

evenin' or if Mr. Bird's hev'in' a busy season, or how this kind o' weather agrees with him, or somethin' like that. Now we'll make b'lieve we've got ter the dinner—that won't be so hard, 'cause yer'll have somethin' to do—it's awful bothersome to stan' round an' act stylish. If they have napkins, Sarah Maud, down to Peory may put 'em in their laps, 'n' the rest of ye can tuck 'em in yer necks. Don't eat with yer fingers—don't grab no vittles off one 'nother's plates; don't reach out for nothin', but wait till yer asked, 'n' if yer never git asked don't git up and grab it. Don't spill nothin' on the tablecloth, or like's not Mis' Bird'll send yer away from the table—'n' I hope she will if yer do! Susan, keep your handkerchief in your lap where Peory can borrow it if she needs it, 'n' I hope she'll know when she does need it, though I don't expect it. Now we'll try a few things ter see how they'll go! Mr. Clement, do you eat cramb'ry sarse?"

Clement (with gusto)—"Bet yer life!"

Mrs. Ruggles—"Clement McGrill Ruggles, do you mean to tell me you'd say that to a dinner-party? I'll give you one more chance. Mr. Clement, will you take some of the cram'bry?"

Clement—"Yes, marm, thank ye kindly, if you happen ter have any handy."

Mrs. Ruggles (approvingly)—"Very good, indeed! But they won't give yer two tries tonight, yer just remember that! Miss Peory, do you speak for white or dark meat?"

Peoria (bridling)—"I ain't perticuler as ter color, anything that nobody else wants will suit me."

Mrs. Ruggles—"First-rate! Nobody could speak more genteel than that. Miss Kitty, will you have hard or soft sarse with your pudden?"

Kitty (airily)—"Hard or soft? Oh! A little of both, if you please, an' I'm much obliged."

(During Kitty's speech all children point finger of shame at her and Peter grunts)

Mrs. Ruggles—"You just stop your gruntin', Peter Ruggles; that warn't greedy, that was all right. I wish I could git it inter your heads that it ain't so much what yer say, as the way you say it. And don't keep starin' cross-eyed at your necktie pin, or I'll take it out 'n' sew it on Clem or Cornelius; Sarah Maud'll keep her eye on it, 'n' if it turns broken side out she'll tell yer Gracious! I should'nt think you'd ever seen nor worn no jool'ry in your life. Eily, you an' Larry's too little to train, so you just look at the rest an' do's they do, 'n' the Lord have mercy on ye 'n' help ye to act decent! Now is there anything more ye'd like to practice?"

Peter (gloomingly)—"If yer tell me one more thing, I can't set up an' eat. I'm so cram full o' manners now I'm ready ter bust, 'thout no dinner at all."

Cornelius—"Me, too."

Mrs. Ruggles (sarcastically)—"Well, I'm sorry for yer both, if the 'mout o' manners yer've got on hand now troubles ye, you're dreadful easy-hurt. Now, Sarah Maud, after dinner, about once in so often, you must git up 'n' say, 'I guess we'd better be goin';' 'n' if they say, 'Oh, no' set a while longer,' yer can set; but if they don't say nothin' you've got ter get up 'n' go. Now, hev yer got that int' yer head?"

("Once in so often" brings look of despair to five older children's faces.)

Sarah Maud (mournfully)—"Seems as if this whole dinner-party set right square on top o' me! Mebbe I could manage my own manners, but to manage nine mannerses is worse 'n stayin' to home!"

Mrs. Ruggles—"Oh, don't fret. I guess you'll git along. I wouldnt' mind if folks would only say, 'Oh, childern will be childern,' but they won't. They'll say, 'Land o' Goodness, who fetched them childern up?' It's quarter past five, 'n' yer can go now—remember 'bout the hats—don't all talk ter once—Susan, lend yer han'chief ter Peory. Peter, don't keep screwin' yer scarf-pin. Cornelius, hold yer head up straight. Sarah Maud, don't take yer eyes off o' Larry, 'n' Larry you keep holt o' Sarah Maud 'n' do jest as she says, 'n' whatever you do, all of yer, never forgit for one second that yer mother was a McGrill."

(During the scene the children should act restless, excited and conscious of their unaccustomed finery. Kitty's hair should be done in thirty-four ringlets; Peoria, Susan, Eily in two braids, Sarah Maud's in one tight short pigtail, Peter has a large conspicuous scarf pin in his necktie which he continually twists and tries to look at).

(Adapted from Kate Douglas Wiggin's "Bird's Christmas Carol"—Houghton Mifflin Company.)

A CHRISTMAS DRILL

Music—Any marching song. Some Old English Folk Songs would be very satisfactory.

Snow—Six girls dressed in white Mother Hubbard dresses and white caps. Also carry sprays of evergreen trimmed with cotton wool and star dust.

Icicles—Six boys in white suits, plain blouse and short trousers, with pointed frill about twelve inches in depth around waist and white pointed caps. All carry long twists of paper, or the like, to represent icicles.

Mistletoe and Holly—Four girls in green Mother Hubbard dresses with white caps. Four boys in green suits made as those of icicles, with frill of red and with red caps. All carry wreaths of holly and mistletoe. (Paper ones may be made in school.)

Figure 1. Enter girls (Snow) at right and boys (Icicles) at left. March in two large circles, girls to right and boys to left centre stage. Leaders meet at