

Choice Literature.

IN THE PIED PIPER'S MOUNTAIN.

It was a great honour, let me tell you; and Doris, as she sat by the window studying, could not help thinking of it and feeling just a wee bit important.

"It isn't as if I was the oldest girl," said she to herself. "No, indeed I'm younger than most of them, and yet when it came to choosing who should speak, and we were each given a chance to vote, I had the most ballots. Miss Smith told me I could recite anything I chose, but to be sure it was 'good,' and that it was not 'beyond me.' Well, this isn't 'beyond me,' I guess," and she began

"Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover City;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its walls on the southern side
A pleasant spot you never spied
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
With vermin was a pity."

For she had chosen Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin." That was surely "good," and if it was long, why, it was so interesting. As she went along she could almost see the rats as they "fought the dogs and killed the cats." She could almost see the great Mayor tremble as the people flocked to him and threatened to "send him packing" if he didn't find some means to rid them of those awful rats. She could almost hear the Pied Piper's voice as he offered to clear the town of the pests, and it seemed to her she could hear the music of his pipe as he stepped into the street and began to play, while the rats from every hole and cranny followed him to the very banks of the Weser, where they were drowned in the rolling tide.

It seemed awful that, after promising the piper those fifty thousand guilders, the Mayor should break his word; and it certainly was terrible, when the Piper found he had been duped, that he should again begin to pipe, and that the children—yes, every one in Hamelin Town—should follow him just as the rats had done, and that, by and by, he should lead them to the mountain side, that it should open, and that lo! after they had all passed in, it should close again, leaving only one little lame boy outside, weeping bitterly because he had not been able to walk fast enough to keep up with the merry crowd. It was all so distinct and plain.

She wondered where the children went after the hill-side shut them in. She wondered what they saw. She thought the Piper's music must have been very odd indeed to charm them so. She could almost hear—what was that? She gave a start, for sure as you live, she heard the sound of a life piping shrill and loud round the corner. She flung down the book and ran into the street. The air was cold and sharp and made her shiver, but she did not stop to think of that: she was listening to that Piper who was coming around the side of the house—nearer and nearer. She meant to follow him, whoever he was. There! How the wind whistled and the leaves scurried!

Wind?

Leaves?

Why, it was the Pied Piper himself with his puffed cheeks and tattered coat, and before him ran the host of children, dancing as they went, to the tune of the Piper's life.

Away—away—

With a bound Doris left the door-step and followed after, running and fluttering, skipping and skurrying, sometimes like a little girl and sometimes like a big leaf—she hadn't time to ask herself which she really was; for all the while she was listening to that wonderful life as it whistled and whined, shrieked and sighed, and seeming to coax them on all the while.

She followed blindly after the rest of the whirling crowd. Away they went; always more and more—away they went; clear out of town and into the bare country—away they went; and the Piper behind them made his life notes shriller and louder so all could hear, and they seemed to be carried along in spite of themselves.

It was like a race in a dream. Their feet seemed not to touch the ground. The leaves rustled—no, the children chattered as they fluttered—no, hurried along. Doris could catch little sentences here and there, but they seemed to be in a strange tongue and she did not understand. But, by and by, she grew very familiar with the sounds and, strangely enough, she found she could make out the meaning of the queer words.

"It's German," she thought. "I know they're talking German," and so she listened very attentively.

"Sie ist eine Fremde," she heard one say to another. "sie gehort nicht zu uns," which she immediately knew meant, "She is a stranger, she doesn't belong to us."

"Nein," replied the other; "aber sie schient gut und brav zu sein." At which Doris smiled. She liked to be thought "good and sweet."

On and on they went; and after a time things began to have a very foreign look, and this startled Doris considerably.

"We can't have crossed the ocean," she thought. But when she asked her nearest neighbour where they were and whether they had crossed the Atlantic, he smiled and said—

"Ja, gewiss. Wir sind in Deutschland. Wir gehen, schon, nach Hamelin," which rather puzzled Doris; for she found they had crossed the sea and were in Germany and going to Hamelin.

"It must be the Piper's wonderful way," she thought.

But she did not feel at all homesick, nor tired nor afraid; for the Piper's life seemed to keep them all in excellent spirits, and she found herself wondering what she would do when they came to the fabled hill-side; for she never doubted they would go there. On they went, faster and faster, the piper behind them playing all the while.

She saw a broad river and all the children shouted; "Die Weser."

One little flaxen-haired girl told her they were nearing Hamelin.

It used to have a big wall around it with twenty towers and a large fort, but that was all blown up by the French, years and years ago," she explained. "But it has a chain bridge," she remarked proudly. "A chain bridge that stretches quite across the Weser."

Doris was just about to say: "Why, that's nothing! We have a huge suspension bridge in New York;" but the words seemed to twist themselves into a different form and the memory of home to melt away and she found herself murmuring, "Ach, so?" quite like the rest of the little Teutons.

But at length the life ceased playing and the children stopped.

There they were in quaint old Hamelin, with its odd wooden houses and its old Munster that was all falling to ruin, and its rosy cheeked children, who did not seem to notice the new-comers at all.

"We must be invisible," thought Doris, and indeed they were.

Then the Pied Piper came forward and beckoned them on, and softly they followed him to the very hill-side that opened, as Doris knew it would, and they found themselves in a vast hall. A low rumbling startled Doris for a moment, but then she knew it was only the hill-side closing upon them. She seemed to hear a faint cry as the last sound died away, and was tempted to run back, for she feared some child had been hurt; but her companion said:

"It can't be helped, dear; he always gets left outside, and then he weeps. You see he is lame and he cannot keep up with us." So Doris knew it was the self same little lad of whom Browning had written in his story of the Piper.

What a chattering there was to be sure! and what a crowd was gathered about the Piper at the farther end of the hall. Every once in a while all the children would laugh so loud that the very ceiling shook. It was such a merry throng

"Tell me," said Doris to her little neighbour—"Tell me, are you always so gay here? Do you never quarrel?" and have you really lived in this hill-side all this long, long time? Ever since the Piper first came to Hamelin five hundred years ago?"

"Ja wohl," replied the girl, nodding her flaxen head. "We are always so happy; we never quarrel, therefore we are ever young, and what thou callest five hundred years are as nothing to us. Ah! we are well cared for here, and the Piper teaches us, and we him; and we play and frolic and sometimes travel, und so geht's."

"But what can you teach him?" asked Doris, wondering.

"Ah, many things. We teach him to tune his life to the tune of our laughter, so when he travels he may pipe new songs. Ah! thou foolish, thou thoughtest him the Wind. And we teach him to be as a little child, and then he keeps young always, and his heart is warm and glad. And we teach him—but thou shalt see," and she nodded again and smiled into Doris's wondering eyes.

The hall they were in was long and wide, and hung all about the walls were the most beautiful pictures, that seemed to shift and change every moment into something more strange and lovely. And as Doris looked she seemed to know what the pictures were and they were only reflections of the children's pure souls that shone out of their eyes.

"How beautiful!" she thought.

But the Piper was singing to them now; and as she drew nearer him she saw he had two little tots in his arms, and was putting them to sleep on his breast.

So the children were very still while the Piper sang his lullaby, and presently the two little ones began to nod; and the Piper did not move, but held them to his kind heart until they were fast asleep. Then he rose and carried them away and laid them down somewhere; Doris could not see where, but it must have been far enough away to be out of the sound of their voices; for when he came back he did not lower his tones, but spoke up quite naturally and laughed gaily as he said—

"Well, what now, children? Shall we show the new friend our manufactory? And they were all so anxious to do whatever he proposed that in a moment they had formed quite a body-guard about the Piper, and were following and leading him down the vast hall.

"What is the manufactory?" asked Doris of a boy who happened to be beside her.

"Wait and thou shalt see," he replied. We always are patient until the Herr Piper is ready to tell us what he wishes; then we listen and attend."

Doris would have felt that the boy was snubbing her if his eyes had not been so kind and his voice so sweet. As it was she took it all pleasantly, and determined to ask no more questions, but to content herself with as much information as the Piper was willing to bestow upon her.

But now they had passed out of the first great hall and into another that seemed even more vast. At first it seemed quite empty to Doris, but as soon as her eyes grew accustomed to the strange light she saw its walls were flanked by any number of wee spinning-wheels; and above them on shelves lay stacks of something that looked like golden flax, and shimmered and glittered in a wonderful way. The floor was carpeted with something very soft and of a tender, fresh green, and Doris' feet seemed to sink into it at every step; and then a sweet perfume seemed to rise up, like that one smells on an early spring day when one goes into the country, and is the first to lay foot on the fresh young grass. The ceiling was so high that at first Doris thought it was no ceiling at all but just the sky itself, and it was a deep, clear blue.

"This is our Spring-room, little Doris," explained the Piper. "Now, children!" And at these words they broke away from him, leaving only Doris by his side, and each group began a different task. One flew to the stacks of gold and separated them into long, heavy skeins, while another spun the threads back and forth till they sparkled and danced and seemed to turn into sunbeams that at length broke away and glanced into the blue above, where they played about just as the sunlight does on a bright spring day. Others, again, knelt down upon the soft carpet, and seemed to be whispering something very sweet to someone or something hidden below; and before very long up sprang long, tender shoots, and then thin buds appeared, and by-and-by the buds swelled and burst, and then where every bud had been was a flower. And all this time there had been a sound as of falling drops that seemed to be keeping time to a soft little melody the children were crooning.

The Piper, looking at Doris' wondering face, said, smiling: "Thou dost not comprehend, dear heart? Well, I will explain. As I said, this is our Spring-room, and in it all the sunshine and flowers and clouds and rain are made that go to make up a spring day. They," he said, pointing to the first group, "are separating the golden skeins so that they can be spun into sunbeams. It takes a great patience before they

are completely finished; and if one of the spinners should sigh while weaving it would ruin the beam and make it dull and heavy. So, you see, the sunbeam children must be very light-hearted. Then those others are coaxing the flowers to spring up and bud. After they are all well above-ground the flower children hide a secret in the heart of each blossom, and a very beautiful secret it is, and so wonderful that very few ever succeed in finding it out. But it is worth searching for, and one or two world people have really discovered it. Thou mayest guess what a difficult task is that of my flower children; for at first the flowers are drowsy and would prefer to slumber yet awhile, and my children must whisper to them such beautiful thoughts that they forget everything else and spring up to hear more. The singing thou hearest is the lullaby the rain children are singing to the drops. Thou knowest that the clouds are the rain-cradles; and when my children sing slumber songs and rock the clouds gently to and fro, the drops grow sleepy and forget to fall. But sometimes they are too restless to remain in their beds, and then they fall to earth; and if we could wait so long we might hear the children teach them their patter-song. But we have much else to see, and must go forward. Now, children!"

At this there was a slight commotion while the deft hands put aside their tasks; but it was over in a moment, and the Piper was once more in the midst of the merry crowd, who laughed gaily and chattered like magpies, while Doris looked her admiration and delight, and the Piper smiled approvingly.

"The next is the Summer-room," he said, as they wandered on. "Thou seest we are never idle. The world is so large, there is always plenty to do; and what would become of it if it were not for the children? They are the ones who make the world bright, little Doris; and so everything depends upon their keeping their hearts glad; and one's heart cannot be glad if one's soul is not beautiful. Thou thoughtest not so much depended on the children, didst thou, dear heart?"

Oh, the wonders of that Summer-room! The perfect chorus that rose as the fresh young voices taught the birds to sing; the beauty of the rainbows, the glory of the sunsets. It was all so wonderful that Doris scarcely knew how to show her appreciation of it all. The Autumn-room was scarcely less bewildering, and the Winter-room was so dazzling that Doris shut up her eyes for very wonder.

In the Autumn-room all the little musicians set about transposing the melody of the bird-songs from the major to the minor key, and they taught the Piper to bring his piping into harmony with their voices. The small artists began changing the sky-colouring, and brought about such wonderful effects that it was marvelous to see, and Doris could scarcely realize at all that such wonders could be.

After they had shown her the Winter-room and had seen her amazement at the glory of the snow-crystals and the mysterious way in which the rainbow colours were hidden in the ice, the Piper nodded his head, and they all turned back and commenced retracing their steps.

"I suppose thou didst wonder where we had been when thou didst join us, little friend," said the Piper. "I will tell thee. In the spring we all set out on our travels; for my children must see and learn themselves, besides showing and teaching others. So in the spring we leave this place and go into the world. Then I go wandering about with my life, north and south, east and west; and the people think me the wind. But my dear children could not bear such fatigue, so they take up their abode in the trees and remain there, guiding the seasons and seeing that all is well: whispering to me as I pass and to one another, and singing softly to the stars and the clouds, and then every one mistakes and thinks them simply rustling leaves. Then, when I have finished my journeying, I give them a sign, and they dress themselves in gala-costume—for joy at the thought of coming home—and when everyone is gay in red, purple and yellow they all slip down from the trees and away we go. People have great theories about the changing of the foliage; but it is a simple matter, as I tell you, it is only that my children are getting ready to go home.

During the winter we leave the world to sleep; for it grows very weary and needs rest. My children arrange its snow-coverlets for it, and then it slumbers, and the moon and stars keep watch. So now thou knowest all, little maid, and thou canst be one of us and make the world bright and glorious if thou wilt. It only needs a beautiful soul, dear Doris; then one remains ever young and can work many wonders."

"Oh, I will, I will," cried Doris instantly.

"But," said the Piper, "it takes such long experience. Thou seest my children had long years of it, and until thou canst make life bright within, thou couldst not venture without; but if thou wilt try and be content to work in patience—there are many children who are doing this—"

"Oh I will, I will," said Doris again.

Then the children laughed more happily than ever, and the Piper raised his life to his lips and blew a loud, glad note.

What was this?

The children had disappeared, the Piper was gone, and Doris sat by the window and her book had dropped to the floor. She rubbed her eyes.

"It was not a dream," she said. "It is the Piper's wonderful way; he has left me here to work and wait so that I may make the world beautiful at last." And she smiled and clapped her hands as the wind swept round the corner. *Julia L. Lipman, in the N. Y. Independent.*

APPLE SAUCE.

Epicsures say that apple sauce, eaten with roast pork or roast goose, aids digestion. Whatever may be the active principle contained in this delicious relish that stimulates the stomach to its duty, is not clear. It is quite clear, however, that when the stomach refuses to perform the work required of it, Ayer's Sarsaparilla is the proper remedy. This medicine not only gives tone and strength to the stomach, but it invigorates all the digestive and blood-making organs, and, through them, keeps the machinery of life free from the obstacles which so often cause it to falter and become irregular in its actions.

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