

THE BLUE BIRD

A Fairy Play in Six Acts

BY
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Translated by
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CHARACTERS

TYLTYL
MYTYL
LIGHT
THE FAIRY BERYLUNE
NEIGHBOUR BERLINGOT
DADDY TYL
MUMMY TYL
GAFFER TYL (Dead)
GRANNY TYL (Dead)
TYLTYL'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS (Dead)
TIME
NIGHT
NEIGHBOUR BERLINGOT'S LITTLE DAUGHTER
TYLO, THE DOG
TYLETTE, THE CAT
BREAD
SUGAR
FIRE
WATER
MILK
THE WOLF
THE PIG
THE OX
THE COW
THE BULL
THE SHEEP
THE COCK
THE RABBIT
THE HORSE
THE ASS
THE OAK
THE ELM
THE BEECH
THE LIME-TREE
THE FIR-TREE
THE CYPRESS
THE BIRCH
THE CHESTNUT-TREE
THE IVY
THE POPLAR
THE WILLOW
STARS, SICKNESSES, SHADES, LUXURIES, HAPPINESSES, JOYS, ETC.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

A new act appears for the first time in this edition and is inserted as Act IV--_Palace of Happiness_. It has been specially written for the Christmas revival of _The Blue Bird_ at the Haymarket Theatre, where it will take the place of the Forest Scene (Act III., Scene 2). In the printed version, however, the Forest Scene is retained; and in this and all later editions the play will consist of six acts instead of five.

ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS.
CHELSEA, 14 _November_, 1910.

COSTUMES

TYLTYL wears the dress of Hop o' my Thumb in Perrault's Tales. Scarlet knickerbockers, pale-blue jacket, white stockings, tan shoes.

MYTYL is dressed like Gretel or Little Red Riding-hood.

LIGHT.--The "moon-coloured" dress in Perrault's _Peau d'ane;_ that is to say, pale gold shot with silver, shimmering gauzes, forming a sort of rays, etc. Neo-Grecian or Anglo-Grecian (_a la_ Walter Crane) or even more or less Empire style: a high waist, bare arms, etc. Head-dress: a sort of diadem or even a light crown.

THE FAIRY BERYLUNE and NEIGHBOUR BERLINGOT.--The traditional dress of the poor women in fairy-tales. If desired, the transformation of the Fairy into a princess in Act I may be omitted.

DADDY TYL, MUMMY TYL, GAFFER TYL and GRANNY TYL.--The traditional costume of the German wood-cutters and peasants in Grimm's Tales.

TYLTYL'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS.--Different forms of the Hop-o'-my-Thumb costume.

TIME.--Traditional dress of Time: a wide black or dark-blue cloak, a streaming white beard, scythe and hour-glass.

NIGHT.--Ample black garments, covered with mysterious stars and "shot" with reddish-brown reflections. Veils, dark poppies, etc.

THE NEIGHBOUR'S LITTLE GIRL.--Bright fair hair; a long white frock.

THE DOG.--Red dress-coat, white breeches, top-boots, a shiny hat. The costume suggests that of John Bull.

THE CAT.--The costume of Puss In Boots: powdered wig, three-cornered hat, violet or sky-blue coat, dress-sword, etc.

N.B.--The heads of the DOG and the CAT should be only discreetly animalised.

THE LUXURIES.--Before the transformation: wide, heavy mantles in red and yellow brocade; enormous fat jewels, etc. After the transformation:

chocolate or coffee-coloured tights, giving the impression of unadorned dancing-jacks.

THE HAPPINESSES OF THE HOME.--Dresses of various colours, or, if preferred, costumes of peasants, shepherds, wood-cutters and so on, but idealised and interpreted fairy-fashion.

THE GREAT JOYS.--As stated in the text, shimmering dresses in soft and subtle shades: rose-awakening, water's-smile, amber-dew, blue-of-dawn, etc.

MATERNAL LOVE.--Dress very similar to the dress worn by Light, that is to say, supple and almost transparent veils, as of a Greek statue, and, in so far as possible, white. Pearls and other stones as rich and numerous as may be desired, provided that they do not break the pure and candid harmony of the whole.

BREAD.--A rich pasha's dress. An ample crimson silk or velvet gown. A huge turban. A scimitar. An enormous stomach, red and puffed-out cheeks.

SUGAR.--A silk gown, cut like that of a eunuch in a seraglio, half blue and half white, to suggest the paper wrapper of a sugar-loaf. Eunuch's headdress.

FIRE.--Red tights, a vermilion cloak, with changing reflections, lined with gold. An aigrette of iridescent flames.

WATER.--A pale-blue or bluish-green dress, with transparent reflections and effects of rippling or trickling gauze, Neo-Grecian or Anglo-Grecian style. but fuller and more voluminous than that of LIGHT. Head-dress of aquatic flowers and seaweed.

THE ANIMALS.--Popular or peasant costumes.

THE TREES.--Dresses of different shades of green or the colour of the trunks of trees. Distinctive attributes in the shape of leaves or branches by which they can be recognised.

SCENES

ACT I.--The Wood-cutter's Cottage.

ACT II., Scene 1--At the Fairy's.

Scene 2--The Land of Memory.

ACT III., Scene 1--The Palace of Night.

Scene 2--The Forest.

ACT IV., Scene 1--Before the Curtain.

Scene 2--The Palace of Happiness.

ACT V., Scene 1--Before the Curtain.

Scene 2--The Graveyard.

Scene 3--The Kingdom of the Future.

ACT VI., Scene 1--The Leave-taking.

Scene 2--The Awakening.

The Blue Bird

ACT I

_The Wood-cutter's Cottage

The stage represents the interior of a wood-cutter's cottage, simple and rustic in appearance, but in no way poverty-stricken. A recessed fireplace containing the dying embers of a wood-fire. Kitchen utensils, a cupboard, a bread-pan, a grandfather's clock, a spinning-wheel, a water-tap, etc. On a table, a lighted lamp. At the foot of the cupboard, on either side, a DOG and a CAT lie sleeping, rolled up, each with his nose in his tail. Between them stands a large blue-and-white sugar-loaf. On the wall hangs a round cage containing a turtle-dove. At the back, two windows, with closed inside shutters. Under one of the windows, a stool. On the left is the front door, with a big latch to it. On the right, another door. A ladder leads up to a loft. On the right also are two little children's cots, at the head of which are two chains, with clothes carefully folded on them. When the curtain rises, TYLTYL and MYTYL are sound asleep in their cots, MUMMY TYL tucks them in, leans over them, watches them for a moment as they sleep and beckons to DADDY TYL, who thrusts his head through the half-open door. MUMMY TYL lays a finger on her lips, to impose silence upon him, and then goes out to the right, on tiptoe, after first putting out the lamp. The scene remains in darkness for a moment. Then a light, gradually increasing in intensity, filters in through the shutters. The lamp on the table lights again of itself, but its light is of a different colour than when MUMMY TYL extinguished it. The two CHILDREN appear to wake and sit up in bed.

TYLTYL
Mytyl?

MYTYL
Tylyl?

TYLTYL
Are you asleep?

MYTYL
Are you?...

TYLTYL
No; how can I be asleep when I'm talking to you?

MYTYL
Say, is this Christmas Day?...

TYLTYL
Not yet; not till to-morrow. But Father Christmas won't bring us anything this year....

MYTYL
Why not?

TYLTYL
I heard mummy say that she couldn't go to town to tell him ... But he will come next year....

MYTYL
Is next year far off?...

TYLTYL
A good long while.... But he will come to the rich children to-night....

MYTYL
Really?...

TYLTYL
Hullo!... Mummy's forgotten to put out the lamp!... I've an idea!...

MYTYL
What?...

TYLTYL
Let's get up....

MYTYL
But we mustn't....

TYLTYL
Why, there's no one about.... Do you see the shutters?...

MYTYL
Oh, how bright they are!...

TYLTYL
It's the lights of the party.

MYTYL
What party?...

TYLTYL
The rich children opposite. It's the Christmas-tree. Let's open the shutters....

MYTYL
Can we?...

TYLTYL
Of course; there's no one to stop us.... Do you hear the music?... Let us get up....

(The two CHILDREN get up, run to one of the windows, climb on to the stool and throw back the shutters. A bright light fills the room. The CHILDREN look out greedily.)

TYLTYL
We can see everything!...

MYTYL (who can hardly find room on the stool)
I can't....

TYLTYL

It's snowing!... There's two carriages, with six horses each!...

MYTYL

There are twelve little boys getting out!...

TYLTYL

How silly you are!... They're little girls....

MYTYL

They've got knickerbockers....

TYLTYL

What do you know?... Don't push so!...

MYTYL

I never touched you.

TYLTYL (_who is taking up the whole stool_)

You're taking up all the room...

MYTYL

Why, I have no room at all!...

TYLTYL

Do be quiet! I see the tree!...

MYTYL

What tree?...

TYLTYL

Why, the Christmas-tree!... You're looking at the wall!...

MYTYL

I'm looking at the wall because I've got no room....

TYLTYL (_giving her a miserly little place on the stool_)

There!... Will that do?... Now you're better off than I!... I say, what lots and lots of lights!...

MYTYL

What are those people doing who are making such a noise?...

TYLTYL

They're the musicians.

MYTYL

Are they angry?...

TYLTYL

No; but it's hard work.

MYTYL

Another carriage with white horses!...

TYLTYL

Be quiet!... And look!...

MYTYL

What are those gold things there, hanging from the branches?

TYLTYL

Why, toys, to be sure!... Swords, guns, soldiers, cannons....

MYTYL

And dolls; say, are there any dolls?...

TYLTYL

Dolls?... That's too silly; there's no fun in dolls....

MYTYL

And what's that all round the table?....

TYLTYL

Cakes and fruit and tarts....

MYTYL

I had some once when I was little....

TYLTYL

So did I; it's nicer than bread, but they don't give you enough....

MYTYL

They've got plenty over there.... The whole table's full.... Are they going to eat them?...

TYLTYL

Of course; what else would they do with them?...

MYTYL

Why don't they eat them at once?...

TYLTYL

Because they're not hungry....

MYTYL (_stupefied with astonishment_)

Not hungry?... Why not?...

TYLTYL

Well, they eat whenever they want to....

MYTYL (_incredulously_)

Every day?...

TYLTYL

They say so....

MYTYL

Will they eat them all?... Will they give any away?...

TYLTYL

To whom?...

MYTYL

To us....

TYLTYL

They don't know us....

MYTYL

Suppose we asked them....

TYLTYL

We mustn't.

MYTYL

Why not?...

TYLTYL

Because it's not right.

MYTYL (_clapping her hands_)

Oh, how pretty they are!...

TYLTYL (_rapturously_)

And how they're laughing and laughing!...

MYTYL

And the little ones dancing!...

TYLTYL

Yes, yes; let's dance too!... (_They stamp their feet for joy on the stool_.)

MYTYL

Oh, what fun!...

TYLTYL

They're getting the cakes!... They can touch them!... They're eating, they're eating, they're eating!...

MYTYL

The tiny ones, too!... They've got two, three, four apiece!...

TYLTYL (_drunk with delight_)

Oh, how lovely!... Oh, how lovely, how lovely!...

MYTYL (_counting imaginary cakes_)

I've got twelve!...

TYLTYL

And I four times twelve!... But I'll give you some....

(_A knock at the door of the cottage_.)

TYLTYL (_suddenly quieted and frightened_)

What's that?...

MYTYL (_scared_)

It's Daddy!...

(_As they hesitate before opening the door, the big latch is seen to rise of itself, with a grating noise; the door half opens to admit a little old woman dressed in green with a red hood on her head. She is humpbacked and lame and near-sighted; her nose and chin meet; and she walks bent on a stick. She is obviously a fairy_.)

THE FAIRY

Have you the grass here that sings or the bird that is blue?...

TYLTYL

We have some grass, but it can't sing....

MYTYL
Tylyl has a bird.

TYLTYL
But I can't give it away....

THE FAIRY
Why not?...

TYLTYL
Because it's mine.

THE FAIRY
That's a reason, no doubt. Where is the bird?...

TYLTYL (_pointing to the cage_)
In the cage....

THE FAIRY (_putting on her glasses to examine the bird_)
I don't want it; it's not blue enough. You will have to go and find me the one I want.

TYLTYL
But I don't know where it is....

THE FAIRY
No more do I. That's why you must look for it. I can do without the grass that sings, at a pinch; but I must absolutely have the blue bird. It's for my little girl, who is very ill.

TYLTYL
What's the matter with her?...

THE FAIRY
We don't quite know; she wants to be happy....

TYLTYL
Really?...

THE FAIRY
Do you know who I am?...

TYLTYL
You're rather like our neighbour, Madame Berlingot....

THE FAIRY (_growing suddenly angry_)
Not a bit!... There's not the least likeness!... This is intolerable!... I am the Fairy Berylune....

TYLTYL
Oh! Very well....

THE FAIRY
You will have to start at once.

TYLTYL
Are you coming with us?

THE FAIRY
I can't, because I put on the soup this morning and it always boils over

if I leave it for more than an hour.... (_Pointing successively to the ceiling, the chimney and the window_) Will you go out this way, or that way, or that way?...

TYLTYL (_pointing timidly to the door_)
I would rather go out that way....

THE FAIRY (_growing suddenly angry again_)
That's quite impossible; and it's a shocking habit!... (_Pointing to the window_) We'll go out this way.... Well?... What are you waiting for?... Get dressed at once.... (_The_ CHILDREN _do as they are told and dress quickly_.) I'll help Mytyl....

TYLTYL
We have no shoes....

THE FAIRY
That doesn't matter. I will give you a little magic hat. Where are your father and mother?....

TYLTYL (_pointing to the door on the right_)
They're asleep in there....

THE FAIRY
And your grandpapa and grandmamma?...

TYLTYL
They're dead....

THE FAIRY
And your little brothers and sisters.... Have you any?...

TYLTYL
Oh, yes; three little brothers....

MYTYL
And four little sisters....

THE FAIRY
Where are they?...

TYLTYL
They are dead, too....

THE FAIRY
Would you like to see them again?...

TYLTYL
Oh, yes!... At once!... Show them to us!...

THE FAIRY
I haven't got them in my pocket.... But this is very lucky; you will see them when you go through the Land of Memory.... It's on the way to the Blue Bird, just on the left, past the third turning.... What were you doing when I knocked?...

TYLTYL
We were playing at eating cakes?...

THE FAIRY
Have you any cakes?... Where are they?...

TYLTYL

In the house of the rich children.... Come and look, it's so lovely. (_He drags the_ FAIRY _to the window_.)

THE FAIRY (_at the window_)

But it's the others who are eating them!...

TYLTYL

Yes; but we can see them eat....

THE FAIRY

Aren't you cross with them?...

TYLTYL

What for?...

THE FAIRY

For eating all the cakes.... I think it's very wrong of them not to give you some....

TYLTYL

Not at all; they're rich.... I say, isn't it beautiful over there?...

THE FAIRY

It's no more beautiful there than here.

TYLTYL

Ugh!... It's darker here and smaller and there are no cakes....

THE FAIRY

It's exactly the same, only you can't see....

TYLTYL

Yes, I can; and I have very good eyes. I can see the time on the church clock and daddy can't...

THE FAIRY (_suddenly angry_)

I tell you that you can't see!... How do you see me?... What do I look like?... (_An awkward silence from_ TYLTYL.) Well, answer me, will you? I want to know if you can see!... Am I pretty or ugly?... (_The silence grows more and more uncomfortable_.) Won't you answer?... Am I young or old?... Are my cheeks pink or yellow?... Perhaps you'll say I have a hump?...

TYLTYL (_in a conciliatory tone_)

No, no; It's not a big one....

THE FAIRY

Oh, yes, to look at you, any one would think it enormous.... Have I a hook nose and have I lost one of my eyes?...

TYLTYL

Oh, no, I don't say that.... Who put it out?...

THE FAIRY (_growing more and more irritated_).

But it's not out!... You wretched, impudent boy!... It's much finer than the other; it's bigger and brighter and blue as the sky.... And my hair, do you see that?... It's fair as the corn in the fields, it's like virgin gold!... And I've such heaps and heaps of it that it weighs my head down.... It escapes on every side.... Do you see it on my hands? (_She

holds out two lean wisps of grey hair_.)

TYLTYL

Yes, I see a little....

THE FAIRY (_indignantly_)

A little!... Sheaves! Armfuls! Clusters! Waves of gold!... I know there are people who say that they don't see any; but you're not one of those wicked, blind people, I should hope?...

TYLTYL

Oh, no; I can see all that isn't hidden....

THE FAIRY

But you ought to see the rest with as little doubt!... Human beings are very odd!... Since the death of the fairies, they see nothing at all and they never suspect it.... Luckily, I always carry with me all that is wanted to give new light to dimmed eyes.... What am I taking out of my bag?...

TYLTYL

Oh, what a dear little green hat!... What's that shining in the cockade?...

THE FAIRY

That's the big diamond that makes people see....

TYLTYL

Really?...

THE FAIRY

Yes; when you've got the hat on your head, you turn the diamond a little; from right to left, for instance, like this; do you see?... Then it presses a bump which nobody knows of and which opens your eyes....

TYLTYL

Doesn't it hurt?...

THE FAIRY

On the contrary, it's enchanted.... You at once see even the inside of things: the soul of bread, of wine, of pepper, for instance....

MYTYL

Can you see the soul of sugar, too?...

THE FAIRY (_suddenly cross_)

Of course you can!... I hate unnecessary questions.... The soul of sugar is no more interesting than the soul of pepper.... There, I give you all I have to help you in your search for the Blue Bird. I know that the flying carpet or the ring which makes its wearer invisible would be more useful to you.... But I have lost the key of the cupboard in which I locked them.... Oh, I was almost forgetting!... (_Pointing to the diamond_) When you hold it like this, do you see?... One little turn more and you behold the past.... Another little turn and you behold the future.... It's curious and practical and it's quite noiseless....

TYLTYL

Daddy will take it from me....

THE FAIRY

He won't see it; no one can see it as long as it's on your head.... Will you try it?... (_She puts the little green hat on_ TYLTYL'S

head.) Now, turn the diamond.... One turn and then....

(TYLTYL _has no sooner turned the diamond than a sudden and wonderful change comes over everything. The old_ FAIRY _alters then and there into a princess of marvellous beauty; the flints of which the cottage walls are built light up, turn blue as sapphires, become transparent and gleam and sparkle like the most precious stones. The humble furniture takes life and becomes resplendent; the deal table assumes as grave and noble an air as a table made of marble; the face of the clock winks its eye and smiles genially, while the door that contains the pendulum opens and releases the Hours, which, holding one another by the hand and laughing merrily, begin to dance to the sound of delicious music_.)

TYLTYL (_displaying a legitimate bewilderment and pointing to the Hours_) Who are all those pretty ladies?...

THE FAIRY

Don't be afraid; they are the hours of your life and they are glad to be free and visible for a moment....

TYLTYL

And why are the walls so bright?... Are they made of sugar or of precious stones?...

THE FAIRY

All stones are alike, all stones are precious; but man sees only a few of them....

(_While they are speaking, the scene of enchantment continues and is completed. The souls of the Quartern-loaves, in the form of little men in crust-coloured tights, flurried and all powdered with flour, scramble out of the bread-pan and frisk round the table, where they are caught up by_ FIRE, _who, springing from the hearth in yellow and vermilion tights, writhes with laughter as he chases the loaves_.)

TYLTYL

Who are those ugly little men?...

THE FAIRY

Oh, they're nothing; they are merely the souls of the Quartern-loaves, who are taking advantage of the reign of truth to leave the pan in which they were too tightly packed....

TYLTYL

And the big red fellow, with the nasty smell?...

THE FAIRY

Hush!... Don't speak too loud; that's Fire.... He's dangerous. (_This dialogue does not interrupt the enchantment. The_ DOG _and the_ CAT, _lying rolled up at the foot of the cupboard, utter a loud and simultaneous cry and disappear down a trap; and in their places rise two persons, one of whom has the face of a bull-dog, the other that of a tom-cat. Forthwith, the little man with the bull-dog face, whom we will henceforward call the_ DOG, _rushes upon_ TYLTYL, _kisses him violently and overwhelms him with noisy and impetuous caresses; while the little man with the face of a tom-cat, whom we will simply call the_ CAT, _combs his hair, washes his hands and strokes his whiskers before going up to_ MYTYL.)

THE DOG (_yelling, jumping about, knocking up against everything, unbearable_)

My little god!... Good-morning, good-morning, my dear little god!... At last, at last we can talk!... I had so much to tell you!... Bark and wag my tail as I might, you never understood!... But now!... Good-morning, good-morning!... I love you!... Shall I do some of my tricks?... Shall I beg?... Would you like to see me walk on my front paws or dance on my hind-legs?...

TYLTYL (_to the_ FAIRY)

Who is this gentleman with the dog's head?....

THE FAIRY

Don't you see? It's the soul of TYLO whom you have set free....

THE CAT (_going up to_ MYTYL _and putting out his hand to her, with much ceremony and circumspection_)

Good-morning, Miss.... How well you look this morning!...

MYTYL

Good-morning, sir.... (_To the_ FAIRY) Who is it?...

THE FAIRY

Why, don't you see? Its the soul of Tylette offering you his hand.... Kiss him....

THE DOG (_hustling the_ CAT)

Me, too!... I've kissed the little god!... I've kissed the little girl!... I've kissed everybody!... Oh, grand!... What fun we shall have!... I'm going to frighten Tylette I Bow, wow, wow!...

THE CAT

Sir, I don't know you....

THE FAIRY (_threatening the_ DOG _with her stick_)

Keep still, will you, or else you'll go back into silence until the end of time....

(_Meanwhile, the enchantment has pursued its course: the spinning-wheel has begun to turn madly in its corner and to spin brilliant rays of light; the tap, in another corner, begins to sing in a very high voice and, turning into a luminous fountain, floods the sink with sheets of pearls and emeralds, through which darts the soul of_ WATER, _like a young girl, streaming, dishevelled and tearful, who immediately begins to fight with_ FIRE.)

TYLTYL

And who is that wet lady?...

THE FAIRY

Don't be afraid. It's Water just come from the tap....

(_The milk-jug upsets, falls from the table and smashes on the floor; and from the spilt milk there rises a tall, white, bashful figure who seems to be afraid of everything_.)

TYLTYL

And the frightened lady in her nightgown?...

THE FAIRY

That's Milk; she has broken her jug....

(_The sugar-loaf, at the foot of the cupboard, grows taller and wider and

splits its paper wrapper, whence issues a mawkish and hypocritical being, dressed in a long coat half blue and half white, who goes up to_ MYTYL _with a sanctimonious smile_.)

MYTYL (_greatly alarmed_)
What does he want?...

THE FAIRY
Why, he is the soul of Sugar!...

MYTYL (_reassured_)
Has he any barley-sugar?...

THE FAIRY
His pockets are full of it and each of his fingers is a sugar-stick....

(_The lamp falls from the table and, at the same moment, its flame springs up again and turns into a luminous maid of incomparable beauty. She is dressed in long transparent and dazzling veils and stands motionless in a sort of ecstasy_.)

TYLTYL
It's the Queen!...

MYTYL
It's the Blessed Virgin!...

THE FAIRY
No, my children; it's Light....

(_Meanwhile, the saucepans on the shelves spin round like tops; the linen-press throws open its folding-doors and unrolls a magnificent display of moon-coloured and sun-coloured stuffs, with which mingles a no less splendid array of rags and tatters that come down the ladder from the loft. But, suddenly, three loud knocks are heard on the door at the right_.)

TYLTYL (_alarmed_)
That's daddy!... He's heard us!...

THE FAIRY
Turn the diamond!... From left to right!...

(TYLTYL _turns the diamond quickly_.)
Not so quick!... Heavens! It's too late!... You turned it too briskly; they will not have time to resume their places and we shall have a lot of annoyance....

(_The FAIRY becomes an old woman again, the walls of the cottage lose their splendour. The Hours go back into the clock, the spinning-wheel stops, etc. But, in the general hurry and confusion, while_ FIRE _runs madly round the room, looking for the chimney, one of the loaves of bread, who has been unable to squeeze into the pan, bursts into sobs and utters roars of fright_.)

THE FAIRY
What's the matter?...

BREAD (_in tears_)
There's no room in the pan!...

THE FAIRY (_stooping over the pan_)

Yes, there is; yes, there is.... (_Pushing the other loaves, which have resumed their original places_) Come, quick, make room there....

(_The knocking at the door is renewed_)

BREAD (_utterly scared, vainly struggling to enter the pan_)
I can't get in!... He'll eat me first!...

THE DOG (_frisking round_ TYLTYL)
My little god!... I am still here!... I can still talk!... I can still kiss you!... Once more! Once more! Once more!...

THE FAIRY
What, you too?... Are you there still?...

THE DOG
What luck!... I was too late to return to silence; the trap closed too quickly....

THE CAT
So did mine.... What is going to happen?... Is there any danger?...

THE FAIRY
Well, I'm bound to tell you the truth: all those who accompany the two children will die at the end of the journey....

THE CAT (_to the_ DOG)
Come, let us get back into the trap....

THE DOG
No, no!... I won't!... I want to go with the little god!... I want to talk to him all the time!...

THE CAT
Idiot!...

(_More knocking at the door_)

BREAD (_shedding bitter tears_)
I don't want to die at the end of the journey!... I want to get back at once into my pan!...

FIRE (_who has done nothing but run madly round the room, hissing with anguish_)
I can't find my chimney!...

WATER (_vainly trying to get into the tap_)
I can't get into the tap!...

SUGAR (_hovering round his paper wrapper_)
I've burst my packing-paper!...

MILK (_lymphatically and bashfully_)
Somebody's broken my little jug!...

THE FAIRY
Goodness me, what fools they are!... Fools and cowards too!... So you would rather go on living in your ugly boxes, in your traps and taps, than accompany the children in search of the bird?...

ALL (_excepting the_ DOG _and_ LIGHT)

Yes, yes! Now, at once!... My tap!... My pan!... My chimney!... My trap!...

THE FAIRY (_to_ LIGHT, _who is dreamily gazing at the wreckage of her lamp_)

And you, Light, what do you say?

LIGHT

I will go with the children....

THE DOG (_yelling with delight_)

I too!... I too!...

THE FAIRY

That's right.... Besides, it's too late to go back; you have no choice now, you must all start with us.... But you, Fire, don't come near anybody; you, Dog, don't tease the Cat; and you, Water, hold yourself up and try not to run all over the place....

(_A violent knocking is again heard at the door on the right_.)

TYLTYL (_listening_)

There's daddy again!... He's getting up this time; I can hear him walking....

THE FAIRY

Let us go out by the window.... You shall all come to my house, where I will dress the Animals and the Things properly.... (_To_ BREAD) You, Bread, take the cage in which to put the Blue Bird.... It will be in your charge.... Quick, quick, let us waste no time....

(_The window suddenly lengthens downwards, like a door. They all go out; after which the window resumes its primitive shape and closes quite innocently. The room has become dark again and the two cots are steeped in shadow. The door on the right opens ajar and in the aperture appear the heads of_ DADDY _and_ MUMMY TYL_.)

DADDY TYL

It was nothing.... It's the cricket chirping....

MUMMY TYL

Can you see them?...

DADDY TYL

I can.... They are sleeping quite quietly....

MUMMY TYL

I can hear their breathing....

(_The door closes again_)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.--_At the_ FAIRY'S.

A magnificent entrance-hall in the palace of the FAIRY BERYLUNE.
_Columns of gleaming marble with gold and silver capitals, staircases,
porticoes, balustrades, etc_.

Enter from the back, on the right, sumptuously clad, the CAT, SUGAR
and FIRE. _They come from a room which emits rays of light; it is
the_ FAIRY'S _wardrobe. The_ CAT _has donned the classic
costume of Puss-in-boots_; SUGAR, _a silk dress, half white and half
pale-blue; and_ FIRE _wears a number of many-coloured aigrettes and a
long vermilion mantle lined with gold. They cross the whole length of the
hall to the front of the stage, where the_ CAT _draws them up under a
portico on the right_.

THE CAT

This way, I know every inch of this palace. It was left to the Fairy
Berylune by Bluebeard.... Let us make the most of our last minute of
liberty, while the children and Light pay their visit to the Fairy's little
daughter.... I have brought you here in order to discuss the position in
which we are placed.... Are we all here?...

SUGAR

I see the Dog coming out of the Fairy's wardrobe....

FIRE

What on earth has he got on?...

THE CAT

He has put on the livery of one of the footmen of Cinderella's coach.... It
was just the thing for him.... He has the soul of a flunkey.... But let us
hide behind the balustrade.... It's strange how I mistrust him.... He had
better not hear what I have to say to you....

SUGAR

It is too late.... He has discovered us.... Look, here is Water also coming
out of the wardrobe.... Goodness me, how fine she is!...

(_The_ DOG _and_ WATER _join the first group_.)

THE DOG (_frisking about_)

There! There!... Aren't we fine I.... Just look at these laces and this
embroidery!... It's real gold and no mistake!...

THE CAT (_to_ WATER)

Is that Catskin's "colour-of-time" dress?... I seem to recognise it....

WATER

Yes, it's the one that suited me best....

FIRE (_between his teeth_)

She's not brought her umbrella....

WATER

What's that?...

FIRE

Nothing, nothing....

WATER

I thought you might be speaking of a great red I saw the other day....

THE CAT

Come, don't let us quarrel; we have more important things to do.... We are only waiting for Bread; where is he?

THE DOG

He was making an endless fuss about choosing his dress....

FIRE

Worth while, isn't it, for a fellow who looks a fool and carries an enormous stomach?...

THE DOG

At last, he decided in favour of a Turkish robe, adorned with gems, a scimitar and a turban....

THE CAT

There he is!... He has put on Bluebeard's finest dress...

Enter BREAD, _in the costume described above. The silk robe is crossed tightly over his huge stomach. In one hand he holds the hilt of a scimitar passed through his sash and in the other the cage intended for the Blue Bird_.

BREAD (_waddling conceitedly_)

Well?... What do you think of this?

THE DOG (_frisking round the_ LOAF)

How nice he looks! What a fool he looks! How nice he looks! How nice he looks!...

THE CAT (_to the_ LOAF)

Are the children dressed?...

BREAD

Yes, Master Tylyl has put on Hop-o'-my-Thumb's blue jacket and red breeches; and Miss Mytyl has Gretel's frock and Cinderella's slippers.... But the great thing was the dressing of Light!...

THE CAT

Why?...

BREAD

The Fairy thought her so lovely that she did not want to dress her at all!... Thereupon I protested in the name of our dignity as essential and eminently respectable elements; and I ended by declaring that, under those conditions, I should refuse to be seen with her....

FIRE

They ought to have bought her a lampshade!...

THE CAT

And what answer did the Fairy make?...

THE LOAF

She hit me with her stick on my head and stomach....

THE CAT

And then?...

BREAD

I allowed myself to be convinced; but, at the last moment, Light decided on the moonbeam dress at the bottom of the chest with Catskin's treasures....

THE CAT

Come, stop chattering, time presses.... Our future is at stake.... You have heard--the Fairy has just said so--that the end of this journey will, at the same time, mark the end of our lives.... It is our business, therefore, to prolong it as much as possible and by every possible means.... But there is another thing: we must think of the fate of our race and the destiny of our children....

BREAD

Hear, hear!... The Cat is right!...

THE CAT

Listen to me!... All of us here present, Animals, Things and Elements, possess a soul which man does not yet know. That is why we retain a remnant of independence; but, if he finds the Blue Bird, he will know all, he will see all and we shall be completely at his mercy.... This is what I have just learned from my old friend, Night, who is also the guardian of the mysteries of Life.... It is to our interest, therefore, at all costs to prevent the finding of that bird, even if we have to go so far as to endanger the lives of the children themselves....

THE DOG (_indignantly_)

What's the fellow saying?... Just say that again, will you, to see if I heard right?...

BREAD

Order! Order!... It's not your turn to speak!... I'm in the chair at this meeting....

FIRE

Who made you chairman?...

WATER (_to_ FIRE)

Hold your tongue!... What are you interfering with?...

FIRE

I shall interfere where I choose.... And I want none of your remarks....

SUGAR (_concilatorily_)

Excuse me.... Do not let us quarrel.... This is a serious moment.... We must, above all things, decide what measures to adopt....

BREAD

I quite agree with Sugar and the Cat....

THE DOG

This is ridiculous!... There is Man and that's all!... We have to obey him and do as he tells us!... That is the one and only fact!... I recognise no one but him!... Hurrah for Man!... Man for ever!... In life or death, all for Man!... Man is God!...

BREAD

I quite agree with the Dog.

THE CAT (_to_ the_ DOG)

But at least give your reasons....

THE DOG

There are no reasons!... I love Man and that's enough!... If you do anything against him, I will throttle you first and I will go and tell him

everything....

SUGAR (_intervening sweetly_)

Excuse me.... Let us not embitter the discussion.... From a certain point of view, you are both of you right.... There is something to be said on both sides....

BREAD

I quite agree with SUGAR!...

THE CAT

Are we not, all of us, Water, Fire you yourselves, Bread and the Dog, the victims of a nameless tyranny?... Do you remember the time when, before the coming of the despot, we wandered at liberty upon the face of the earth?... Fire and Water were the sole masters of the world; and see what they have come to!... As for us puny descendants of the great wild animals.... Look out!... Pretend to be doing nothing!... I see the Fairy and Light coming.... Light has taken sides with Man; she is our worst enemy.... Here they are....

Enter, on the right, the FAIRY, _in the shape of an old woman, and_ LIGHT, _followed by_ TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL.

THE FAIRY

Well?... What is it?... What are you doing in that corner?... You look like conspirators.... It is time to start.... I have decided that Light shall be your leader.... You will obey her as you would me and I am giving her my wand.... The children will pay a visit to their late grandparents this evening.... You will remain behind; that is more discreet.... They will spend the evening in the bosom of their dead family.... Meanwhile, you will be getting ready all that is wanted for to-morrow's journey, which will be a long one.... Come, up, be off and every one to his post!...

THE CAT (_hypocritically_)

That is just what I was saying to them, madam.... I was encouraging them to do their duty bravely and conscientiously; unfortunately, the Dog, who kept on interrupting me....

THE DOG

What's that?... Just wait a bit I...

(_He is about to leap upon the_ CAT, _but_ TYLTYL _foreseeing his intention, stops with a threatening gesture_.)

TYLTYL

Down, Tylo!... Take care; and, if ever I catch you again...

THE DOG

My little god, you don't know, it was he who...

TYLTYL (_threatening him_)

Be quiet!...

THE FAIRY

Come, that will do.... Let Bread hand the cage for this evening to Tylyl.... It is just possible that the Blue Bird may be hidden In the Past, at the grandparents'.... In any case, it Is a chance which we must not neglect.... Well, Bread, the cage?

BREAD (_solemnly_)

One moment, if you please, Mrs. Fairy....

(Like an orator making a speech)

I call upon all of you to bear witness that this silver cage, which was entrusted to my care by....

THE FAIRY (interrupting him)

Enough!... No speeches!... We will go out this way and the children that....

TYLTYL (rather anxiously)

Are we to go all alone?...

MYTYL

I feel hungry!...

TYLTYL

I, too!...

THE FAIRY (to BREAD)

Open your Turkish robe and give them a slice of your good stomach....

(BREAD opens his robe, draws his scimitar and cuts two slices out of his stomach and hands them to the CHILDREN.)

SUGAR (approaching the CHILDREN)

Allow me at the same time to offer you a few sugar-sticks....

(He breaks off the five fingers of his left hand, one by one, and presents them to the CHILDREN.)

MYTYL

What is he doing?... He is breaking all his fingers!...

SUGAR (engagingly)

Taste them, they are capital... They're made of real barley-sugar....

MYTYL (tasting one of the fingers)

Oh, how good they are!... Have you many of them?...

SUGAR (modestly)

Yes; as many as I want....

MYTYL

Does that hurt you much, when you break them off?...

SUGAR

Not at all.... On the contrary, it's a great advantage; they grow again at once and so I always have new, clean fingers....

THE FAIRY

Come, children, don't eat too much sugar.... Don't forget that you are to have supper presently with your grandpapa and grandmamma....

TYLTYL

Are they here?...

THE FAIRY

You shall see them at once....

TYLTYL

How can we see them, when they are dead?...

THE FAIRY

How can they be dead, when they live in your memory?... Men do not know this secret, because they know so little; whereas you, thanks to the diamond, are about to see that the dead who are remembered live as happily as though they were not dead....

TYLTYL

Is Light coming with us?

THE FAIRY

No, it is more proper that this visit should be confined to the family.... I will wait near here, so as not to appear indiscreet.... They did not invite me....

TYLTYL

Which way are we to go?...

THE FAIRY

Over there.... You are on the threshold of the Land of Memory.... As soon as you have turned the diamond, you will see a big tree with a board on it, which will show you that you are there.... But don't forget that you are to be back, both of you, by a quarter to nine.... It is extremely important.... Now mind and be punctual, for all would be lost if you were late.... Good-bye for the present!...

(_Calling the_ CAT, _the_ DOG, LIGHT, _etc_.) This way.... And the little ones that way....

(_She goes out to the right, with_ LIGHT, _the_ ANIMALS, _etc., while the_ CHILDREN _go out to the left_.)

CURTAIN

SCENE 2.--_The Land of Memory_.

A thick fog, from which stands out, on the right, close to the footlights, the trunk of a large oak, with a board nailed to it. A vague, milky, impenetrable light prevails. TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _are at the foot of the oak_.

TYLTYL

Here Is the tree!...

MYTYL

There's the board!...

TYLTYL

I can't read it.... Wait, I will climb up on this root.... That's it.... It says, "Land of Memory."

MYTYL

Is this where it begins?...

TYLTYL

Yes, there's an arrow....

MYTYL

Well, where are grandad and granny?...

TYLTYL

Behind the fog.... We shall see....

MYTYL

I can see nothing at all!... I can't see my feet or my hands....
(Whimpering) I'm cold!... I don't want to travel any more.... I want
to go home....

TYLTYL

Come, don't keep on crying, just like Water.... You ought to be ashamed of
yourself.... A great big little girl like you.... Look, the fog is lifting
already.... We shall see what's behind it....

(The mist begins to move; It grows thinner and lighter, disperses,
evaporates. Soon, in a more and more transparent light, appears, under a
leafy vault, a cheerful little peasant's cottage, covered with creepers.
The door and windows are open. There are bee-hives under a shed,
flower-pots on the window-sills, a cage with a sleeping blackbird. Beside
the door is a bench, on which an old peasant and his wife, TYLTYL'S
grandfather and grandmother, are seated, both sound asleep.)

TYLTYL (suddenly recognising them)

It's grandad and granny!...

MYTYL (clapping her hands)

Yes! Yes!... So it is! So it is!...

TYLTYL (still a little distrustful)

Take care!... We don't know yet if they can stir.... Let's keep behind the
tree....

(GRANNY TYL opens her eyes, raises her head, stretches herself, gives
a sigh and looks at GAFFER TYL, who also wakes slowly from his
sleep.)

GRANNY TYL

I have a notion that our grandchildren who are still alive are coming to
see us today....

GAFFER TYL

They are certainly thinking of us, for I feel anyhow and I have pins and
needles in my legs....

GRANNY TYL

I think they must be quite near, for I see tears of joy dancing before my
eyes....

GAFFER TYL

No, no, they are a long way off.... I still feel weak....

GRANNY TYL

I tell you they are here; I am quite strong....

TYLTYL and MYTYL (rushing up from behind the oak)

Here we are!... Here we are!... Gaffer! Granny!... It's we!... It's we!...

GAFFER TYL

There!... You see?... What did I tell you?... I was sure they would come
to-day....

GRANNY TYL

Tyltyl!... Mytyl!... It's you!... It's she!... (_Trying to run to meet them_) I can't run!... I've still got the rheumatics!...

GAFFER TYL (_hobbling along as fast as he can_)

No more can I.... That's because of my wooden leg, which I still wear instead of the one I broke when I fell off the big oak....

(_The_ GRANDPARENTS _and the_ CHILDREN _exchange frantic embraces_.)

GRANNY TYL

How tall and strong you've grown, Tyltyl!

GAFFER TYL (_stroking_ MYTYL'S _hair_)

And Mytyl!... Just look at her.... What pretty hair, what pretty eyes!...

GRANNY TYL

Come and kiss me again!... Come on to my lap....

GAFFER TYL

And what about me?...

GRANNY TYL

No, no.... Come to me first.... How are Daddy and Mummy Tyl?...

TYLTYL

Quite well, granny.... They were asleep when we went out....

GRANNY TYL (_gazing at them and covering them with caresses_)

Lord, how pretty they are and how nice and clean!... Was it mummy who washed you?... And there are no holes in your stockings!... I used to darn them once, you know.... Why don't you come to see us oftener?... It makes us so happy!... It is months and months now that you've forgotten us and that we have seen nobody....

TYLTYL

We couldn't, granny; and to-day its only because of the Fairy....

GRANNY TYL

We are always here, waiting for a visit from those who are alive.... They come so seldom!... The last time you were here, let me see, when was it?... It was on All-hallows, when the church-bells were ringing....

TYLTYL

All-hallows?... We didn't go out that day, for we both had very bad colds....

GRANNY TYL

No; but you thought of us....

TYLTYL

Yes....

GRANNY TYL

Well, every time you think of us, we wake up and see you again....

TYLTYL

What, is it enough to...

GRANNY TYL

But come, you know that....

TYLTYL

No, I didn't know....

GRANNY TYL (_to_ GAFFER TYL)

It's astonishing, up there.... They don't know yet.... Do they never learn anything?...

GAFFER TYL

It's as in our own time.... The Living are so stupid when they speak of the Others....

TYLTYL

Do you sleep all the time?...

GAFFER TYL

Yes, we get plenty of sleep, while waiting for a thought of the Living to come and wake us.... Ah, it is good to sleep when life is done.... But it is pleasant also to wake up from time to time....

TYLTYL

So you are not really dead?...

GAFFER TYL

What do you say?... What is he saying?... Now he's using words we don't understand.... Is it a new word, a new invention?...

TYLTYL

The word "dead"?...

GAFFER TYL

Yes, that was the word.... What does it mean?...

TYLTYL

Why, it means that one's no longer alive....

GAFFER TYL

How silly they are, up there!...

TYLTYL

Is it nice here?...

GAFFER TYL

Oh, yes; not bad, not bad; and, if one could just have a smoke....

TYLTYL

Aren't you allowed to smoke?...

GAFFER TYL

Yes, it's allowed; but I've broken my pipe....

GRANNY TYL

Yes, yes, all would be well, if only you would come and see us oftener.... Do you remember, Tylyl?... The last time I baked you a lovely apple-tart.... You ate such a lot of it that you made yourself ill....

TYLTYL

But I haven't eaten any apple-tart since last year.... There were no apples this year....

GRANNY TYL

Don't talk nonsense.... Here, we have them always....

TYLTYL

That's different....

GRANNY TYL

What? That's different?... Why, nothing's different when we're able to kiss each other....

TYLTYL (_looking first at his_ GRANDMOTHER _and then at his_ GRANDFATHER)

You haven't changed, grandad, not a bit, not a bit.... And granny hasn't changed a bit either.... But you're better-looking....

GAFFER TYL

Well, we feel all right.... We have stopped growing older.... But you, how tall you're growing!... Yes, you're shooting up finely.... Look, over there, on the door, is the mark of the last time.... That was on All-hallows.... Now then, stand up straight.... (TYLTYL _stands up against the door_) Four fingers taller!... That's immense!... (MYTYL _also stands up against the door_) And Mytyl, four and a half!... Aha, ill weeds grow apace!... How they've grown, oh, how they've grown!...

TYLTYL (_looking around him with delight_)

Nothing is changed, everything is in its old place!... Only everything is prettier!... There is the clock with the big hand which I broke the point off....

GAFFER TYL

And here is the soup-tureen you chipped a corner off....

TYLTYL

And here is the hole which I made in the door, the day I found the gimlet....

GAFFER TYL

Yes, you've done some damage in your time!... And here is the plum-tree in which you were so fond of climbing, when I wasn't looking.... It still has its fine red plums....

TYLTYL

But they are finer than ever!...

MYTYL

And here is the old blackbird!... Does he still sing?...

(_The blackbird wakes and begins to sing at the top of his voice_)

GRANNY TYL

You see.... As soon as one thinks of him....

TYLTYL (_observing with amazement that the blackbird is quite blue_)

But he's blue!... Why, that's the bird, the Blue Bird which I am to take back to the Fairy.... And you never told us that you had him here!... Oh, he's blue, blue, blue as a blue glass marble!... (_Entreatingly_) Grandad, granny, will you give him to me?...

GAFFER TYL

Yes, perhaps, perhaps.... What do you think, granny?...

GRANNY TYL

Certainly, certainly.... What use is he to us?... He does nothing but sleep.... We never hear him sing....

TYLTYL

I will put him in my cage.... I say, where is my cage?... Oh, I know, I left it behind the big tree.... (_He runs to the tree, fetches the cage and puts the blackbird into it_) So, really, you've really given him to me?... How pleased the Fairy will be!... And Light too!...

GAFFER TYL

Mind you, I won't answer for the bird.... I'm afraid that he will never get used again to the restless life up there and that he'll come back here by the first wind that blows this way.... However, we shall see.... Leave him there, for the present, and come and look at the cow....

TYLTYL (_noticing the hives_)
And how are the bees getting on?

GAFFER TYL

Oh, pretty well.... They are no longer alive, as you call it up there; but they work hard....

TYLTYL (_going up to the hives_)
Oh, yes!... I can smell the honey!... How heavy the hives must be!... All the flowers are so beautiful!... And my little dead sisters, are they here too?...

MYTYL

And where are my three little brothers who were buried?...

(_At these words, seven little_ CHILDREN, _of different sizes, like a set of Pan's pipes, come out of the cottage, one by one_)

GRANNY TYL

Here they are, here they are!... As soon as you think of them, as soon as you speak of them, they are there, the darlings!...

(TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _run to meet the_ CHILDREN. _They hustle and hug one another and dance and whirl about and utter screams of joy_)

TYLTYL

Hullo, Pierrot!... (_They clutch each other by the hair_) Ah, so we're going to fight again, as in the old days.... And Robert!... I say, Jean, what's become of your top?... Madeleine and Pierrette and Pauline!... And here's Riquette!...

MYTYL

Oh, Riquette, Riquette!... She's still crawling on all fours!...

GRANNY TYL

Yes, she has stopped growing.

TYLTYL (_noticing the little_ DOG _yelping around them_)
There's Kiki, whose tail I cut off with Pauline's scissors.... He hasn't changed either....

GAFFER TYL (_sententiously_)

No, nothing changes here....

TYLTYL

And Pauline still has a pimple on her nose....

GRANNY TYL

Yes, it won't go away; there's nothing to be done for it....

TYLTYL

Oh, how well they look, how fat and glossy they are!... What jolly cheeks they have!... They look well fed....

GRANNY TYL

They have been much better since they ceased living.... There's nothing more to fear, nobody is ever ill, one has no anxiety....

(The clock inside the cottage strikes eight.)

GRANNY TYL (_amazed_)

What's that?...

GAFFER TYL

I don't know, I'm sure.... It must be the clock....

GRANNY TYL

It can't be.... It never strikes....

GAFFER TYL

Because we no longer think of the time.... Was any one thinking of the time?...

TYLTYL

Yes, I was.... What is the time?...

GAFFER TYL

I'm sure I can't tell.... I've forgotten how.... It struck eight times, so I suppose it's what they call eight o'clock up there....

TYLTYL

Light expects me at a quarter to nine.... It's because of the Fairy.... It's extremely important.... I'm off!...

GRANNY TYL

Don't leave us like that, just as supper's ready!... Quick, quick, let's lay the table outside.... I've got some capital cabbage-soup and a beautiful plum-tart....

(They get out the table, dishes, plates, etc., and lay for supper outside the door, all helping.)

TYLTYL

Well, as I've got the Blue Bird.... And then it's so long since I tasted cabbage-soup.... Ever since I've been, travelling.... They don't have it at the hotels....

GRANNY TYL

There!... That didn't take long!... Sit down, children.... Don't let us lose time, if you're in a hurry....

(They have lit the lamp and served the soup. The GRANDPARENTS and the CHILDREN sit down round the table, jostling and elbowing one another and laughing and screaming with pleasure.)

TYLTYL (_eating like a glutton_)

How good it is!... Oh, how good it is!...I want some more! More!...

(_He brandishes his wooden spoon and noisily hits his plate with it_.)

GAFFER TYL

Come, come, a little more quiet.... You're just as ill-behaved as ever; and you'll break your plate....

TYLTYL (_half-raising himself on his stool_)

I want more, more!... (_He seizes the tureen, drags it toward him and upsets it and the soup, which trickles over the table and down over their knees and scalds them. Yells and screams of pain_.)

GRANNY TYL

There!... I told you so!...

GAFFER TYL (_giving TYLTYL a loud box on the ear_)

That's one for you!...

TYLTYL (_staggered for a moment, next puts his hand to his cheek with an expression of rapture_)

Oh, that's just like the slaps you used to give me when you were alive?... Grandad, how nice it was and how good it makes one feel!... I must give you a kiss!...

GAFFER TYL

Very well; there's more where that came from, if you like them....

(_The clock strikes half-past eight_)

TYLTYL (_starting up_)

Half-past eight!... (_He flings down his spoon_.) Mytyl, we've only just got time!...

GRANNY TYL

Oh, I say!... Just a few minutes more!... Your house isn't on fire!... We see you so seldom....

TYLTYL

No, we can't possibly.... Light is so kind.... And I promised her.... Come, Mytyl, come!...

GAFFER TYL

Goodness gracious, how tiresome the Living are with all their business and excitement!...

TYLTYL (_taking his cage and hurriedly kissing everybody all round_)

Good-bye, grandad.... Good-bye, granny.... Good-bye, brothers and sisters, Pierrot, Robert, Pauline, Madeleine, Riquette and you, too, Kiki.... I feel we mustn't stay.... Don't cry, granny; we will come back often....

GRANNY TYL

Come back every day!...

TYLTYL

Yes, yes; we will come back as often as we can....

GRANNY TYL

It's our only pleasure and it's such a treat for us when your thoughts visit us!...

GAFFER TYL

We have no other amusements....

TYLTYL

Quick, quick!... My cage!... My bird!...

GAFFER TYL (_handing him the cage_)

Here they are!... You know, I don't warrant him; and if he's not the right colour...

TYLTYL

Good-bye! Good-bye!...

THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS TYL

Good-bye, Tylyl! Good-bye, Mytyl!... Remember the barley-sugar!...

Good-bye!... Come again!... Come again!...

(_They all wave their handkerchiefs while_ TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _slowly move away. But already, during the last sentences, the fog of the beginning of the scene has been gradually re-forming, so that, at the end, all has disappeared in the mist and, at the fall of the curtain_, TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _are again alone visible under the big oak_.)

TYLTYL

It's this way, Mytyl....

MYTYL

Where is Light?...

TYLTYL

I don't know.... (_Looking at the bird in the cage_.) But the bird is no longer blue!... He has turned black!...

MYTYL

Give me your hand, little brother.... I feel so frightened and so cold....

CURTAIN

ACT III.

SCENE 1.--_The Palace of_ NIGHT.

A large and wonderful hall of an austere, rigid, metallic and sepulchral magnificence, giving the impression of a Greek temple with columns, architraves, flagstones and ornaments of black marble, gold and ebony. The hall is trapezium-shaped. Basalt steps, occupying almost the entire width, divide it into three successive stages, which rise gradually toward the back. On the right and left, between the columns, are doors of sombre bronze. At the back, a monumental door of brass. The palace is lit only by a vague light that seems to emanate mainly from the brilliancy of the marble and the ebony. At the rise of the curtain, NIGHT, _in the form of a very old woman, clad in long, black garments, is seated on the steps of the second stage between two children, of whom one, almost naked, like Cupid, is smiling in a deep sleep, while the other is standing up, motionless and veiled from head to foot_.

Enter from the right, in the foreground, the CAT

NIGHT

Who goes there?

THE CAT (_sinking heavily upon the marble steps_)

It is I, Mother Night.... I am worn out....

NIGHT

What's the matter, child?... You look pale and thin and you are splashed with mud to your very whiskers.... Have you been fighting on the tiles again, in the snow and rain?...

THE CAT

It has nothing to do with the tiles!... It's our secret that's at stake!... It's the beginning of the end!... I have managed to escape for a moment to warn you; but I greatly fear that there is nothing to be done....

NIGHT

Why?... What has happened?...

THE CAT

I have told you of little Tytyl, the woodcutter's son, and of the magic diamond.... Well, he is coming here to demand the Blue Bird of you....

NIGHT

He hasn't got it yet.....

THE CAT

He will have it soon, unless we perform some miracle.... This is how the matter stands: Light, who is guiding him and betraying us all, for she has placed herself entirely on Man's side, Light has learned that the Blue Bird, the real one, the only one that can live in the light of day, is hidden here, among the blue birds of the dreams that live on the rays of the moon and die as soon as they set eyes on the sun.... She knows that she is forbidden to cross the threshold of your palace, but she is sending the children; and, as you cannot prevent Man from opening the doors of your secrets, I do not know how all this will end.... In any case, if, unfortunately, they should lay their hands on the real Blue Bird, there would be nothing for us but to disappear....

NIGHT

Oh dear, oh dear!.... What times we live in!... I never have a moment's peace.... I cannot understand Man, these last few years.... What is he aiming at?... Must he absolutely know everything?... Already he has captured a third of my Mysteries, all my Terrors are afraid and dare not leave the house, my Ghosts have taken flight, the greater part of my Sicknesses are ill....

THE CAT

I know, Mother Night, I know, the times are hard and we are almost alone in our struggle against Man.... But I hear them coming.... I see only one way: as they are children, we must give them such a fright that they will not dare to persist or to open the great door at the back, behind which they would find the Birds of the Moon.... The secrets of the other caverns will be enough to distract their attention and terrify them....

NIGHT (_listening to a sound outside_)

What do I hear?... Are there many of them?...

THE CAT

It is nothing; it is our friends, Bread and Sugar; Water is not very well and Fire could not come, because he is related to Light.... The Dog is the only one who is not on our side; but it is never possible to keep him away....

(_Enter timidly, on the right, in the foreground, TYLTYL, MYTYL, BREAD, SUGAR and the DOG_.)

THE CAT (_rushing up to TYLTYL_)

This way, little master, this way.... I have told Night, who is delighted to see you.... You must forgive her, she is a little indisposed; that is why she was not able to come to meet you....

TYLTYL

Good-day, Mrs. Night....

NIGHT (_in an offended voice_)

Good-day?... I am not used to that.... You might say, Good-night, or, at least. Good-evening....

TYLTYL (_mortified_)

I beg your pardon, ma'am....I did not know....(_Pointing to the two CHILDREN.) Are those your two little boys?... They are very nice....

NIGHT

This is Sleep....

TYLTYL

Why is he so fat?...

NIGHT

That is because he sleeps well....

TYLTYL

And the other, hiding himself?... Why does he veil his face?...Is he ill?... What is his name?...

NIGHT

That is Sleep's sister.... It is better not to mention her name....

TYLTYL

Why?...

NIGHT

Because her name is not pleasant to hear.... But let us talk of something else.... The Cat tells me that you have come here to look for the Blue Bird....

TYLTYL

Yes, ma'am, if you will allow me.... Will you tell me where he is?...

NIGHT

I don't know, dear.... All I can say is that he is not here.... I have never seen him....

TYLTYL

Yes, yes.... Light told me that he was here; and Light knows what she is saying.... Will you hand me your keys?...

NIGHT

But you must understand, dear, that I cannot give my keys like that to

the first comer.... I have the keeping of all Nature's secrets and I am absolutely forbidden to deliver them to anybody, especially to a child....

TYLTYL

You have no right to refuse them to Man when he asks you for them....I know that....

NIGHT

Who told you?...

TYLTYL

Light....

NIGHT

Light again! Always Light!... How dare she interfere, how dare she?...

THE DOG

Shall I take them from her by force, my little god?...

TYLTYL

Hold your tongue, keep quiet and try to behave.... (_To_NIGHT) Come, madam, give me your keys, please....

NIGHT

Have you the sign, at least?... Where is it?...

TYLTYL (_touching his hat_)

Behold the Diamond!...

NIGHT (_resigning herself to the inevitable_)

Well, then... Here is the key that opens all the doors of the hall.... Look to yourself if you meet with a misfortune.... I will not be responsible....

BREAD (_very anxiously_)

Is it dangerous?...

NIGHT

Dangerous?... I will go so far as to say that I myself do not know what I shall do when certain of those bronze doors open upon the abyss.... All around the hall, in each of those basalt caves, are all the evils, all the plagues, all the sicknesses, all the terrors, all the catastrophes, all the mysteries that have afflicted life since the beginning of the world.... I have had trouble enough to Imprison them there with the aid of Destiny; and it is not without difficulty, I assure you, that I keep some little order among those undisciplined characters.... You have seen what happens when one of them escapes and shows itself on earth....

BREAD

My great age, my experience and my devotion make me the natural protector of these two children; therefore, Mrs. Night, permit me to ask you a question....

NIGHT

Certainly....

BREAD

In case of danger, which is the way of escape?...

NIGHT

There is no way of escape.

TYLTYL (_taking the key and climbing the first steps_)
Let us begin here.... What is behind this bronze door?...

NIGHT
I think it is the Ghosts.... It is long since I opened the door and since they came out....

TYLTYL (_placing the key in the lock_)
I will see.... (_To_ BREAD) Have you the cage for the Blue Bird?...

BREAD (_with chattering teeth_)
I'm not frightened, but don't you think it would be better not to open the door, but to peep through the keyhole?...

TYLTYL
I don't want your advice....

MYTYL (_suddenly beginning to cry_)
I am frightened!... Where is Sugar?... I want to go home!...

SUGAR (_eagerly, obsequiously_)
Here I am, miss, here I am.... Don't cry, I will break off one of my fingers so that you may have a sugar-stick....

TYLTYL
Enough of this!...

(_He turns the key and cautiously opens the door. Forthwith, five or six_ GHOSTS _of strange and different forms escape and disperse on every side_. MYTYL _gives a scream of fright_, BREAD, _terrified, throws away the cage and goes and hides at the back of the hall, while_ NIGHT, _running after the_ GHOSTS, _cries out to_ TYLTYL.)

NIGHT
Quick! Quick!... Shut the door!... They will all escape and we should never be able to catch them again!... They have felt bored in there, ever since Man ceased to take them seriously....
(_She runs after the_ GHOSTS _and endeavours, with the aid of a whip formed of snakes, to drive them back to the door of their prison_.)
Help me!... Here!... Here!...

TYLTYL (_to the_ DOG)
Help her, Tylo, at them!...

THE DOG (_leaping up and barking_)
Yes, yes, yes!...

TYLTYL
And Bread, where's Bread?...

BREAD (_at the back of the hall_)
Here.... I am near the door to prevent them from going out....

(_One of the_ GHOSTS _moves in that direction and he rushes away at full speed, uttering yells of terror_.)

NIGHT (_to three_ GHOSTS _whom she has seized by the neck_)
This way, you!... (_To_ TYLTYL) Open the door a little.... (_She pushes the_ GHOSTS _into the cave_.) There, that's it....
(_The_ DOG _brings up two more_.) And these two.... Come, quick, in with you!... You know you're only allowed out on All-hallows....

(_She closes the door._)

TYLTYL (_going to another door_)
What's behind this one?....

NIGHT
What is the good?...I have already told you the Blue Bird has never been here.... However, as you please.... Open the doors if you like.... It's the Sicknesses....

TYLTYL (_with the key in the lock_.)
Must I be careful in opening?...

NIGHT
No, it is not worth while.... They are very quiet, the poor little things.... They are not happy.... Man, for some time, has been waging such a determined war upon them!... Especially since the discovery of the microbes.... Open, you will see....

(TYLTYL _opens the door quite wide. Nothing appears_.)

TYLTYL
Don't they come out?

NIGHT
I told you they are almost all poorly and very much discouraged.... The doctors are so unkind to them.... Go in for a moment and see for yourself....

(TYLTYL _enters the cavern and comes out again immediately_.)

TYLTYL
The Blue Bird is not there.... They look very ill, those Sicknesses of yours.... They did not even lift their heads.... (_One little Sickness in slippers, a dressing-gown and a cotton nightcap escapes from the cavern and begins to frisk about the hall_.) Look!... There's a little one escaping.... Which one is it?...

NIGHT
It's nothing, one of the smallest; it's Cold-in-the-Head.... It is one of those which are least persecuted and which enjoy the best health.... (_Calling to_ COLD-IN-THE-HEAD) Come here, dear....It's too soon yet; you must wait for the winter.... (COLD-IN-THE-HEAD, _sneezing, coughing and blowing its nose, returns to the cavern and_ TYLTYL _shuts the door_.)

TYLTYL (_going to the next door_)
Let us look at this one..... What is in here?...

NIGHT
Take care!... It is the Wars.... They are more terrible and powerful than ever.... Heaven knows what would happen if one of them escaped!... Fortunately, they are rather heavy and slow-moving.... But we must stand ready to push back the door, all of us together, while you take a rapid glance into the cavern....

(TYLTYL, _with a thousand precautions, opens the door ajar so that there is only a little gap to which he can put his eye. He at once doubles his back against the door, shouting_.)

TYLTYL

Quick! Quick!... Push with all your might!... They have seen me!... They are all coming!... They are breaking down the door!...

NIGHT

Come, all together!... Push hard!... Bread, what are you doing?... Push, all of you!... How strong they are!... Ah, that's it!... They are giving way!... It was high time!... Did you see them?...

TYLTYL

Yes, yes!... They are huge and awful!... I don't think that they have the Blue Bird....

NIGHT

You may be sure they haven't.... If they had, they would eat him at once.... Well, have you had enough of it?... You see there is nothing to be done....

TYLTYL

I must see everything.... Light said so....

NIGHT

Light said so!... It's an easy thing to say when one's afraid and stays at home....

TYLTYL

Let us go to the next.... What is in here?...

NIGHT

This is where I lock up the Shades and the Terrors....

TYLTYL

Can I open the door?...

NIGHT

Certainly.... They are pretty quiet; they are like the Sicknesses....

TYLTYL (*_half-opening the door, with a certain mistrustfulness, and taking a look into the cavern_*)
Are they not there?...

NIGHT (*_looking into the cavern in her turn_*)

Well, Shades, what are you doing?... Come out for a moment and stretch your legs; it will do you good.... And the Terrors also.... There is nothing to be afraid of.... (*_A few_ SHADES _and a few_ TERRORS, _in the shape of women, shrouded, the former in black veils and the latter in greenish veils, piteously venture to take a few steps outside the cavern; and then, upon a movement of_ TYLTYL'S, _hastily run back again._*)
Come, don't be afraid.... It's only a child; he won't hurt you.... (*_To_ TYLTYL*) They have become extremely timid, except the great ones, those whom you see at the back....

TYLTYL (*_looking into the depths of the cave_*)

Oh, how terrifying they are!...

NIGHT

They are chained up.... They are the only ones that are not afraid of Man.... But shut the door, lest they should grow angry....

TYLTYL (*_going to the next door_*)

I say!... This is a darker one.... What is here?

NIGHT

There are several Mysteries behind this one.... If you are absolutely bent upon it, you may open it too.... But don't go in.... Be very cautious and let us get ready to push back the door, as we did with the Wars....

TYLTYL (_half-opening the door; with unparalleled precautions and passing his head fearsomely through the aperture_)
Oh!... How cold!... My eyes are smarting!... Shut it quickly!... Push, oh, push! They are pushing against us!... (NIGHT, _the_ DOG, _the_ CAT _and_ SUGAR _push back the door_.) Oh, I saw!...

NIGHT

What?...

TYLTYL (_upset_)

I don't know, it was awful!... They were all seated like monsters without eyes.... Who was the giant who tried to seize me?...

NIGHT

It was probably Silence; he has charge of this door.... It appears to have been alarming?... You are quite pale still and trembling all over....

TYLTYL

Yes, I would never have believed.... I had never seen.... And my hands are frozen....

NIGHT

It will be worse presently if you go on....

TYLTYL (_going to the next door_)

And this one?... Is this terrible also?...

NIGHT

No; there is a little of everything here.... It is where I keep the unemployed Stars, my personal Perfumes, a few Glimmers that belong to me, such as Will-o'-the-Wisps, Glow-worms and Fireflies, also the Dew, the Song of the Nightingales and so on....

TYLTYL

Just so, the Stars, the Song of the Nightingales.... This must be the door....

NIGHT

Open it, if you like; there is nothing very bad inside....

(TYLTYL _throws the door wide open. The_ STARS, _in the shape of beautiful young girls veiled in many-coloured radiancy, escape from their prison, disperse over the hall and form graceful groups on the steps and around the columns, bathed in a sort of luminous penumbra. The_ PERFUMES OF THE NIGHT, _who are almost invisible, the_ WILL-O'-THE-WISPS, _the_ FIREFLIES _and the transparent_ DEW _join them, while the_ SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALES _streams from the cavern and floods the Palace of_ NIGHT.)

MYTYL (_clapping her hands with delight_)

Oh, what pretty ladies!...

TYLTYL

And how well they dance!...

MYTYL

And how sweet they smell!...

TYLTYL

And how beautifully they sing!...

MYTYL

What are those, whom one can hardly see?...

NIGHT

Those are the Perfumes of my Shadow.

TYLTYL

And those others, over there, in spun glass?...

NIGHT

They are the Dew of the plains and forests.... But enough!... They would never have done.... It is the devil's own business to get them back, once they begin to dance.... (_Clapping her hands together_) Now then, Stars, quick!... This is not the time for dancing.... The sky is overcast and heavily clouded.... Come, quick, in with you, or I will go and fetch a ray of sunlight!... (_The_ STARS, PERFUMES, _etc., take to flight in dismay and rush back into the cavern; and the door is closed upon them. At the same time, the song of the_ NIGHTINGALE _ceases_.)

TYLTYL (_going to the door at the back_)

Here is the great middle door....

NIGHT (_gravely_)

Do not open that one...

TYLTYL

Why not?....

NIGHT

Because it's not allowed....

TYLTYL

Then it's here that the Blue Bird is hidden; Light told me so....

NIGHT (_maternally_)

Listen to me, child ... I have been kind and indulgent ... I have done for you what I have never done for any one before ... I have given up all my secrets to you.... I like you, I feel pity for your youth and innocence and I am speaking to you as a mother.... Listen to me, my child, and believe me; relinquish your quest, go no further, do not tempt fate, do not open that door....

TYLTYL (_a little shaken_)

But why?...

NIGHT

Because I do not wish you to be lost.... Because not one of those, do you hear, not one of those who have opened it, were it but by a hair's breadth, has ever returned alive to the light of day.... Because every awful thing imaginable, because all the terrors, all the horrors of which men speak on earth are as nothing compared with the most harmless of those which assail a man from the moment when his eye lights upon the first threats of the abyss to which no one dares give a name.... So much so that I myself, if you are bent, in spite of everything, upon touching that door, will ask you to wait until I have sought safety in my windowless tower... Now it is for

you to know, for you to reflect....

(MYTYL, _all in tears, utters cries of inarticulate terror and tries to drag_ TYLTYL _away_.)

BREAD (_with chattering teeth_)
Don't do it, master dear!... (_Flinging himself on his knees_) Take pity on us!... I implore you on my knees.... You see that Night is right....

THE CAT
You are sacrificing the lives of all of us....

TYLTYL
I must open the door....

MYTYL (_stamping her feet, amid her sobs_)
I won't!... I sha'n't!...

TYLTYL
Sugar and Bread, take Mytyl by the hand and run away with her.... I am going to open the door....

NIGHT
Run for your lives!... Come quickly!... It is time!... (_She flees_.)

BREAD (_fleeing wildly_)
At least wait till we are at the end of the hall!...

THE CAT (_also fleeing_)
Wait! Wait!...

(_They hide behind the columns at the other end of the hall_. TYLTYL _remains alone with the DOG by the monumental door_.)

THE DOG (_panting and hiccoughing with suppressed fright_)
I shall stay, I shall stay!... I'm not afraid!... I shall stay!... I shall stay with my little god!... I shall stay!... I shall stay!...

TYLTYL (_patting the_ DOG)
That's right, Tylo, that's right!... Kiss me.... You and I are two.... And now, steady!...

(_He places the key in the lock. A cry of alarm comes from the other end of the hall, where the runaways have taken refuge. The key has hardly touched the door before its tall and wide leaves open in the middle, glide apart and disappear on either side in the thickness of the walls, suddenly revealing the most unexpected of gardens, unreal, infinite and ineffable, a dream-garden bathed in nocturnal light, where, among stars and planets, illumining all that they touch, flying ceaselessly from jewel to jewel and from moonbeam to moonbeam, fairy-like blue birds hover perpetually and harmoniously down to the confines of the horizon, birds innumerable to the point of appearing to be the breath, the azured atmosphere, the very substance of the wonderful garden_.)

TYLTYL (_dazzled, bewildered, standing in the light of the garden_)
Oh!... Heaven!... (_Turning to those who have fled_) Come quickly!... They are here!... It's they, it's they, it's they!... We have them at last!... Thousands of blue birds!... Millions!... Thousands of millions!... There will be too many!... Come, Mytyl!... Come, Tylo!... Come, all!... Help me!... (_Darting in among the birds_.) You can

catch them by handfuls!... They are not shy!... They are not afraid of us!... Here! Here!... (MYTYL _and the others run up. They all enter the dazzling garden, except_ NIGHT _and the_ CAT.) You see!... There are too many of them!... They fly into my hands!... Look, they are eating the moonbeams!... Mytyl, where are you?... There are so many blue wings, so many feathers falling that one cannot see anything for them!... Don't bite them, Tylo!... Don't hurt them!... Take them very gently!...

MYTYL (_covered with blue birds_)

I have caught seven already!... Oh, how they flap their wings!... I can't hold them!...

TYLTYL

Nor can I!... I have too many of them!... They're escaping!... They're coming back!... Tylo has some, too!... They will drag us with them!... They will take us up to the sky!... Quick, let us go out this way!... Light is waiting for us!... How pleased she will be!... This way, this way!...

(_They escape from the garden, with their hands full of struggling birds, and, crossing the whole hall amid the mad whirl of the azure wings, go out on the right, where they first entered, followed by_ BREAD _and_ SUGAR, _who have caught no birds_. NIGHT _and the_ CAT, _left alone, return to the back of the stage and look anxiously into the garden_.)

NIGHT

Haven't they got him?...

THE CAT

No... I see him there, on that moonbeam... They could not reach him, he kept too high...

(_The_ CURTAIN _falls. Immediately after, before the dropped curtain_, ENTER, _at the same time, on the left_, LIGHT _and on the right_, TYLTYL, MYTYL _and the_ DOG, _who run up all covered by the birds which they have captured. But already the birds appear lifeless and, with hanging heads and drooping wings, are nothing more in their hands than inert remains_.)

LIGHT

Well, have you caught him?...

TYLTYL

Yes, yes!...As many as we wanted!... There are thousands of them!... Here they are!... Do you see them?... (_Looking at the birds, which he holds out to_ LIGHT, _and perceiving that they are dead_) Why, they are dead!... What have they done to them?... Yours too, Mytyl?... Tylo's also?... (_Angrily flinging down the dead bodies of the birds_) Oh, this is too bad?... Who killed them?... I am too unhappy!...

(_He hides his head in his arms and his whole frame is shaken with sobs_.)

LIGHT (_pressing him maternally in her arms_)

Do not cry, my child... You did not catch the one that is able to live in broad daylight... He has gone elsewhere... We shall find him again...

THE DOG (_looking at the dead birds_)

Are they good to eat?...

(_They all go out on the left_.)

SCENE 2.--_The Forest.

A forest. It is night. The moon is shining. Old trees of various kinds, notably an_ OAK, _a_ BEECH, _an_ ELM, _a_ POPLAR, _a_ FIR-TREE, _a_ CYPRESS, _a_ LIME-TREE, _a_ CHESTNUT-TREE, _etc_.

ENTER _the_ CAT.

THE CAT (_bowing to the trees in turn_)
To all the trees here present, greeting!....

THE TREES (_murmuring in their leaves_)
Greeting!....

THE CAT

This is a great day, a day of days!.... Our enemy is coming to set free your energies and to deliver himself into your hands.... It is Tylytyl, the son of the wood-cutter, who has done you so much harm.... He is seeking the Blue Bird, whom you have kept hidden from Man since the beginning of the world and who alone knows our secret.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) What do you say?... Ah, it's the Poplar!... Yes, he possesses a diamond which has the virtue of setting free our spirits for a moment; he can compel us to hand over the Blue Bird and thenceforth we shall be definitely at Man's mercy.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) Who is speaking?... Ah, the Oak!... How are you?... (_A murmuring in the leaves of the_ OAK.) Still got your cold?... Does the Liquorice no longer look after you?... Can't you throw off your rheumatism?... Believe me, that's because of the moss; you put too much of it on your feet.... Is the Blue Bird still with you?... (_A murmuring in the leaves of the_ OAK.) I beg your pardon?... Yes, there is no room for hesitation; we must take the opportunity; he must be done away with.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) I didn't quite catch.... Oh, yes, he is with his little sister; she must die, too.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) Yes, they have the Dog with them; there is no keeping him away.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) What did you say?... Bribe him?... Impossible.... I have tried everything.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) Ah, is that you, Fir-Tree?... Yes, get four planks ready.... Yes, there are Fire, Sugar, Water and Bread besides.... They are all with us, except Bread, who is rather doubtful.... Light alone is on Man's side; but she won't come.... I made the children believe that they ought to steal away while she was asleep.... There never was such an opportunity.... (_A murmuring in the leaves_) Ah, that's the Beech's voice!... Yes, you are right; we must inform the animals.... Has the Rabbit got his drum?... Is he with you?... Good, let him beat the troop at once.... Here they are!...

(_The roll of the_ RABBIT'S _drum is heard, diminishing in the distance. Enter_ TYLTYL, MYTYL _and the_ DOG.)

TYLTYL

Is this the place?...

THE CAT (_obsequiously, eagerly, mealy-mouthed, rushing to meet the_ CHILDREN)

Ah, there you are, my little master!... How well you look and how pretty, this evening!.... I went before you to announce your arrival.... All is going well. We shall have the Blue Bird to-night, I am sure.... I have just

sent the Rabbit to beat the troop in order to convoke the principal animals of the country.... You can hear them already among the foliage.... Listen!... They are a little shy and dare not come near.... (_The sounds are heard of different animals, such as cows, pigs, horses, donkeys, etc. The_ CAT, _aside, to_ TYLTYL, _taking him apart_) But why have you brought the Dog?... I have told you he is on the worst terms with everybody, even the trees.... I fear that his odious presence will spoil everything....

TYLTYL

I could not get rid of him.... (_To the_ DOG, _threatening him_)
Go away, you ugly thing!...

THE DOG

Who?... I?... Why?... What have I done?...

TYLTYL

I tell you, go away!... We don't want you here and there's an end of it.... You're a nuisance, there!...

THE DOG

I sha'n't say a word.... I shall follow you at a distance.... They sha'n't see me.... Shall I beg?...

THE CAT (_aside, to_ TYLTYL)

Do you allow this disobedience?... Hit him on the nose with your stick; he is really unbearable!...

TYLTYL (_beating the_ DOG)

There, that will teach you to be more obedient!...

THE DOG (_yelling_)

Ow! Ow! Ow!...

TYLTYL

What do you say?...

THE DOG

I must kiss you now you've beaten me!... (_He covers_ TYLTYL _with violent kisses and embraces_.)

TYLTYL

Come.... That will do.... That's enough.... Go away!...

MYTYL

No, no; I want him to stay.... I am afraid of everything when he is not there....

THE DOG (_leaping up and almost upsetting_ MYTYL, _whom he overwhelms with hurried and enthusiastic kisses_)

Oh, the dear little girl!... How beautiful she is!... How good she is!... How beautiful she is, how sweet she is!... I must kiss her!... Once more, once more, once more!...

THE CAT

What an idiot!... Well, we shall see!... Let us lose no time.... Turn the diamond....

TYLTYL

Where shall I stand?...

THE CAT

In this moonbeam; you will see better.... There, turn it gently!...

(TYLTYL _turns the Diamond. A long-drawn-out rustling shakes the leaves and branches. The oldest and most stately trunks open to make way for the soul which each of them contains. The appearance of these souls differs according to the appearance and the character of the trees which they represent. The soul of the_ ELM, _for instance, is a sort of pousy, pot-bellied, crabbed gnome; the_ LIME-TREE _is placid, familiar and jovial; the_ BEECH, _elegant and agile; the_ BIRCH, _white, reserved and restless; the_ WILLOW, _stunted, dishevelled and plaintive; the_ FIR-TREE, _tall, lean and taciturn; the_ CYPRESS, _tragic; the_ CHESTNUT-TREE, _pretentious and rather dandified; the_ POPLAR, _sprightly, cumbersome, talkative. Some emerge slowly from their trunks, torpidly stretching themselves, as though they had been imprisoned or asleep for ages; others leap out actively, eagerly; and all come and stand in a circle round the two_ CHILDREN, _while keeping as near as they can to the tree in which they were born_.)

THE POPLAR (_running up first and screaming at the top of his voice_) Men?... Little men!... We shall be able to talk to them!... We've done with silence!... Done with it!... Where do they come from?... Who are they?... What are they?... (_To the_ LIME-TREE, _who comes forward quietly smoking his pipe_) Do you know them, Daddy Lime-Tree?...

THE LIME-TREE

I do not remember ever having seen them....

THE POPLAR

Oh, yes, you must have!... You know all the men; you're always hanging about their houses....

THE LIME-TREE (_examining the_ CHILDREN)

No, I assure you.... I don't know them.... They are too young still.... I only know the lovers who come to see me by moonlight and the toppers who drink their beer under my branches....

THE CHESTNUT-TREE (_affectedly adjusting his eyeglass_)

Who are these?... Are they poor people from the country?...

THE POPLAR

Oh, as for you, Mr. Chestnut-Tree, ever since you have refused to show yourself except in the streets of the big towns...

THE WILLOW (_hobbling along in a pair of wooden shoes_)

Oh dear, oh dear!... They have come to cut off my head and arms again for fagots!...

THE POPLAR

Silence!... Here is the Oak leaving his palace!... He looks far from well this evening.... Don't you think he is growing very old?... What can his age be?... The Fir-tree says he is four thousand; but I am sure that he exaggerates.... Listen; he will tell us all about it....

(_The_ OAK _comes slowly forward. He is fabulously old, crowned with mistletoe and clad in a long green gown edged with moss and lichen. He is blind; his white beard streams in the wind. He leans with one hand on a knotty stick and with the other on a young_ OAKLING, _who serves as his guide. The Blue Bird is perched on his shoulder. At his approach, the other trees draw themselves up in a row and bow respectfully_.)

TYLTYL

He has the Blue Bird!... Quick! Quick!... Here!... Give it to me!...

THE TREES

Silence!...

THE CAT (_to_ TYLTYL)

Take of your hat. It's the Oak!...

THE OAK (_to_ TYLTYL)

Who are you?....

TYLTYL

I am Tylytl, sir.... When can I have the Blue Bird?...

THE OAK

Tylytl, the wood-cutter's son?...

TYLTYL

Yes, sir....

THE OAK

Your father has done us much harm.... In my family alone, he has put to death six hundred of my sons, four hundred and seventy-five uncles and aunts, twelve hundred cousins of both sexes, three hundred and eighty daughters-in-law, and twelve thousand great-grandsons!...

TYLTYL

I know nothing about it, sir.... He did not do it on purpose....

THE OAK

What have you come here for; and why have you made our souls leave their abodes?...

TYLTYL

I beg your pardon, sir, for disturbing you.... The Cat said that you would tell us where the Blue Bird was....

THE OAK

Yes, I know that you are looking for the Blue Bird, that is to say, the great secret of things and of happiness, so that Man may make our servitude still harder....

TYLTYL

Oh, no, sir; it is for the Fairy Berylune's little girl, who is very ill....

THE OAK (_laying silence upon him with a gesture_)

Enough!... I do not hear the Animals.... Where are they?... All this concerns them as much as us.... We, the Trees, must not assume the responsibility alone for the grave measures that have become necessary.... On the day when MAN hears that we have done what we are about to do, there will be terrible reprisals..... It is right, therefore, that our agreement should be unanimous, so that our silence may be the same....

THE FIR-TREE (_looking over the top of the other trees_)

The Animals are coming.... They are following the Rabbit.... Here are the souls of the Horse, the Bull, the Ox, the Cow, the Wolf, the Sheep, the Pig, the Cock, the Goat, the Ass, and the Bear....

(_Enter the souls of the_ ANIMALS, _who, as the_ FIR-TREE

utters their names, come forward and sit down among the trees, with the exception of the soul of the GOAT, _who roams to and fro, and of the_ PIG, _who snuffles among the roots_.)

THE OAK
Are all here present?...

THE RABBIT
The Hen could not leave her eggs, the Hare is out on a run, the Stag has a pain in his horns, the Fox is ill--here is the doctor's certificate--the Goose did not understand and the Turkey flew into a passion....

THE OAK
These abstentions are most regrettable.... However, we have a quorum.... You know, my brothers, the nature of our business. The child you see before you, thanks to a talisman stolen from the powers of Earth, is able to take possession of the Blue Bird and thus to snatch from us the secret which we have kept since the origin of life.... Now we know enough of Man to entertain no doubt as to the fate which he reserves for us once he is in possession of this secret. That is why it seems to me that any hesitation would be both foolish and criminal.... It is a serious moment; the child must be done away with before it is too late....

TYLTYL
What is he saying?...

THE DOG (_prowling round the_ OAK _and showing his fangs_)
Do you see my teeth, you old cripple?...

THE BEECH (_indignantly_)
He is insulting the Oak!...

THE OAK
Is that the Dog?... Drive him out! We must suffer no traitors among us!...

THE CAT (_aside, to_ TYLTYL)
Send the Dog away.... It's a misunderstanding.... Leave it to me; I will arrange things.... But send him away as quick as you can....

TYLTYL (_to the_ DOG)
Will you be off!...

THE DOG
Do let me worry the gouty old beggar's moss slippers!.... It will be such a joke!...

TYLTYL
Hold your tongue!... And be off with you!... Be off, you ugly brute!...

THE DOG
All right, all right, I'm going.... I'll come back when you want me....

THE CAT (_aside, to_ TYLTYL)
It would be a good thing to chain him up, or he will commit some folly; the Trees will be angry and all will end badly....

TYLTYL
What can I do?... I have lost his leash....

THE CAT
Here's the Ivy just coming along with strong bonds....

THE DOG (_growling_)

I'll come back, I'll come back!... Ugh! Goutytoes! Timbertoes!... Pack of old stunted growths, pack of old roots!... It's the Cat who's at the bottom of all this!... I'll be even with him!... What have you been whispering about, you sneak, you tiger, you Judas!... Wow, wow, wow!....

THE CAT

You see, he insults everybody....

TYLTYL

Yes, he is unbearable and one can't hear one's self speak.... Mr. Ivy, will you chain him up, please?...

THE IVY (_timorously going up to the_ DOG)

Won't he bite?...

THE DOG (_growling_)

On the contrary, on the contrary!... He's going to kiss you!... Just wait and see!... Come along, come along, you old ball of twine, you!...

TYLTYL (_threatening him with his stick_)

Tylo!...

THE DOG (_cringing at_ TYLTYL'S _feet and wagging his tail_)

What am I to do, my little god?

TYLTYL

Lie down flat!... Obey the Ivy.... Let him bind you, or....

THE DOG (_growling between his teeth, while the_ IVY _binds him_)

Ball of twine I... Hunk of yarn!... Hangman's rope I... Calves' leash!... Look, my little god I ... He's cutting my paws!... He's choking me!...

TYLTYL

I don't care!... It's your own fault.... Hold your tongue; be quiet; you're unbearable!...

THE DOG

You're wrong, for all that.... They mean mischief.... Take care, my little god!... He's closing my mouth!... I can't speak!...

THE IVY (_who has tied up the_ DOG _like a parcel_)

Where shall we put him?... I've muzzled him finely.... He can't utter a word....

THE OAK

Fasten him tight down there behind my trunk; to my big root.... We will decide later what had best be done with him....

(_The_ IVY _and the_ POPLAR _carry the_ DOG _behind the_ OAK'S _trunk_.)

THE OAK

Is that done?... Well, now that we are rid of this inconvenient witness, of this renegade, let us deliberate in accordance with justice and truth.... I will not conceal from you the deep and painful nature of my emotion.... This is the first time that it is given to us to judge Man and make him feel our power.... I do not think that, after the harm which he has done us, after the monstrous injustice which we have suffered, there can remain the least doubt as to the sentence that awaits him....

ALL THE TREES and ALL THE ANIMALS

No! No! No!... No doubt at all!... Hanging!... Death!... The injustice has been too great!... The abuse too wicked!... It has lasted too long!... Crush him!... Eat him!... At once!... Here and now!...

TYLTYL (_to the_ CAT)

What is the matter with them?... Are they displeased?...

THE CAT

Don't be alarmed.... They are a little annoyed because Spring is late.... Leave it to me; I will settle it all....

THE OAK

This unanimity was inevitable.... We must now decide, in order to avoid reprisals, which form of execution will be the most practical, the easiest, the quickest and the safest, which will leave the fewest accusing traces when Man finds the little bodies in the forest....

TYLTYL

What is all this about?... What is he driving at?... I am getting tired of this.... He has got the Blue Bird; let him hand it over....

THE BULL (_coming forward_)

The most practical and the surest way is a good butt with the horns in the pit of the stomach.... Shall I go at him?...

THE OAK

Who speaks?...

THE CAT

It's the Bull.

THE COW

It would be better to keep quiet.... I won't meddle with it.... I have all the grass to browse in the field which you can see down there in the blue light of the moon.... I have quite enough to do....

THE OX

I also.... However, I agree to everything beforehand....

THE BEECH

I can offer my highest branch to hang them on....

THE IVY

And I the slip-knot....

THE FIR-TREE

And I the four planks for their little coffin....

THE CYPRESS

And I a perpetual grant of a tomb....

THE WILLOW

The simplest way would be to drown them in one of my rivers.... I will take charge of that....

THE LIME-TREE (_in a conciliatory tone_)

Come, come.... Is it really necessary to go to such extremities?... They are very young.... We could quite simply prevent them from doing any harm by keeping them prisoners in an enclosure which I will undertake to form by

planting myself all around....

THE OAK

Who speaks?... I seem to recognise the honeyed accents of the Lime-tree....

THE FIR-TREE

Yes, it's he....

THE OAK

So there is a renegade among us, as among the Animals?... Hitherto we have only had to deplore the disloyalty of the Fruit-trees; but they are not real trees....

THE PIG (_rolling his small eyes gluttonously_)

I think we should first eat the little girl.... She ought to be very tender....

TYLTYL

What's he saying?... Just wait a bit, you...

THE CAT

I don't know what is the matter with them; but things are beginning to look badly....

THE OAK

Silence!... What we have to decide is which of us shall have the honour of striking the first blow, who shall ward off from, our tops the greatest danger that has threatened us since the birth of Man....

THE FIR-TREE

That honour falls to you, our king and our patriarch....

THE OAK

Is that the Fir-tree speaking?... Alas, I am too old!... I am blind and infirm and my numbed arms no longer obey me.... No, to you, brother, ever green, ever upright, to you, who have witnessed the birth of most of these trees, to you be the glory, in default of myself, of the noble act of our deliverance....

THE FIR-TREE

I thank you, venerable father.... But as I shall, in any case, have the honour of burying the two victims, I should be afraid of arousing the just jealousy of my colleagues; and I think that, next to ourselves, the oldest and the worthiest and the one that owns the best club is the Beech....

THE BEECH

You know I am worm-eaten and my club is no longer to be relied upon.... But the Elm and the Cypress have powerful weapons....

THE ELM

I should be only too pleased; but I can hardly stand upright.... A mole twisted my great toe last night....

THE CYPRESS

As for me, I am ready.... But, like my brother, the Fir-tree, I shall have, if not the privilege of burying them, at least the advantage of weeping over their tomb.... It would be an unlawful plurality of offices.... Ask the Poplar....

THE POPLAR

Me?... Are you serious?... Why, my wood is more tender than the flesh of

a child!... And, besides, I don't know what's the matter with me.... I am shivering with fever.... Just look at my leaves.... I must have caught cold at sunrise this morning....

THE OAK (_bursting out with indignation_)

You are afraid of Man!... Even those unprotected and unarmed little children inspire you with the mysterious terror which has always made us the slaves that we are!... Enough of this! Things being as they are and the opportunity unequalled, I shall go forth alone, old, crippled, trembling, blind as I am, against the hereditary enemy!... Where is he?...

(_Groping with his stick, he moves towards_ TYLTYL.)

TYLTYL (_taking his knife from his pocket_)

Is it me he's after, that old one, with his big stick?...

ALL THE TREES (_uttering a cry of alarm at the sight of the knife, they step in between and hold back the_ OAK)

The knife!... Take care!... The knife!...

THE OAK (_struggling_)

Let me be!... What does it matter?... The knife or the axe!... Who's holding me back?... What! Are you all here?... What! You all want to....

(_Flinging down his_ _stick_) Well, so be it!... Shame upon us!... Let the Animals deliver us!...

THE BULL

That's right!... I'll see to it!... And with one blow of the horns!...

THE OX _and_ THE COW (_holding him back by the tail_)

What are you doing?... Don't be a fool!... It's a bad business!... It will end badly.... It is we who will pay for it.... Do let be.... It's the wild animals' business....

THE BULL

No, no!... It's my business!... Wait and see!... Look here, hold me back or there will be an accident!...

TYLTYL (_to_ MYTYL, _who is uttering piercing screams_)

Don't be afraid!... Stand behind me.... I have my knife....

THE COCK

He has plenty of pluck, the little chap!...

TYLTYL

So you've made up your minds, it's me you're going for?...

THE ASS

Why, of course, my little man; you've taken long enough to see it!...

THE PIG

You can say your prayers; your last hour has come.... But don't hide the little girl.... I want to feast my eyes on her.... I'm going to eat her first....

TYLTYL

What have I done to you?...

THE SHEEP

Nothing at all, my little man.... Eaten my little brother, my two sisters, my three uncles, my aunt, my grandpapa and my grandmamma.... Wait, wait,

when you're down, you shall see that I have teeth also....

THE ASS
And I hoofs!...

THE HORSE (_haughtily pawing the ground_)
You shall see what you shall see!... Would you rather that I tore you with my teeth or knocked you down with a kick?... (_He moves ostentatiously towards_ TYLTYL, _who faces him and raises his knife. Suddenly the_ HORSE, _seized with panic, turns and rushes away_.) Ah, no!... That's not fair!... That's against the rules!.... He's defending himself!...

THE COCK (_unable to hide his admiration_)
I don't care, the little chap's full of grit!...

THE PIG (_to the_ BEAR _and the_ WOLF)
Let us all rush on them together.... I will support you from the rear.... We will throw them down and share the little girl when she is on the ground....

THE WOLF
Divert their attention in front.... I am going to make a turning movement....

(_He goes round_ TYLTYL, _whom he attacks from behind and half overthrows_.)

TYLTYL
You brute!... (_He raises himself on one knee brandishing his knife and doing his best to cover his little sister, who utters yells of distress. Seeing him half overturned, all the_ ANIMALS _and_ TREES _come up and try to hit him_. TYLTYL _calls distractedly for assistance_.) Help! Help!... Tylo! Tylo!... Where is the Cat?... Tylo!... Tylette! Tylette!... Come! Come!...

THE CAT (_hypocritically, holding aloof_)
I can't come.... I have sprained my paw....

TYLTYL (_warding off the blows and defending himself as best he can_)
Help!... Tylo! Tylo!... I can't hold out!... There are too many of them!... The Bear! The Pig! The Donkey! The Ass! The Fir-tree! The Beech!... Tylo! Tylo! Tylo!...

(_Dragging his broken bonds after him, the_ DOG _leaps from behind the trunk of the_ OAK _and, elbowing his way through_ TREES _and_ ANIMALS, _flings himself before_ TYLTYL, _whom he defends furiously_.)

THE DOG (_distributing great bites_)
Here! Here, my little god!... Don't be afraid! Have at them!... I know how to use my teeth!... Here, there's one for you, Bear, in your fat hams!... Now then, who wants some more?... Here, that's for the Pig and that's for the Horse and that's for the Bull's tail!... There, I've torn the Beech's trousers and the Oak's petticoat!... The Fir-tree's making tracks!... Whew, it's warm work!...

TYLTYL (_overcome_)
I'm done for!... The Cypress has caught me a great blow on the head....

THE DOG
Ow!... That's the Willow!... He's broken my paw!...

TYLTYL

They're coming back, they're charging down upon us, all together!... This time, it's the Wolf!...

THE DOG

Wait till I give him one for himself!...

THE WOLF

Fool!... Our brother!... His father drowned your seven puppies!...

THE DOG

Quite right!... And a good thing too!... It was because they looked like you!...

ALL THE TREES AND ANIMALS

Renegade!... Idiot!... Traitor!... Felon!... Simpleton!... Judas!... Leave him!... He's a dead man!... Come over to us!...

THE DOG (_drunk with ardour and devotion_)

Never! Never!... I alone against all of you!... Never! Never!... True to the gods, to the best, to the greatest!... (_To_ TYLTYL) Take care, here's the Bear!... Beware of the Bull!... I'll jump at his throat.... Ow!... That's a kick.... The Ass has broken two of my teeth....

TYLTYL

I'm done for, Tylo!... Ah!... That was a blow from the Elm.... Look, my hand's bleeding.... That's the Wolf or the Pig....

THE DOG

Wait, my little god.... Let me kiss you.... There, a good lick.... That will do you good.... Keep behind me.... They dare not come again.... Yes, though.... Here they are coming back!... This time, it's serious!.... We must stand firm!...

TYLTYL (_dropping to the ground_)

No, I can hold out no longer!...

THE DOG (_listening_)

They are coming!... I hear them, I scent them!...

TYLTYL

Where?... Who?...

THE DOG

There! There!... It's Light!... She has found us!... Saved, my little king!... Kiss me!... We are saved!... Look!... They're alarmed!... They're retreating!... They're afraid!...

TYLTYL

Light!... Light!... Come quick!... Hurry!... They have rebelled!... They are all against us!...

Enter LIGHT. _As she comes forward, the dawn rises over the forest, which becomes light_.

LIGHT

What is it?... What has happened?... But, my poor boy, didn't you know?... Turn the diamond!... They will return into silence and obscurity; and you will no longer perceive their hidden feelings....

(TYLTYL _turns the diamond. Immediately, the souls of all the_ TREES
rush back into the trunks, which close again. The souls of the
ANIMALS _also disappear; and a peaceful_ COW _and_ SHEEP,
_etc., are seen browsing in the distance. The Forest becomes harmless
once more_, TYLTYL _looks around him in amazement_.)

TYLTYL

Where are they?... What was the matter with them?... Were they mad?...

LIGHT

No, they are always like that; but we do not know it because we do not see
it.... I told you so before; it is dangerous to wake them when I am not
there....

TYLTYL (_wiping his knife_)

Well, but for the Dog and if I had not had my knife!... I would never have
believed that they were so wicked!...

LIGHT

You see that Man is all alone against all in this world....

THE DOG

Are you very badly hurt, my little god?...

TYLTYL

Nothing serious.... As for Mytyl, they have not touched her.... But you, my
dear Tylo?... Your mouth is all over blood and your paw is broken!...

THE DOG

It is not worth speaking of.... It won't show to-morrow.... But it was a
tough fight!...

THE CAT (_appearing from behind a thicket, limping_)

I should think so!... The Ox caught me a blow with his horns in the
stomach.... You can't see the marks, but it's very painful.... And the Oak
broke my paw....

THE DOG

I should like to know which one....

MYTYL (_stroking the_ CAT)

My poor Tylette, did he really?.... Where were you?... I did not see
you....

THE CAT (_hypocritically_)

Mummy dear, I was wounded at the first, while attacking that horrid Pig,
who wanted to eat you.... And then the Oak gave me a great blow which
struck me senseless....

THE DOG (_to the_ CAT, _between his teeth_)

As for you, I want a word with you presently.... It will keep!...

THE CAT (_plaintively, to_ MYTYL)

Mummy dear, he's insulting me.... He wants to hurt me....

MYTYL (_to the_ DOG)

Leave him alone, will you, you ugly beast?...

(_They all go out_.)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE 1.--_Before the Curtain_.

The curtain represents beautiful clouds

(_Enter_ TYLTYL, MYTYL, LIGHT, _the_ DOG, _the_ CAT, BREAD,
FIRE, SUGAR, WATER _and_ MILK.)

LIGHT
I believe we have the Blue Bird this time. I ought to have thought of it before. But the idea came to me, like a ray from the sky, this morning only, when I recovered my strength the dawn.... We are at the entrance to the enchanted palaces where all men's Joys, all men's Happinesses are gathered together in the charge of Fate.

TYLTYL
Are there many of them? Shall we have any? Are they little?

LIGHT
Some are little and some are great; some are coarse and some are delicate; some are very beautiful and others not so pleasant to look upon.... But the ugliest were expelled from the garden some time ago and took refuge with the Miseries. For we must not forget that the Miseries inhabit an adjoining cave, which communicates with the Garden of Happiness and is separated from it only by a sort of vapour or fine veil, lifted at every moment by the winds that blow from the heights of Justice or from the depths of Eternity.... What we have now to do is to organise ourselves and take certain precautions. Generally, the Joys are very good; but, still, there are some of them that are more dangerous and treacherous than the greatest Miseries.

BREAD
I have an idea! If they are dangerous and treacherous, would it not be better for us all to wait at the door, so that we may lend a hand to the children should they be obliged to fly?....

THE DOG
Not at all! Not at all! I mean to go everywhere with my little gods! Let those who are afraid remain at the door! We have no need (_looking at_ BREAD) of cowards (_looking at the_ CAT) or traitors!...

FIRE
I'm going!... I hear it's great fun!... They dance all the time....

BREAD
Do they have any eating as well?

WATER (_moaning_)
I have never known the smallest Happiness!... I should like to see some at last!....

LIGHT
Hold your tongues! Who asked your opinions?... This is what I have decided:

the Dog, Bread and Sugar shall go with the children. Water shall stay outside, because she is too cold, and Fire, because he is too turbulent. I strongly urge Milk to remain at the door, because he is so impressionable. As for the Cat, he can do as he likes....

THE CAT

I shall take the opportunity of calling on the chief Miseries of my acquaintance, who live next door to the Joys....

TYLTYL

And you, Light? Aren't you coming?

LIGHT

I cannot go into the Joys like this: most of them cannot endure me. But I have here the thick veil with which I cover myself when I visit happy people.... (_She unfolds a long veil and wraps herself in it carefully_) Not a ray of my you! must startle them, for there are many Happinesses that are afraid and are not happy.... There... like this, even the ugliest and coarsest of them will have nothing to fear....

(_The curtain opens and discloses the next Scene_)

SCENE 2.--_The Palace of Happiness_.

When the curtain of clouds opens, the stage represents, in the forefront of the palace, a sort of hall formed of tall marble columns, between which hang heavy purple draperies, supported by golden ropes and concealing all the background. The architecture suggests the most sensual and sumptuous moments of the Venetian or Flemish Renaissance, as seen in the pictures of Veronese or Rubens, with garlands, horns of plenty, fringes, vases, statues, gildings, lavishly distributed on every side. In the middle stands a massive and marvellous table of jasper and silver-gilt, laden with candlesticks, glass, gold and silver plate and fabulous viands. Around the table, the biggest luxuries of the Earth sit eating, drinking, shouting, singing, tossing and lolling about or sleeping among the haunches of venison, the miraculous fruits, the overturned jars and ewers. They are enormously, incredibly fat and red in the face, covered with velvet and brocade, crowned with gold and pearls and precious stones. Beautiful female slaves incessantly bring decorated dishes and foaming beverages. Vulgar, blatantly hilarious music, in which the brasses predominate. The stage is bathed in a red and heavy light.

(TYLTYL, MYTYL, _the_ DOG, BREAD _and_ SUGAR _are a little awestruck at first and crowd round_ LIGHT _in the foreground, to the right. The_ CAT, _without a word, walks to the background, also to the right, lifts a dark curtain and disappears_.)

TYLTYL

Who are those fat gentlemen enjoying themselves and eating such a lot of good things?

LIGHT

They are the biggest Luxuries of the Earth, the ones that can be seen with the naked eye. It is possible, though not very likely, that the Blue Bird may have strayed among them for a moment. That is why you must not turn the diamond yet. For form's sake, we will begin by searching this part of the hall.

TYLTYL

Can we go up to them?

LIGHT

Certainly. They are not ill-natured, although they are vulgar and usually rather ill-bred.

MYTYL

What beautiful cakes they have!....

THE DOG

And such game! And sausages! And legs of lamb and calves' liver!... There is nothing nicer or lovelier in the world than liver!...

BREAD

Except quartern-loaves made of fine white flour! They have splendid ones!... How lovely they are! How lovely they are!...

SUGAR

I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, I beg a thousand pardons.... Allow me, allow me.... I would not like to hurt anybody's feelings; but are you not forgetting the sweetmeats, which form the glory of that table and which, if I may say so, surpass in grandeur and magnificence all that exists in this hall, or perhaps anywhere else?...

TYLTYL

How pleased and happy they look!... And they are shouting! And laughing! And singing!... I believe they have seen us....

(_A dozen of the biggest_ LUXURIES _have risen from table and now, holding their stomachs in their hands, advance laboriously towards the_ CHILDREN.)

LIGHT

Have no fear, they are very affable.... They will probably invite you to dinner.... Do not accept, do not accept anything, lest you should forget your mission....

TYLTYL

What? Not even a tiny cake? They look so good, so fresh, so well iced with sugar, covered with candied fruits and brimming over with cream!...

LIGHT

They are dangerous and would break your will. A man should know how to sacrifice something to the duty he is performing. Refuse politely, but firmly.

THE BIGGEST OF THE LUXURIES (_holding out his hand to_ TYLTYL)

How do you do, Tylytyl?...

TYLTYL (_surprised_)

Why, do you know me?... Who are you?...

THE LUXURY

I am the biggest of the Luxuries, the Luxury of Being Rich; and I come, in the name of my brothers, to beg you and your family to honour our endless repast with your presence. You will find yourself surrounded by all that is best among the real, big Luxuries of this Earth. Allow me to introduce to you the chief of them. Here is my son-in-law, the Luxury of Being a Landowner, who has a stomach shaped like a pear. This is the Luxury of Satisfied Vanity, who has such a nice, puffy face, (_The_ LUXURY OF

SATISFIED VANITY (_gives a patronising nod_.) These are the Luxury of Drinking when you are not Thirsty and the Luxury of Eating when you are not Hungry: they are twins and their legs are made of macaroni. (_They bow, staggering_.) Here are the Luxury of Knowing Nothing, who is as deaf as a post, and the Luxury of Understanding Nothing, who is as blind as a bat. Here are the Luxury of Doing Nothing and the Luxury of Sleeping more than Necessary: their hands are made of bread-crumbs and their eyes of peach-jelly. Lastly, here is Fat Laughter: his mouth is split from ear to ear and he is irresistible....

(FAT LAUGHTER _bows, writhing and holding his sides_.)

TYLTYL (_pointing to a_ LUXURY _who is standing a little on one side_) And who is that one, who dares not come up to us and who is turning his back?...

THE LUXURY OF BEING RICH

Do not ask about him: he is a little awkward and is not fit to be introduced to children.... (_Seizing_ TYLTYL'S _hands_) But come along! They are beginning the banquet all over again.... It is the twelfth time since this morning. We are only waiting for you.... Do you hear all the revellers calling and shouting for you?... I cannot introduce you to all of them, there are so many of them.... (_Offering his arm to the two children_) Allow me to lead you to the two seats of honour....

TYLTYL

No, thank you very much, Mr. Luxury.... I am so sorry.... I can't come for the moment.... We are in a great hurry, we are looking for the Blue Bird. You don't happen to know, I suppose, where he is hiding?

THE LUXURY

The Blue Bird?... Wait a bit.... Yes, I remember.... Some one was telling me about him the other day.... He is a bird, that is not good to eat, I believe.... At any rate, he has never figured on our table.... That means that we have a poor opinion of him. But don't trouble; we have much better things.... You shall share our life, you shall see all that we do....

TYLTYL

What do you do?

THE LUXURY

Why, we occupy ourselves incessantly in doing nothing.... We never have a moment's rest.... We have to drink, we have to eat, we have to sleep. It's most engrossing....

TYLTYL

Is it amusing?

THE LUXURY

Why, yes.... It needs must be; it's all there is on this Earth....

LIGHT

Do you think so?...

THE LUXURY (_pointing to_ LIGHT, _aside, to_ TYLTYL)

Who is that ill-bred young person?...

(_During the whole of the preceding conversation a crowd of_ LUXURIES _of the second order have been busying themselves with the_ DOG, SUGAR _and_ BREAD _and have dragged them to the orgie_. TYLTYL _suddenly sees them seated fraternally at the table with their hosts,

eating, drinking and flinging themselves about wildly_.)

TYLTYL

Why, look, Light!... They are sitting at the table!...

LIGHT

Call them back, or this will have a bad end!...

TYLTYL

Tylo!... Here, Tylo!... Come here at once, will you? Do you hear?... And you too, Sugar and Bread, who told you to leave me?... What are you doing there, without permission?

BREAD (_speaking with his mouth full_)

Can't you keep a civil tongue in your mouth?...

TYLTYL

What? Is Bread daring to be impertinent?... Why, what's come over you?... And you, Tylo?... Is that the way you obey? Now then, come here, on your knees, on your knees!... And look sharp!...

THE DOG (_muttering, from the end of the table_)

When I'm eating, I'm at home to nobody and I hear nothing....

SUGAR (_honey-mouthed_)

Pardon us, we could not possibly leave such charming hosts so abruptly: they would be offended....

THE LUXURY

You see!... They are setting you an example.... Come, we are waiting for you.... We won't hear of a refusal.... We shall have to resort to a gentle violence.... Come, you Luxuries, help me!... Let us push them to the table by force, so that they may be happy in spite of themselves!... (_All the_ LUXURIES, _uttering cries of joy and skipping about as nimbly as they are able, drag the_ CHILDREN, _who struggle, while_ FAT LAUGHTER _seizes_ LIGHT _vigorously round the waist_.)

LIGHT

Turn the diamond, it is time!...

(TYLTYL _obeys_ LIGHT'S _order. Forthwith, the stage is lit up with an ineffably pure, divinely roseate, harmonious and ethereal brightness. The heavy ornaments in the foreground, the thick red hangings become unfastened and disappear, revealing an immense and magnificent hall, a sort of cathedral of gladness and serenity, tall, innocent and almost transparent, whose endless fabric rests upon innumerable long and slender, limpid and blissful columns, suggesting the architecture of the Palladian churches or certain drawings by Carpaccio, notably the "Presentation of the Virgin" in the Uffizi Gallery. The table of the orgie melts away without leaving a trace; the velvets, the brocades, the garlands of the_ LUXURIES _rise before the luminous gust that invades the temple tear asunder and fall, together with the grinning masks, at the feet of the astounded revellers. These become visibly deflated, like burst bladders, exchange glances, blink their eyes in the unknown rays that hurt them; and, seeing themselves at last as they really are, that is to say, naked, hideous, flabby and lamentable, they begin to utter yells of shame and dismay, amid which those of_ FAT LAUGHTER _are clearly distinguishable above all the rest. The_ LUXURY OF UNDERSTANDING NOTHING _alone remains perfectly calm, while his friends rush about madly, trying to flee, to hide themselves in corners which they hope to find dark. But there is not a shadow left in the dazzling room. And so the majority, in their

despair, decide to pass through the threatening curtain which, in an angle on the right, closes the vault of the Cave of Miseries. Each time that one of them, in his panic, raises a skirt of the curtain, a storm of oaths, imprecations and maledictions is heard to issue from the hollow depths of the cave. As for the DOG, BREAD and SUGAR, they hang their heads, join the group of the CHILDREN and hide behind them very sheepishly.)

TYLTYL (_watching the LUXURIES flying_)
Goodness, how ugly they are!... Where are they going?...

LIGHT
I really believe that they have lost their heads.... They are going to take refuge with the Miseries, where I very much fear that they will be kept for good....

TYLTYL (_looking around him, wonder-struck_)
Oh, what a beautiful hall, what a beautiful hall!... Where are we?...

LIGHT
We have not moved: it is your eyes that see differently.... We now behold the truth of things; and we shall perceive the soul of the Joys that endure the brightness of the diamond.

TYLTYL
How beautiful it is!... And what lovely weather!... It is just like midsummer.... Hulloo! It looks as though people were coming to talk to us....

(The halls begin to fill with angel forms that seem to be emerging from a long slumber and glide harmoniously between the columns. They are clad in shimmering dresses, of soft and subtle shades; rose-awakening, water's-smile, amber-dew, blue-of-dawn, etc_.)

LIGHT
Here come some amiable and curious Joys who will direct us....

TYLTYL
Do you know them?...

LIGHT
Yes, I know them all; I often come to them, without their knowing who I am....

TYLTYL
Oh, what a lot of them there are!... They are crowding from every side!

LIGHT
There were many more of them once. The Luxuries have done them great harm.

TYLTYL
No matter, there are a good few of them left....

LIGHT
You will see plenty of others, as the influence of the diamond spreads through the halls.... There are many more Happinesses on Earth than people think; but the generality of men do not discover them....

TYLTYL
Here are some little ones: let us run and meet them....

LIGHT

It is unnecessary: those which interest us will pass this way. We have no time to make the acquaintance of all the rest....

(A troop of little HAPPINESSES, frisking and bursting with laughter, run up from the back of the halls and dance round the CHILDREN in a ring.)

TYLTYL

How pretty, how very pretty they are!... Where do they come from, who are they?...

LIGHT

They are the Children's Happinesses....

TYLTYL

Can one speak to them?

LIGHT

It would be no use. They sing, they dance, they laugh, but they do not talk yet....

TYLTYL (skipping about)

How do you do? How do you do?... Oh, look at that fat one laughing!... What pretty cheeks they have, what pretty frocks they have!... Are they all rich here?...

LIGHT

Why, no, here, as everywhere, there are many more poor than rich....

TYLTYL

Where are the poor ones?...

LIGHT

You can't distinguish them.... A Child's Happiness is always arrayed in all that is most beautiful in Heaven and upon Earth.

TYLTYL (unable to restrain himself)

I should like to dance with them....

LIGHT

It is absolutely impossible, we have no time.... I see that they have not the Blue Bird.... Besides, they are in a hurry: you see, they have already passed.... They too have no time to waste, for childhood is very short....

(Another troop of HAPPINESSES, a little taller than the last, rush into the hall, singing at the top of their voice, "There they are! There they are! They see us! They see us!" and, dance a merry fling around the CHILDREN, at the end of which the one who appears to be the chief of the little band goes up to TYLTYL with hand outstretched.)

THE HAPPINESS

How do you do, Tyltyl?...

TYLTYL

Another one who knows me!... (To LIGHT) I am getting known wherever I go!... (To the HAPPINESS) Who are you?...

THE HAPPINESS

Don't you recognise me?... I'll wager that you don't recognise any one

here!

TYLTYL (_a little embarrassed_)

Why, no.... I don't know.... I don't remember seeing any of you.

THE HAPPINESS

There, do you hear?... I was sure of it!... He has never seen us!...

(_All the other_ HAPPINESSES _burst out laughing_) Why, my dear Tylyl, we are the only things you do know!... We are always around you!... We eat, drink, wake up, breathe and live with you!...

TYLTYL

Oh, yes, just so, I know, I remember.... But I should like to know what your names are....

THE HAPPINESS

I can see that you know nothing.... I am the chief of the Happinesses of your home; and all these are the other Happinesses that live there....

TYLTYL

Then there are Happinesses in my home?

(_All the_ HAPPINESSES _burst out laughing_.)

THE HAPPINESS

You heard him!... Are there Happinesses in his home!... Why, you little wretch, it is crammed with Happinesses in every nook and cranny!... We laugh, we sing, we create enough joy to knock down the walls and lift the roof; but, do what we may, you see nothing and you hear nothing.... I hope that, in future, you will be a little more sensible.... Meantime, you shall shake hands with the more noteworthy of us.... Then, when you reach home again, you will recognise them more easily and, at the end of a fine day, you will know how to encourage them with a smile, to thank them with a pleasant word, for they really do all they can to make your life easy and delightful.... Let me introduce myself first: the Happiness of Being Well, at your service.... I am not the prettiest, but I am the most important. Will you know me again?... This is the Happiness of Pure Air, who is almost transparent.... Here is the Happiness of Loving one's Parents, who is clad in grey and always a little sad, because no one ever looks at him.... Here are the Happiness of the Blue Sky, who, of course, is dressed in blue, and the Happiness of the Forest, who, also of course, is clad in green: you will see him every time you go to the window.... Here, again, is the good Happiness of Sunny Hours, who is diamond-coloured, and this is the Happiness of Spring, who is bright emerald....

TYLTYL

And are you as fine as that every day?

THE HAPPINESS OF BEING WELL

Why, yes, it is Sunday every day, in every house, when people open their eyes.... And then, when evening comes, here is the Happiness of the Sunsets, who is grander than all the kings in the world and who is followed by the Happiness of Seeing the Stars Rise, who is gilded like a god of old.... Then, when the weather breaks, here are the Happiness of the Rain, who is covered with pearls, and the Happiness of the Winter Fire, who opens his beautiful purple mantle to frozen hands.... And I have not mentioned the best among us, because he is nearly a brother of the great limpid Joys whom you will see presently: his name is the Happiness of Innocent Thoughts, and he is the brightest of as all.... And then here are.... But really there are too many of them!... We should never have done; and I must

first send word to the Great Joys, who are right at the back, near the gates of Heaven, and who have not yet heard of your arrival.... I will send the Happiness of Running Barefoot in the Dew, who is the nimblest of us.... (_To the_ HAPPINESS OF RUNNING BAREFOOT IN THE DEW, _who comes forward capering_) Off you go!...

LIGHT (_to_ TYLTYL)

In the meantime, you might enquire about the Blue Bird. It is just possible that the chief Happiness of your home knows where he is....

TYLTYL

Where Is he?...

THE HAPPINESS

He doesn't know where the Blue Bird is!... (_All the_ HAPPINESSES OF THE HOME _burst out laughing_.)

TYLTYL (_vexed_)

No, I do not know.... There's nothing to laugh at.... (_Fresh bursts of laughter_.)

THE HAPPINESS

Come, don't be angry... and let us be serious.... He doesn't know: well, what do you expect? He is no more absurd than the majority of men.... But little Happiness of Running Barefoot in the Dew has told the Great Joys and they are coming towards us....

(_Tall and beautiful angelic figures, clad in shimmering dresses, come slowly forward_.)

TYLTYL

How beautiful they are!... Why are they not laughing?... Are they not happy?...

LIGHT

It is not when one laughs that one is really happy....

TYLTYL

Who are they?...

THE HAPPINESS

They are the Great Joys....

TYLTYL

Do you know their names?...

THE HAPPINESS

Of course; we often play with them.... Here, first of all, before the others, is the Great Joy of Being Just, who smiles each time an injustice is repaired. I am too young: I have never seen her smile yet. Behind her is the Joy of Being Good, who is the happiest, but the saddest; and it is very difficult to keep her from going to the Miseries, whom she would like to console; for, if she left us, we should be almost as miserable as the Miseries themselves. On the right is the Joy of Fame, next to the Joy of Thinking. After her comes the Joy of Understanding, who is always looking for her brother, the Luxury of Understanding Nothing....

TYLTYL

But I have seen her brother!... He went to the Miseries with the Big Luxuries....

THE HAPPINESS

I was certain of it.... He has turned out badly; keeping evil company has corrupted him entirely.... But do not speak of it to his sister. She would want to go and look for him and we should lose one of our most beautiful Joys.... Here, among the greatest Joys, is the Joy of Seeing what is Beautiful, who daily adds a few rays to the light that reigns amongst us....

TYLTYL

And there, far away, far away, in the golden clouds, the one whom I can hardly see when I stand as high as I can on tip-toe?...

THE HAPPINESS

That is the Great Joy of Loving.... But, do what you will, you are ever so much too small to see her altogether....

TYLTYL

And over there, right at the back, those who are veiled and who do not come near?...

THE HAPPINESS

Those are the Joys whom men do not yet know....

TYLTYL

What do the others want with us?... Why are they standing aside?...

THE HAPPINESS

It is before a new Joy who is arriving, perhaps the purest that we have here....

TYLTYL

Who is it?

THE HAPPINESS

Don't you recognise her yet?... But take a better look at her, open your two eyes down to the very heart of your soul!... She has seen you, she has seen you!... She runs up to you, holding out her arms!... It is your mother's Joy, it is the peerless Joy of Maternal Love!...

(The other JOYS, who have run up from every side, acclaim the JOY OF MATERNAL LOVE with their cheers and then fall back before her in silence_.)

THE JOY OF MATERNAL LOVE

Tyltyl! And Mytyl!... What, do I find you here?... I never expected it!... I was very lonely at home; and here are you two climbing to that Heaven where the souls of all mothers beam with joy!... But first kisses, heaps and heaps of kisses!... Into my arms, the two of you; there is nothing on earth that gives greater happiness!... Tyltyl, aren't you laughing?... Nor you either, Mytyl?... Don't you know your mother's love when you see it?... Why, look at me: are these not my eyes, my lips, my arms?...

TYLTYL

Yes, yes, I recognise them, but I did not know.... You are like Mummy, but you are much prettier....

MATERNAL LOVE

Why, of course, I have stopped growing old.... And every day brings me fresh strength and youth and happiness.... Each of your smiles makes me younger by a year.... At home, that does not show; but here everything is seen and it is the truth....

TYLTYL (_wonder-struck, gazing at her and kissing her by turns_)
And that beautiful dress of yours: what is it made of?... Is it silk,
silver or pearls?...

MATERNAL LOVE

No, it is made of kisses and caresses and loving looks.... Each kiss you
give me adds a ray of moon-light or sunshine to it....

TYLTYL

How funny, I should never have thought that you were so rich!... Where used
you to hide it?... Was it in the cupboard of which Daddy has the key?...

MATERNAL LOVE

No, no, I always wear it, but people do not see it, because people see
nothing when their eyes are closed.... All mothers are rich when they love
their children.... There are no poor mothers, no ugly ones, no old ones.
Their love is always the most beautiful of the Joys.... And, when they seem
most sad, it needs but a kiss which they receive or give to turn all their
tears into stars in the depths of their eyes....

TYLTYL (_looking at her with astonishment_)

Why, yes, it's true, your eyes are filled with stars.... And they are
really your eyes, only they are much more beautiful.... And this is your
hand too, with the little ring on it.... It even has the burn which you
gave it one evening when lighting the lamp.... But it is much whiter; and
how delicate the skin is!... There seems to be light flowing through it....
Doesn't it do any work like the one at home?...

MATERNAL LOVE

Why yes, it is the very same: did you never see that it becomes quite white
and fills with light the moment it fondles you?...

TYLTYL

It's wonderful, Mummy: you have the same voice also; but you speak much
better than you do at home....

MATERNAL LOVE

At home, one has too much to do and there is no time.... But what one does
not say one hears all the same.... Now that you have seen me, will you know
me again, in my torn dress, when you go back to the cottage tomorrow?...

TYLTYL

I don't want to go back.... As you are here, I want to stay also, as long
as you remain....

MATERNAL LOVE

But it's just the same thing: I am down below, we are all down below....
You have come up here only to realise and to learn, once and for all, how
to see me when you see me down below.... Do you understand, Tylyl dear?...
You believe yourself in Heaven; but Heaven is wherever you and I kiss each
other.... There are not two mothers; and you have no other.... Every child
has only one; and it is always the same one and always the most beautiful;
but you have to know her and to know how to look.... But how did you manage
to come up here and to find a road for which men have been seeking ever
since they began to dwell upon the Earth?...

TYLTYL (_pointing to_ LIGHT, _who, discreetly, has drawn a little to one
side_)

She brought me....

MATERNAL LOVE
Who is she?...

TYLTYL
Light....

MATERNAL LOVE
I have never seen her.... I was told that she was very fond of you both and very kind.... But why does she hide herself?... Does she never show her face?...

TYLTYL
Oh, yes, but she is afraid that the Joys might be frightened if they saw too clearly....

MATERNAL LOVE
But doesn't she know that we are waiting only for her! (_Calling the other_ GREAT JOYS) Come, come, sisters! Come quickly, all of you! Light has come to visit us at last!...

(_A stir among the_ GREAT JOYS, _who draw nearer, with cries of "Light is here!... Light! Light!_...")

THE JOY OF UNDERSTANDING (_thrusting all the others aside, to come and embrace_ LIGHT)
You are Light and we did not know it!... And we have been waiting for you for years and years and years!... Do you recognise me?... I am the Joy of Understanding, who have been seeking you for so long!... We are very happy, but we cannot see beyond ourselves....

THE JOY OF BEING JUST (_embracing_ LIGHT _in her turn_)
Do you recognise me?... I am the Joy of Being Just, who have besought you so long.... We are very happy, but we cannot see beyond our shadows.

THE JOY OF SEEING WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL (_also embracing_ LIGHT)
Do you recognise me?... I am the Joy of Seeing what is Beautiful, who have loved you so dearly.... We are very happy, but we cannot see beyond our dreams....

THE JOY OF UNDERSTANDING
Come, sister, come, do not keep us waiting any longer.... We are strong enough, we are pure enough.... Put aside those veils which still conceal from us the last truths and the last happinesses.... See, all my sisters are kneeling at your feet.... You are our queen and our reward.

LIGHT (_drawing her veils closer_)
Sisters, my beautiful sisters, I am obeying my Master.... The hour is not yet come; it will strike, perhaps, and I shall return without fear and without shadow.... Farewell, rise and let us kiss once more, like sisters lost and found, while waiting for the day that will soon appear....

MATERNAL LOVE (_embracing_ LIGHT)
You have been very good to my poor little ones....

LIGHT
I shall always be good to those who love one another....

THE JOY OF UNDERSTANDING (_going up to_ LIGHT)
Let the last kiss be laid upon my forehead....

(_They exchange a long kiss; and, when they separate and raise their

heads, tears are seen to stand in their eyes_.)

TYLTYL (_surprised_)

Why are you crying?... (_Looking at the other_ JOYS) I say! You're crying too!... But why have all of you tears in your eyes?...

LIGHT

Hush, dear....

CURTAIN

ACT V

SCENE I.--_Before the Curtain_.

Enter TYLTYL, MYTYL, LIGHT, _the_ DOG, _the_ CAT, BREAD, FIRE, SUGAR, WATER _and_ MILK.

LIGHT

I have received a note from the Fairy Berylune telling me that the Blue Bird is probably here.

TYLTYL

Where?...

LIGHT

Here, in the graveyard behind that wall.... It appears that one of the dead in the graveyard is hiding it in his tomb.... We must find out which one it is.... We shall have to pass them under review....

TYLTYL

Under review?... How is that done?...

LIGHT

It is very simple: at midnight, so as not to disturb them too greatly, you will turn the diamond. We shall see them come out of the ground; or else we shall see those who do not come out lying in their tombs....

TYLTYL

Will they not be angry?...

LIGHT

Not at all; they will not even know.... They do not like being disturbed, but, as it is their custom, in any case, to come out at midnight, that will not inconvenience them....

TYLTYL

Why are Bread, Sugar and Milk so pale and why do they say nothing?...

MILK (_staggering_)

I feel I am going to turn....

LIGHT (_aside to TYLTYL_)

Do not mind them.... They are afraid of the dead....

FIRE (_frisking about_)

I'm not afraid of them!... I am used to burning them.... Time was when I burnt them all; that was much more amusing than nowadays ...

TYLTYL

And why Is Tylo trembling?... Is he afraid, too?...

THE DOG

I?... I'm not trembling!... I am never afraid; but if you went away, I should go too....

TYLTYL

And has the Cat nothing to say?...

THE CAT (_mysteriously_)

I know what's what....

TYLTYL (_to LIGHT_)

Are you coming with us?...

LIGHT

No; it is better that I should remain at the gate of the graveyard with the Things and the Animals.... Some of them would be too frightened and I fear that the others would misbehave.... Fire, in particular, would want to burn the dead, as of old; and that is no longer done.... I shall leave you alone with Mytyl....

TYLTYL

And may not Tylo stay with us?...

THE DOG

Yes, yes, I shall stay; I shall stay here I... I want to stay with my little god!...

LIGHT

It is impossible.... The Fairy gave formal orders; besides, there is nothing to fear....

THE DOG

Very well, very well, it makes no difference. If they are vicious, my little god, all you have to do Is this ... (_he whistles_) and you shall see.... It will be just as in the forest: Wow! Wow! Wow!...

LIGHT

Come, good-bye, dear children ... I shall not be far away.... (_She kisses the_ CHILDREN.) Those who love me and whom I love always find me again.... (_To the_ THINGS _and the_ ANIMALS) This way, all of you....

(_She goes out with the_ THINGS _and the_ ANIMALS. _The_ CHILDREN _remain alone in the middle of the stage. The curtain, opens and discloses the next scene_.)

SCENE 2.--_The Graveyard_.

It is night. The moon is shining on a country graveyard.. Numerous tombstones, grassy mounds, wooden crosses, stone slabs, etc. TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _are standing by a short stone pillar_.

MYTYL

I am frightened!...

TYLTYL (_not too much at his ease_)

I am never frightened....

MYTYL

I say, are the dead wicked?...

TYLTYL

Why, no, they're not alive!...

MYTYL

Have you ever seen one?...

TYLTYL

Yes, once, long ago, when I was very young....

MYTYL

What was it like, say?...

TYLTYL

Quite white, very still and very cold and it didn't talk....

MYTYL

Are we going to see them, say?...

TYLTYL

Why, of course, Light said so....

MYTYL

Where are they?...

TYLTYL

Here, under the grass or under those big stones....

MYTYL

Are they there all the year round?...

TYLTYL

Yes.

MYTYL (_pointing to the slabs_)

Are those the doors of their houses?...

TYLTYL

Yes.

MYTYL

Do they go out when it's fine?...

TYLTYL

They can only go out at night....

MYTYL

Why?...

TYLTYL

Because they are in their shirts....

MYTYL

Do they go out also when it rains?...

TYLTYL

When it rains, they stay at home....

MYTYL

Is it nice in their homes, say?...

TYLTYL

They say it's very cramped....

MYTYL

Have they any little children?...

TYLTYL

Why, yes; they have all those that die....

MYTYL

And what do they live on?...

TYLTYL

They eat roots....

MYTYL

Shall we see them?...

TYLTYL

Of course; we see everything when I turn the diamond.

MYTYL

And what will they say?...

TYLTYL

They will say nothing, as they don't talk....

MYTYL

Why don't they talk?...

TYLTYL

Because they have nothing to say....

MYTYL

Why have they nothing to say?...

TYLTYL

You're a nuisance....

(_A pause_)

MYTYL

When will you turn the diamond?

TYLTYL

You heard Light say that I was to wait until midnight, because that disturbs them less....

MYTYL

Why does that disturb them less?...

TYLTYL

Because that is when they go out to take the air....

MYTYL

Is it not midnight yet?...

TYLTYL

Do you see the church clock?...

MYTYL

Yes, I can even see the small hand....

TYLTYL

Well, midnight is just going to strike.... There!... Do you hear?...

(The clock strikes twelve)

MYTYL

I want to go away!...

TYLTYL

Not now.... I am going to turn the diamond....

MYTYL

No, no!... Don't!... I want to go away!... I am so frightened, little brother!... I am terribly frightened!...

TYLTYL

But there is no danger....

MYTYL

I don't want to see the dead!... I don't want to see them!...

TYLTYL

Very well, you shall not see them; shut your eyes....

MYTYL (clinging to TYLTYL'S clothes)

Tyltyl, I can't stay!... No, I can't possibly!... They are going to come out of the ground!...

TYLTYL

Don't tremble like that.... They will only come out for a moment....

MYTYL

But you're trembling, too!... They will be awful!...

TYLTYL

It is time, the hour is passing....

(TYLTYL turns the diamond. A terrifying minute of silence and motionlessness elapses, after which, slowly, the crosses totter, the mounds open, the slabs rise up....)

MYTYL (cowering against TYLTYL)

They are coming out!... They are there!...

(Then, from all the gaping tombs, there rises gradually an efflorescence at first frail and timid, like steam; then white and virginal and more and more tufty, more and more tall and plentiful and marvellous. Little by little, irresistibly, invading all things, it transforms the graveyard into a sort of fairy-like and nuptial garden, over which rise the first rays of the dawn. The dew glitters, the flowers open their blooms, the wind murmurs in the leaves, the bees hum, the birds wake and flood the air with

the first raptures of their hymns to the sun and to life. Stunned and dazzled, _TYLTYL_ and _MYTYL_, _holding each other by the hand, take a few steps among the flowers while they seek for the trace of the tombs_.)

MYTYL (_looking in the grass_)
Where are the dead?....

TYLTYL (_looking also_)
There are no dead....

CURTAIN

SCENE 3.--_The Kingdom of the Future_.

The immense halls of the Azure Palace, where the children wait that are yet to be born. Infinite perspectives of sapphire columns supporting turquoise vaults. Everything, from the light and the lapis-lazuli flagstones to the shimmering background into which the last arches run and disappear, everything, down to the smallest objects, is of an unreal, intense, fairy-like blue. Only the plinths and capitals of the columns, the key-stones, a few seats and circular benches are of white marble or alabaster. To the right, between the columns, are great opalescent doors. These doors, which TIME _will throw back towards the end of the scene, open upon actual life and the quays of the Dawn. Everywhere, harmoniously peopling the hall, is a crowd of_ CHILDREN _robed in long azure garments. Some are playing, others strolling to and fro, others talking or dreaming; many are asleep, many also are working, between the colonnades, at future inventions; and their tools, their instruments, the apparatus which they are constructing, the plants, flowers and fruit which they are cultivating or plucking are of the same supernatural and luminous blue as the general atmosphere of the Palace. Figures of a taller stature, clad in a paler and more diaphanous azure, figures of a sovereign and silent beauty move among the_ CHILDREN _and would seem to be angels.

Enter on the left, as though by stealth, gliding between the columns in the foreground_, TYLTYL, MYTYL _and_ LIGHT. Their arrival causes a certain movement among the_ BLUE CHILDREN, _who come running up on every hand, form a group around the unwonted visitors and gaze upon them with curiosity_.

MYTYL
Where are Sugar, the Cat and Bread?...

LIGHT
They cannot enter here; they would know the future and would not obey....

TYLTYL
And the Dog?...

LIGHT
It is not well, either, that he should know what awaits him in the course of the ages....I have locked them all up in the vaults of the church....

TYLTYL
Where are we?...

LIGHT

We are in the Kingdom of the Future, in the midst of the children who are not yet born. As the diamond allows us to see clearly in this region which is hidden from men, we shall very probably find the Blue Bird here....

TYLTYL

Certainly the bird will be blue, since everything here is blue....(_Looking all around him_) Heaven, how beautiful it all is!...

LIGHT

Look at the children running up....

TYLTYL

Are they angry?...

LIGHT

Not at all....You can see, they are smiling, but they are surprised....

THE BLUE CHILDREN (_running up in ever-increasing numbers_)

Live children!...Come and look at the little live children!...

TYLTYL

Why do they call us the little live children?

LIGHT

Because they themselves are not alive yet....

TYLTYL

What are they doing, then?...

LIGHT

They are awaiting the hour of their birth....

TYLTYL

The hour of their birth?...

LIGHT

Yes; it is from here that all the children come who are born upon our earth. Each awaits his day.... When the fathers and mothers want children, the great doors which you see there, on the right, are opened and the little ones go down....

TYLTYL

What a, lot there are! What a lot there are!...

LIGHT

There are many more.... We do not see them all.... There are thirty thousand halls like this, all full of them.... Just think, there are enough to last to the end of the world!... No one could count them....

TYLTYL

And those tall blue persons, who are they?...

LIGHT

No one exactly knows.... They are believed to be guardians.... I have heard that they will come upon earth after men.... But we are not allowed to ask them....

TYLTYL

Why not?...

LIGHT

Because it is the earth's secret....

TYLTYL

And may one talk to the others, the little ones?...

LIGHT

Certainly; you must make friends.... Look, there is one who is more curious than the rest.... Go up to him, speak to him....

TYLTYL

What shall I say to him?...

LIGHT

Whatever you like, as you would to a little playfellow....

TYLTYL

Can I shake hands with him?...

LIGHT

Of course, he won't hurt you.... But come, don't look so constrained.... I will leave you alone, you will be more at ease by yourselves.... Besides, I want to speak to the tall blue person....

TYLTYL (_going up to the_ BLUE CHILD _and holding out his hand_)

How do you do?... (_Touching the_ CHILD'S _blue dress with his finger_) What's that?...

THE CHILD (_gravely touching_ TYLTYL'S _hat_)

And that?...

TYLTYL

That?... That is my hat.... Have you no hat?...

THE CHILD

No; what is it for?...

TYLTYL

It's to say How-do-you-do with.... And then for when it rains or when it's cold....

THE CHILD

What does that mean, when it's cold?...

TYLTYL

When you shiver like this: brrrr! brrrr!... When you blow into your hands and go like this with your arms....

(_He vigorously beats his arms across his chest_.)

THE CHILD

Is it cold on earth?...

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes, in the winter, when there is no fire....

THE CHILD

Why is there no fire?...

TYLTYL

Because it's expensive and it costs money to buy wood....

THE CHILD

What is money?...

TYLTYL

It's what you pay with....

THE CHILD

Oh....

TYLTYL

Some people have money and others have none....

THE CHILD

Why not?...

TYLTYL

Because they are not rich.... Are you rich?... How old are you?...

THE CHILD

I am going to be born soon.... I shall be born in twelve years.... Is it nice to be born?...

TYLTYL

Oh, yes!... It's great fun!...

THE CHILD

How did you manage?...

TYLTYL

I can't remember.... It is so long ago!...

THE CHILD

They say it's lovely, the earth and the live people!...

TYLTYL

Yes, it's not bad.... There are birds and cakes and toys.... Some have them all; but those who have none can look at them....

THE CHILD

They tell us that the mothers stand waiting at the door.... They are good, aren't they?...

TYLTYL

Oh, yes!... They are better than anything in the world!... And the grannies too; but they die too soon....

THE CHILD

They die?... What is that?...

TYLTYL

They go away one evening and do not come back....

THE CHILD

Why?...

TYLTYL

How can one tell?... Perhaps because they feel sad....

THE CHILD

Has yours gone?...

TYLTYL

My grandmamma?...

THE CHILD

Your mamma or your grandmamma, I don't know....

TYLTYL

Oh, but it's not the same thing!... The grannies go first; that's sad enough.... Mine was very kind to me....

THE CHILD

What is the matter with your eyes?.... Are they making pearls?...

TYLTYL

No; it's not pearls....

THE CHILD

What is it, then?...

TYLTYL

It's nothing; it's all that blue, which dazzles me a little....

THE CHILD

What is that called?...

TYLTYL

What?...

THE CHILD

There, that, falling down....

TYLTYL

Nothing, it is a little water....

THE CHILD

Does it come from the eyes?...

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes, when one cries....

THE CHILD

What does that mean, crying?...

TYLTYL

I have not been crying; it is the fault of that blue... But if I had cried, it would be the same thing....

THE CHILD

Does one often cry?...

TYLTYL

Not little boys, but little girls do.... Don't you cry here?...

THE CHILD

No; I don't know how....

TYLTYL

Well, you will learn.... What are you playing with, those great blue wings?...

THE CHILD

These?... That's for the invention which I shall make on earth....

TYLTYL

What invention?... Have you invented something?...

THE CHILD

Why, yes; haven't you heard?... When I am on earth, I shall have to invent the thing that gives happiness....

TYLTYL

Is it good to eat?... Does it make a noise?...

THE CHILD

No; you hear nothing....

TYLTYL

That's a pity....

THE CHILD

I work at it every day.... It is almost finished.... Would you like to see it?...

TYLTYL

Very much.... Where is it?...

THE CHILD

There, you can see it from here, between those two columns....

ANOTHER BLUE CHILD (_coming up to_ TYLTYL _and plucking his sleeve_)

Would you like to see mine, say?...

TYLTYL

Yes, what is it?...

THE SECOND CHILD

The thirty-three remedies for prolonging life.... There, in those blue phials....

A THIRD CHILD (_stepping out from the crowd_)

I will show you a light which nobody knows of!... (_He lights himself up entirely with an extraordinary flame_) It's rather curious, isn't it?...

A FOURTH CHILD (_pulling_ TYLTYL'S _arm_)

Do come and look at my machine which flies in the air like a bird without wings!...

A FIFTH CHILD

No, no; mine first! It discovers the treasures hidden in the moon!...

THE BLUE CHILDREN (_crowding round_ TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _and all crying together_)

No, no, come and see mine!... No, mine is much finer!... Mine is a wonderful invention!... Mine is made of sugar!... His is no good!... He stole the idea from me!...

(_Amid these disordered exclamations, the_ LIVE CHILDREN _are dragged towards the blue workshops, where each of the inventors sets his ideal machine going. There ensues a cerulean whirl of wheels, disks,

flywheels, driving-wheels, pulleys, straps and strange and as yet unnamed objects shrouded in the bluey mists of the unreal. A crowd of odd and mysterious mechanisms dart forth and hover under the vaults or crawl at the foot of the columns, while_ CHILDREN _unfold charts and plans, open books, uncover azure statues and bring enormous flowers and gigantic fruits that seem formed of sapphires and turquoises_.)

A LITTLE BLUE CHILD (_bending under the weight of some colossal blue daisies_)
Look at my flowers!...

TYLTYL
What are they?... I don't know them....

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD
They are daisies!...

TYLTYL
Impossible!... They are as big as tables!...

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD
And they smell so good!...

TYLTYL (_smelling them_)
Wonderful!...

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD
They will grow like that when I am on earth....

TYLTYL
When will that be?...

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD
In fifty-three years, four months and nine days....

(_Two_ BLUE CHILDREN _arrive, carrying, like a lustre hanging on a pole, an incredible bunch of grapes, each larger than a pear_.)

ONE OF THE CHILDREN (_carrying the grapes_)
What do you say to my fruits?...

TYLTYL
A bunch of pears!...

THE CHILD
No, they are grapes!... They will all be like that when I am thirty.... I have found the way....

ANOTHER CHILD (_staggering under a basket of blue apples the size of melons_)
And mine!... Look at my apples!...

TYLTYL
But those are melons!...

THE CHILD
No, no!... They are my apples and they are not the finest at that!... They will all be alike when I am alive.... I have discovered the system!...

ANOTHER CHILD (_wheeling a blue barrow with blue melons bigger than pumpkins_)

What do you say to my little melons?...

TYLTYL

But they are pumpkins!...

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

When I come on earth, the melons will be splendid!... I shall be the gardener of the King of the Three Planets....

TYLTYL

The King of the Three Planets?

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

The great king who for thirty-five years will bring happiness to the Earth, Mars and the Moon.... You can see him from here....

TYLTYL

Where is he?...

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

There, the little boy sleeping at the foot of that column.

TYLTYL

On the left?...

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

No, on the right.... The one on the left is the child who will bring pure joy to the globe....

TYLTYL

How?...

THE CHILD (_the one that first talked to_ TYLTYL)

By means of ideas which people have not yet had....

TYLTYL

And the other, that little fat one with his fingers to his nose, what will he do?...

THE CHILD

He is to discover the fire that will warm the earth when the sun is paler than now....

TYLTYL

And the two holding each other by the hand and always kissing; are they brother and sister?...

THE CHILD

No; they are very comical....They are the Lovers....

TYLTYL

What is that?...

THE CHILD

I don't know.... Time calls them that, to make fun of them.... They spend the day looking into each other's eyes, kissing and bidding each other farewell....

TYLTYL

Why?...

THE CHILD

It seems that they will not be able to leave together...

TYLTYL

And the little pink one, who looks so serious and is sucking his thumb, what is he?...

THE CHILD

It appears that he is to wipe out injustice from the earth....

TYLTYL

Oh!...

THE CHILD

They say it's a tremendous work....

TYLTYL

And the little red-haired one, who walks as if he did not see where he was going, is he blind?...

THE CHILD

Not yet; but he will become so....Look at him well; it seems that he is to conquer Death....

TYLTYL

What does that mean?...

THE CHILD

I don't exactly know; but they say it's a great thing....

TYLTYL (_pointing to a crowd of_ CHILDREN _sleeping at the foot of the columns, on the steps, the benches, etc_.)

And all those asleep, what a number of them there are asleep!... Do they do nothing?...

THE CHILD

They are thinking of something....

TYLTYL

Of what?...

THE CHILD

They do not know yet; but they must take something with them to earth; we are not allowed to go from here empty-handed....

TYLTYL

Who says so?...

THE CHILD

Time, who stands at the door.... You will see when he opens it.... He is very tiresome....

A CHILD (_running up from the back of the hall and elbowing his way through the crowd_)

How are you, TYLTYL?...

TYLTYL

Hullo!... How does he know my name?...

THE CHILD (_who has just run up and who now kisses_ TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _effusively_.)

How are you?... All right?... Come, give me a kiss, and you too, Mytyl. It's not surprising that I should know your name, seeing that I shall be your brother.... They have only just told me that you were here.... I was right at the other end of the hall, packing up my ideas.... Tell mummy that I am ready....

TYLTYL

What?... Are you coming to us?...

THE CHILD

Certainly, next year, on Palm Sunday.... Don't tease me too much when I am little.... I am very glad to have kissed you both beforehand.... Tell daddy to mend the cradle.... Is it comfortable in our home?...

TYLTYL

Not bad.... And mummy is so kind!...

THE CHILD

And the food?...

TYLTYL

That depends.... We even have cakes sometimes, don't we, Mytyl?...

MYTYL

On New Year's Day and the fourteenth of July.... Mummy makes them....

TYLTYL

What have you got in that bag?... Are you bringing us something?...

THE CHILD

I am bringing three illnesses: scarlatina, whooping-cough and measles....

TYLTYL

Oh, that's all, is it?... And, after that, what will you do?...

THE CHILD

After that?... I shall leave you....

TYLTYL

It will hardly be worth while coming!...

THE CHILD

We can't pick and choose!...

(At that moment, a sort of prolonged, powerful, crystalline vibration is heard to rise and swell; it seems to emanate from the columns and the opal doors, which are irradiated by a brighter light than before.)

TYLTYL

What is that?...

THE CHILD

That's Time!... He is going to open the gates!...

(A great change comes over the crowd of BLUE CHILDREN, Most of them leave their machines and their labours, numbers of sleepers awake and all turn their eyes towards the opal doors and go nearer to them.)

LIGHT (joining TYLTYL)

Let us try to hide behind the columns.... It will not do for Time to discover us....

TYLTYL

Where does that noise come from?...

A CHILD

It is the Dawn rising.... This is the hour when the children who are to be born to-day go down to earth....

TYLTYL

How will they go down?... Are there ladders?...

THE CHILD

You shall see.... Time is drawing the bolts....

TYLTYL

Who is Time?...

THE CHILD

An old man who comes to call those who are going....

TYLTYL

Is he wicked?...

THE CHILD

No; but he hears nothing.... Beg as they may, if it's not their turn, he pushes back all those who try to go....

TYLTYL

Are they glad to go?...

THE CHILD

We are sorry when we are left behind, but we are sad when we go.... There! There!... He is opening the doors!...

(The great opalescent doors turn slowly on their hinges. The sounds of the earth are heard like a distant music. A red and green light penetrates into the hall; TIME, a tall old man with a streaming beard, armed with his scythe and hourglass, appears upon the threshold; and the spectator perceives the extremity of the white and gold sails of a galley moored to a sort of quay, formed by the rosy mists of the Dawn.)

TIME (_on the threshold_)

Are they ready whose hour has struck?...

BLUE CHILDREN (_elbowing their way and running up from all sides_)

Here we are!... Here we are!... Here we are!...

TIME (_in a gruff voice to the CHILDREN defiling before him to go out_)

One at a time!... Once again, there are many more of you than are wanted!... It's always the same thing!... You can't deceive me!...(_Pushing back a CHILD.) It's not your turn!... Go back and wait till to-morrow.... Nor you either; go in and return in ten years.... A thirteenth shepherd?... There are only twelve wanted; there is no need for more; the days of Theocritus and Virgil are past.... More doctors?... There are too many already; they are grumbling about it on earth.... And where are the engineers?... They want an honest man, only one, as a phenomenon.... Where is the honest man?... Is it you?... (THE CHILD _nods yes_) You appear to me to be a very poor specimen!... Hallo, you, over there, not so fast, not so fast!... And you, what are you bringing?... Nothing at all, empty-handed?... Then you can't go through.... Prepare something, a great crime, if you like, or a fine sickness, I don't care ...

but you must have something.... (_Catching sight of a little_ CHILD _whom the others are pushing forward, while he resists with all his strength_) Well, what's the matter with you?... You know that the hour has come.... They want a hero to fight against injustice; you're the one: you must start....

THE BLUE CHILDREN

He doesn't want to, sir....

TIME

What?... He doesn't want to?... Where does the little monster think he is?... No objections, we have no time to spare....

THE CHILD (_who is being pushed_)

No, no!...I don't want to go!... I would rather not be born!... I would rather stay here!...

TIME

That is not the question.... When the hour comes, it comes!... Now then, quick, forward!...

A CHILD (_stepping forward_)

Oh, let me pass!... I will go and take his place!... They say that my parents are old and have been waiting for me so long!...

TIME

None of that!... You will start at your proper hour, at your proper time.... We should never be done if we listened to you.... One wants to go, another refuses; it's too soon or it's too late.... (_Pushing back some_ CHILDREN _who have encroached upon the threshold_) Not so near, you children!... Back, you inquisitive ones!... Those who are not starting have no business outside.... You are in a hurry now; later, when your turn comes, you will be frightened and hang back.... Look, there are four who are trembling like leaves.... (_To a_ CHILD _who, on the point of crossing the threshold, suddenly goes back_) Well, what is it?... What's the matter?...

THE CHILD

I have forgotten the box containing the two crimes which I shall have to commit....

ANOTHER CHILD

And I the little pot with my idea for enlightening the crowd....

A THIRD CHILD

I have forgotten the graft of my finest pear!...

TIME

Run quick and fetch them!... We have only six hundred and twelve seconds left.... The galley of the Dawn is already flapping her sails to show that she is waiting.... You will come too late and you won't be born!... Come, quick, on board with you!... (_Laying hold of a_ CHILD _who tries to pass between his legs to reach the quay_) Oh, no, not you!... This is the third time you've tried to be born before your turn.... Don't let me catch you at it again, or you can wait forever with my sister Eternity; and you know that it's not amusing there!... But come, are we ready?... Is every one at his post?... (_Surveying the_ CHILDREN _standing on the quay or already seated in the galley_) There is still one missing.... It is no use his hiding, I see him in the crowd.... You can't deceive me!... Come on, you, the little fellow whom they call the Lover, say good-bye to your sweetheart....

(The two CHILDREN who are called the Lovers, fondly entwined, their faces livid with despair, go up to TIME and kneel at his feet.)

THE FIRST CHILD

Mr. Time, let me stay behind with her!...

THE SECOND CHILD

Mr. Time, let me go with him!...

TIME

Impossible!... We have only three hundred and ninety-four seconds left....

THE FIRST CHILD

I would rather not be born!...

TIME

You cannot choose....

THE SECOND CHILD (_beseechingly_)

Mr. Time, I shall come too late!...

THE FIRST CHILD

I shall be gone before she comes down!...

THE SECOND CHILD

I shall never see him again!...

THE FIRST CHILD

We shall be alone in the world!...

TIME

All this does not concern me.... Address your entreaties to Life.... I unite and part as I am told....(_Seizing one of the CHILDREN.)
Come!...

THE FIRST CHILD (_struggling_)

No, no, no!... She, too!...

THE SECOND CHILD (_clinging to the clothes of the FIRST)

Leave him with me!... Leave him!...

TIME

Come, come, he is not going to die, but to live!... (_Dragging away the FIRST CHILD.) Come along!...

THE SECOND CHILD (_stretching her arms out frantically to the CHILD that is being carried off_)

A sign!... A sign!... Tell me how to find you!...

THE FIRST CHILD

I shall always love you!...

THE SECOND CHILD

I shall be the saddest thing on earth!... You will know me by that!...

(She falls and remains stretched on the ground.)

TIME

You would do much better to hope.... And now, that is all....

(_Consulting his hour-glass_.) We have only sixty-three seconds left....

(_Last and violent movements among the_ CHILDREN _departing and remaining. They exchange hurried farewells_.)

THE BLUE CHILDREN

Good-bye, Pierre!... Good-bye, Jean!... Have you all you want?... Announce my idea!... Have you got the new turnscrew?... Mind you speak of my melons!... Have you forgotten nothing?... Try to know me again I... I shall find you!... Don't lose your ideas!... Don't lean too far into space!... Send me your news!... They say one can't... Oh, try, do try!... Try to tell us if it's nice!... I will come to meet you I... I shall be born on a throne!...

TIME (_shaking his keys and his scythe_)
Enough! Enough!... The anchor's raised!...

(_The sails of the galley pass and disappear. The voices of the_ CHILDREN _in the galley are heard in the distance_: "The Earth! The Earth!... I can see it!... How beautiful it is!... How bright it is!... How big it is!"... _Then, as though issuing from the depths of the abyss, an extremely distant song of gladness and expectation_.)

TYLTYL (_to_ LIGHT)
What is that?... It is not they singing.... It sounds like other voices....

LIGHT
Yes, it is the song of the mothers coming out to meet them....

(_Meanwhile_, TIME _closes the opalescent doors. He turns to take a last look at the hall and suddenly perceives_ TYLTYL, MYTYL _and_ LIGHT.)

TIME (_dumbfounded and furious_)
What's that?... What are you doing here?... Who are you?... Why are you not blue?... How did you get in?... (_He comes forward, threatening them with his scythe_.)

LIGHT (_to_ TYLTYL)
Do not answer!... I have the Blue Bird.... He is hidden under my cloak.... Let us escape.... Turn the diamond, he will lose our traces.... (_They slip away on the left, between the columns in the foreground_.)

CURTAIN

ACT VI

SCENE I.--_The Leave-taking_.

The stage represents a wall with a small door. It is the break of day.

(_Enter_ TYLTYL, MYTYL, LIGHT, BREAD, WATER, SUGAR, FIRE _and_ MILK) You would never guess where we are....

TYLTYL

Well, no, Light, because I don't know....

LIGHT

Don't you recognise that wall and that little door?...

TYLTYL

It is a red wall and a little green door.

LIGHT

And doesn't that remind you of anything?...

TYLTYL

It reminds me that Time shewed us the door....

LIGHT

How odd people are when they dream.... They do not recognise their own hands....

TYLTYL

Who is dreaming?... Am I?...

LIGHT

Perhaps it's myself.... Who can tell?... However, this wall contains a house which you have seen more than once since you were born....

TYLTYL

A house which I have seen more than once since I was born?...

LIGHT

Why yes, sleepy-head!... It is the house which we left one evening, just a year ago, to a day....

TYLTYL

Just a year ago?... Why, then....

LIGHT

Come, come!... Don't open great eyes like sapphire caves.... It's the dear old house of your father and mother....

TYLTYL (_going up to the door_)

But I think.... Yes, really.... It seems to me.... This little door.... I recognise the wooden pin.... Are they in there?... Are we near mummy?... I want to go in at once.... I want to kiss her at once!...

LIGHT

One moment.... They are sound asleep; you must not wake them with a start.... Besides, the door will not open till the hour strikes....

TYLTYL

What hour?... Is there long to wait?...

LIGHT

Alas, no!... A few poor minutes....

TYLTYL

Aren't you glad to be back?... What is it, Light?... You are quite pale, you look ill....

LIGHT

It's nothing, child.... I feel a little sad, because I am leaving you....

TYLTYL

Leaving us?...

LIGHT

I must.... I have nothing more to do here; the year is over, the Fairy is coming back to ask you for the Blue Bird....

TYLTYL

But I haven't got the Blue Bird!... The one of the Land of Memory turned quite black, the one of the Future turned quite pink, the Night's are dead and I could not catch the one in the Forest.... Is it my fault if they change colour, or die, or escape?... Will the Fairy be angry and what will she say?...

LIGHT

We have done what we could.... It seems likely that the Blue Bird does not exist or that he changes colour when he is caged....

TYLTYL

Where is the cage?...

BREAD

Here, master.... It was entrusted to my diligent care during our long journey; to-day, now that my mission is drawing to an end, I restore it to your hands, untouched and carefully closed, as I received it.... (_Like an orator making a speech_) And now, in the name of all, I crave permission to add a few words....

FIRE

He has not been called upon to speak!...

WATER

Order!...

BREAD

The malevolent interruptions of a contemptible enemy, of an envious rival....

FIRE

An envious rival!... What would you be without me?... A lump of shapeless and indigestible dough....

WATER

Order!...

FIRE

I won't be shouted down by you! ...

(_They threaten each other and are about to come to blows_.)

LIGHT (_raising her wand_)

Enough!...

BREAD

The insults and the ridiculous pretensions of an element whose notorious misbehaviour and whose scandalous excesses drive the world to despair....

FIRE

You fat pasty-face!

BREAD (_raising his voice_)

Will not prevent me from doing my duty to the end.... I wish, therefore, in the name of all...

FIRE

Not in mine!... I have a tongue of my own!...

BREAD

In the name of all and with a restrained but simple and deep emotion, to take leave of two distinguished children, whose exalted mission ends to-day.... When bidding them farewell, with all the grief and all the fondness which a mutual esteem....

TYLTYL

What?... You are bidding us farewell?... Are you leaving us too?...

BREAD

Alas, needs must, since the hour when men's eyes are to be opened has not yet come.... I am leaving you, it is true; but the separation will only be apparent, you will no longer hear me speak....

FIRE

That will be no loss!...

WATER

Order! Silence!...

FIRE

I shall keep silence when you cease babbling in the kettles, the wells, the brooks, the waterfalls and the taps....

LIGHT (_threatening them with her wand_)

That will do, do you hear?... You are all very quarrelsome; It is the coming separation that sets your nerves on edge like this....

BREAD (_with great dignity_)

That does not apply to me.... I was saying, you will no longer hear me speak, no longer see me in my living form.... Your eyes are about to close to the invisible life of the Things; but I shall always be there. In the bread-pan, on the shelf, on the table, beside the soup, I who am, if I may say so, with Water and Fire, the most faithful companion, the oldest friend of Man....

FIRE

Well, and what about me?...

LIGHT

Come, the minutes are passing, the hour is at hand which will send us back into silence.... Be quick and kiss the children....

FIRE (_rushing forward_)

I first! I first!... (_Violently kissing the_ CHILDREN.) Good-bye, Tylyl and Mytyl!... Good-bye, my darlings.... Think of me if ever you want any one to set fire to anything....

MYTYL

Oh! Oh!... He's burning me!...

TYLTYL

Oh! Oh!... He's scorched my nose!...

LIGHT

Come, Fire, moderate your transports.... Remember you're not in your chimney....

WATER

What an idiot!...

BREAD

What a vulgarian!...

FIRE

There, look; I will put my hands in my pockets.... But don't forget me.... I am the friend of Man.... I shall always be there, in the hearth and in the oven; and I will come sometimes and put out my tongue for you when you are cold or sad.... I shall be warm in winter and roast chestnuts for you....

WATER (_approaching the_ CHILDREN)

I shall kiss you without hurting you, tenderly, my children....

FIRE

Take care, you'll get wet!...

WATER

I am loving and gentle; I am kind to human beings....

FIRE

What about those you drown?...

WATER

Love the wells, listen to the brooks.... I shall always be there....

FIRE

She has flooded the whole place....

WATER

When you sit down, in the evening, beside the springs--there is more than one here in the forest--try to understand what they are trying to say....

FIRE

Enough! Enough!... I can't swim!...

WATER

I shall no longer be able to tell you as clearly as I do to-day that I love you; but you will not forget that that is what I am saying to you when you hear my voice.... Alas!... I can say no more.... My tears choke me and prevent my speaking....

FIRE

It doesn't sound like it!...

WATER

Think of me when you see the water-bottle.... Alas! I have to be silent there; but my thoughts will always be of you.... You will find me also in the ewer, the watering-can, the cistern and the tap....

MILK (_approaching timidly_)

And me in the milk-jug....

TYLTYL

What, you too, my dear Milk, so shy and so good?... Is everybody going?...

SUGAR (_naturally mawkish and sanctimonious_)

If you have a little corner left in your memory, remember sometimes that my presence was sweet to you.... That is all I have to say.... Tears are not in harmony with my temperament and they hurt me terribly when they fall on my feet....

BREAD

Jesuit!...

FIRE (_yelping_)

Sugar-plum! Lollipop! Caramel!...

TYLTYL

But where are Tylette and Tylo gone to?... What are they doing?...

(_The_ CAT _is heard to utter shrill cries_.)

MYTYL (_alarmed_)

It's Tylette crying!... He is being hurt!...

(_Enter the_ CAT, _running, his hair on end and dishevelled, his clothes torn, holding his handkerchief to his cheek, as though he had the toothache. He utters angry groans and is closely pursued by the_ DOG, _who overwhelms him with bites, blows and kicks_.)

THE DOG (_beating the_ CAT)

There!... Have you had enough?... Do you want any more?... There! There! There!...

LIGHT, TYLTYL and MYTYL (_rushing forward to part them_)

Tylo!... Are you mad?... Well, I never!... Down!... Stop that, will you?... How dare you?... Wait, wait!...

(_They part the_ DOG _and the_ CAT _by main force_.)

LIGHT

What is it?... What has happened?...

THE CAT (_blubbering and wiping his eyes_)

It's the Dog, Mrs. Light.... He insulted me, he put tin tacks in my food, he pulled my tail, he beat me; and I had done nothing, nothing, nothing at all!...

THE DOG (_mimicking him_)

Nothing, nothing, nothing at all!... (_In an undertone, with a mocking grimace_) Never mind, you've had some, you've had some and you're going to have some more!...

MYTYL (_pressing the_ CAT _in her arms_)

My poor Tylette, where has he hurt you?... Tell me.... I shall cry too....

LIGHT (_to the_ DOG, _severely_)

Your conduct is all the more, unworthy since you have chosen for this disgraceful exhibition the already most painful moment when we are about to part from these poor children....

THE DOG (_suddenly sobered_)

To part from these poor children?...

LIGHT

Yes; the hour which you know of is at hand.... We are going to return to silence.... We shall no longer be able to speak to them....

THE DOG (_suddenly uttering real howls of despair and flinging himself upon the_ CHILDREN, _whom he loads with violent and tumultuous caresses_)
No! No!... I refuse!... I refuse!... I shall always talk!... You will understand me now, will you not, my little god?... Yes! Yes! Yes!... And we shall tell each other everything, everything, everything!... And I shall be very good.... And I shall learn to read and write and play dominoes!... And I shall always be very clean.... And I shall never steal anything in the kitchen again.... Shall I do a wonderful trick for you?... Would you like me to kiss the Cat?...

MYTYL (_to the_ CAT)
And you, Tylette?... Have you nothing to say to us?...

THE CAT (_in an affected and enigmatic tone_)
I love you both as much as you deserve....

LIGHT
Now let me, in my turn, children, give you a last kiss....

TYLTYL and MYTYL (_hanging on to_ LIGHT'S _dress_)
No, no, no, Light!... Stay here with us!... Daddy won't mind.... We will tell mummy how kind you have been....

LIGHT
Alas! I cannot!... This door is closed to us and I must leave you....

TYLTYL
Where will you go all alone?...

LIGHT
Not very far, my children; over there, to the Land of the Silence of Things....

TYLTYL
No, no; I won't have you go.... We will go with you.... I shall tell mummy....

LIGHT
Do not cry, my dear little ones.... I have not a voice like Water; I have only my brightness, which Man does not understand.... But I watch over him to the end of his days.... Never forget that I am speaking to you in every spreading moonbeam, in every twinkling star, in every dawn that rises, in every lamp that is lit, in every good and bright thought of your soul.... (_Eight o'clock strikes behind the wall_) Listen!... The hour is striking!... Good-bye!... The door is opening!... In with you, in with you!...

(_She pushes the_ CHILDREN _through the door, which has half-opened and which closes again behind them_. BREAD _wipes away a furtive tear_, SUGAR _and_ WATER, _etc., all in tears, flee precipitously and disappear in the wings to the right and left. The_ DOG _howls behind the scenes. The stage remains empty for a moment and then the scenery representing the wall and the little door opens in the middle and reveals the last scene_.)

SCENE 2.--_The Awakening_.

The same setting as in ACT I, _but the objects, the walls and the atmosphere all appear incomparably and magically fresher, happier, more smiling. The daylight penetrates gaily through the chinks of the closed shutters. To the right, at the back_, TYLTYL _and_ MYTYL _lie sound asleep in their little beds. The_ DOG, _the_ CAT _and the_ THINGS _are in the places which they occupied in_ ACT I, _before the arrival of the_ FAIRY.

Enter MUMMY TYL

MUMMY TYL (_in a cheerfully scolding voice_)
Up, come, get up, you little lazybones!... Aren't you ashamed of yourselves?... It has struck eight and the sun is high above the trees!... Lord, how they sleep, how they sleep!... (_She leans over and kisses the_ CHILDREN.) They are quite rosy.... Tylytl smells of lavender and Mytyl of lilies-of-the-valley.... (_Kissing them again_) What sweet things children are!... Still, they can't go on sleeping till midday.... I mustn't let them grow up idle.... And, besides, I have heard that it's not very healthy.... (_Gently shaking_ TYLTYL) Wake up, wake up, Tylytl....

TYLTYL (_waking up_)
What?... Light?... Where is she?... No, no, don't go away....

MUMMY TYL
Light?... Why, of course it's light... Has been for ever so long.... It's as bright as noonday, though the shutters are closed.... Wait a bit till I open them.... (_She pushes back the shutters and the dazzling daylight invades the room_) There! See!... What's the matter with you?... You look quite blinded....

TYLTYL (_rubbing his eyes_)
Mummy, mummy!... It's you!...

MUMMY TYL
Why, of course, it's I.... Who did you think it was?...

TYLTYL
It's you.... Yes, yes, it's you!....

MUMMY TYL
Yes, yes, it's I.... I haven't changed my face since last night.... Why do you stare at me in that wonderstruck way?... Is my nose turned upside down, by any chance?...

TYLTYL
Oh, how nice it is to see you again!... It's so long, so long ago!... I must kiss you at once.... Again! Again! Again!... And how comfortable my bed is!... I am back at home!...

MUMMY TYL
What's the matter?... Why don't you wake up?... Don't tell me you're ill.... Let me see, show me your tongue.... Come, get up and dress....

TYLTYL
Hullo, I've got my shirt on!...

MUMMY TYL
Of course you have.... Put on your breeches and your little jacket....

There they are, on the chair....

TYLTYL

Is that what I did on the journey?...

MUMMY TYL

What journey?...

TYLTYL

Why, last year....

MUMMY TYL

Last year?...

TYLTYL

Why, yes!...At Christmas, when I went away....

MUMMY TYL

When you went away?... You haven't left the room.... I put you to bed last night, and here you are this morning.... Have you dreamed all that?...

TYLTYL

But you don't understand!... It was last year, when I went away with Mytyl, the Fairy, Light--how nice Light is!--Bread, Sugar, Water, Fire: they did nothing but quarrel!... You're not angry with me?... Did you feel very sad?... And what did daddy say?... I could not refuse... I left a note to explain....

MUMMY TYL

What are you talking about?... For sure, either you're ill or else you're still asleep.... (_She gives him a friendly shake_) There, wake up.... There, is that better?...

TYLTYL

But, mummy, I assure you.... It's you that's still asleep....

MUMMY TYL

What! Still asleep, am I?... Why? I've been up since six o'clock.... I've finished all the cleaning and lit the fire....

TYLTYL

But ask Mytyl if it's not true.... Oh, we have had such adventures!...

MUMMY TYL

Why Mytyl?... What do you mean?...

TYLTYL

She was with me.... We saw grandad and granny....

MUMMY TYL (_more and more bewildered_)

Grandad and granny?...

TYLTYL

Yes, in the Land of Memory.... It was on our way.... They are dead, but they are quite well.... Granny made us a lovely plum-tart.... And then the little brothers--Robert, Jean and his top--and Madeleine and Pierrette and Pauline and Riquette, too....

MYTYL

Riquette still goes about on all fours!...

TYLTYL

And Pauline still has a pimple on her nose....

MUMMY TYL

Have you found the key of the cupboard where daddy hides his brandy bottle?...

TYLTYL

Does daddy hide a brandy bottle?...

MUMMY TYL

Certainly. One has to hide everything when one has little meddlesome good-for-nothings like you.... But come, out with it, confess that you took it.... I would rather it was that.... I sha'n't tell daddy.... I sha'n't beat you....

TYLTYL

But, mummy, I don't know where it is....

MUMMY TYL

Just walk in front of me, so that I may see if you can walk straight.... (TYLTYL _does so_) No, it's not that.... Dear heaven, what is the matter with them?... I shall lose them too, as I lost the others!... (_Suddenly mad with alarm, she calls out_) Daddy Tyl!... Come, quick! The children are ill!...

(_Enter_ DADDY TYL, _very calmly, with an axe in his hand_.)

DADDY TYL

What is it?...

TYLTYL and MYTYL (_running up gaily to kiss their father_)

Hullo, daddy!... It's daddy!... Good-morning, daddy!... Have you had plenty of work this year?...

DADDY TYL

Well, what's the matter?... They don't look ill; they look very well....

MUMMY TYL (_weeping_)

You can't trust their looks.... It will be as with the others.... They looked quite well also to the end; and then God took them.... I don't know what's the matter with them.... I put them to bed quite quietly last night; and this morning, when they woke up, everything was wrong.... They don't know what they're saying; they talk about a journey.... They have seen Light and grandad and granny, who are dead, but who are quite well....

TYLTYL

But grandad still has his wooden leg....

MYTYL

And granny her rheumatics....

MUMMY TYL

Do you hear?... Run and fetch the doctor!...

DADDY TYL

Why, no, no.... They are not dead yet.... Come, let us look into this.... (_A knock at the front door_.) Come in!...

(_Enter_ NEIGHBOUR BERLINGOT, _a little old woman resembling the_ FAIRY _in_ ACT I _and leaning on a stick_.)

THE NEIGHBOUR

Good-morning and a Merry Christmas to you all!...

TYLTYL

It's the Fairy Berylune!...

THE NEIGHBOUR

I have come to ask for a bit of fire for my Christmas stew.... It's very chilly this morning.... Good-morning, children, how are you?...

TYLTYL

Fairy Berylune, I could not find the Blue Bird....

THE NEIGHBOUR

What is he saying?...

MUMMY TYL

Don't ask me, Madame Berlingot.... They don't know what they are saying.... They have been like that since they woke up.... They must have eaten something that wasn't good....

THE NEIGHBOUR

Why, Tylyl, don't you remember Goody Berlingot, your Neighbour Berlingot?...

TYLTYL

Why, yes, ma'am.... You are the Fairy Berylune.... You're not angry with us?...

THE NEIGHBOUR

Bery... what? Goodness gracious me!...

TYLTYL

Berylune.

THE NEIGHBOUR

Berlingot, you mean Berlingot....

TYLTYL

Berylune or Berlingot, as you please, ma'am.... But Mytyl knows....

MUMMY TYL

That's the worst of it, that Mytyl also....

DADDY TYL

Pooh, pooh!... That will soon go; I will give them a smack or two....

THE NEIGHBOUR

Don't; It's not worth while.... I know all about it; it's only a little fit of dreaming.... They must have slept in the moonbeams.... My little girl, who is very ill, is often like that....

MUMMY TYL

By the way, how is your little girl?...

THE NEIGHBOUR

Only so-so.... She can't get up.... The doctor says that it's her nerves.... I know what would cure her, for all that. She was asking me for it only this morning, for her Christmas box; it's a notion she has...

MUMMY TYL

Yes, I know; it's Tylyl's bird.... Well, Tylyl, aren't you going to give it at last to that poor little thing?...

TYLTYL

What, mummy?...

MUMMY TYL

Your bird.... It's no use to you.... You don't even look at it now.... And she has been dying to have it for ever so long!...

TYLTYL

Hullo, that's true, my bird!... Where is he?... Oh, there's the cage!... Mytyl, do you see the cage?... It's the one which Bread carried.... Yes, yes, it's the same one, but there's only one bird in it.... Has he eaten the other, I wonder?... Hullo, why, he's blue!... But it's my turtle-dove!... But he's much bluer than when I went away!... Why, that's the blue bird we were looking for!... We went so far and he was here all the time!... Oh, but it's wonderful!... Mytyl, do you see the bird? What would Light say?... I will take down the cage.... (_He climbs on a chair and takes down the cage and carries it to the_ NEIGHBOUR.) There, Madame Berlingot, there you are.... He's not quite blue yet, but that will come, you shall see!... Take him off quick to your little girl....

THE NEIGHBOUR

Really?... Do you mean it?... Do you give it me like that, straight away and for nothing?... Lord, how happy she will be!... (_Kissing_ TYLTYL) I must give you a kiss!... I fly!... I fly!...

TYLTYL

Yes, yes; be quick.... Some of them change their colour....

THE NEIGHBOUR

I will come back to tell you what she says....

(_She goes out_.)

TYLTYL (_after taking a long look around him_)

Daddy, mummy, what have you done to the house?... It's just as it was, but it's much prettier....

DADDY TYL

How do you mean, it's prettier?...

TYLTYL

Why, yes, everything has been painted and made to look new, everything is clean and polished.... It was not like that last year....

DADDY TYL

Last year?...

TYLTYL (_going to the window_)

And look at the forest!... How big and fine it is!... One would think it was new!... How happy I feel here!... (_Going to the bread-pan and opening it_) Where's Bread?.... I say, the loaves are very quiet.... And then here's Tylo!... Hullo, Tylo, Tylo!... Ah, you had a fine fight!... Do you remember, in the forest?...

MYTYL

And Tylette.... He knows me, but he has stopped talking....

TYLTYL

Mr. Bread.... (_Feeling his forehead_) Hullo, the diamond's gone!...
Who's taken my little green hat?... Never mind; I don't want it any
more.... Ah, Fire!... He's a good one!... He crackles and laughs to make
Water angry.... (_Running to the tap_) And Water?... Good-morning,
Water!... What does she say?... She still talks, but I don't understand her
as well as I did....

MYTYL

I don't see Sugar....

TYLTYL

Lord, how happy I am, happy, happy, happy!...

MYTYL

So am I, so am I!...

MUMMY TYL

What are you spinning round for like that?....

DADDY TYL

Don't mind them and don't distress yourself.... They are playing at being
happy....

TYLTYL

I liked Light best of all.... Where's her lamp?... Can we light it?...
(_Looking round him again_) Goodness me, how lovely it all is and how
glad I feel!...

MUMMY TYL

Why?...

TYLTYL

I don't know, mummy....

(_A knock at the front-door_.)

DADDY TYL

Come in, come in!...

(_Enter the_ NEIGHBOUR, _holding by the hand a little girl of a
fair and wonderful beauty, who carries_ TYLTYL'S _dove pressed in her
arms_.)

THE NEIGHBOUR

Do you see the miracle?...

MUMMY TYL

Impossible!... Can she walk?...

THE NEIGHBOUR

Can she walk?... She can run, she can dance, she can fly!... When she saw
the bird, she jumped, just like that, with one bound, to the window, to see
by the light if it was really Tylyl's dove.... And then, whoosh!... Out
into the street, like an angel!... It was as much as I could do to keep
pace with her....

TYLTYL (_going up to her, wonderstruck_)

Oh, how like Light she is!...

MYTYL

She is much smaller....

TYLTYL

Yes, indeed!... But she will grow bigger....

THE NEIGHBOUR

What are they saying?... Haven't they got over it yet?...

MUMMY TYL

They are better, they are mending.... It will be all right when they have had their breakfasts....

THE NEIGHBOUR (_pushing the_ LITTLE GIRL _into_ TYLTYL'S _arms_).

Come along, child, come and thank Tylytl....

(TYLTYL, _suddenly frightened, takes a step back_.)

MUMMY TYL

Well, Tylytl, what's the matter?.... Are you afraid of the little girl?... Come, give her a kiss, a good big kiss.... No, a better one than that.... You're not so shy as a rule!... Another one!... But what's the matter with you?... You look as if you were going to cry....

(TYLTYL, _after kissing the_ LITTLE GIRL _rather awkwardly, stands before her for a moment and the two children look at each other without speaking; then_ TYLTYL _strokes the dove's head_.)

TYLTYL

Is he blue enough?...

THE LITTLE GIRL

Yes, I am so pleased with him....

TYLTYL

I have seen bluer ones.... But those which are quite blue, you know, do what you will, you can't catch them....

THE LITTLE GIRL

That doesn't matter; he's lovely....

TYLTYL

Has he had anything to eat?...

THE LITTLE GIRL

Not yet.... What does he eat?...

TYLTYL

Anything: corn, bread, Indian corn, grasshoppers....

THE LITTLE GIRL

How does he eat, say?...

TYLTYL

With his beak. You'll see, I will show you....

(_He moves in order to take the bird from the_ LITTLE GIRL'S _hands. She resists instinctively; and, taking advantage of the hesitation of their movements, the_ DOVE _escapes and flies away_.)

THE LITTLE GIRL (_with a cry of despair_)

Mother!... He is gone!... (_She bursts into sobs_.)

TYLTYL

Never mind.... Don't cry.... I will catch him again.... (_Stepping to the front of the stage and addressing the audience_) If any of you should find him, would you be so very kind as to give him back to us?... We need him for our happiness, later on....

CURTAIN