

••LITTLE FOLKS••

Peter the Piper.

Do you think any king upon his throne could be happier than Peter? Look at him seated on the stile beside the bridge. He is monarch there. Not a soul disturbs him. The sky, the water, the fair, outspread country are all his. And he is making music for himself.

him. She keeps a cow, and it is chiefly from the butter and cheeses which she makes and sends to market that the money comes with which she buys the clothes that her children wear.

Sometimes Peter goes with her to market, and on these occasions he will often make merry dance

was with him, found it hard work to cheer him up. She happened to hear Peter playing in the village street as he walked quickly along to the tune he was making.

'Stop!' she called to him in German, and when Peter did not hear her she hurried after him and took hold of his arm. 'What merry music you make!' she said. 'Will you come and play at the inn for me?'

'Certainly, gracious lady,' said Peter, for he was not unused to being asked to play for people, and where music was concerned he was never shy. He knew this lady, too, by sight, for in such a village everyone soon knows all about everyone else. So a time was arranged, and in the evening, just when the fits of gloom came chiefly to the poor sick man, Peter went and stood outside the window of the parlor as he had been told and played such airs as came to him—all gay and bright and clear, like the song of birds.

The gentleman looked up from his brooding, listened, smiled, then his face became gradually cheerful. He rose and went to the window.

'Alice,' he said, 'just look at this little musician. It does one good to hear him. And he has a face like sunshine.'

His wife smiled.

'I have seen him,' she said, 'and heard him too, and I thought I would give you a little surprise. I have been asking our landlady about him. She says that, young as he is, he is quite in request at all the village festivities, but he is just as simple and unspoiled as he can be. He has a good mother, but his father is dead.'

'Tell him to come in,' said the gentleman.

In came Peter, with bare feet and legs, rosy cheeks, bright eyes, his hat in one hand, his whistle in the other, and made his best bow to the lady and gentleman.

'I am very fond of music,' said the latter, 'and I have enjoyed yours this evening. Tell me, child, who taught you?'

'No one taught me,' said Peter. 'Uncle Max gave me this—touching his instrument—and I play



There's music in the sighing of a reed;
There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had ears;
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

I think Peter can hear some of this music and is trying to reproduce it. And there is music in his own little heart, too, because he is so happy and free from care, and has love for God and all His creatures.

Peter's mother is a widow, and very hard she works all day, for she has two little girls to see to besides

tunes with his pipe in the marketplace, and then the other children can never keep from dancing. Even the market-women when trade is slack can hardly forbear dancing, too, and will, at any rate, beat time with their feet and nod their heads to the tune.

One day there came to stay at the inn in the village where Peter lived a gentleman who had been ill. He was often depressed and sad from his weakness and from a trouble he had had, and his wife, who