reached over and stroked Sue's curls.

"Oh, goodie!" cried Bunny, when he understood that his father was going to hire Mart Clayton to work in the office at the dock. "Then you can help us get up the show."

"Well, I'll do all I can," promised Mart.

"And I'll help, too," added Lucile.

"If you can find a place for me, Mr. Brown, I'll make the same promise," said Mr. Treadwell. "I don't care much about going back to New York, and if Mart and Lucile stay here I'd like to stay, too, and sort of look after them. I'll try to help them find their missing folks."

"I guess I can find work for you," said Mr. Brown. "Do you know anything about the fish or boat business?"

"Very little, I'm afraid. I once worked as a bookkeeper in a piano factory, though, if that would help any," he said.

"Keeping books is just what I want done," said Mr. Brown. "So you can have a place in my office. The man I have is going to leave, and you may take his place. He also has a room with Mr. Winkler and his sister, and you could get board there."

"That suits me all right, and thank you very much," said Mr. Treadwell. "I'll send over to Wayville and get what little baggage I have. But will it be all right for me to board at Mr. Winkler's?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. They'll be glad to have you."

"And you can see Mr. Winkler's monkey Wango and the parrot all the while!" cried Bunny Brown.

"That will be a treat!" laughed Mr. Treadwell.

So it was settled that both Mr. Treadwell and Mart would work for Mr. Brown. The man who pretended to be George Washington and other great men would board with the old sailor and his sister, while Mart and Lucile would live with the Browns.

“And we’ll have lots of fun!” said Sue to Lucile.

“And will you show me how to make flipflops?” asked Bunny of Mart.

“Yes,” answered the boy actor and acrobat, “I will.”

While Lucile remained at Mrs. Brown’s house, Mart, with Mr. Brown and the impersonator went over to Wayville to get the baggage of the theatrical folk. Mr. Brown was going to pay the board bills. Bunny and Sue wanted to go also, but their father said:

“I’ll take you along when we go to look at the scenery. You’d only be in the way now, and wouldn’t have a good time.”

That night Lucile and Mart stayed at the Brown house, which was to be their home for some time, and Mr. Treadwell went to board with the Winklers.

“And when you come over in the morning tell us all about the monkey and parrot!” begged Bunny, as the actor started for his boarding place that evening.

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"I will," was the promise.

"When are we going to get the scenery for our play, Daddy?" asked Bunny Brown, as he and his sister Sue were getting ready for bed that night.

"I'll take you over to-morrow after school," was the promise. And you can well imagine that the two children could hardly wait for the time to come.

The air was clear and cold, and it seemed as if there would be more snow when Mr. Brown brought around the automobile in which the trip to Wayville was to be made. Bunny and Sue, Lucile and Mart were to sit in the back, while Mr. Brown and Mr. Treadwell sat in front. They were going to the place where the theatrical scenery had been stored since the time the vaudeville troupe had got into trouble.

"I'm glad winter is coming, aren't you?" asked Bunny of Mart, as they rode along the roads which were still covered with snow from the first storm.

"Well, yes, I like winter," was the answer. "It's always the best time for the show business—'tisn't like a circus—that does best in the summer time."

"We had our circus in summer," said Sue. "Now we're going to have a real theater show in the winter."

The automobile was going down a snowy hill into Wayville, and Mr. Brown had put on the brakes, for, once or twice, the machine had slid from side to side.

"I ought to have chains on the back wheels," said the fish merchant to Mr. Treadwell. "But if I go slowly I guess I'll be all right. Do you think we need any more scenery than the three sets you spoke of—the barnyard, the orchard and the meadow?"

"No, I think that will be enough," said the actor. "The children only want something simple. You can tell when you see it."

"Can we pick apples in the orchard?" asked Sue.

Before Mr. Treadwell could answer something happened. Mr. Brown turned out to one side of the road to let another automobile pass, and, a moment later, his machine began sliding to one side at a place where there was a deep gully.

"Oh!" screamed Lucile. "We're going to upset!"

CHAPTER IX

BUNNY DOES A TRICK

Nearer and nearer to the side of the deep gully, across the road that was slippery with snow, slid Mr. Brown's automobile. Bunny and Sue's father's hands held tightly to the steering wheel, and he pressed his foot down hard on the brake pedal.

"Oh! Oh!" cried the children.

"Sit still! It will be all right!" exclaimed Mr. Brown. "We won't be hurt!"

And so well did he steer the automobile that in a few seconds more it was back in the middle of the road and going safely down the hill. The dangerous gully was passed. It had all happened so quickly that Bunny and Sue had had no chance to get really frightened. But they were so sure their father could do everything all right that I hardly believe they would have worried even if the auto had started to roll over sideways. Bunny would probably have thought it only a trick, and he and Sue were very fond of tricks.

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"The man in the other automobile didn't give you enough room to pass, did he, Mr. Brown?" asked the actor, when the danger was over.

"Not quite," was the answer. "We'll go home by another road that is wider, but I took this one because it is the shortest way."

"I hope I didn't do wrong to cry out that way," Lucile said, when they were on their way again.

"No, you didn't do any harm," said Mr. Brown. "I was a bit alarmed myself at first. But we're all right now."

"We were in a railroad wreck once," went on Lucile.

"Did the trains all smash up?" asked Bunny, his eyes wide open.

"Yes, they were badly smashed," answered Lucile. "I don't like to think about it. Mart was hurt, too!"

"Was you?" cried Bunny, forgetting, in his excitement, to speak correctly. "Say, you've had lots of things happen to you, haven't you?"

"Quite a few," answered the boy actor. "I've traveled around a good bit. But I think I like it here better than anywhere I've been."

"I do too," said Lucile. "Traveling everyday makes one tired."

A little later they reached Wayville, and Mr. Treadwell told Mr. Brown where to go in the automobile to look at the scenery. It was stored away, for the company that had "busted up," as Mart sometimes called it, had no further use for it.

"Oh, look! Here's a little house!" cried Bunny, when with their father and the others he and Sue had entered the big room where the scenery was stored.

"It's got a door to it," said Sue, "but the window is only make believe," and she found this out when she tried to stick her fat little hand out of what looked like a window in the side of the small house.

"Most things on a stage in a theater are make believe," said the man who pretended to be different persons. "You'll find the scenery isn't as pretty when you get close to it as it is when you see it from the other side of the footlights."

This the children noticed was true. The scenery was made of painted canvas stretched over a framework of wood. And the colors were put on with a coarse brush and was very thick, as Bunny and Sue saw when they went up close.

“But it looked so pretty in the Opera House,” complained Bunny.

“That’s because you were farther off, and because the lights were made to shine on it in a certain way,” explained Mart. “It will look just as pretty again when you use it in your show.”

Bunny and Sue were not so sure of this, but they were willing to wait and see. Mr. Brown and Mr. Treadwell looked over the scenery.

As the actor had said, there were three “sets” as they are called. One was a scene painted to look like a meadow, with a big green field, a stream of water and, in the distance, cows eating grass. Of course the cows were only pictured ones as was the grass and stream.

The barnyard scene showed more cows and the end of a barn, and in this barn there was a real door that opened and shut. Mr. Treadwell explained that the boy and girl actors could go through this door to enter upon or leave the stage during the play.

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"There's a pump and a watering trough that goes with this scene," said the actor. "In the play as we used to give it the trough was filled with water and one of the actors had to fall into it."

"And does the pump pump real water?" cried Bunny.

"Yes, about a pail full," was the answer.

"Then we'll have it in our show!" cried the little boy. "I'll fall into the trough and get all wet, Sue, and you can pump more water on me from the pump."

"That'll be fun!" laughed Sue.

"We'll have to see about that act first," laughed Mr. Brown. "Now let's find out what else we have for the great play 'Down on the Farm.' Where's that orchard I heard you speak of, Mr. Treadwell?"

"I guess the orchard is behind the barn," laughed the old actor. And when some of the men in the storage place had lifted away the painted canvas that represented the barn, a pretty orchard scene was shown.

"There's the rest of the little house!" cried Bunny, for at first he had only noticed one side of it.

"Yes, there is one end of a house shown in this scene, as one end of the barn is shown in the other," explained the actor. "And there is a real door, too, that opens and shuts. The orchard, as you see, is only painted."

And so it was, but in such a way as to appear very pretty when set up and lighted.

"Here's a real tree!" cried Bunny, who was rummaging about back of the stacked-up scenery.

"Well, it's meant to look like a real tree," said Mr. Treadwell, "but it isn't, really. It's a pretty good imitation of a peach tree, and I suppose you could use it in your show, children."

"Peaches don't grow in the winter," objected Bunny, who had been on his grandfather's farm often enough to know this.

"We could make believe our show was in summer," said Sue.

"Yes, or you could make believe your play took place down south, where it's always warm," added Mart, "and you could have this for an orange tree."

“Oh, no! That wouldn’t do!” laughed Mr. Treadwell. “The leaves aren’t anything like those of an orange tree. I remember once when we gave an act with this tree it was supposed to be on a tropic island, and one of the actors fastened a cocoanut on it, to make the audience think it really grew there.”

“What happened?” asked Mr. Brown, as he saw the actor laugh.

“Well, the cocoanut wasn’t fastened on very well,” was the answer, “and when the leading lady was standing under the tree, singing a sad song, the cocoanut fell off and dropped on her foot. She stopped singing right there, and the play was nearly spoiled. So don’t have oranges grow on peach trees,” he advised.

“We could have peanuts,” suggested Bunny. “They wouldn’t hurt if they fell on you.”

Mr. Brown and Mr. Treadwell laughed at that, and Bunny wondered why they did.

The children were delighted with the scenery, once they had got over their surprise at how coarse the paint looked when they were close to it. The barn and the house, with their real doors that opened and shut, were quite wonderful to Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, and so was the tree.

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This was made of wood with what seemed to be real bark on it, and had limbs, branches, and twigs that seemed very natural. But Mr. Treadwell explained that it was all artificial, like the palms you see in some hotels and moving picture theaters.

While Bunny and Sue waited, Mr. Brown talked with the man who had charge of the scenery, and in a little while the children's father said he would buy the set, which was offered at a low price.

"And can we give our show with it?" Bunny wanted to know when told what his father had done.

"Yes," said Mr. Brown. "It will be delivered in Bellemere day after to-morrow, and stored away in our garage until you decide when and where you are going to give your show. There is a lot to be done before your first performance, children. I guess you know that, from the work you had getting up your circus."

"We'll have a lot of fun!" declared Bunny, not thinking of the hard work. "When we get back home I'll tell the boys and girls about the scenery and they can come over to see it. Then we'll begin to practice for the show play."

"You'll have to have a play written for you, bringing in all the scenery I've bought," said Mr. Brown.

"I guess I can manage that part for them," suggested Mr. Treadwell. "I have written two or three little plays, and I guess I can do one more. I'll write out a little sketch and have parts to fit as many boys and girls as Bunny and Sue can get to act."

"Oh, I can get a lot of 'em!" cried Bunny. "And will you make it so Sue can pump water and I can fall in the trough and get all wet?"

"It's pretty cold to fall into the water," said the actor. "But we'll talk of that later."

You can imagine how excited the little friends of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were when they heard that Mr. Brown had bought some real scenery for the children's play. As soon as the house, the barn, the meadow, the barnyard, and the orchard had been brought to the garage a crowd of boys and girls was on hand to look at them.

Sue led a number of her girl friends up in the loft to look over the painted canvas, and Bunny took charge of a throng of boys. Sue was explaining about the make-believe tree, that once had had a cocoanut on it, when suddenly there came a cry of pain from behind the painted canvas barn.

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed a voice. "I'm stuck fast!"

"That's Bunny!" shouted Sue. "What's the matter?" she asked.



“Bunny tried to do a trick and he’s caught!” answered Charlie Star. “You’d better go and get your father or mother!”

CHAPTER X

GETTING READY

Sue Brown was too curious when she heard Charlie say this to do as she had been told.

“Oh, Bunny!” she called out, as she heard her brother’s cries, “what’s the matter, and where are you?”

“He’s stuck in the watering trough,” explained Harry Bentley. “Come on back here and you can see him!”

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"Get me out! Get me out!" begged Bunny. "Please get me out!"

"Better go get your father or mother," advised Charlie again. "I've pulled and pulled, and I can't get Bunny loose. His trick didn't work out right."

But Sue made up her mind that she would see what was the matter with Bunny before she called on her father and mother to come and help. She and Bunny had often been in little troublesome scrapes before, and often they got out by themselves. They might do it this time. So Sue darted around the piled-up scenery, and there she saw a group of boys around the stage watering trough.

This was made to look like the watering troughs you may have seen in the country, made from a big, hollowed-out log. Only this one was made of sheet tin, and painted to look like wood.

Down in the trough was Bunny Brown. He was stretched out at full length and he seemed to be caught. In fact he was caught, and the reason for it was that Bunny was a little too big to fit in the stage trough—that is his shoulders were too large. But his legs and feet were free, and with his shoes he was drumming a tattoo on the inside of the tin trough, which was somewhat like a bathtub.

"Oh, Bunny Brown, what have you done now?" cried Sue, when she saw her brother in the trough and the crowd of boys standing around him.

"I—I'm stuck fast!" Bunny replied. "I was practising a trick, like the one I'm going to do on the stage when we give our play. I got in the trough, and now I can't get out."

"It's a good thing we didn't put the water in as he wanted us to do," said George Watson, "else he'd be soaking wet now."

"Yes, I'm glad you didn't put the water in," agreed Bunny. "But say, I wish I could get out!"

He wiggled and squirmed, but still he was held fast.

"Oh, if he has to stay stuck in there all the while Bunny can't be in the show!" said Sadie West.

"We'll get him out!" declared Charlie Star. "Come on, Harry, you and George each take hold of him on one side, and Bobby Boomer and I'll pull his legs."

"My legs aren't caught!" said Bunny. "It's my shoulders!"

"Well, if I pull on your legs it'll help get your shoulders loose, I guess," returned Charlie. "Come on now, fellows!"

"Can't we girls help too?" asked Sue.

"Well, maybe you could," Charlie agreed. "All pull."

"Don't tear my clothes," protested Bunny. "If I tear my clothes maybe my mother won't let me be in the show."

"Come on now, let's all pull together!" suggested Charlie.

[Illustration: "*Come on now, let's all pull together!*"
Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Giving a Show. Page 96]

As many of the boys and girls as could, gathered around the trough and tried to pull Bunny loose. But he stuck fast in spite of all they could do. Then Sue said:

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"I'm going to tell mother. She'll know how to get him loose. Once he was stuck in the rain water barrel, when it was empty, and my mother got him out. She can do 'most everything. I'll go for her."

"Yes, I guess you'd better," agreed Bunny. "We've got a lot to do to get ready for the play, and I can't do anything while I'm stuck fast here."

"It's a good thing this isn't in the play, or everybody in the audience would be laughing at us," said Harry Bentley.

"I—I guess I won't get in the trough when we give our play real," decided Bunny. "I might get stuck then. I'll think up some other trick to do."

Sue was about to hurry away, intending to call her mother, when some one was heard coming up the stairs that led to the loft over the garage. A moment later the head and shoulders of Mart Clayton came into view.

"Oh, Mart!" cried Sue, for she and Bunny felt quite well acquainted with the boy and girl performers, "Bunny is stuck in the trough and he can't get out!"

"Is there water in it?" asked Lucile's brother quickly, as he jumped up the rest of the stairs.

"No!" answered a chorus of boys and girls. "Not a drop."

"Oh, then he's all right," said Mart. "I'll soon have him out."

And he did. It was very simple. Mart simply pulled Bunny's coat off, over the little fellow's head, and then Bunny was small enough to slip out of the trough himself. He had so wiggled and squirmed after getting into the tin thing like a bath tub that his coat was all hunched up in bunches. This kept his shoulders from slipping out, but when the coat was off everything was all right.

"What did you get in there for?" asked Mart, when Bunny was on his feet once more.

"I was practising my act," was the answer. "I'm going to be a farmer boy in the play, and then I hide in the trough so I can scare an old tramp that comes to get a drink of water. Only there isn't going to be any water in the trough when I do my act," said Bunny. "I wanted there to be some, but mother won't let me."

"I guess we can do that act just as well without water as with it," said Mart with a smile. "An audience likes to see real water on the stage, but we can use some in the pump, I guess. Now then, boys and girls, are you all going to be in the new play, 'Down on the Farm?'"

“Yes, I am! I am! So’m I!” came the answers, and Mart laughed and put his hands over his ears.

“I guess we’ll have plenty of actors and actresses,” he said. “Mr. Treadwell will be out here this afternoon and tell you something of the little play he is going to write for you—for all of us, in fact, for my sister and I are going to be in it with you. But now suppose I tell you a little about a stage, and how to come on and go off.”

“Is Bunny going to get stuck again?” asked Sue. “If he is I’m going to tell mother so she can help get him out.”

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"No, I won't get in the trough again," said Bunny. "I only did it now to see if I'd fit. And I don't—very well," he added.

Then Mart told Bunny, Sue, and the others something about how a stage in a theater is set, and something about the proper way to come on and go off. A little later Lucile also came out to the garage and she drilled the girls in a little dance they were to give.

Then the two young performers showed the others how the stage scenery was set up to look as real as possible from the front.

"Where are you going to give your play?" asked Mart, as they all sat down to rest.

"Oh, we don't know, yet," said Bunny. "I guess we won't have it until around Christmas, and by then my father will think up some place for us."

"Couldn't we have it up here?" asked Sadie West. "All the scenery is here."

"Oh, there isn't room," said Lucile. "We have to have a stage, and then there is no place up here for the audience to sit. And there isn't any use in giving a play unless you have an audience. That's half the fun. What are you going to do with all the money you make, Bunny Brown?" she asked the little chap.

"Oh, I—I guess we'll give it to mother's Red Cross," he answered. "But first we've got to find out what sort of acts we can give. Our dog Splash is a good actor—he was in our circus."

"I guess Mr. Treadwell can work Splash into the play in some way," said Mart. "We'll ask him."

That afternoon the actor gathered the children around him, out in the loft over the garage, and, by questioning them, he found out what each one could do best. Some could recite little verses, others could sing and some could dance.

"Can't I have my trained white mice in the play?" asked Will Laydon. "They twirl around on a wire wheel and one of 'em stands up on his hind legs."

"Well, perhaps we can use them," said the actor. "Now I'll tell you a little about the play I am going to write for you. It will be in three acts. One act will be in the meadow, as we have the scenery for that and must use what we have. Another act will be in the barnyard, and we can use as many animals there as we can get. Then we'll have the last act in the orchard, and you children can be in swings, in the trees, or playing around."

"We've got only one tree and not many of us can get in that," objected Charlie Star.

“Well, perhaps I can rig up another tree—or something that will do,” said Mr. Treadwell. “We’ll decide about that later. Now as to the play. I thought I’d have it very simple. It’s about an old man and two children who have lived in the city all their lives. They are in the show business and they get tired of it. One day while traveling about they miss their train, and they are left in a lonely country town.

“At first they don’t like it, but when they see how quiet and peaceful it is, after the hot, noisy city, they decide to stay. They reach a farmhouse and find some children who are tired of the country and want to go to the city. The old man and the city children tell the country children about how hot it is in town, and advise them to stay in the fields and meadows.

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"Then the old man and the children with him do some of the things they used to do in a city theater, and the country children do some of the things they do Friday afternoons at school. And they all have a good time. Then they hear about some poor people who live in a hospital, or some place like that, and they decide to get up a show to make money to give to the poor folks who haven't had much joy in life. So they give a little show, make some money and all ends happily. How do you like that?"

No one spoke for a moment, and then Bunny cried:

"Why—why that's just like you and—and us, Mr. Treadwell! It's almost real—like it is here."

"Yes," agreed the actor, "I thought I'd make it as real as possible, and as natural. It will go better that way. Do you like it?"

"Oh, it's lovely!" said Sue. "I hope Sadie West will speak the piece about a Dolly's Prayer."

"Yes, she speaks that very nicely," said Mary Watson.

"Then we'll have her do it in our little play," decided Mr. Treadwell. "And now I'll start to work writing the play and we can soon begin to practice."

"And we really can give the money to the Blind Home here, instead of to the Red Cross, maybe," said Bunny. "Once mother and some ladies got up an entertainment and they made 'most fifty dollars for the Blind Home."

"I hope we can make as much," said Lucile. "It's dreadful to be blind. I feel so sorry for our Uncle Bill. I wish we could find him."

"And I wish we could find Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie," added Mart. "But still we like it here," he hastened to add, lest Bunny and Sue might think he and his sister did not care for all that Mr. and Mrs. Brown had done for them.

In the week that followed Mr. Treadwell, when he was not working in Mr. Brown's office, keeping books, wrote away at the little play. Mart, too, when he was not busy at the dock, helping Bunker Blue, did what he could to get ready for the show. The children did not tell any one except their fathers and mothers what it was to be about.

"It must be a secret," said Bunny Brown. "Then everybody will buy a ticket to come and see it."

"But where are we going to have the show?" asked Sue of Bunny one night.

"I don't know," Bunny answered.

"I must begin to look around for a place for you," said Mr. Brown. "I did think we could use the old moving picture theater, but that has been sold and is being torn down. But we'll find some place. How are you coming on with the children's play?" he asked the impersonator.

"Very well, I think," was the answer. "We'll soon be ready for a trial, or rehearsal, as it is called. Have you heard anything about the uncle and aunt of Mart and Lucile?" he asked.

"No," replied Mr. Brown, "I haven't. I have written several letters hoping to get some word, but I haven't as yet. I can't even find out where Mr. and Mrs. Jackson are. They might have found the address of the children's Aunt Sallie and Uncle Simon. But Jackson seems to have vanished after his show failed."

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"Yes, that often happens," said Mr. Treadwell.

"If we could only find our Uncle Bill he could tell us just what we want to know," said Mart. "But I don't know where he is."

"Could he, by any chance, be in this Blind Home just outside of your town?" asked the actor.

"No, I thought of that, and inquired," said Mr. Brown. "There is no person named Clayton in the place. Well, we'll just keep on hoping."

The weather was now getting colder. Thanksgiving came, and there were jolly good times in the Brown home. Mart and Lucile said they had never had such a happy holiday since their own folks were with them, and Mr. Treadwell, who was invited to dinner, told such funny jokes and stories, making believe he was a colored man, or an Irishman, at times, that he had every one laughing. Bunker Blue came to dinner also, and he said he had had as much fun as if he had been to the theater.

"You'll come to our show, won't you, Bunker?" asked Bunny, when he could eat no more.

"Oh, sure, I'll come!" said the fish boy. "And I'll clap as loud as I can when you get in the water trough."

"I'm not going to get in," decided Bunny. "I'm going to let Charlie Star do that—he's smaller 'n I am."

The children were given their parts for the farm play, and they practiced whenever they had a chance over the garage. The scenery was still stored there, and Mr. Brown was trying to find a place in town large enough for the show to be given.

It was one evening after a day of practice, and while Bunny, Sue, and the others in the Brown house were talking about the play, that a ring came at the front door.

"Oh, maybe that's a special delivery letter to say our uncle and aunt have been heard from!" exclaimed Lucile.

"Oh, if it should be!" murmured Sue, hopefully.

But it was Mr. Raymond, the hardware store keeper, in whose place Wango the monkey had once got loose.

"Good evening, Mr. Brown," was Mr. Raymond's greeting as he came in. "I heard you were looking for a place for the children to give some sort of entertainment—is that so?"

“Yes,” was the answer. “I did hope we might get the old moving picture theater, but that’s been sold, and I really don’t know what to do. We have the scenery, the children have nearly learned their parts, but we have no place to give the show.”

“Well, I’ve come to tell you where you can find a place,” said the hardware man, and Bunny and Sue clapped their hands in delight.

CHAPTER XI

THE STRANGE VOICE

“This is very kind of you, I’m sure, Mr. Raymond,” said Mr. Brown. “I didn’t know there was any place in town I hadn’t thought of. The church will hardly do, and the Opera House costs too much to hire for a simple little play. The town meeting hall is too small, and I was thinking we’d have to get a tent, perhaps.

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"No, you won't have to do that," said the merchant. "You know there's a big loft over my store, don't you?"

"Yes, but I thought you had that piled full of things," said Mr. Brown.

"Well, it was, but it's partly cleaned out now," was the answer. "I'm going to clean out the rest, and you can have that place for your show, and welcome. It won't cost you a penny for rent."

"Oh! Oh!" Bunny Brown and his sister Sue fairly squealed in delight.

"I'm glad you like it," said Mr. Raymond with a smile. "I was up in my attic, as I call it, the other day, and after I got to thinking about cleaning it out I thought of you children and your show. I heard some one say that Mr. Brown couldn't get just the place that would suit, so began to measure around, and I think mine will do."

"I'm sure it will," said Mrs. Brown.

"But is there a stage and are there seats for the audience?" asked Mart, who was the first to think of these things.

"No, there isn't a stage, nor yet any seats," said Mr. Raymond, and at hearing this Bunny and Sue looked disappointed. But they brightened up when Mr. Raymond went on with a smile:

"I'm going to build a stage in the place, and also put in seats. It's about time we had, in this town, some place where little shows and entertainments can be given. The town hall is too small, and the Opera House is too big. I'm going to make mine in-between."

"Like the big bear and the little bear and the middle-sized bear!" laughed Sue.

"That's it," said Mr. Raymond. "I expect to make some money by renting out my hall after I get it fixed up. But I'm going to let you folks have it for nothing this time," he was quick to say. "It will advertise the place, and people will know about it. So now if you'd like it I'll go ahead and fix up the stage and the seats, and as soon as it's ready you can move your scenery in and have your show, Bunny Brown."

"Will it be ready in time for a Christmas entertainment?" asked Lucile.

"Oh, yes, I'll see to that!" promised Mr. Raymond.

"Well, I'm sure we can't thank you enough," said Mr. Brown. "I had promised the children a place for their show, but I was just beginning to think I couldn't find one. This will be just the thing."

“And Mr. Raymond can come to our play for nothing!” cried Bunny.

“Yes, I think that’s the least we can offer him,” laughed Mrs. Brown.

There was great excitement in town the next day, especially among the boys and girls, when it became known that a new hall was to be built over the hardware store, and it can be easily believed that Bunny, Sue, and their friends who were to be in the play, “Down on the Farm,” were more excited than any one else.

While they waited for Mr. Raymond to have his “attic,” as he called it, cleaned out and the stage built and seats put in, Bunny and Sue, with Mart and Lucile, had plenty of fun, as well as some work. For it was work to get up a play, as the children soon found out. Mr. Treadwell did his part, in writing the different parts the boy and girl actors were to speak, but the boys and girls themselves had to learn them by heart, and it was not as easy as learning to speak a “single piece” for Friday afternoon at school.

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But every one did his or her best, and soon it was felt that the play was coming on “in fine shape,” as the actor said. It was easier for Mart and Lucile to learn their parts, as they were used to appearing on the stage.

When the children were not practicing they had fun on the snow and ice, for winter had set in early that year, and there was plenty of coasting and skating.

One day Mart and his sister came back to the Brown house, having been downtown to see how the new hall for the play was coming on—Raymond Hall it was to be called.

“Is it ’most ready?” asked Bunny, who opened the door for the boy acrobat and his singing sister.

“Yes,” was the answer. “Mr. Raymond has had the stage built and they are putting in the seats to-day. Was there any mail for us, Bunny?” Mart asked.

“No,” answered the little boy.

“Oh dear!” sighed Lucile. “I don’t believe we’ll ever hear from our folks. I guess they’ve forgotten us!”

“Maybe you’ll hear at Christmas,” said Sue softly. “You get things at Christmas you don’t get in all the year, and maybe you’ll get the letter you want, Lucile.”

“I hope so,” was the answer. “It’s lonesome not to have any folks writing to you. But of course we love it here!” she made haste to add, for indeed the Browns were very kind to the boy and the girl, and also to Mr. Treadwell, who seemed to like it in Bellemere.

At last the new hall was finished, the farm scenery Mr. Brown had bought was moved in, and one bright, sunny day, with the sparkling white snow on the ground outside, the boys and girls gathered over the hardware store for practice.

“Now we will try the first act,” said Mr. Treadwell, when the meadow scene had been set up on the stage, and it “looked as real as anything!” as Sue whispered to Sadie West.

“Take your places!” said the actor. “Remember now, Bunny and Sue are supposed to be picking daisies in the meadow, and you other children are picking buttercups. All at once an old tramp comes along the road—which is the front of the stage, as I’ve told you.”

“Oh, I don’t want to play if there’s going to be an old twamp in it!” exclaimed little Belle Hanson. “I don’t like twamps! They’s awful dirty!”

"It isn't a real tramp," said Mr. Treadwell. "I dress up like one, Belle," for he had arranged to have a number of costumes for himself so he could take different parts in the little play.

"Well, if it's just a play twamp all wight," said Belle. "They's wagged maybe, but not dirty."

The children were told what they must do and say for the first act. They had practiced it over and over again, but even then some of them would forget at times.

"Now we're all ready," said Mr. Treadwell, at length. "Start to pick daisies, Bunny and Sue, and the rest of you pick buttercups. Then I'll make believe I'm a tramp and come along the road."

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As this was not what is called a “dress rehearsal” neither Mr. Treadwell nor the children had on any special costumes. They were wearing their everyday clothes.

Bunny, Sue, and the others took their places, and spoke their proper lines.

“Oh, here comes a tramp!” suddenly cried Sue to her brother, as she was supposed to do in the play when Mr. Treadwell appeared on the stage. “Here comes a tramp!”

Now Bunny was supposed to have a speech at this point, but no sooner had Sue cried out just as she had been taught to do, than a strange voice answered her, saying:

“A tramp is it! Set the dog on him! Here, Towser! Get after the tramp! No tramps allowed around here! Bow! Wow! Wow!” and then came a shrill whistle as of some one calling a dog.

CHAPTER XII

A SURPRISE

Mr. Treadwell, who was closely watching Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, to see that they did their first part in the play all right, looked up in surprise as he heard the strange voice speaking about the tramp, calling the dog and whistling.

“Please don’t do that,” said the actor. “That isn’t in the play. Who said it?”

“No—nobody—I guess,” replied Charlie Star.

“Well, somebody must have said it, for I heard it,” replied Mr. Treadwell, with a smile.

“Don’t do it again! Now Bunny and Sue try it again. Make believe, Sue, that you see a tramp coming down the road. I’m to be the tramp, you know, and on the night of the show I’ll really dress up like one. Now go on.”

Bunny looked at Sue and Sue looked at Bunny. The other children in the play also looked at one another. They were sure none of them had spoken, and yet Mr. Treadwell seemed to think the voice had been one of theirs.

“Oh, here comes a tramp!” cried Sue once more, and Bunny was just about to repeat his part, when, again, came the strange, shrill voice, saying:

“No tramps allowed! No tramps wanted! Give him a cold potato and let him go!”

“Oh, I’m not going to stay here!” suddenly cried Sadie West.

"There is something funny here," said Bunny Brown. "None of us is talking and yet we hear a voice."

Mr. Treadwell, who had been looking over the papers on which he had written down the different parts of the play, looked up quickly when he again heard the strange voice. He was just about to ask who had called out when something fluttered down out of the stage tree which was to be set up in the orchard scene. The tree was off to one side, in what are called in theater talk, the "wings." Out of the tree fluttered something with flapping wings.

"It's a big owl!" cried George Watson.

"Don't let it get hold of your hair or it'll pull it all out!" called Sue. "Owls feets gets tangled in your hair," and she put her hands over her head.

"Pooh! They don't either!" cried Helen Newton.

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The children were rushing here and there about the stage, and Mr. Treadwell was trying to see where the strange bird was going to light, when Bunny Brown cried out:

“Tisn’t an owl at all! It’s Mr. Jed Winkler’s parrot!”

And when the fluttering bird had come to rest on top of the stage barn, it was seen that it was just what Bunny said—a big, green parrot. There it perched, picking at a make believe shingle with its hooked bill, and calling in its shrill voice:

“No tramps allowed! No tramps allowed! Call the dog! Here, Towser! Give him a cold potato and let him go! Bow wow!”

Then how all the children laughed!

“Why, it surely is Mr. Winkler’s parrot!” exclaimed Mr. Treadwell, as he looked at the green bird. “He was safe in his cage when I came out this morning, but he must have got loose. I’d better go and tell Miss Winkler, for she likes the parrot as much as she doesn’t like Jed’s monkey. She told me she was teaching the parrot to say some new words, but I didn’t know they were about tramps or I would have known right away it wasn’t any of you children speaking during the play. Come on down, Polly!” called the actor to the green bird.

But Polly seemed to like it up on top of the stage barn, and from the top of the roof it cried again:

“No tramps! No tramps allowed! Towser, get after the tramps!”

The children laughed again, and Mr. Treadwell said:

“It wouldn’t do to have the parrot in the play, or he’d spoil the first scene. Now I’d better go and tell Miss Winkler where she can find the bird.”

But he was saved this trouble, for just then Miss Winkler herself came up the stairs leading from the hall at one side of the hardware store.

“Is my parrot here, Mr. Treadwell?” she asked the actor who boarded at her house. “I let him out of his cage when I was cleaning it a while ago, and when I looked for him, to put him back, he was gone. One of my windows was open and he must have flown out. Some of my neighbors said they saw a big bird flying toward the hardware store, so I came over. Mr. Raymond and I couldn’t find him downstairs, and he told me to look up here. Have you seen Polly?”

The big, green bird answered for himself then, for he cried out:

“Look out for tramps!”

“Oh, there you are!” exclaimed Miss Winkler. “Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, Polly, to fly off like that? You’ll catch your death of cold; too, coming out this wintry weather! Here, come to me!”

She held out her hand, and the parrot fluttered down to one finger. Miss Winkler scratched the green bird’s head, and the parrot seemed to like this.

“No tramps allowed!” he cried.

“I taught him to say that!” said Miss Winkler. “I thought it would be a good thing for a parrot to say. Often tramps come around when Jed isn’t at home, and if they hear Polly speaking they’ll think it’s a man and go away. Now, Polly, we’ll go home!”

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"No tramps allowed!" said the bird again.

"I hope my parrot didn't spoil the play," said Miss Winkler to Mr. Treadwell and the children.

"Oh, no," answered the actor. "We didn't know he was in here, and when he began talking I thought it was one of the boys or girls speaking out of turn. But he did no harm."

"I'm glad of that," said the elderly woman. "A parrot is a heap sight better than a monkey, I tell Jed. He ought to teach Wango to talk, and then he'd be of some use!"

The children laughed as she went downstairs with the parrot on her finger, and Sue said:

"A monkey would be funny if he could talk, wouldn't he?"

"I should say so!" exclaimed Mr. Treadwell. "But now, children, we'll get on with the play."

Miss Winkler took her parrot home and shut him, or her, up in a cage. Sometimes "Polly" was called "him," and again "her." It didn't seem to matter which. The bird had got out of an open window when Miss Winkler was busy in another room, and, like the monkey, had gone to the store of Mr. Raymond, not far away.

I need not tell you about the practice for the play, as it took so long for each boy and girl to learn his or her part, and how to come on and go off the stage at the right time. At the proper place I'll tell you all about the play, but just now I'll say that for several days there was hard practice with Mr. Treadwell, Mart, and Lucile to help, or "coach," as it is called, the children.

"Do you think we'll be ready by Christmas?" asked Bunny one day.

"Oh, surely," answered the actor. It was planned to have the play, "Down on the Farm," given Christmas afternoon, and the money was to go to the Home for the Blind in Bellemere, and not the Red Cross.

"Oh, it's snowing again!" cried Bunny Brown, as he ran into the house one afternoon, when he and Sue came home from school. "May we take our sleds out, Mother?"

"Yes, I think so," answered Mrs. Brown.

"Where's Lucile?" asked Sue. "Can't she come and sleigh ride with us?"

“She and Mart are out in the pony stable,” answered Sue’s mother. “Your father let Mart come home early from the office, and he and his sister have been out in the barn ever since. I can’t say what they’re doing. Maybe you’d better go and see.”

“Come on, Sue!” cried Bunny Brown. “Maybe they’re practicing some new acts for the play.”

But when Bunny and his sister entered the stable where the Shetland pony was kept, a sound of hammering was heard.

“Are you here, Mart?” called Bunny.

“Yes,” was the answer. “Come and see what Lucile and I have made for you and Sue!”

Bunny and his sister hurried into the room where the little pony cart stood, and there they saw something that made them open their eyes in delight.

CHAPTER XIII

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"THEY'RE GONE"

The pony cart, which generally stood in the middle of the barn floor next to the stall of Toby, the little Shetland, had been rolled back out of the way, and in its place stood what first seemed to Sue and Bunny to be a large box. But when they looked a second time, they saw that the box was fastened on a large sled—larger than either of their small ones.

"What are you makin'?" asked Sue.

"Oh, something to give you and Bunny a pony ride," answered Mart.

"Oh, it's a pony sled, isn't it?" cried Bunny.

"Well, yes, something like that," was the answer, given with a smile. "There wasn't much to do down at the dock to-day, so your father let me off early. On my way home I saw this large sled at Mr. Raymond's store. It was broken, so he let me buy it cheap. I brought it here, mended it, and fastened on it this drygoods box. Lucile helped me, and she lined it with an old blanket your mother gave us. Now what do you think of your sled?" and Mart stepped back out of the way so Bunny and Sue could see what he had made.

"Oh, it's just—just dandy!" cried the little boy.

"And it's a real seat in it!" exclaimed Sue.

"Yes, we took a smaller box and put it inside the large one for a seat," explained Lucile. "Now don't you want to go for a ride?"

"I—I—oh, it's dandy," cried Bunny, his eyes round with pleasure.

"See," went on Mart, "I am going to take the thills off the pony cart and fasten them on this sled. Then you can hitch up the Shetland and go for a ride."

"Oh! Oh!" squealed Sue, in delight, as she jumped up and down on the barn floor.

"Say, this is more than dandy!" cried Bunny. "It's *Jim Dandy*!"

He went closer to look at the home-made sled while Mart took the shafts from the pony cart and fastened them on the dry goods box at a place he had made for that purpose.

"Why, there's room for all four of us in the sled!" said Bunny, as he noticed how large the box was. "And our pony can pull four. He's done it lots of times."

“Well, then I guess he can do it on the slippery snow,” said Mart. “We’ll come if you want us to, Bunny.”

“Of course I want you!” said the little boy.

“And Lucile, too!” added Sue, for she was very fond of the singing girl actress.

“Yes, I’ll come,” said Lucile. “But if you drive, Bunny, you must promise not to go too fast.”

“Oh, I’ll go slow,” he agreed.

“Maybe the snow’ll stop and then we can’t go riding,” Sue said.

“Oh, go and look and see if it has!” cried her brother. “That would be too bad, wouldn’t it, to have the snow stop after Mart had made such a fine sled?”

But a look out the window of the barn showed the white flakes still swirling down, and Bunny and Sue laughed and clapped their hands in delight as Mart brought the pony from his stall.

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Everything was just right. The pony backed in between the shafts, and soon drew the new sled outside where the newly fallen snow let it slip easily along.

"It will look nicer when it's painted," said Mart.

"I think it's nice now!" said Bunny.

"Terrible nice!" agreed Sue.

"Well, get in, and we'll have a ride," suggested Lucile. "Can you drive, Bunny?"

"Oh, yes!" was the answer; and Bunny soon showed that he could by taking the reins and guiding the pony around to the front of the house.

"Come on out, Mother, and see what we have!" cried Sue, as Bunny stopped the little horse.

"Oh, isn't that just fine!" laughed Mrs. Brown, as she came to the door. "What a nice surprise for you children! Did you thank Mart and Lucile for making it?"

"I—I guess we forgot," said Bunny. "But we're glad you live with us," he said to the boy actor and his sister.

"So are we!" laughed Lucile. "This is more fun than going about from one place to another, and traveling half the night."

"I'm glad, too," said Sue. "Now let's go for a ride."

And they did, down the village street, stopping now and then to let some of their boy or girl friends look at the new pony sled Mart had made from an old drygoods box and the broken "bob" from the hardware store.

The white flakes sifted down, like feathers from a big goose flying high in the air, the bells on the Shetland pony jingled, and Bunny and Sue thought that never had they been so happy.

The snow lasted several days, and each day after school Bunny Brown and his sister Sue went for a pony ride in the jolly sled. Mart had painted it a bright red, and it really looked very nice.

"That boy is handy with tools," said Mr. Brown to his wife one day, when they were talking about Mart and wondering if he and Lucile would ever find their relatives. "If he'd like to stay with me he would be good help around the boats in the summer. He and Bunker Blue are good friends, and one helps the other."

“Lucile is good help around the house,” said Mrs. Brown. “I’d love to have them with me always, but of course if they have relatives it would be better for them to live in their own home. Do you think the children’s play will be nice?”

“Oh, I’m sure it will. Mr. Treadwell says they are doing nicely. I don’t suppose they will make much money, but they’ll have the fun of it, and it is good for children to try to help others, as Bunny, Sue, and their friends are hoping to help the Home for the Blind.”

“It’s too bad about Mart’s blind uncle, isn’t it? Do you think he’ll ever be found?”

“Well, we can only hope,” said Mr. Brown.

Though Bunny and Sue had fun in the snow and on the ice they did not forget to practice for the new play, nor did the other children. One afternoon all the little actors and actresses were assembled in the new hall over the hardware store. A rehearsal was going on, and nearly all the mothers of the children were there, as Mr. Treadwell had asked them to come so he might talk to them about the costumes that had to be made for the little girls and boys.

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Just after the second scene, which took place partly in the barnyard, and partly in the barn itself, Will Laydon came walking out to the middle of the stage where Mr. Treadwell stood.

"They—they're gone!" exclaimed Will, seemingly much excited.

"Just a moment," said the actor, who was talking to Mrs. Brown. "I'll attend to you in a minute, Will."

"But they're gone!" exclaimed the boy, and Mrs. Brown and the other ladies turned to look at him in some surprise. "My white mice got out of their cage just now," said Will, "and they're running all over. My white mice are loose!"

CHAPTER XIV

SPLASH HANGS ON

For a while there was a good deal of excitement and wild scampering about. Mice ran here and mice ran there. Children scrambled after them or scrambled to get out of their way. There were cries and shrieks and laughter.

One little white mouse, frightened and not knowing where to go, ran up the dress skirt and into the lap of the mother of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue.

"Come here, Will, and come quick," called Mrs. Brown to the owner of the white mice. "I do not like your sort of pet, come and take it away—and come quick, I say!"

"All right, I'll come," answered Will.

"Don't be frightened," called out Mr. Treadwell. "I'm sure Will's white mice are too well-trained to harm any one."

"Oh, we're not afraid!"

"They won't hurt anybody," said the boy who owned the white pets, and who was going to have them do little tricks during the show. "Why, they're so tame they'll crawl all over you and go to sleep in your pocket!"

"Oh, take 'em away! Take 'em away!" cried one girl. "I wouldn't have come if I had known there were to be any mice!"

"But they're white mice," said Will, "and I didn't know they were out of the cage. Somebody must have opened the door."

"I'll help you hunt for the white mice," offered Bunny Brown. "I'm not afraid of 'em!"

"I aren't, either," added Sue.

"I'm not zactly 'fraid of 'em," said Helen Newton, "but they make you feel so *ticklish* when they crawl on you!"

"They're nice," said Bunny Brown, as he crawled under a chair to coax a white mouse that was trying to hide behind a paper bag. "And they'll do some nice tricks in our show."

It took some little time to catch all the white mice. Will made sure, by counting twice, that he had every one of his pets back in their wire cage.

Then Mr. Treadwell told the mothers of the little girls what sort of costumes the young actresses and actors must have for the different parts in the play. Everything was very simple, and no costly costumes need be bought.

"You see we want to make all the money we can for the Home for the Blind," explained Bunny.

"That's a good idea," said Mrs. West. "I think the children are just perfectly fine to do things like this. It teaches them to be kind."

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After the talk about the dresses and suits, Mr. Treadwell went on with, the rehearsal, or practice. I have told you something of what the play was to be about, but changes were made in it from time to time, during practice, just as changes are made in real plays. It was found that one boy could speak a piece better than another boy, so he was allowed to do this, while the first boy, perhaps, was given a funny dance to do. The same with the girls—some could sing better than others. Most of the solo singing in the play was to be done by Lucile Clayton. She had a very sweet, clear voice, and of course she had had more practice than any of the others.

Of course all the boys wished they could do some of the acrobatic work that Mart was to do on the stage. But though some of the lads of Bellemere, like Bunny Brown, were pretty good at turning somersaults or flipflops, none of them was equal to Mart, who had been on the stage for several years. But he was training Bunny, Harry Bentley, Charlie Star and George Watson to do a leap-frog dance which Mr. Treadwell said would be very funny.

Mr. Treadwell was not only the author of the little play, but he was also the stage director; that is, he told the boys and girls what to do and when to do it. In this he was helped by Lucile and Mart. These three performers, who had been in such bad luck when the vaudeville troupe broke up, were now quite happy again. Mr. Treadwell and Mart were working for Mr. Brown, and though they did not make as much money as when they had been acting in theaters, still they had an easier time. Lucile, too, liked it at Mrs. Brown's.

Of course the two "waifs" as they were sometimes called, wished they could find out where their uncle and aunt were. They also wanted to find their blind uncle. But, so far, no trace of any of them was to be had, though many letters were written by Mr. Brown and Mr. Treadwell.

Mr. Treadwell was a very busy man. After he finished work at Mr. Brown's office he would help the children rehearse for the farm play. In the play Mr. Treadwell was to take several parts. In one act he was a tramp, and in another a farmer. Then, too, he took the character of a man from the city, and later he did a number of impersonations, using the costumes he had made use of in the various theaters.

"Don't you think we could have our dog Splash in the play?" asked Bunny of Mr. Treadwell one afternoon when the rehearsal was finished.

"Why, yes, I think so," was the answer. "I'll be thinking up a part for him. Has he good, strong teeth?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Sue, who was standing beside Bunny. "He has terrible strong teeth! You ought to see him bite a bone!"

“Well, I don’t know that I want him to bite a bone on the stage,” said Mr. Treadwell, with a laugh. “But we’ll see about it.”

Some days after that, during which time Mr. Treadwell spent many hours with Splash alone in the stable, Bunny and Sue were quite surprised on coming from school to hear loud barking in their yard.

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"Maybe Splash is chasing a cat!" exclaimed Bunny.

"It must be a strange cat," said Sue; "'cause he likes all the other cats around here."

The children ran around the corner of the house and there saw a strange sight. Mr. Treadwell was running about the yard. After him ran Splash, and the dog was holding tightly to Mr. Treadwell's coat, shaking the tails as if trying to tear it off the actor.

"Oh! Oh!" screamed Sue. "Our Splash is mad at Mr. Treadwell!"

CHAPTER XV

TICKETS FOR THE SHOW

Back and forth across the snow-covered yard ran Mr. Treadwell, and after him went Splash, the dog, holding to the flying coat-tails of the actor.

"Splash! Splash! Come here to me!" cried Bunny. But the dog did not obey.

"Oh, Mother, come quick!" called Sue. "Our dog is going to eat Mr. Treadwell all up!"

Splash, indeed, did seem very angry, for he barked and growled. He growled more than he barked, for he could not open his mouth wide enough to bark when he was holding to the coat.

Mrs. Brown rushed to the kitchen door, and she was as much surprised as the children were at what she saw.

"Oh, call some one! Get some man to make Splash let Mr. Treadwell alone!" cried Sue.

The actor, with the dog still clinging to him, was running toward the children now, and, to his surprise, Bunny saw that Mr. Treadwell was laughing.

"Is he—is he hurting you?" asked the little boy.

"Not a bit," was the answer. "Is Splash holding fast?"

"He's holding tight!" said Sue. "Oh, is he mad at you?"

Before Mr. Treadwell could answer there was a ripping sound, and a piece of cloth came loose from his coat. The piece of cloth stayed in Splash's teeth and the children's dog at once began to shake and worry it, as he might a big rat he had caught. And as Splash shook the piece of cloth he growled louder than before.

“Oh, has he torn your coat?” asked Mrs. Brown. “I never knew Splash to act that way before. He is always kind and gentle.”

“He’s all right now,” answered Mr. Treadwell, with a laugh. “This is only in fun and part of the play.”

“Part of the play!” exclaimed Bunny. “Didn’t he really tear your coat?”

“No,” answered the actor, and, turning around, he showed that his coat was not ripped a bit. Yet Splash certainly had a piece of cloth in his jaws.

“It’s just a trick I have been teaching Splash during the last few days,” explained Mr. Treadwell. “You see, I’m to take the part of a tramp in the first act. Now, most dogs don’t like tramps, so I thought I’d have that sort of dog in the farm play.

“Splash will make a good actor dog, I think. First I found a bit of old cloth that he was used to playing with and shaking as he might shake a rat. Then I sewed this piece of cloth to my coat, so it would not pull off too easily. Then I took Splash out to the barn to train him. As soon as he saw his own private piece of cloth sewed on my coat he chased after me and wanted to get it. I ran away and we played at that game until Splash did just what I wanted him to.

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"That is, he will run after me, grab hold of the piece of cloth sewed fast to my coat, and he'll hold on while I drag him about until the cloth tears loose just as you saw it. Though Splash barks and growls, it is all done in fun, and he likes the play very much."

"Is he going to do that on the stage?" asked Bunny.

"I hope that's what he'll do," said the actor, as he patted the dog, who came up to him, having given up, for the time, the teasing of the bit of cloth. "You see I'm to be a tramp in the first act of the play. I'll come walking down the road, and then, Bunny, you'll let Splash loose after me."

"He'll run out from the wings—that is from the side, you know—and chase me, for I'll be dressed in a ragged suit and on my coat-tails will be fastened the piece of cloth your dog likes so to tease. He'll grab hold of that, hang on, and I'll drag him across the stage. That ought to make the people laugh."

"I think it will," said Bunny. "And they'll think Splash is really mad at you, won't they?"

"I think they will, if we don't let them know any different," said the actor, with a laugh. "We must keep this part of our play a secret."

"Oh, yes! I love a secret!" said Sue. "We won't tell anybody."

"Splash is a smart dog," said Bunny, as he patted his pet.

"Indeed he is!" declared Mr. Treadwell. "He learned this hanging on trick much sooner than I thought he would. He likes to chase after me and let me drag him by my coat-tails."

After Splash had had a little rest the actor put him through the trick again, and Bunny and Sue laughed as they saw their dog swinging about the yard, making believe to chase a tramp. Of course, Mr. Treadwell was not dressed like a tramp now, though he would be in the first act of the play.

If Bunny and Sue could have had their way they would not have gone to school at all during the days when they were getting ready to give the play, "Down on the Farm." All the other boys and girls who were to be in it, also, would have been glad to stay at home from lessons, but, of course, that would never do. But all the time they had to spare from their books, Bunny, Sue, and the others spent either in practicing their parts or going to the hall over the hardware store where the performance was to be given.

Bunny and Sue had about learned their parts now, and so had most of the other children. Some were slower than others, and had to be told over and over again what to do. But, on the whole, Mr. Treadwell said he was well pleased.

School would close for the holidays a week before Christmas, and then there would be more time to rehearse. Meanwhile Bunny, Sue, and their friends had fun on the snow and ice as well as in practicing for the show.

Each day Mart and Lucile anxiously waited for the mail, to see if there were any replies to the letters sent out, seeking news of their uncles and their aunt. But no word came.

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"I don't believe we'll ever hear," said Lucile with a sigh.

"It doesn't seem so," agreed her brother. "I guess we'll soon have to begin looking for another place with some show company on the road. I have almost enough money saved to take us to New York."

"Oh, but we can't let you go yet a while," said; Mr. Brown. "I'm sure we'll get some word of your relatives some day. Meanwhile, we are glad to have you stay with us. I like to have you work for me, Mart."

"Well, I'm glad to work, of course. But I feel that the theater is the place where I belong. Of course, it's harder work than in your office, but it's what my sister and I have been brought up to."

"I'm not going to hold you back," said Mr. Brown, to the boy and girl performers. "But stay here until after the holidays anyhow. By that time the little play will be over and you can decide what you want to do. Who knows? Perhaps by then we may find not only your blind Uncle Bill, but your Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie as well."

But Mart and Lucile shook their heads. They did not have much hope. However, they were glad to help the children get ready for the farm play.

One afternoon, when Bunny and Sue came in from school and were getting ready to go to the hall to practice, they heard their doorbell ring loud and long.

"Oh, maybe that's a telegram for us!" exclaimed Lucile. She was always hoping for sudden good news.

"No, it's Charlie Star," said Bunny, who had gone to the door. "Oh, come down and see what he's got!" he cried, and Sue, Mart, and Lucile hastened down the stairs.

"What is it?" asked Sue, as she saw her brother and Charlie looking at something which Charlie held. "Is it a mud turtle?"

"It's tickets!" exclaimed Bunny. "Tickets for our show! Charlie printed 'em on his printing press!"

He held up for all to see a small square of pasteboard on which appeared:

GRA TE SHOW
BY
BUNNY BWOWN aND HiS
SisTEER S*UE
CoMe 1 comE All and
sEE

“DO\$N onTHE farn!!
ADMISHION \$25

CHAPTER XVI

UPSIDE DOWNSIDE BUNNY

For a few seconds Bunny, Sue, Mart and Lucile looked over the shoulders of one another at the ticket which Charlie Star had brought to show them.

“I didn’t know we were going to have real tickets!” exclaimed Bunny. “This is lots more fun than I thought.”

“It’s just like a real show, with real tickets an’ everything!” exclaimed Sue.

“Course that isn’t a very good ticket, yet,” explained Charlie. “I just got it set up and there’s a couple mistakes in it. I’ll have them fixed before the show.”

“Yes, I guess it would be better to have the mistakes fixed before you print the tickets for the show,” replied Mart, with a smile. He knew something about show tickets, and he could see more mistakes in the one Charlie had made than could the young printer himself.

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"But it's very nice," said Lucile, not wanting Charlie's feelings to be hurt. "Only you aren't going to charge twenty-five dollars to come to the show, are you?" she asked with a smile.

"Oh, no, that ought to be twenty-five cents," said Charlie, "only I made a mistake. Or else Harry Bentley did. He helped me set the type."

"Where did you get the printing press?" asked Mart.

"It's one my father had when he was a little boy," answered Charlie. "He had it put away in the attic, and he always said I could take it when I got old enough. So I asked him for it to-day.

"He said I wasn't quite old enough, but when I told him about the show we're going to have for the Blind Home he said he guessed I could print the tickets. So I set up the type. Harry helped me, and when we get it fixed right I'll print all the tickets for nothing."

"That will be very nice," said Mrs. Brown, who came in to look at what Charlie had brought over. "You did very well for the first time, I think."

I suppose you children can see where Charlie made the mistakes in setting up the type. But with the help of his father he corrected them, and when the tickets were printed for the show they were all right, even to the price to get in, which was twenty-five cents.

But of course I haven't really reached the show part of this story yet. I just thought I'd mention the tickets. There was still much to be done before Bunny, Sue, and the other children were ready for the first act of the play, "Down on the Farm."

Mr. Treadwell gave a great deal of his time to telling the boys and girls what to do, and in going over the little farm play. All the time he could spare away from Mr. Brown's office the actor gave to the show. If you have ever been in a play you know how often you must do the same thing over. Finally the time comes when you are as nearly perfect as possible. It was that way with Bunny and Sue. Sometimes they were tired of saying over and over again such things as: "Here come a tramp!" or "Let's call Snap, he'll make the tramp go away!"

Those were only two "lines" in the play, but these, as well as others, had to be said over and over again, until Mr. Treadwell was sure the children would not forget.

Mart and Lucile, also, had to practice their parts, but as the boy and girl actor and actress had been in plays before, it was not so hard for them. And though the two little strangers gave much of their time to getting ready for the performance they still had hours when they thought of their missing relations—Uncle Bill, Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie.

For, though many letters had been written by Mr. Brown and Mr. Treadwell, no answers had come, and at times Lucile and Mart were very sad.

But no one could be sad very long when they were near Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. These two were always doing such funny things and saying such funny things that Mart and Lucile laughed more often than they were sad.

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"Do you think, we can have Mr. Winkler's monkey and Miss Winkler's parrot in the show?" asked Bunny of Mart one day.

"I guess we can if Mr. Treadwell will write parts for them," answered Mart. "But the trouble is, you can't be sure that Wango and the parrot will do the things you want them to. The parrot might speak at the wrong time, and Wango might cut up by chasing his tail or hanging by his hind paws from the ceiling, and so make the audience laugh when we didn't want them to."

"That's so," agreed Bunny. "Then I guess we'll only just have our dog Splash in the play. He'll do whatever you tell him."

"He certainly chases after the tramp in a funny way," laughed Lucile. "I should think Mr. Treadwell would be afraid the dog would tear his coat."

"Oh, Splash only bites the old piece of cloth," said Mart. "It's a good trick."

A little while after this Bunny saw Mart going out to the garage with some ropes and straps under his arm. The garage was partly a barn, for the Shetland pony was kept in it and some hay for Toby, the pony, to eat was also stored in the same place.

"What are you going to do?" Bunny asked the boy acrobat.

"Practice a few of my new tricks that I'm going to do in the play," Mart answered.

"There's a new kind of back somersault I want to turn, and a new kind of flipflop I want to make. You know in the play I do some tricks in front of the stage barn to make the farmers laugh. I'm supposed to be a boy who has run away from a circus."

"We knew a boy who really ran away from a circus once," said Bunny. "And he was in our show when we had one down at grandpa's farm."

"Well, I'm going to do a few circus tricks, as well as I can, though I never was in a tent show," said Mart.

"Please, may I come and watch you?" asked Bunny.

"Yes," answered Mart kindly.

So the acrobat and Bunny went out to the little barn, and there, with ropes and straps, Mart made a trapeze, such as you have often seen on the stage or in a circus. On the floor of the barn Mart spread a pile of hay.

"Is that for our pony to come out and eat?" Bunny wanted to know.



“Oh, no,” answered Mart. “That’s to make something soft for me to fall on, in case I slip. In the circus the performers have nets under them to catch them in case they slip. But you can’t have nets in a garage very well, so I use the hay.”

Bunny watched his friend swing to and fro, sometimes by his hands and sometimes by his toes, on the trapeze in the barn. And Mart was so sure and careful that he didn’t slip once. So he didn’t fall down on the hay.

“Did you ever fall?” asked Bunny, as he watched the young acrobat swing to and fro, with his head down.

“Oh, yes indeed! More than once. And once I broke my leg so I couldn’t go on the stage for over a month.”

“I don’t want to break my leg,” said Bunny.

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"I hope you never do," answered Mart. "But, of course, as you aren't going on a trapeze you won't fall and break anything."

"I wish I could go on a trapeze," murmured Bunny. "I could do some of the things you do I guess."

"I'm afraid not," laughed Mart, with a shake of his head. "It isn't as easy as it looks, and you are not big enough. If you do your somersaults and part of a flipflop in the play, as you are going to do, you'll make a hit, Bunny."

"Do you mean I'll hit the floor?" asked the little boy.

"No," laughed Mart. "Though if you aren't careful that may happen. But when I say you'll make a 'hit' I mean that the audience will like the tricks you do and they'll clap."

"Like they did in the circus?" asked Bunny.

"Just like that," said Mart.

Bunny sat and watched his friend. It looked so easy when Mart swung to and fro on the rope, twisting and turning this way and that.

"I could do it," said Bunny to himself.

When Mart was called to the house by his sister he forgot to take down the ropes and straps that made the trapeze in the barn. They hung right before Bunny Brown's eyes.

"I believe I can do it!" said Bunny to himself, as he looked at the swinging trapeze. "Anyhow, if I do fall, there's some soft hay."

And then Bunny did what he should not have done. He pulled some boxes and rolled a barrel over to the middle of the barn floor until he had a sort of platform under the trapeze Mart had put up to practice on. Then Bunny climbed up, got hold of the swinging bar and swung his legs over. Then something queer happened, for the first thing Bunny Brown knew, there he was, hanging upside down with his legs over the trapeze and his head pointing to the pile of hay in the middle of the barn floor.

CHAPTER XVII

SUE'S QUEER SLIDE

Bunny Brown was at first so frightened, when he found himself swinging upside downside from Mart's trapeze, that he did not know what to do. He was too frightened even to call out, as he nearly always did when he found himself in trouble. Nearly

always his first thought was of his father or mother. But this time he hardly knew what to do.

It had all happened so suddenly. He had not meant to get upside downside this way. All he wanted to do was to sit on the trapeze, as he had often sat in a swing, and sway to and fro. But something had gone wrong, something had slipped, and there Bunny was, hanging by his knees with his head toward the floor.

Then Bunny had a thought that he might let go with his clinging legs and drop to the pile of hay. That was what the hay was for—to fall on. It was a thick, soft pile, but, somehow or other, Bunny did not like to think of falling on it head first.

“If I could only land on it with my hands or feet it wouldn’t be so bad,” thought the little fellow to himself. “But if I hit on my head——”

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And when he thought of that he clung with all his force to the wooden bar. He was still swinging to and fro, and on this first swing Bunny had knocked to one side the pile of boxes and the barrel with which he had made himself a sort of ladder so he could reach Mart's trapeze, which was several feet above the barn floor. So, now that the boxes by which he had climbed up were out of reach, Bunny could not get down by using them.

And he wanted, very much, to get down. He tried to wiggle around in such a way that he could reach the wooden bar with his hands, but he could not, and the more he wiggled the more it felt as though he might fall.

Then Bunny decided that he must call for help. He had hoped that Mart might come back, but the acrobatic boy was in the house helping his sister learn a new song Lucile was going to sing in the play. So Mart knew nothing of what was happening to Bunny.

"Mother! Daddy! Come and get me!" cried Bunny as he swung to and fro on the trapeze, head downward. "Come and get me! Mother! Daddy!"

Bunny might have called like this for some time, and neither his father nor his mother would have heard him. For Mr. Brown was down at his office on the dock, and Mrs. Brown was making a cake, beating up eggs with the egg beater.

An egg beater, you know, makes a lot of noise, and even if Bunny had been in the kitchen Mrs. Brown might not have heard him call out. And away out in the barn as he was, of course she couldn't hear him. I don't believe she could have heard him even if she hadn't been using the egg beater.

So poor little Bunny Brown swung by his legs on the trapeze in the upper part of the garage and he did not know how to get down nor how to stop himself.

"Daddy! Mother!" he called again, but no one heard him.

On a summer day, when the windows were open, Bunny's voice might have been heard from the barn to the house, but now no one heard him.

But, as it also happened, Sue was the means by which Bunny's trouble was discovered, though Sue, too, had an accident. Soon after Mart came to the house to help his sister, Sue heard the doorbell ring, and when she went to see who was there she saw Helen Newton, one of her little playmates who was to act in the show with Sue.

"Oh, Sue!" exclaimed Helen, "have you got a doll you could lend me? I have to have one in the play, and the only one I had isn't any good any more."

"Is your doll sick?" Sue wanted to know.

"She's worse than sick," said Helen. "Our puppy dog got hold of her the other day, and he dragged my doll all around the kitchen and all her clothes were torn off and she's chewed and she isn't fit to be seen. I can't have her in the play with me, though I did at first, before the puppy chewed her."

"I guess Sue can let you take one of her dolls," said Mrs. Brown, with a smile, as she came in from the kitchen where she had been doing her baking. "What one do you think would be best for Helen, Sue?"

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"Oh, I guess my unbreakable doll, Jane Anna, would be best for in the play," Sue answered. "If you drop her, Helen, it won't hurt."

"No, and it won't hurt much if our puppy dog gets hold of her," added Helen. "Course our dog won't come to the play and chew up any dolls, but he might get hold of one again when I'm practicing at home. I think the Jane Anna will be best."

"I'll get her for you," offered Sue. But when she went to look for the doll for Helen, Jane Anna could not be found.

"I wonder where it is!" exclaimed Sue.

"Maybe your dog Splash chewed her up," said Helen.

"No, he doesn't chew dolls," replied Sue. "He chews up my school books, and Bunny's, but he doesn't chew dolls."

"I wish my dog would chew books," went on Helen. "Then I wouldn't have to study. Maybe he will chew them after he finds there isn't any of my old doll left to bite."

Sue looked in different places in the house for her unbreakable doll, but could not find it. She asked Lucile and Mart about it, when the brother and sister took a rest from the song which Lucile was to sing, though her brother had a part in it.

"Lost your doll, have you, Sue?" asked Mart. "Well, maybe she is hiding under the umbrella plant!"

"Oh, you're teasing me!" said Sue, and that's just what Mart was doing. For though Mrs. Brown did have an umbrella plant, and a rubber plant also, Sue's doll was not under either one.

"The last time I saw you have your unbreakable doll was out in the hayloft of the barn," said Lucile. "Don't you remember? You were playing house with Sadie West."

"O, now I remember!" cried Sue. "I left Jane Anna asleep in the hay in the corner of the loft. I'll go out and get her for you, Helen. You wait here."

So Helen sat down in a chair in the dining room while Sue ran out to the barn to look for her doll. Mart and Lucile began practicing the song again.

Now all this while Bunny Brown was swinging by his legs, upside downside on the trapeze. It seems to him a long while since he had started to hang head downward, but, really, it was not very long. For though it takes me quite a little while to tell you about it, really it all happened in a short while.

So Bunny Brown had not been swinging very long, head downward, before Sue ran out to the barn, or garage, whichever you like to call it, to look for her doll. Up the stairs into the loft, where Mart had fastened the trapeze, went Sue. She had just reached the top step and was wondering if her doll were really there when, all at once, Sue heard some one cry:

“Help me down! Help me down!”

“Oh, my!” was the little girl’s first thought, “can that be my doll?”

Then she knew it couldn’t be. For, though some dolls have inside them a little phonograph that can say words, Sue’s Jane Anna had nothing like this.

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"But somebody yelled!" said Sue to herself.

Just then the voice shouted again.

"Help me down! Help me down!"

"Oh, it's Bunny!" exclaimed Sue, as she heard her brother's voice. "Where are you, and what's the matter, Bunny?" she asked.

A moment later she looked toward the middle of the hayloft and saw the little boy swinging by his legs from the trapeze.

"Oh, Bunny Brown, are you doing circus tricks up here?" asked Sue. "Mamma wouldn't let you! Oh, Bunny Brown!"

"Help me down, Sue! Help me down!" shouted Bunny. "I daren't drop on the hay, and I want to get down!"

Sue took a step forward. She did not know just what she was going to do, but she wanted to help Bunny. And just then Sue's feet seemed to drop out from under her, and down she went in a funny slide.

[Illustration: DOWN WENT SUE IN A FUNNY SLIDE.
Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Giving a Show. Page 161]

Down and down and down, with a lot of hay all around her, and out of sight of Bunny Brown, who was still on the trapeze, went sister Sue.

CHAPTER XVIII

MR. TREADWELL'S WIG

Bunny Brown, swinging by his knees from the trapeze, had just one little look at his sister Sue, and then he didn't see her again. At first Bunny thought perhaps he had fallen asleep and had dreamed that he had seen Sue. So many things had happened since he climbed up on the funny swing that it would not have surprised Bunny to have learned that he had fallen asleep and dreamed.

But a moment later he heard Sue's voice, and then Bunny felt sure it was not a dream. For as Sue slipped and fell down a deep hole, together with a lot of hay, she called:

"Oh, oh! Oh, Bunny! Oh, Mother! Oh, Daddy!"

She wanted all three of them to help her and she didn't know which one she wanted most.

"Oh, Sue! Sue!" cried Bunny, as soon as he felt sure it was his sister he had seen and not a dream. "Sue! Come and help me!"

"Somebody's got to help me!" half sobbed Sue, and her voice seemed very faint and far away.

And no wonder! For Sue had slipped down the little hole over the manger, or feed-box, in the stall of Toby, the Shetland pony. In this barn, as perhaps you have seen in barns at your grandpa's farm in the country, there is a little hole cut in the floor of the loft, or upstairs part, so hay can be pushed down from the mow into the stall of a horse or a pony. There was a little hay covering this hole, so Sue did not see it when she went up to look for her doll. And it was down this hole that Sue had fallen.

Right down she went, into the manger of the pony's stall, but as the manger was filled with hay Sue didn't get hurt a bit. But the pony was very much surprised. It was just as if, when you were eating your bread and milk at the table some day, the ceiling over your head should suddenly have a hole come in it, and down through the hole, from upstairs, should slide a little horse.

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"Oh! Oh!" cried Sue, in surprise. Of course the Shetland pony didn't say anything, but he was surprised just the same.

Sue wasn't hurt a bit, and soon she scrambled out of the manger and ran out of the stall. As she did so the little girl heard a bump, or thud, over her head. That bump made her think of Bunny, and how he was swinging on the trapeze.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue, running up the stairs again. "Did you see me slide down the hay hole?"

"Yes," answered Bunny, "I did. And did you hear me fall on the pile of hay under the trapeze?"

"I heard a bumpity-bump sound!" said Sue.

"That was me," explained Bunny. "I couldn't hold on any longer, so I had to let go. But I fell in the hay and I didn't hurt myself at all. I thought I would hurt myself, or I'd have let go before this. Now I'm all right. I can do a trapeze swing almost as good as Mart. I'm all right now!"

Certainly he seemed so to Sue, who by this time had got to the top of the stairs and was looking across the loft at her brother. Bunny wasn't hurt—the hay on which he had fallen was just like a feather bed.

"Well, we better go in now," said Sue. "We both falled down but we both didn't get hurt."

Bunny stood looking up at the trapeze. He was thinking of getting on it again, but as he remembered how frightened he was he made up his mind that he had better let Mart do those risky tricks.

"Oh, I almost forgot!" exclaimed Sue, as she and Bunny were going out of the barn toward the house. "I forgot my Jane Anna for Helen. I was coming out to get her when I heard you holler."

"I yelled a lot of times before anybody heard me," said Bunny, and he told Sue how he had climbed up on the pile of boxes, and how they had fallen so he could not get down off the trapeze.

"Well, you're down now," said Sue.

Mrs. Brown guessed that something was the matter when she saw Bunny and Sue coming back from the barn, looking rather excited, and she soon had the whole story. Then she told Bunny he must not get on Mart's trapeze again, as he was too little for that sort of play.

“Even if there’s a lot of hay under it can’t I get on?” asked Bunny.

“No, not even if there’s a lot of hay under it,” answered Mrs. Brown.

So that ended Bunny’s hopes of becoming a trapeze performer in the show. But Mart still kept on practicing, and soon he could do a number of good tricks. Lucile, too, practiced her songs, and those who heard the children at their rehearsals said the show, which had first been thought of by Bunny and Sue, would be a good one.

Charlie Star fixed the mistakes in the tickets he was printing for the farm play and soon they were ready to be sold. All the fathers and mothers of the children who were to be in the play bought tickets, and so did other persons in Bellemere. The tickets were put on sale in the hardware store, in the drug store, in the grocery of Mr. Sam Gordon, and in other places about town.

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Mr. Treadwell also made some big posters, telling about the show. These posters were hung in the window of the barber shop, and one was tacked up in the railroad station and another on Mr. Brown's dock office.

Everything was being made ready for the show which would be given Christmas afternoon. The children could hardly wait for the time to come, but, of course, they had to. Meanwhile, they had as much fun as they could when they were not at school or practicing their parts in the new hall built over the hardware store.

"How happy we could be living here and going to take part in a nice play if we only knew where our people were," said Lucile to her brother Mart one day.

"Yes, that's all we need to make us quite happy," said he. "But I guess we'll never see our uncles or Aunt Sallie again. Why, we haven't even heard from Mr. Jackson since our vaudeville show busted up.

"Well, I'm going to write just one more letter," went on Mart, and he got out pen, ink, and paper. "I'm going to write to that man in New York who used to act in the same play with Uncle Simon. Mr. Treadwell found that man's address the other day, and I'm going to write to him. He may know where Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie are."

"Does he know where Uncle Bill is?" asked. Lucile.

"I don't know. I'll ask him," decided Mart.

When the letter had been written Bunny and Sue came in from school. It was snowing again, and the ground was white with the beautiful flakes. The coats of Bunny and Sue were also covered, for they had been throwing snowballs at one another. Their cheeks were red and their eyes sparkling.

"Want to walk down the street with me while I mail this letter?" asked Mart of the two children.

"Oh, yes!" cried Sue.

"Can't we go in the pony sled?" Bunny asked. "There's enough snow to make it slip easy now."

"Yes, I guess we could go in the pony sled," agreed Mart. "And we can stop at Mr. Winkler's and ask Mr. Treadwell, if he's at home, if he wants us to come to rehearsal to-night."

Soon Bunny, Sue, Mart, and Lucile were riding down the street in the pony sled, having a fine time in the snow storm. It was quite a heavy fall of snow, but the weather was not very cold.

After mailing the letter the four children drove to the home of Mr. Winkler.

"I hope the monkey does something queer," said Bunny.

"I wish the parrot would sing a funny song!" exclaimed Sue.

"Something seems to be the matter, anyhow," said Lucile, as they got out of the little sled and walked toward the front door of Mr. Winkler's house, where the actor boarded.

"Look at Miss Winkler running around," and she pointed to the sister of the old sailor. Miss Winkler could be seen hurrying about the room from one window to another.

"Do you want us all to come to practice to-night, Mr. Treadwell?" asked Mart, as he and the children entered the house and saw the actor hurrying around after Miss Winkler.

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"Come to practice? Oh, I don't know!" was the answer. "I can't talk to you right away, Mart. Something has happened!"

"What is it?" asked Lucile. "Have you heard anything about——?"

"Oh, it isn't about your kin, I'm sorry to say," was the actor's answer. "It's just that one of my best wigs is missing—the one I wear when I dress up like General Washington. Those wigs are scarce, and I hardly ever let it out of my box. But now it is gone!"

"And I've searched high and low for it all over this house, but I can't find it!" said Miss Winkler.

Bunny and Sue did not know quite what to make of all the excitement over the lost wig which Mr. Treadwell wore on his head in certain parts of the play. So they stood to one side while the search went on. Sue looked in the sitting room, while Mr. Treadwell and Miss Winkler went into the parlor that was hardly ever opened.

Something that Bunny saw in a chair in front of the kitchen stove made him call out:

"Oh, Miss Winkler! there's a funny old man in your kitchen, and he's trying to open the cupboard door where you keep the cookies. Come and see the funny old man!"

CHAPTER XIX

UNCLE BILL

"What's that, Bunny Brown?" called Miss Winkler, stepping to the door of the parlor, in which Mr. Treadwell was looking for his missing wig. "What's that you said about an old man?"

"There's one in your kitchen now," added Sue, for she was now looking at the funny "old man" in the kitchen.

"One what in my kitchen?" asked Miss Winkler, in surprise.

"A funny old man," said Bunny again. "And he's after some of your nice sugar cookies." Bunny knew Miss Winkler's sugar cookies were nice because she sometimes gave him and Sue some. Not too often, but once in a while.

"An old man after my cookies, is there?" cried the sailor's sister. "Well, I'll see about that!"

Down the hall she hurried, leaving Mr. Treadwell to look for the wig himself, and this he was doing.

"I suppose it's some tramp!" exclaimed Miss Winkler. "Wait until I take the broom stick to him! The idea of taking my cookies! I'd rather give 'em to you children than to an old tramp. I wish your dog was here, Bunny Brown!"

"Oh, so do I!" cried Bunny. "Splash would hang on to the tramp the way he hangs to Mr. Treadwell's coat in the play. Oh, Sue, let's go home and get our Splash, and sic him on the tramp!"

By this time Miss Winkler had reached the kitchen door. Bunny and Sue, with Lucile and Mart, stood to one side, so the sailor's sister could go in and stop the funny old man from taking her cookies.

Into the kitchen hurried Miss Winkler. There, surely enough, with his gray head just showing over the back of a hall chair on which he was standing, was what seemed to be an old man. He had on a black coat, and one hand appeared to be reaching up into the cookie closet.

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"Hi there! Get down out of that!" cried Miss Winkler. "The idea of you daring to take my cookies! Get out of here! You tramp!"

And the green parrot, in his cage hanging in the kitchen, cried in his shrill voice:

"No tramps allowed! Out you go! Sic him, Towser! Bow wow!"

Bunny, Sue, Mart, and Lucile hurried into the kitchen after Miss Winkler. They saw her quickly take a broom from a corner.

And then, as the sailor's sister ran around in front of the chair, on which the old man tramp seemed to be standing, she gave a scream.

"Wango! You good-for-nothing monkey you!" cried Miss Winkler. "The idea of pretending you were a tramp! I've a good notion to take this broom to you, anyhow!"

There was a chatter from the chair and the gray head dropped down out of sight.

"Oh, was it Wango?" cried Bunny Brown.

"Indeed it was!" said Miss Winkler. "The idea of his fooling us all like that!"

"But he looked just like an old man with gray hair," said Sue.

"Indeed he did," chimed in Mart and Lucile Clayton.

Just then Mr. Treadwell came through the hall into the kitchen.

"It's no use, Miss Winkler," he said. "I can't find my big wig anywhere. If I use one like if in the play I'll have to send to New York for another. My wig is lost."

"No, it isn't, either!" exclaimed Miss Winkler. "There it is—on Wango!"

She pointed to the monkey, which, just then, ran around from behind the chair on which he had been standing. And, surely enough Wango had on the big, white wig for which Mr. Treadwell and Miss Winkler had been searching so long. The wig made Wango look like an old man.

"And he has on one of my jackets, too!" exclaimed the actor. "It's one I use in some of my stage plays, children, where I have to have a very short, little jacket. No wonder you thought a tramp was in Miss Winkler's kitchen! Wango, are you trying to be an impersonator, such as I used to be?" asked Mr. Treadwell, laughing and shaking his finger at Mr. Jed Winkler's monkey.

Wango made a funny little chattering noise, and took off the wig, which he held out to the actor.

“See, he’s saying he’s sorry!” exclaimed Lucile.

Next Wango took off the jacket. It was one of the costumes Mr. Treadwell used on the stage.

“I guess he won’t dress up again,” said Mart. “I didn’t know he was such a performer.”

“Oh, Wango is a regular pest for playing tricks!” said Miss Winkler. “I tell Jed, every day, that I won’t have the monkey around any longer, but I always give in and let him stay. Now if he was as nice and quiet as the parrot it would be all right.”

And just then the parrot began to screech and to cry:

“No tramps allowed! Sic ’em, Towser!”

Really the parrot made more noise than Wango, but Miss Winkler did not seem to think so.

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"Well, I'm glad to get back my wig, anyhow," said Mr. Treadwell, as he took that and the jacket from Wango. "This little monkey must have gone in my room, found that I left my trunk open, and then he took out what he wanted."

"Do you really think he knew he was dressing up like a tramp?" asked Lucile.

"You never know what Wango thinks he's doing," said Miss Winkler. "But I'm glad I caught him in time. There wouldn't have been a cookie left if he had got his paws in the jar."

"Are there any cookies left now, Miss Winkler?" asked Bunny, with a funny little side look at his sister.

"Oh, yes, there's a whole jar full," answered the sailor's sister.

"Are you—aren't you going to give Wango any?" asked Bunny.

"Give Wango any? Give my good sugar cookies to that monkey? Well, I guess not!" cried Miss Winkler. Then, as she looked at Bunny and Sue, a more gentle look came over her face.

"But I guess I'll give you children some," she said. "If it hadn't been that you saw Wango he might have cleaned out my cupboard. Yes, I'll give you children some cookies."

So she brought the jar from the cupboard, and not only gave some of her cookies—which were really very good—to Bunny and Sue, but also to Mart and Lucile. And even Mr. Treadwell had some.

As for Wango—well, I'll tell you a little secret. He had some of the cookies, too. For when Miss Winkler wasn't looking, Bunny and Sue fed the jolly little monkey some bits of their cake. Wango was very fond of sweet things.

And so the lost wig was found, and Miss Winkler didn't have to drive the gray-haired tramp out of her kitchen with a broom, for which I suppose she was very glad.

Mr. Treadwell had time, now, to talk to Mart and the other children about the farm play, and he told them there would have to be a number of rehearsals, or practices, yet, before they would be ready to give a performance Christmas afternoon.

The children were drilled over and over again in their parts, until at last, a few days before Christmas, the actor said:

"Well, now I am satisfied. I think we are ready for the show!"

And, oh, how glad Bunny, Sue, and the others were! All their hard work would amount to something now.

One night, about three days before Christmas, Mr. Brown came home from the dock office one evening with Mr. Treadwell and Mart, who had finished their work.

"I had a letter from the Home for the Blind to-day," said Mr. Brown, as they sat at the supper table, for Mr. Treadwell had been invited to share the meal. "The superintendent would like to have me call, so he can tell me something about the work of the home and the poor people who have to stay there in the darkness. He thinks if I tell the audience that comes to see the children's play something about the Home for the Blind more people will be glad to help."

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"I think they would," said Mrs. Brown. "Why don't you go over?"

"I will," answered Mr. Brown. "There isn't much to do to-morrow, so I'll go and take Bunny and Sue with me. Would you like to go?" he asked Mart and Lucile.

They said they would, and the next day the five of them went over in Mr. Brown's automobile. Mr. Treadwell was invited, but he said he had to go to the hall to make sure all the scenery for the play was ready.

The Home for the Blind was in a big red brick building on the side of a hill about two miles across the valley from Bellemere. It did not take long to get there in the automobile, for though there was snow on the ground the roads were good.

Mr. Harrison, the superintendent of the home, welcomed Mr. Brown and the children.

"Now please don't think this is a sad place," said Mr. Harrison. "Though the men and women and the boys and girls here can not see, they get along very well, considering. So don't think it's too sad.

"Of course it is sad enough, but it might be worse. That's what all our blind folk have come to think—that it might be worse. They have ways of 'seeing,' even if they have eyes that are no longer any use to them. I just want you to go over our place, and then you will be more glad than ever, I hope, that you are going to help us with your little play. For we need many things. We need books, printed in the kind of type that the blind can read, and we need many things so that our blind men and women can work and make articles to sell. The money you are going to give us from your play will help to buy these things."

Then, indeed, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were very glad they had decided to have a play, and they saw men and women and boys and girls who did not seem to be without their sight, for they went about almost as quickly as Bunny and Sue did.

"That's because they have learned their way," said Mr. Harrison. "Our blind folks know their way around here just as you can walk around some parts of your house in the dark."

He led them toward the music room, for there was one where the blind inmates played and sang, and as Mr. Brown and the children went through the door Lucile uttered a low cry at the sight of a man who was just getting up from the piano.

"Uncle Bill!" cried Lucile. "Uncle Bill! Oh, we have found you at last!"

CHAPTER XX

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

Bunny Brown, who had been listening to the piano music of the blind man, looked quickly at Lucile as she cried out about Uncle Bill. For Bunny remembered how much the actress girl and her brother had wanted to find their blind uncle, so he might tell them where their other uncle and aunt were.

Sue just said: "O-oh!"

"Uncle Bill!" cried Mart, in the same sort of wondering voice as had his sister. "Yes, that's our Uncle Bill!" he went on, as the blind man, who had been playing, came over toward them. There was a strange look on his face, and except for a queer look about his eyes, one would hardly have known he was blind.

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"Who is calling me?" he asked. "I seem to know those voices, though I have not heard them for a long time. Who is it?"

Lucile and Mart stepped forward. Mr. Brown was right behind them, and Bunny and Sue were near their father. Mr. Harrison, who was in charge of the Home, looked on in surprise.

"Do you know Mr. Clayton?" he asked Lucile and Mart.

"Yes, he is our uncle," Mart answered in a low voice, but, low as it was, the blind piano player heard. Holding out his hands toward the young theatrical players he cried,

"Now I know those voices. Lucile! Mart! I have found you at last!"

"And we have found you!" cried Lucile. "Oh, how wonderful!"

"Can you tell us where Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie are?" asked Mart. "We've lost track of them, and we were stranded after the show failed. We didn't know where to find you, and——"

"Say, your trouble all came together, didn't it?" cried the blind man. "But now, perhaps, it is all over. Let me sit down with you, and then we'll have a long talk."

"But do you know where Aunt Sallie Weatherby is?" asked Lucile.

"Yes, of course! I have her address," said the blind Mr. Clayton.

By this time he had managed to walk up to Mart, clasping his hands. Then he found Lucile and kissed her. For, though he was blind, Mr. Clayton could tell by the sound of a person's voice just where they stood in a room, and walk over to them.

"Oh, how glad I am to find you again!" he said, as he felt around for a chair and sat down. "I have been waiting for a letter from Mr. Jackson so I might find you, but he has been a long time writing, and since my last letter to him I came to this place."

"We don't know where Mr. and Mrs. Jackson are," said Lucile. "They left us, after the company broke up, and we haven't heard from them since. But we didn't know you were here!"

"You weren't the last time we inquired," added Mart. "We knew you were in some such place as this, but Mr. Brown asked and no one here had heard of you."

"That's because I only came the other day," said the blind Mr. Clayton. "You see I am thinking of going back on the stage again, doing a funny piano act. I can play pretty well, even if I am blind," he said, turning toward Mr. Brown, for he seemed to know just

where the children's father sat. "And as I don't like to sit around doing nothing I've decided to go back on the stage again."

"We're going on the stage!" cried Bunny, who, with Sue, had been waiting for a chance to get in a word or two.

"We're going to have a real play on a farm," said Sue. "And you ought to see our dog Splash hang on to Mr. Treadwell."

"Treadwell? Is that the impersonator?" asked Mr. Clayton.

"Yes," answered Mart. "He is helping us with the little play."

"And maybe you could be in it and play the piano!" cried Bunny. "We heard you play the piano terrible nice!"

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"Well, I'm glad you liked it," said Mr. Clayton, with a laugh, "but I'm afraid I'm not quite ready to start a performance yet. I need more practice. Oh, but I am glad you have found me, and that I have found you!"

"Mr. Clayton only came to this Home a few days ago," explained Mr. Harrison to Mr. Brown. "I had forgotten that you had asked about some one of his name, or I would have sent you word before that the children's blind uncle was here."

"And if I had known they were so near me, and had been looking so long for me, I'd have sent them word," said Uncle Bill. "And now tell me all that happened, Mart and Lucile."

Their story was soon told, just as I have written it here—how they were "stranded" when the show broke up, and how Mr. Brown took care of them. The story of Mr. Treadwell was also told to Mart and Lucile's Uncle Bill, and how the impersonator had written the little play.

"And once he lost his wig and Wango the monkey had it!" cried Sue.

"Indeed! Wango must be a funny monkey!" said Mr. Clayton.

"He's funny, and so's Miss Winkler," said Bunny.

They all laughed at this, and then Mr. Clayton told his story.

He had been an actor as were many of his relatives, including Mart and Lucile. He had been stricken blind some years before, and had been in many Homes and hospitals, trying to get cured. But at last he had given up hope, and settled down to make the best of life.

He often wrote to Lucile and Mart, and also to their Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie. But of late he had lost the address of the boy and girl actor, and they had also lost his. They all traveled around so much that one did not know where the other was, except that Lucile and her brother always stayed together, of course.

"But where is Aunt Sallie?" asked Mart.

Mr. Clayton said that she and her husband were many miles away, in a far country, traveling about and acting. But he knew their address, and he would at once send them word that Lucile and Mart wanted to hear from them. Mr. Clayton had not heard from the Weatherbys for several months, he remarked.

"Very likely they've been trying as hard to find you as you have to find them," said Mr. Clayton. "They'll be glad to know that I have found you."

“And we’re glad we’ve found you!” cried Lucile, as she kissed her blind uncle again.
“Oh, it’s so good to have folks!”

“We would be glad to have you come over to our house and stay with us,” said Mr. Brown to the blind man.

“Thank you,” he answered, “but I must stay here and finish learning to play the piano for the act I am to do. Of course I’ll come over and see Lucile and Mart, though. I call it ‘seeing’ them, but of course I can’t use my eyes,” he added. “However, I’ve grown used to that, and I don’t seem to mind being in the dark.”

“You can’t ever see anybody make faces at you—if they ever do—can you?” asked Sue, as she patted his hand.

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"No indeed!" laughed Mr. Clayton. "I never thought of that. But I suppose some bad people like to make faces at me, and, as you say, if ever they do I sha'n't see them."

"I don't guess anybody would make faces at you when you play on the piano," said Bunny Brown.

"I don't guess so, either," added Sue.

There was more talk, and then it was time for Mr. Brown and the children to go back home. Mr. Clayton promised to write a telegram to Lucile's other uncle and aunt. He could write even though he was blind, and Mr. Harrison, at the Home for the Blind, promised to send the message.

"Then you'll hear from Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie soon," said the blind man.

"I hope we hear before the play!" exclaimed Lucile. "It will make me so much happier when I sing."

"Perhaps you'll come over to the hall the night of the performance," suggested Mr. Brown to Mr. Clayton. "You can hear what goes on."

"I'll try to come," agreed the blind man.

Very happy, now that they had found their uncle, Mart and Lucile went home with Mr. Brown, Bunny, and Sue, promising to come often again to see Mr. Clayton.

"Wasn't it queer," said Mart, "that, after all, he should come to the same Home we're going to help with the farm play?"

"Very strange, indeed," said Mr. Brown.

"And now, if we can only get word from Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie, how happy we'll be!" exclaimed Lucile.

"Oh, I'm sure you'll hear soon, my dear," said Mrs. Brown when they had reached home and told her the good news.

Then followed a time of anxious waiting, with Lucile and Mart looking almost every hour for a message from their uncle and aunt so far away. And they and the other children were kept busy getting ready for the play. For it was almost Christmas and time for the great performance.

The tickets had been printed, and all the mistakes corrected in the type that Charlie Star had set up. Many tickets had been sold, and it looked as though everything would be all right.

"I do hope we won't make any mistakes," said Bunny to his sister one day, as they were talking about the coming play.

"I hope so, too," she answered. "Wouldn't it be terrible if we got on the stage and forgot what we were going to say?"

"Yes, it would," agreed Bunny. "I'm going to keep on saying my lines over and over again all the while. Then I won't forget."

"Don't be too anxious, my dears," said Mrs. Brown, as she heard the children talking this way. "Sometimes the more you try to remember things like that, the more easily you forget. Just do your best, put your whole mind on it, and I'm sure you will remember the right words to say, and the right actions to do."

"It's easier to remember what to do than what to say," declared Bunny. "Mr. Treadwell tells us to act just as we would if we weren't on the stage, but of course we can't say anything we happen to think of—we have to say the right words."

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"I remember once, when I was a little girl," remarked Mrs. Brown, as she threaded her needle, for she was mending one of Sue's dresses, "I had to speak a piece in school, and I didn't know it at all well."

"Oh, tell us about it, Mother!" begged Sue.

"Please do!" cried Bunny Brown. For there was a funny little smile on his mother's face, and whenever the children saw that they knew there was a story back of it.

"Well, it was this way," went on Mrs. Brown. "When I was a little girl I lived in the country, and I went to school in a little red brick schoolhouse about half a mile down the road from our house. We had a very nice teacher, and one day she said we must all learn a piece to speak for the next Friday afternoon.

"Well, of course we children were all excited. Some of us had spoken pieces before, and some of us had not. And I was one that never had, but I was pleased to think I should get up in front of the whole school and speak a piece.

"When I went home that night I asked my mother what I should learn as my recitation. She got down a book that she had used when she was a little school girl, and in it were a number of nice pieces. There was one about Mary and her little lamb, but I thought that was too young for me to take, so I picked out one about a ship being wrecked at sea. There were about ten verses to the piece, and they told how a great storm came up and drove the vessel on the rocks."

"I'd like to see a big storm!" exclaimed Bunny.

"Please keep quiet!" begged Sue. "Mother can't tell about her speaking in school if you're going to talk all the while."

"I won't talk any more," promised Bunny Brown. "Please go on, Mother. I'll be quiet."

So Mrs. Brown continued:

"I began to learn this piece about the wreck. I don't remember now, how it all went, but I know the first two lines were like this:

"The thunder rolls,
The lightning flashes!"

"I remember those lines very well," said the children's mother, "and I thought how wonderful it would be if I could get up there and speak them in a loud voice. I practiced hard, too—as hard as you have practiced for your play. And I thought I had the piece learned perfectly. Finally Friday afternoon came, lessons were finished, books put away and we got ready for the recitations in the main schoolroom.

"I forget the different pieces that were spoken. There were all kinds, but none like mine. Some were sad and some were funny, and some of the boys and girls got up and were so stage-struck that they couldn't think of a single word of the pieces they had learned.

"Then I was afraid this would happen to me, but when my name was called, and I walked up to the platform, I was glad to find that I could remember every single word—or at least I thought I could.

"But dear me! As soon as I opened my mouth and began to speak it was just as though the bottom had opened and let everything fall out of everything. All I could think of was the first two lines:

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"The thunder rolls,
The lightning flashes!"

"Over and over again I repeated those lines, and I could not get past them. The teacher looked sorry for me, and some of the boys and girls began to laugh. This made it all the worse for me, and my face grew red. Over and over again I told about the thunder and lightning, and at last I made up my mind I'd have to do something, or else go to my seat as some of the other girls had done, without finishing. And I didn't want to do that.

"So I braced my feet on the platform, and then I stood straight up in front of the whole school and fairly shouted out this verse:

"The thunder rolls,
The lightning flashes!
It broke Grandmother's teapot
All to smashes!"

"That's what I gave as my first recitation," went on Mrs. Brown, when Bunny and Sue had finished laughing. "How those words about my grandmother's teapot popped into my head I don't know. I don't even remember my grandmother's teapot, though I suppose she had one. But that's the verse I recited. And you should have heard the children laugh!"

"What did the teacher say?" asked Bunny.

"At the time I thought she was rather angry," answered his mother, "thinking I had done it on purpose, to make fun of the speaking. But really I had not. The wrong two lines popped into my head all of a sudden. And of course; they spoiled the piece. I know now, too, that she was trying to keep from laughing, and that made her look stern."

"I hope that doesn't happen to us," said Sue, as she and Bunny thought over the little story their mother had told them.

"I hope not, either," agreed her brother. "Come on—let's go up in the attic and practice."

So they did, and for some time they went over the lines they were to speak on the stage. After a while Lucile and Mart came in and helped Bunny and Sue. The older boy and girl said the two little ones were doing very well. Mr. Treadwell, too, who heard Bunny and Sue go through their parts, said they did very well.

"We'll have a good practice to-morrow," said the impersonator.

Then Mr. Treadwell called a dress rehearsal. That is generally the last one before the show, and it is really a complete performance in itself, though the audience isn't allowed to come in.

The day before Christmas Bunny, Sue, Lucile, Mart, and the other girls and boys assembled in the hall over the hardware store for the dress rehearsal. Mr. Treadwell was there, and the men who were to help set up the scenery were on hand.

Just before it was time for the rehearsal to begin George Watson went up to Mr. Treadwell.

"If you please," said he, "couldn't Peter be in the play?"

"Peter? Who is Peter?" asked the impersonator. "I'm afraid it's too late to put any one else in, George. They wouldn't have time to practice, and, besides, we really have all the actors we need."

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"Oh, Peter wouldn't need any practice," said George. "He'd be just fine in the barnyard scene. I brought him with me!"

"Well, I'm sorry, for I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint your friend Peter," said Mr. Treadwell. "But where is he?"

"Here in this basket," answered George, and he held up a small one in front of the stage manager.

CHAPTER XXI

"WHERE IS BUNNY?"

Mr. Treadwell looked first at George, then at the basket, and once more at George.

"Now look here, George," said the actor. "I don't mind your making fun or having jokes, but I'm very busy now, for the first act of the rehearsal is going to start. Besides, you shouldn't bring your baby brother to the hall in a small basket like that."

"My baby brother?" cried George with a laugh. "I haven't any baby brother! I have a sister Mary, but——"

"But you said Peter was in there," said Mr. Treadwell. "And if Peter is——"

"Oh, Peter isn't a *baby*, and he isn't my brother," said George with another laugh. "He's only a——"

But before he could say what Peter was a loud crow sounded from inside the basket which George held up.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" sounded all through the hall, and Bunny, Sue, and the others who were getting ready for their parts in the dress rehearsal of the play, laughed. Mr. Treadwell looked surprised.

"Why—why—it's a rooster!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Peter is my pet bantam rooster," said George. "I brought him with me because I thought he could crow in the barnyard scene, and make it more natural like."

"Well, a crowing rooster would be a good performer to have in a barnyard scene on a stage," agreed Mr. Treadwell. "But the only thing about it is that we couldn't be sure that he would crow at the right time. He might crow when Lucile was singing, or when Bunny Brown was doing some of his tricks, or when Sue was making believe run away from me when I'm dressed up like a tramp."

"Yes," said George, "that's so. Peter crows a lot, and you can't tell when he's going to do it. But, Mr. Treadwell, he always crows when he flaps his wings, and if somebody could hold his wings so they couldn't flap then he couldn't crow. I wish we could have him in the play!"

"Well, we might try him, anyhow," said Mr. Treadwell, with a laugh. "Though I haven't anybody I could let stand near and hold the rooster's wings so he wouldn't crow."

"I could do that," offered George. "My rooster likes me."

"Yes, I suppose he does," agreed the stage manager. "But you have to recite a piece in the play, George, and your rooster might start to crow when you were reciting."

"That would make me laugh," said George, with a smile, "and I couldn't pucker up my mouth to whistle, and I have to do that in my piece."

"Then I guess we had better not have the rooster in the play," said Mr. Treadwell. "But since you have brought him we'll let him stay for the practice, and we'll see how he behaves. He certainly would be good in the barnyard scene, and make it quite natural, but I'm afraid he'll crow at the wrong time."

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"And did you really think George had a little baby brother in the basket?" asked Sue, as the rooster was being shut up again.

"Yes, I really did," said Mr. Treadwell. "But now everybody get ready! The rehearsal will begin in a minute."

It took a little while for all the boys and girls to find their right places. Their mothers or big sisters were, in most cases, on hand ready to help them, to see that this little girl's dress was buttoned up the back, that her hair ribbon was prettily tied and that the little boys had their hair combed as it ought to be.

But at last everything was finished, and the stage was set for the first scene, that of the meadow. Everything was to go on just as if it was the real play—the scenery, the lights, the curtain being raised and lowered, and everything.

Out in front were the mothers, the big sisters, with, here and there, an occasional father of the children who were taking part. This was the audience. Of course this audience didn't pay anything, but Bunny, Sue, and the others who were getting up the play, hoped a large throng would come Christmas afternoon, when the real play would be given.

I must not tell you, here, how the rehearsal went, for it was so like the play that if I set down all that took place I wouldn't have anything left to tell you about the main performance. All I will say is that after the meadow scene came the one in the barnyard.

"Now if the Peter rooster will crow right this will be a good scene," said Mr. Treadwell.

Well, the scene was all right—at least at first. Bunny and Sue did their parts well, and so did the other children. The people sitting in front of the footlights—which glowed as brightly as they would in the real performance—said the show was going on finely. And Peter crowed just at the right time, too, without any one telling him to.

"That's great!" said Mr. Treadwell. "I think he can be in the play after all, George. It helps out the barnyard scene."

George felt quite proud of his bantam rooster, and Bunny and Sue were glad the feathered actor was in their show. But alas! Toward the end of the barnyard scene, when Lucile was singing a sad little song, Peter began to crow. He crowed and he crowed and he crowed, until Lucile could hardly be heard, and everybody laughed instead of sitting quietly.

"I'll go and hold his wings," offered George. But even that didn't quiet Peter. He kept on crowing louder than ever.

"I know what I'll do," said Bunny Brown. "I'll put Peter in his basket and carry him down to the cellar. That'll be dark, and he'll think it's night and he'll stop crowing."

"That will be just the thing!" said Mr. Treadwell.

So as Bunny Brown didn't have anything to do just then in the barnyard scene, he put Peter in the basket and carried the bantam rooster downstairs.

"What have you got there?" asked Mr. Raymond, the hardware man, as he saw Bunny with the basket.

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The little boy told.

"Yes, put him down in the cellar," said Mr. Raymond. "That ought to keep him quiet. I'll turn on the electric lights down there for you, so you can see. Otherwise you might tumble downstairs in the dark."

Bunny had been down in the hardware store cellar before, once when his father was looking at a certain piece of iron for a boat, the iron being stowed away down in the basement, and at other times, when he himself wanted to buy some odds or ends from the hardware man to make some toy. So Bunny knew his way down into the cellar.

"I'll come and get you after the play," said Bunny to Peter, as he set the basket, with the rooster in it, on a big box.

Peter didn't answer. He didn't even crow. I guess he didn't like the dark. He might have thought it was night, when the electric lights were turned out after Bunny had gone upstairs, and Peter may have gone to roost.

Bunny tramped upstairs and went on with his parts in the play. Everything went along nicely, and every one said the last act, the one in the orchard, was fine. Bunny and Sue did well, as did Lucile, Mart and the others.

"I wish we could think of some way so my rooster would only crow at the right time," said George, when talking to Bunny, after the rehearsal was over.

Bunny Brown wished so, too, for he wanted the little play to be as real as it could, so the people who saw it would be glad they had come to pay money to help the Home for the Blind.

Mr. Clayton sent word from the Home that he would surely be on hand at the performance Christmas afternoon. He also said he had not yet received any word from the other uncle and aunt of the two vaudeville children.

"Oh, dear," sighed Lucile on Christmas eve, as she and her brother sat in the Brown home, "I do hope we can find Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie!"

"So do I hope you do," said Sue. "But, oh, won't we have fun to-morrow at the play! And to-morrow is Christmas. I'm going to hang up my stocking. Are you going to hang up your stocking?" she asked Mart and Lucile.

"Well, I don't know," answered the boy slowly. "I guess, seeing that we haven't heard from Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie yet, that maybe it wouldn't be any use for us to hang up our stockings, Sue."

“Oh, I think it would,” said Mrs. Brown, with a funny little smile. “You tell Mart and Lucile to hang them up, Sue. I don’t believe Santa Claus will forget them.”

“There!” cried Sue. “You must do as mother says. Come on, Bunny!” she added. “Let’s get our stockings ready, and we’ll go to bed early. Christmas will come sooner then. Why, where’s Bunny?” she asked, as she looked out in the kitchen where she had last seen her brother. “Bunny!” she called. “Come on, hang up our stockings!”

But Bunny Brown did not answer.

“Bunny isn’t here!” said Sue. “Where is Bunny?”

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CHAPTER XXII

ACT I

"What's that? Isn't Bunny here?" asked Mr. Brown, who was busy talking to Mr. Treadwell about the play.

"This is the first I knew he wasn't here," answered Mrs. Brown. "Did any one see him go out?"

No one had.

"Perhaps he is upstairs," said Lucile.

"No, he wouldn't go up to bed without telling me," said Mrs. Brown. "Besides, he's been teasing me all evening to get his stockings ready to hang up, and he wouldn't go without them. Where can he be?"

"He isn't in the kitchen," said Sue, for she had gone out to look, and had come back again.

"Perhaps he is hiding away from you, just for fun," said Mart.

"He sometimes does play tricks," remarked Mr. Brown. "I'll take a look."

They all looked, and they called, but Bunny could not be found. He did not seem to be in the house. Mr. Brown even opened the back door and shouted, thinking perhaps Bunny had gone out to see that the Shetland pony was all right, as he sometimes did.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, "where can he be?"

"Oh, he's all right," said her husband. "It's early yet, even if it is dark, and maybe he went out to play in the snow, though of course he shouldn't at this hour."

"It's snowing, too," said Mrs. Brown, as she stood in the back door beside her husband. "Snowing hard! There's going to be a big storm, and if Bunny is out in it—I wish Bunny would not do such things!"

"Oh, will he get freezed?" cried Sue, her eyes opening big and round.

"No, dear, he'll be all right," replied her mother. "But he must be found."

"Maybe he went out with Bunker Blue," suggested Mart.

Bunker Blue, the boy, or rather, young man, who worked for Mr. Brown at the fish and boat dock, had been at the house shortly after supper, and later had said he was going back to the office to make sure it was locked, for it would not be open on Christmas Day.

"Perhaps Bunny did go back with Bunker," said Mr. Brown. "Though he shouldn't have done that. But he was so excited about the play there is no telling what he might do."

"Bunker ought to be at the office about this time," said Mrs. Brown, looking at the clock. "Call him on the telephone," she begged her husband, "and ask him if Bunny is there. I hope he is."

Bunker Blue answered the telephone a few minutes later, when Mr. Brown had called him on the wire.

"No, Bunny didn't come out with me," said Bunker. "But I saw him in the kitchen with his cap, coat, and rubber boots on when I left. He seemed to be getting ready to go out."

"Then he's gone off somewhere without telling us anything about it!" cried Mrs. Brown. "Maybe he went over to Charlie Star's house, to make sure there would be enough tickets for the show. Oh, I wish he hadn't gone out!"

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"I can telephone to Mr. Star and ask," suggested Mr. Brown. But when he had done this, and no Bunny Brown was there, they all began to get quite excited.

"I'll get on my coat and rubbers and go out with you," said Mart, as Mr. Brown began to put on his overcoat. "He might be in the barn, practicing some of the tricks he is going to do in the play to-morrow."

"Oh, I don't believe Bunny would go out to the barn alone after dark," said Mrs. Brown.

Her husband and Mart were just starting out into the storm to look for the missing Bunny when the tramp of feet was heard on the porch.

"Here comes somebody!" cried Sue. "I hope it's Bunny!"

But it was not. Instead it was Bunker Blue, and he was covered with snow flakes. His nose was red, too, even if his name was Bunker Blue.

"Has Bunny come back yet?" asked Bunker, as he stamped his feet on the porch, to get the snow off.

"No, he hasn't," answered Mr. Brown. "We are getting very anxious about him, too, though the worst that can happen is that he may get cold. He shouldn't have gone out!"

"Well, I didn't see anything of him," said Bunker Blue. "I was quite surprised at what you told me, over the telephone, about his not being in the house in this storm."

"Oh, maybe he'll never come back, and then we can't have our nice Christmas play!" exclaimed Sue.

"Oh, Bunny will come back all right—don't worry about that," said her father gently. "If he doesn't come we'll go and get him. In fact, now that you are here, Bunker, we three might as well set out and look for the little fellow. He's got something on his mind, or he wouldn't go out as he did."

"I'm sure I can't see what made him go out," said Mrs. Brown. "It's snowing very hard, too," she added, as she shaded her eyes from the light in the room and looked out of the window.

"But it isn't very cold, that's one good thing," her husband added. "Of course I wish Bunny hadn't gone out, but, since he has, we must go out and find him."

"Could he, by any chance, be hiding somewhere in the house?" asked Mart.

"We'll look," decided Mr. Brown, "although we looked before."

He and Mart, as well as Bunker Blue, were dressed to go out into the storm to look for Bunny, who was so strangely missing, but when Mart said this Mr. Brown decided that it would be better to go over the house once more, to make sure Bunny was not hiding away.

“We’ll take Sue with us to help search,” said her father, as he took off his overcoat, for he did not know how long he would stay in the house. “Bunny and Sue play hide-and-go-seek games in the different rooms,” went on Mr. Brown, “and Sue knows lots of hiding places; don’t you, Sue?”

“Yes, we hide in lots of places,” the little girl answered. “But I don’t guess Bunny is hiding now.”

“Oh, well, maybe he is, just to fool us,” returned her father. “Come now, we’ll begin the search.”

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And while the storm was getting more and more wild outside, with the wind blowing harder and the snowflakes coming down more and more thickly, Mr. Brown, Bunker, and Mart, with Sue and Mrs. Brown to help them, began searching through the house after Bunny. It was a good thing they took Sue with them, for she knew many “cubby holes” in which she and her brother often took turns hiding. And some of these even her mother had forgotten about, though Mrs. Brown thought she knew every nook and cranny of the house.

But Bunny was in none of these places, and though they looked and called his name and called again, from attic to cellar, there was no sign of the little fellow.

“He surely must have gone out!” decided Mr. Brown. “Very likely he’s gone to see some of the boys to talk about the play.”

“Then let’s go and find him!” cried Bunker Blue, putting on his coat again.

“That’s what I say!” came from Mart. “This is no night for a little boy to be out. It’s snowing harder than ever.”

So Mr. Brown, Bunker, and Mart started out to look for Bunny. They went first to one house and then to another, and there were many houses where Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were in the habit of calling. At most of the places were boys and girls with whom Bunny and Sue played, or who were to take part in the Christmas show. But none of these boys or girls had seen Bunny.

“Well, this is certainly strange!” declared Mr. Brown, when they had stopped at the last place where they thought it likely Bunny would be. “I guess we’ll have to tell the police about it and have them help hunt for him. I don’t see what else we can do.”

“Maybe it would be the best way,” agreed Bunker Blue. “I’ll go down and tell the chief of police.”

“No, we had better telephone—that’s quicker,” said Mr. Brown. So they stopped in the drug store and Mr. Brown talked to the police station on the wire.

“All right,” the chief answered back. “I’ll start some of my men out on the search. You go back home and let me know as soon as Bunny is found or comes back.”

This Mr. Brown promised to do, and soon he and Mart and Bunker were back at the Brown home. Mrs. Brown looked very much disappointed and worried when her husband came in without Bunny.

“Oh, where can he be?” she cried.

Just then the heavy tramp of feet was heard on the porch.

“Maybe this is Bunny!” exclaimed Mart.

And Bunny Brown it was, all covered with snow flakes, his eyes shining and his cheeks red with the cold. He carried a small basket in one hand, and the other was clasped in that of Mr. Raymond, the man who owned the hardware store.

“Why Bunny Brown! where have you been?” cried his mother, as the lamp light shone on his flushed face, and made the snowflakes sparkle.

“And what have you got in the basket?” asked Sue.

“That’s Peter,” was the answer, and before any one could ask who Peter was, if they had wished to, there came a loud crow from the basket.

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"A rooster!" cried Mrs. Brown.

"Yes," said Bunny. "Peter—he's George's pet bantam rooster. And he crowed at the wrong time in the practice to-day—I mean Peter crowed—so I took him down into Mr. Raymond's cellar. And then I forgot all about him, and I left him there, and I thought of him after supper, and I guessed he'd be hungry, so I went back to get him."

"Yes, that's just what he did," said the hardware man. "I was busy waiting on late Christmas Eve customers, when in came Bunny, all covered with snow. I didn't know what he meant when he told me he'd come back for the rooster, for I'd forgotten about the bird myself."

"Nothing would do but he must bring Peter home, and, knowing what a bad storm it was, I came back with him. I'd have telephoned, but my wire's out of order, so I couldn't reach you, and I didn't want to stop to go anywhere else. So I brought him over in my auto."

"It was very kind of you," said Mr. Brown.

"And, Bunny, it was very wrong of you to go away without telling us," said Mrs. Brown.

"I'm sorry," answered the little boy. "But I thought maybe Peter'd be lonesome all alone in the dark, and on Christmas Eve too."

"That's so!" laughed Mr. Raymond. "I guess, Mrs. Brown, you'll have to forgive Bunny on account of it's being Christmas Eve."

"Did you hang up your stocking, Mr. Raymond?" asked Sue, and they all laughed at that, so that every one felt better, and Bunny was not scolded, as perhaps he ought to have been.

"Well, I must get back to my store," said the hardware man. "Merry Christmas to you, and I'll see you all at the play to-morrow!"

"Yes, we'll all be there!" cried Bunny. "You're going to have a free ticket, you know!"

This had been decided on, because Mr. Raymond was so kind about letting the children have the new hall he had fitted up.

"Good-nights," and more "Merry Christmas" greetings were called back and forth, and then, as the hardware man left in his automobile, to go chugging through the storm, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue hung up their stockings for Santa Claus and went to bed.

“Oh, I’m so happy; aren’t you, Bunny?” laughed Sue. “Christmas will be here in the morning, and we’re going to have a play an’—everything lovely!”

“Yes,” answered Bunny. “I’m glad, and I’m glad I got Peter so he won’t have to stay all alone, too.”

The little rooster was taken out by Mr. Brown and put in the chicken house near the barn for the night. Word was telephoned to George that his pet bantam was all right. In a little while every one in the house was in bed.

If this book had started out to be a Christmas story I could put in a lot about what nice presents Bunny and Sue got. And also how Santa Claus did not forget Mart and Lucile. But as this is a book about Bunny Brown and his sister Sue giving a show, I must get to that part of my story. I’ll just say, though, that the little boy and girl thought it was the finest Christmas they had ever known.

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"I hope it won't snow so hard that nobody will come to the show," said Sue, when, after breakfast, she stood with her nose pressed in a funny, flat way against the window. It was snowing, but not too hard.

"O, I guess every one will come," said Mrs. Brown. "They have all bought tickets, anyhow, so you'll make some money for the Home for the Blind."

"And I hope Uncle Bill doesn't forget to come," put in Lucile.

"I had word from him a little while ago," said Mr. Brown. "I'm going for him in my auto. And now we must have an early dinner and get ready for the play."

I think Bunny and Sue were so excited that they did not eat as much roast turkey and cranberry sauce at that Christmas dinner as at others. But they had enough, anyhow, and in due time they were at the hall, where they met all the other children. Bunny had brought back the bantam rooster, thinking that perhaps, after all, Peter might have some part in the play. Will Laydon had his trained white mice with him, Splash was on hand, ready to cling to the piece of cloth on Mr. Treadwell's coat, and some other animal pets were ready to do their share in the play.

There was a final looking over of every one, mothers and sisters saw to it that the dresses and suits of the girls and boys were all right, and Mr. Treadwell was here, there, and everywhere, back of the scenes and curtain.

"Oh, there's a terrible big crowd!" exclaimed Bunny, as he looked out at the audience through a peep-hole in the curtain.

"Then we'll make a lot of money for the Blind Home," said Sue.

"I see Uncle Bill!" cried Mart, as he, too, looked out.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" exclaimed Lucile. "Now if we could only hear from Aunt Sallie and Uncle Simon everything would be all right."

The musicians were in their places. The hall was well filled, not only with boys and girls who had come to see their chums and playmates act, but with grown folks as well.

"Are you all ready?" asked Mr. Treadwell of Bunny, Sue and the others, as the musicians finished playing the opening piece.

"Yes," answered Bunny. "I'm all ready."

"Is my hair ribbon on right?" Sue wanted to know.

"Yes, you look sweet!" said Lucile.

“Now all ready for act one!” exclaimed the impersonator as he made sure that Snap was in his place.

And then up went the curtain on the meadow scene!

CHAPTER XXIII

ACT II

There was a moment of silence when the curtain first went up, and then as the audience, many of them for the first time, saw the pretty meadow scene, there was loud clapping. For the opening act was very nicely gotten up. The scenery Mr. Brown had bought from the stranded vaudeville company had been so set up by Mr. Treadwell that it looked very natural.

“Why, bless me, if that don’t look jest like my south meddar!” exclaimed old Mr. Tyndell, as he looked at the stage.

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"Hush, father! The people will hear you!" whispered his wife.

"Wa'al, I want 'em to!" he went on. "That's a fine piece of meddar!"

Several sitting near the old farmer laughed, but no one minded it. And then, as the musicians began to play softly, Lucile stepped out from behind a make-believe stone in the meadow beside a pretend brook and began to sing her first song. Every one grew quiet to listen.

The play, "Down on the Farm," had been changed somewhat by Mr. Treadwell from what he had first planned. This had to be done as he found out the different things the boy and girl actors could best do. And the first act had to do with Lucile, a lost girl who wandered to a farm meadow near the house where Bunny Brown and his sister Sue lived, only, of course, they had different names in the play.

Lucile sang her little song, and then she pretended she was so tired, from having walked a long way, that she must lie down and take a rest.

It was while she was lying down on some green carpet that took the place of green grass in the meadow that Bunny and Sue were supposed to come along and find her.

Bunny and Sue had a little act to themselves at this point. They stood on the stage and talked about the sleeping Lucile. Bunny said she looked sad and he was going to cheer her up.

"How are you going to make her feel happy?" asked Sue.

"I—I'm going to turn a pepper—no, I mean a somersault!" cried Bunny, stammering a trifle and making a little mistake, for this was the first time he had acted before such a large crowd. But no one laughed.

"Can you turn somersaults?" asked Sue.

"Yes, I'll show you!" answered Bunny. And then, on the stage, he began turning over and over.

All this was part of the play, of course, and Bunny was loudly clapped for the way in which he turned head over heels. He had practiced these somersaults many times, and Mart had helped him.

"Well, if you can make her happy by doing that maybe I can make her happier by singing a song," said Sue. "I'll practice my song while she's asleep as you practiced your somersaults."

And so Sue began to sing, while Lucile pretended to be asleep. After Sue's song Mart was supposed to come along, being a boy who had run away from a circus, and he was to watch Bunny try to turn a handspring. Bunny was to make believe he couldn't turn a handspring very well, and Mart would then take the center of the stage.

"Here! Look at me do a flipflop!" cried Mart, and then he really did some very good tricks for a boy acrobat.

All this while Lucile was pretending to be asleep, and when Mart's tricks were over she was supposed to wake up suddenly. At this point Sue was to see the pretend tramp, who, of course, was only Mr. Treadwell dressed up in old clothes.

Everything went off very well. Along through the meadow walked the actor tramp, and then, when Sue and Bunny called for "Snap," out rushed Splash.

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"Grab him!" cried Bunny, and his dog caught hold of the loose piece of cloth sewed to Mr. Treadwell's coat. Then began a funny scene, with the actor pulling one way and Splash pulling the other, until, with a rip, the cloth came loose and Splash began shaking it as he might a rat.

Well, you should have heard the people laugh and clap at that! They wanted that scene done over again, but of course this wasn't like a song, with two verses. Mr. Treadwell only had one patch sewed on his coat, and when that was torn off he didn't want Splash to pretend to bite him again.

Finally the dog act came to an end and the little play went on with George and Mary Watson, Harry Bentley, fat Bobbie Boomer, Sadie West, Charlie Star and Helen Newton, besides other boys and girls, taking part. They all did well, and the fathers and mothers and strangers, too, applauded very loudly.

Lucile's Uncle Bill could hear all that was said, though he could see nothing, and he seemed to enjoy it all very much. The first act came to an end with all the children joining in singing a chorus.

"And now for act two!" exclaimed Mr. Treadwell, as the curtain went down. "This is in the barnyard, you know."

"I hope Peter crows at the right time!" said George, for it had been decided to try the rooster in that act.

While the audience sat in front of the lowered curtain, waiting for it to go up again, the children behind the curtain were very busy. Most of them had to dress in different clothes, or "costumes," as they are called, for the next act. And, for a time, there was much hurrying to and fro, much hunting here and there for things that had been mislaid.

"Where's my red hat?" called Charlie Star as he looked back of a piece of scenery that had a little brook painted on it. "Has anybody got my red hat?"

"Is it a fireman's hat, Charlie?" asked Sue, who was looking for some one to help her pin her dress in the back.

"No, it was a soldier's hat, but I'm going to make believe I'm a fireman, so I guess you could call it a fireman's hat," explained Charlie. "Has anybody seen my red hat?"

"Hush! Not so loud!" called Mr. Treadwell to Charlie. "The audience out in front will hear you, and they'll all be laughing at us."

"Oh!" said Charlie more quietly. "But I've got to have my hat, or I can't be in the next act."

"I'll help you hunt for it," said Bunny Brown. "I know where all my things are for the next act and I have time to help you, Charlie, 'cause you helped me a lot by printing the tickets for our show."

The two little boys began to hunt behind the scene, on the stage, for the missing red hat. They searched all around for it, but it seemed to have disappeared. Even Mr. Treadwell helped look, for he knew the play would not go right unless Charlie was dressed as had been planned for him.

"Did anybody see Charlie's red hat?" finally the impersonator called, when he managed to stop all the others from talking for a moment. "Please think, and see if you can remember seeing a red hat."

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Then the buzz of talk broke out again, while the men who had been hired to do it kept on setting up the scenes for the second act. But all the children who had time to *do* so helped Bunny look for the red hat.

"Maybe Splash took it," suggested Sue, when she had finally gotten her dress pinned to suit her. "I saw him dragging something off to one corner a while ago."

"Was it a bone?" asked Bunny.

"I couldn't see very well, 'cause I was in a hurry," Sue answered.

"Come on—we'll find Splash!" called Bunny to Charlie and some of the others who were helping in the search.

But even the dog seemed to have hidden himself. At last, however, he was heard growling in a dark corner, and Bunny saw that his pet was chewing something, and tossing it up in the air, as he often tossed a bit of cloth or an old shoe.

"Splash! What have you got?" cried Bunny. "Bring it here!"

At first the dog did not mind, but finally, when both Sue and Bunny told him to come, out he came, dragging something after him.

"Oh, it is my red hat!" cried Charlie, when he saw it. "It's my nice red hat that mother made for me to wear in the show!"

And that is what it was. But the red hat was nice and red no longer. Splash had chewed all the red off it, and the hat was also very much out of shape.

"Splash! You're a bad dog!" cried Bunny, shaking his finger at his pet, and Splash slunk away with his tail between his legs. He always did that whenever any one called him a bad dog.

"Oh, see how bad he feels," said Sue, in her gentle voice. "I guess he didn't mean to be bad and chew your hat, Charlie."

"But he did chew it!" replied the little boy who was to wear it in the next act. "Look! I can't even get it on! It isn't a hat at all!"

"Let me see," said Mr. Treadwell, coming up just then. He looked at what Splash had left of the hat. It was torn and chewed and the color was all gone, for the red had been only red ribbons pinned on an old cap, and Splash had made them look very sad indeed.

"What can I do?" asked Charlie. "Have I got to stay out of the play?"

Mr. Treadwell thought for a moment.

"No," he said. "I'll tell you what we'll do. You were to be a fireman and wear this red hat, weren't you?"

"Yes," answered Charlie.

"Well, you can still be a fireman, but instead of a red hat you can wear a tin one. A tin hat will be just the thing for a fireman. It will keep the make-believe hot sparks, as well as the water, off his head."

"But where can I get a tin hat?" asked Charlie.

"I'll have Mr. Raymond bring up a small tin pail from his hardware store downstairs."

And that's what was done, and the new, shiny tin pail made a very funny hat for Charlie. He liked it better than the red one that Splash had chewed.

After some delay the curtain went up again, showing the barnyard scene, and in this Bunny and Sue were to drive Toby, their Shetland pony, on the stage. It had been decided they could do this, as the pony was a very little one.

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Up went the curtain again, and once more the big crowd clapped as they saw how pretty and natural it was. There was part of a barn with a real door that opened, and when it swung wide and out trotted the Shetland pony on to the stage, drawing a little cart in which sat Bunny and Sue, why, then you should have heard the applause!

And then something happened. Just how it came about no one knew, but, all of a sudden, there was a loud crow, and out from his basket, which had been hidden back of the wings, flew Peter, the rooster.

At first no one paid much attention to this, as they all knew it was part of the play. But when Peter suddenly flew out from back of the stage and alighted right on the pony's back, Toby was much frightened.

Up he rose on his hind legs, and then he made a dash for the edge of the stage. Straight for the footlights he started, dragging Bunny and Sue in the cart after him!

Men jumped to their feet and women screamed. It looked as if Bunny and Sue would be hurt.

CHAPTER XXIV

ACT III

Lucky it was for every one that Mr. Treadwell was an old actor and stage manager and that he was used to slight accidents happening during a show. Just at the time Bunny and Sue, in the pony cart, were seemingly about to be run over the footlights. Mr. Treadwell was at one side of the stage, waiting for his turn to go on, dressed as an old soldier. When he saw what was happening to the little boy and girl he did not stop.

Rushing out he fairly slid across the smooth boards, in front of the make-believe barn, and he grabbed the pony's bridle in one hand. In the other he held the sword that he was supposed to use as a soldier.

"Halt!" cried the impersonator. "Stop right where you are, and surrender to General Grant!"

Mr. Treadwell really was dressed up like General Grant, but Bunny and Sue were surprised to hear him use these words, which were not in the play at all, "General Grant" had quite a different part to perform, and at first Bunny and Sue could not understand it. All they knew was that Mr. Treadwell had caught the pony's bridle in time to stop the frightened animal from walking over the edge of the stage, when Peter the rooster crowed so loudly from his back. Perhaps the sharp claws of the rooster may have tickled the pony. I should think they would. Anyhow the pony was stopped just in time.

“Don’t be frightened, Bunny and Sue!” whispered Mr. Treadwell, as he motioned for the orchestra to play a little louder, so no one in the audience could hear what he said. Then he went on: “Just pretend it is all part of the show! Make believe I was to rush out this way, and call on you to surrender. I’ll take Peter off the pony’s back. The rooster makes him afraid. Now, Bunny, you say: All right General Grant! I’ll surrender if it takes all summer!”

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Bunny had been told so many times by Mr. Treadwell just what other things to say that this time he did not waste a second. So, almost as soon as the impersonator, dressed as General Grant, had rushed out, grabbed the pony's bridle, and called on Bunny and Sue to surrender, Bunny answered:

"All right, General Grant. I'll surrender if—if it takes all summer!"

Bunny didn't know why some of the old men in the audience laughed so hard when he said this, but later on his father told him that some of them, like Uncle Tad, had fought under General Grant in the Civil War and that he had said words that were a "take-off" of one of General Grant's real speeches.

So, in less time than I have taken to tell you about it, the danger was over, Mr. Treadwell had turned the pony around so that it was headed back toward the make-believe barn, Peter, the crowing rooster had been taken from the back of the little horse, and the play was going on as usual.

Lucile came out and sang another song, Mart did some acrobatic feats, and the other boys and girls did their parts in the play, while "General Grant" appeared again and amused the audience.

"Dear me, Mrs. Brown!" exclaimed Mrs. Newton, who sat next to the mother of Bunny and Sue, "I thought at first that was an accident—the way the pony started off the stage when the rooster got on his back—but I guess it was all part of the play."

"It was clever of them to get up something to fool us like that—almost too real and life-like, I think, though," said the mother of one of the little boys in the play.

Mrs. Brown knew, from the looks on the faces of Bunny and Sue, that it was an accident, and not intended, but she said nothing, for she did not want to spoil any one's pleasure in the show.

And so the performance went on, the boys and girls doing simple little things they had been taught by Mr. Treadwell. There were dances and drills, for it was a sort of mixed-up play, without very much of what grown folks call "plot." But it was just the thing for Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, and the only sort of play they could have given, for they were not very old.

In one scene George Watson, Harry Bentley, and Charlie Star played leapfrog, jumping over one another's backs. Bunny also had a part in this.

George tried to get his rooster to do a little trick in the barnyard scene. The boy stood near the barn door and held a piece of bread in his hand. He wanted Peter, the rooster, to fly up, perch on his head, and eat the crumbs of bread. But the rooster seemed to

think he had done enough by perching on the pony's back, and he wouldn't fly on top of George's head at all. So they had to leave that trick out of the second act.

Then the curtain went down on the second act, the barnyard scene, and the boy and girls got ready for the last, the third act, in the orchard. This was to be the prettiest of all, for it was supposed to be in apple-blossom time, and the scene was a beautiful one, though it was cold, snowy, and wintry weather outside. Mr. Treadwell had done his best on this act.

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It was hard work for some of the children, though most of them thought of it as play, but they had spent long hours in drilling.

As I have told you, there was a real tree in the scene, and a house, and the play was supposed to end with every one saying how happy he or she was to be “Down on the Farm,” when they all sang a song with those words in it.

Everything went off very nicely. Bunny and Sue did even better in this third act than in the first or second, and there was no little accident like that with the pony and rooster.

They were coming to the climax of the third act. Sue was supposed to be lost, and Bunny was supposed to hunt for her. He was to look everywhere, and at last find her up in an apple tree—or what passed for an apple tree—on the stage.

All went well until Sue slipped out of the farmhouse, ran to the apple tree and climbed up in it to hide among the artificial branches. Then Bunny started to pretend to look for her. He stood under the tree, but didn't let on he knew she was there, though of course he really did know.

“I wonder where she can be?” he said aloud, just as he was supposed to say in the play. “Where can she have hidden herself?”

And just then little Weeje Brewster piped up from where she was sitting with her mother:

“Dere she is, Bunny! Dere's Sue hidin' up in de apper tree! I kin see her 'egs stickin' out! She's in de tree, she is!”

Of course everybody burst out laughing at hearing this, but the play was so near the end that what Weeje said did not spoil it. Bunny had to laugh himself, and so did Sue. Then Bunny looked up among the branches, pretended to discover Sue, and on he went with the rest of his talk.

The little white mice performed once again. Splash did another trick quite well, too. And then Peter, the rooster, as if to make up for not behaving nicely in the second act, flew out on the head of George just as he was handing Lucile a bouquet when she sang her “Rose Song.”

Of course the rooster, coming out at that time, rather spoiled Lucile's song, but she didn't mind, and when the audience got over laughing she went on with it as if nothing had happened.

It was just before the last scene, where the whole company of boys and girls was to gather around Mr. Treadwell, in front of the house, and sing the farm song, that something else happened.

Down the aisle came Mr. Jed Winkler, and in his hand he held a yellow telegram envelope. He marched up to Mr. Brown and said, so loud that every one could hear him:

"This message just came! I was over at the telegraph office and the operator gave *it* to me to bring to you."

"Oh, thank you," said Mr. Brown.

There was a little pause in the play while the children were getting ready to sing the last song. Mr. Brown tore open the message.

"I hope there is no bad news," some one said, and every one in the audience hoped the same thing, for they all liked Mr. Brown.

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Bunny and Sue, up on the stage, looked at their father in some wonderment, while Lucile, who was to lead in the singing, glanced at her brother. Could the telegram be about them?

CHAPTER XXV

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Mr. Treadwell, who was off to one side of the stage getting everything ready for the last scene, came out now to tell Bunny, Sue, and the others to start the singing.

"And sing good and loud," said the impersonator, who was dressed in a funny clown suit. "Sing your best, so all the people will like the show that Bunny and Sue started."

The piano player struck a few notes and then Mr. Brown, who had finished reading the telegram, held up his hand and stepped out into the aisle, walking toward the stage.

"Wait a minute!" called Mr. Brown, and the piano player stopped.

"Is there anything the matter?" asked Mr. Treadwell, and Lucile's Uncle Bill seemed a bit uneasy, for, being blind, he could not so well take care of himself in case of accident as could the others.

"Don't you want Bunny and me to sing any more, Daddy?" called out Sue, from where she stood on the stage, and nearly every one in the hall laughed.

"Oh, yes, indeed, I want you to sing," said Mr. Brown. "But I have some good news, and I might as well tell it to those to whom it comes before the show goes on. It will not take more than a few minute. Lucile—Mart—the good news is for you!" And Mr. Brown waved the telegram at the boy acrobat and his sister, the singer.

"Is it from our kin?" asked Mart.

"Yes," answered Bunny's father. "This message came to me because, I suppose, your uncle, Mr. William Clayton, gave my address when he telegraphed to your uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie."

"And is the message from them?" asked Lucile.

"Yes," replied Mr. Brown. "It's from your Uncle Simon, and he says he and your aunt will be here in about a week. They have been giving a show in a far-off country, and they did not know you had lost track of them and your Uncle Bill. But everything is all right now. Your uncle and aunt are coming to look after you, and they say they are sorry you had so much trouble."

“We didn’t have much trouble after we met you, and you took care of us,” said Mart.

“Well, I’m glad you feel that way about it,” replied Mr. Brown. “And I’ll be glad to have you and Lucile stay with me until your uncle and aunt come back. It’s well they telegraphed instead of waiting to send a letter, for the good news came more quickly. They say they just received the first letter your Uncle Bill sent, and they made haste to answer by telegraph.”

“So everything is all right, is it?” asked Mart’s Uncle Bill, from where he sat with a friend from the Home for the Blind.

“Yes,” answered Mr. Brown. “Lucile and Mart have found their relatives, and I hope they never lose them again.”

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"That's fine!" cried the blind man. "This will be a jolly Christmas for everybody!"

And so it was, and no one was happier than Lucile and Mart that they had found their missing uncle and aunt.

"Oh, I can sing my last song so much more happily now!" said Lucile softly.

"And I'm going to turn three flipflops instead of one!" cried Mart.

"And I'll help you!" added Bunny Brown, and every one laughed again. It was a merry, happy, jolly time, just right for Christmas.

"Well, all ready now, children!" called Mr. Treadwell when Mr. Brown had taken his seat. "Now for the last grand chorus then the final curtain and the play will be over!"

Once more the piano played, and then the children, led by Lucile, lifted up their sweet voices in song. And it seemed to be a hymn of thanksgiving for the two children who had found their lost ones.

Circling around the tree in the stage orchard marched Bunny Brown, his sister Sue, and the other children. Then out danced Mr. Treadwell, in another funny suit, and then, all at once, out from the wings rushed Splash the dog. He stood up on his hind legs put his paws on Mr. Treadwell's shoulders, and marched across the stage that way, while the audience clapped and Bunny and Sue stared with wide-opened eyes.

"I—I didn't know my dog could do that trick!" cried Bunny.

"I taught it to him for a surprise," said the actor. "Hi, Splash! Come on and have another dance with me!" And the dog walked across the stage again on his hind legs.

And then, with another song, given as the children stood in a double row facing the audience, the show of "Down on the Farm" came to a close and the final curtain fell, while the crowd of fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts and friends applauded as loudly as they could. Mr. Brown gave a little talk about the Home for the Blind and many persons said they would help it.

"Well, from what I heard of it, I'll say that was a fine show!" said Lucile's Uncle Bill. "And one of the best parts was that telegram Mr. Brown read."

"Yes, I think so myself," said Bunny's father.

Back on the stage the children were hurrying to get off their costumes and into their regular garments, so they might go home and look at their Christmas presents once more.

“Shall we ever give the show again?” asked Charlie Star.

“Well, we might, in a day or so,” said Mr. Treadwell. “If the audience would like to see it, we might give it some afternoon next week.”

“Oh, yes, let’s do it!” cried Bunny.

“Oh, yes!” cried Sue and the others.

While this talk was going on Mr. Raymond, the owner of the hall, came up to where Bunny Brown stood.

“I guess you’re the treasurer of this show, aren’t you?” he asked, and Sue noticed that the hardware man had something in his hand.

“No—no,” said Bunny, shaking his head, “I wasn’t a—a treasure. I was a farm boy in one act and I turned somersaults in another act.”

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"Well, I don't exactly mean that," said Mr. Raymond, with a laugh. "I mean you got up the show, didn't you?"

"Yes, Bunny and Sue really started it," said Mr. Treadwell.

"That's what I thought," said the hardware man. "Well, then, Bunny, this money comes to you. It's what was taken in at the door, and what was paid for tickets. Your father asked me to take charge of it, but, now that the first show, at least, is over, you'd better have it."

He handed a box that seemed to be full of silver money and bills to Bunny and Sue Brown.

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed Sue. "It's most a thousand dollars I guess!"

"No, not quite as much as that," said Mr. Raymond. "But your show was a great success, and there's ninety dollars and fifteen cents there. The fifteen cents is from a boy who couldn't raise the quarter admission, so I let him in for fifteen. I'd have let him in for nothing, but he said he wanted to do all he could to help the Home for the Blind."

"Yes, this money's for the Blind Home," said Bunny. "I'm glad we got such a lot. I didn't think we'd get more than ten dollars."

"Indeed, you did very well, and I want to thank you on behalf of the blind people," said Mr. Harrison, manager of the Home, to whom Mr. Brown handed the money, after Bunny, Sue, and the other children had all had a look at it. "This will buy many a little comfort for my people."

Then, indeed, Bunny, Sue and the others felt repaid for all they had done to get up the show; and some of them had worked very hard to give the audience a pleasant and amusing time.

So everything came out well, and the finding of the uncle and aunt of Lucile and Mart was one of the nicest parts of the little play.

Soon the hall was deserted, and the children were on their way home. Mr. Bill Clayton—though I presume his name was William, and not just Bill—and Mr. Harrison went to the Brown house to stay for supper, and there the telegram from their Uncle Simon was read again by Lucile and Mart.

"I'm going to be a show actor when I grow up," declared Bunny Brown.

"And I'm going to sing on the stage—I like it," said Sue.

“Well, it will be a good many years before you are old enough to go on the real stage,” said her mother, with a laugh. “You or Bunny either.”

And so the show that Bunny and Sue gave came to an end—yet not quite an end, either. For the play was given over again the week after, and more money raised for the Home for the Blind. And among those in the audience were Mart and Lucile’s Uncle Simon and Aunt Sallie. They had hurried their trip back to this country to look after Lucile and Mart, and they were glad to find their niece and nephew in such good hands.

“And if it hadn’t been for Bunny Brown, thinking of getting up a show, maybe you’d never have found us,” said Mart to his Uncle Simon.

“Maybe,” agreed Mr. Weatherby. “Bunny did a lot, and so did his sister Sue! They’re just the kind of children to do things!”

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And perhaps, if all goes well, you may read of other doings of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue.

THE END.

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One of the girls has learned to run a big motor car, and she invites the club to go on a tour to visit some distant relatives. On the way they stop at a deserted mansion and make a surprising discovery.

THE OUTDOOR GIRLS IN A WINTER CAMP
Or Glorious Days on Skates and Ice Boats.

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THE OUTDOOR GIRLS IN FLORIDA.
Or Wintering in the Sunny South.

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THE OUTDOOR GIRLS AT OCEAN VIEW
Or The Box that Was Found in the Sand.



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The girls have great fun and solve a mystery while on an outing along the New England coast.

THE OUTDOOR GIRLS ON PINE ISLAND
Or A Cave and What it Contained.

A bright, healthful story, full of good times at a bungalow camp on Pine Island.

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Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

Table of Contents: Chapter XVIII. MR. TREADWELL'S WIG 161 changed to 162.

Page 57: line ends travel-
next line begins

Brown. "Haven't you any
words in between have been presumed and do not appear in the original.

Page 66: "hard" changed to "heard" (I've heard that)

Page 89: repeated word "a" removed (a cocoanut on it)

Page 85

Page 127: “were’re” changed to “we’re” (we’re glad you)

Page 157: “though” changed to “thought” (thought the little)

Page 162: “though” changed to “thought” (Bunny thought perhaps)

Page 163: “did’t” changed to “didn’t” (hay Sue didn’t get)

Page 163: “break” changed to “bread” (bread and milk)

Page 164: “though” changed to “thought” (I thought I would)

Page 209: “yyet” changed to “yet” (come back yet)

Page 223: “Teadwell” changed to “Treadwell” (Treadwell dressed up)

Page 226: “Maye” changed to “Maybe” (Maybe Splash took)

Page 237: “aound” changed to “around” (around Mr. Treadwell)

Page 237: “boquet” changed to “bouquet” (a bouquet when she)