GRAND OPERA

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

MR. HEINRICH CONRIED



LIBRETTO

THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN, FRENCH OR GERMAN LIBRETTO WITH A CORRECT ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

Hansel und Gretel

PUBLISHED BY

F. RULLMAN.

THEATRE TICKET OFFICE,

111 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

TRINITY BUILDING (REAR ARCADE)

THE ONLY CORRECT AND AUTHORIZED EDITION.

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Adelheid Wette

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HÄNSEL AND GRETEL

A FAIRY OPERA IN THREE ACTS

BY

ADELHEID WETTE

The Music by Engelbert Humperdinck

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AT THE THEATRE TICKET OFFICE, 111 BROADWAY
NEW YORK

ARGUMENT.

Hänsel and Gretel is an opera in three acts, the music by Engelbert Humperdinck and the libretto by Adelheid Wette. It is the German version of the old nursery legend—Babes in the Wood.

The first scene discloses a wretched homestead. The two children, Hänsel and Gretel, are at work—the boy making brooms and the girl knitting stockings. They both complain of feeling very hungry, and there isn't a thing in the house. Yes, there's a jug of milk that will make nice blanc-mange when mother comes home. Hänsel tastes it and Gretel raps his fingers. He says he won't work any more and proposes they dance instead. Gretel is delighted. He is very awkward at first but she teaches him the steps and they are getting along so famously that they whirl around the room and fall exhausted on the floor. At this moment the mother enters and she is so angry at seeing them do no work that she boxes their ears for it. In her excitement she gives the milk pitcher a push. It falls off the table, breaks in pieces, and spills all the milk. At this she is beside herself and seizes a basket and tells the children to go to the wood and pick strawberries. They must not come home till the basket is full. They run off while she, weary of life, sits sobbing herself to sleep.

The father is heard in the distance with a joyous song and enters in a joyful mood. He wakes up his unhappy wife to tell that he

has sold all his brooms at the fair for splendid prices and he shows his basket full of provisions. Both are thus in fine humor when he asks where the children are. She says she sent them away in disgrace to the Ilsenstein. The Ilsenstein! he exclaims, where the witches ride on broomsticks and devour little children. Exclaiming "Oh horror!" she runs out of the house, he after her, to find Hänsel and Gretel.

The second act shows a forest. Gretel is making a garland of wild roses while Hänsel is looking for strawberries. In the background is the Ilsenstein. It is sunset. Hänsel crowns Gretel queen of the wood and she allows him to taste a strawberry. He gives her one in return and little by little they devour them all. Then they are frightened. They want to pick more but it is getting too dark. They want to leave but cannot find the way. Gretel fears being in the dark but Hänsel is very brave. She sees faces in trees and stumps and he calls out to reassure her. Echo answers and he grows frightened too. They huddle together as a thick mist arises which hides the background. Gretel, terror-stricken, falls on her knees and hides behind Hänsel. At this moment a little man appears, as the mist rises, and quiets them. It is the Sandman and he sings them to slumber. Half awake they say their evening prayer and sink down on the moss in each other's arms. A dazzling light then appears, the mist rolls itself into a staircase and angels pass down and group themselves about the two sleeping children.

In the third act the scene is the same, the mist still hiding the background. The Dawn Fairy shakes dewdrops on the children. They wake, but Hänsel very lazily. They both have had dreams of angels coming to see them with shining wings. The mist now clears away and in the background is seen the witches' house with a fence of gingerbread figures. There are also seen an oven and a cage. Hänsel wants to go inside and Gretel draws him back. But Hänsel says the angels beguiled their footsteps and why shouldn't they nibble a bit at the cottage? They tiptoe to the fence and break off a bit of the cake cautiously. The witch voice from within tells them to go on nibbling. They like the gingerbread. It suits them famously and apparently suits her too as she watches them from her window.

But she comes out of the house as they are joyously laughing and throws a rope about Hänsel's neck and caresses them. Hänsel tries to get away and calls her names, while she goes on saying how she loves them both—they are such dainty morsels. Hänsel tries to run away and takes Gretel with him. But the witch casts a spell on them and they stand stock-still. Then she leads Hänsel to the cage and shuts him in and gives him almonds and raisins to fatten him up. She loosens Gretel with the magic stick and says how nice and plump she'll be when she's roasted brown. She opens the oven and puts more fagots under it and says the fire will soon be ripe to push Gretel in. In her joy she rides wildly round on a

broomstick while Gretel watches from the house.

The witch calls Gretel out and opens the oven door. Hänsel tells Gretel to beware and the witch tells her to peep in the oven. Gretel pretends she does not understand. She secretly disenchants Hänsel so that when the witch bends over and peeps into the oven they give her a push and in she goes. Then they dance wildly about. Hänsel throws sweetmeats out of the window. The oven cracks open and falls into bits, while groups of children suddenly surround Hänsel and Gretel. Then they disenchant the gingerbread children who are very grateful. As they are all dragging the gingerbread witch about, the Father and Mother come in and are overjoyed at finding their children again.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PETER, Broom-maker.
GERTRUDE, his wife.
HÄNSEL,
GRETEL, their children.
THE WITCH who eats children.
SANDMAN, the Sleep Fairy.
DEWMAN, the Dawn Fairy.
CHILDREN.
THE FOURTEEN ANGELS.

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL.

ERSTES BILD.

DAHEIM.

Erste Scene.

(*Dürftige Stube. Im Hintergrunde rechts eine niedrige Thür, in der Mitte ein kleines Fenster mit Aussicht in den Wald. Links ein Herd mit einem Rauchfang darüber. Gegenüber an der rechten Wand hängen Besen in verschiedenen Formen. Hänsel, an der Thüre mit Besenbinden, Gretel, am Herde mit Strumpfstricken beschäftigt, sitzen auf Schemeln einander gegenüber.*)

GRETEL.

Suse, liebe Suse,

was raschelt im
Stroh?
Die Gänse gehn
barfuss
und haben kein'
Schuh.
Der Schuster
hat's Leder,
kein'n Leisten
dazu.
Drum kann er
den Gänslein
auch machen
kein' Schuh.

HÄNSEL.

Eia popeia,
das ist eine Not!
Wer schenkt mir
einen Dreier
zu Zucker und
Brot?
Verkauf ich
mein Bettlein
und leg mich
auf's Stroh,
sticht mich
keine Feder
und beisst mich
kein Floh!

(*Wirft den Besen in eine Ecke und springt auf.*)

Ach, käm doch die

Mutter nun endlich
nach Haus!

GRETEL.

Auch ich halt's kaum
noch vor Hunger
aus.

HÄNSEL.

Seit Wochen nichts als
trocken Brot;
ist das ein Elend! Potz
schwere Not!

GRETEL.

Still, Hänsel, denk
daran, was Vater
sagt,
wenn Mutter
manchmal so
verzagt:
„Wenn die Not auf's
höchste steigt,
Gott der Herr die Hand
euch reicht!“

HÄNSEL.

Jawohl, das klingt
ganz schön und
glatt,
aber leider wird man
davon nicht satt.
Ach, Gretel, wie lang'
ist's doch schon her,

dass wir nichts Gutes
geschmauset mehr!
Eierfladen und
Butterwecken—
kaum weiss ich noch,
wie die thun
schmecken.

(*Dem Weinen nahe.*)

Ach, Gretel, ich
wollt'...

GRETEL (*ihm den Mund zuhaltend*).

Still, nicht
verdriesslich sein:
Gedulde dich fein, sieh
freundlich drein!
Dies lange Gesicht,—
hu, welcher Graus!
Siehst ja wie der
leibhaftige
Griesgram aus!
Griesgram,
hinaus!
Fort aus dem
Haus!
Ich will dich
lehren,
Herz zu
beschweren,
Sorgen zu
mehren,
Freuden zu
wehren:

Griesgram, Griesgram,
greulicher Wicht,
griesiges, grämiges
Galgengesicht,
packe dich, trolle dich,
schäbiger Wicht!

HÄNSEL.

Griesgram,
hinaus!
Halt's nicht
mehr aus!
Immer mich
plagen,
Hungertuch
nagen,
muss ja
verzagen,
mag's nicht
ertragen!
Griesgram, Griesgram,
greulicher Wicht,
griesiges, grämiges
Galgengesicht,
packe dich, trolle dich,
schäbiger Wicht!

GRETEL.

So recht! Und willst du
nun nicht mehr
klagen,
so will ich dir auch ein
Geheimnis sagen.

HÄNSEL.

Ein Geheimnis? Wird
wohl was Rechtes
sein!

GRETEL.

Ja, hör nur,
Brüderchen! Darfst
dich schon freun,
Guck her in den Topf,
Milch ist darin,
die schenkte uns heute
die Nachbarin.
Mutter kocht uns,
kommt sie nach
Haus,
gewiss einen leckeren
Reisbrei daraus.

HÄNSEL (*mit
Juchzen*).

Reisbrei, Reisbrei,
herrlicher Brei!
Giebt's Reisbrei, da ist
Hänsel dabei!
Wie dick ist der Rahm
auf der Milch!
Lass schmecken!

(*Nascht mit dem
Finger.*)

Herrjemine, den
möcht' ich ganz
verschlecken!

GRETEL.

Wie, Hänsel, naschen?
Schämst du dich
nicht?
Fort mit den Fingern,
du naschhafter
Wicht!

(*Giebt ihm eins auf die Finger.*)

Und jetzt an die Arbeit
zurück, geschwind,
dass wir beizeiten
fertig sind!
Kommt Mutter nach
Haus, und wir
thaten nicht recht,
Dann, weisst du, geht
es den Faulpelzen
schlecht.

HÄNSEL.

Arbeiten? Brr! Wo
denkst du hin?
Danach steht mir jetzt
nicht der Sinn.
Immer mich plagen,
das fällt mir nicht
ein,
jetzt lass uns tanzen
und fröhlich sein!

GRETEL (*entzückt*).

Tanzen? Das wär' auch
mir eine Lust!
Dazu ein Liedchen aus
froher Brust,
wie's uns die Muhme
gelehrt zu singen:
Tanzliedchen soll jetzt
lustig erklingen!

(*Klatscht in die Hände.*)

Brüderchen, komm,
tanz' mit mir,
beide Händchen reich'
ich Dir;
einmal hin,
einmal her,
rund herum, es ist
nicht schwer!

HÄNSEL.

Tanzen soll ich armer
Wicht,
Schwesterlein, und
kann es nicht.
Darum zeig' mir, wie
es Brauch,
dass ich tanzen lerne
auch!

GRETEL.

Mit den Füsschen tapp
tapp tapp,
mit den Händchen

klapp klapp klapp,
einmal hin,
einmal her,
rund herum, es ist
nicht schwer.

HÄNSEL.

Mit den Füsschen tapp
tapp tapp,
mit den Händchen
klapp klapp klapp,
einmal hin,
einmal her,
rund herum, es ist
nicht schwer.

GRETEL.

Ei, das hast Du gut
gemacht,
ei, das hätt' ich nicht
gedacht!
Seht mir doch den
Hänsel an,
wie der tanzen lernen
kann!

Mit dem Köpfchen nick
nick nick,
mit dem Fingerchen
tick tick tick,
einmal hin,
einmal her,
rund herum, es ist
nicht schwer!

HÄNSEL.

Mit dem Köpfchen nick
nick nick,
mit dem Fingerchen
tick tick tick,
einmal hin,
einmal her,
rund herum, es ist
nicht schwer!

GRETEL.

Hänsel, komm und
gieb mal acht,
wie's die Gretel weiter
macht!
Lass uns Arm in Arm
verschränken,
unsre Schrittchen
paarweis lenken!

Ich liebe Tanz und
Fröhlichkeit
und bin nicht gern
allein;
ich bin kein Freund
von Traurigkeit,
und fröhlich will ich
sein.
Tralala, tralala,
tralala la la,
Dreh dich
herum, mein
lieber Hans!

(*Beide umtanzen sich*

gegenseitig.)

GRETEL.

Komm her zu mir,
komm her zu mir,
zum Ringelreigentanz!

HÄNSEL.

Geh weg von mir, geh
weg von mir,
ich bin der stolze
Hans!
Mit kleinen Mädchen
tanz ich nicht,
die sind mir viel zu
dumm!

GRETEL.

Geh, dummer Hans,
geh, stolzer Hans,
ich krieg dich doch
herum!
Tralala, tralala,
tralala la la,
dreh dich
herum, mein
lieber Hans!

HÄNSEL.

Ach,
Schwesterlein,
ach,
Gretelein,
Du hast im

Strumpf ein
Loch!

GRETEL.

Ach Brüderlein, ach
Hänselein,
Du willst mich hänseln
noch!
Mit bösen Buben tanz
ich nicht,
das ist mir viel zu
dumm!

HÄNSEL.

Nicht böse sein, lieb
Schwesterlein,
ich krieg Dich doch
herum!
Tralala, tralala,
tralala, la la,
Dreh dich doch
herum, mein
Gretelein!

HÄNSEL.

Tanz lustig,
heissa,
lustig tanz!
Lass
dich's
nicht
gereu'n;
und ist der

Strumpf
auch nicht
mehr ganz,
die Mutter
strickt dir
'n neu'n!
Dreh
dich
doch
herum!
Sei
nicht
so
dumm!
Tralala,
tralala
u. s.
w.

GRETEL.

Tanz lustig,
heissa,
lustig tanz!
Lass
dich's
nicht
gereu'n;
und ist der
Schuh'
auch nicht
mehr ganz,
der Schuster
flickt dir 'n
neu'n!
Dreh
dich

doch
herum!
Sei
nicht
so
dumm!
Tralala,
tralala
u. s.
w.

(*Mit verschlungenen Händen umtanzen sie sich immer ausgelassener, bis sie beide übereinander zu Boden purzeln. In diesem Augenblick geht die Thür auf.*)

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL.

ACT I.

AT HOME.

Scene I.

(*Small, poorly furnished*

room. In the background a door, a small window near it with a view into the forest. On the left a fireplace, with chimney above it. On the walls many brooms of various sizes. Hänsel sits near the door, making brooms, and Gretel opposite him by the fireplace, knitting a stocking.)

GRETEL.

Susy, little Susy, pray
what is the news?
The geese are running
barefoot, because
they've no shoes!
The cobbler has leather,
and plenty to spare,
why can't he make the
poor goose a new
pair?

HÄNSEL.

Then they'll have to go
barefoot!
Eia-popeia, pray what's
to be done?
Who'll give me milk and
sugar, for bread I have
none?

I'll go back to bed and I'll
lie there all day;
where there's nought to
eat, then there's
nothing to pay!

GRETEL.

Then we'll have to go
hungry!

HÄNSEL.

If mother would only
come home again!
Yes, I am so hungry,
I don't know what to do!
For weeks I've eaten
nought but bread—
It's very hard, it is
indeed!

GRETEL.

Hush, Hänsel, don't
forget what father
said,
when mother, too,
wished she were dead:
"When past bearing is
our grief,
Then 'tis Heaven will
send relief!"

HÄNSEL.

Yes, yes, that sounds all
very fine,

but you know off
maxims we cannot
dine!
O Gret, it would be such
a treat
if we had something nice
to eat!
Eggs and butter and suet
paste,
I've almost forgotten
how they taste.

(*Nearly crying.*)

O Gretel, I wish—

GRETEL.

Hush, don't give way to
grumps;
have patience awhile, no
doleful dumps!
This woful face, whew!
what a sight!
Looks like a horrid old
crosspatch fright!
Crosspatch, away!
Leave me, I pray!
Just let me reach
you,
quickly I'll teach
you
how to make
trouble,
soon mount to
double!
Crosspatch,

crosspatch,
what is the use,
growling and
grumbling,
full of abuse?
Off with you, out
with you,
shame on you,
goose!

HÄNSEL.

Crosspatch, away!
Hard lines, I say.

HÄNSEL.

When I
am
hungry,
surely I
can
say so,
cannot
allay
so,
can't
chase
away
so!

GRETEL.

If I am
hungry,
I'll never

say so,
will not
give
way
so,
chase it
away
so!

GRETEL.

That's right. Now, if you
leave off complaining,
I'll tell you a most
delightful secret!

HÄNSEL.

O delightful! it must be
something nice!

GRETEL.

Well, listen, brotherkin—
won't you be glad!
Look here in the jug,
here is fresh milk,
'twas given to-day by our
neighbour,
and mother, when she
comes back home,
will certainly make us a
rice-blancmange.

HÄNSEL (*joyfully dances round the room*).

Rice-blancmange!
When blancmange is
anywhere near,
then Hänsel, Hänsel,
Hänsel, is there!
How thick is the cream
on the milk;
let's taste it! O Gemini!
wouldn't I like to drink
it!

(*Tasting it.*)

GRETEL.

What, Hänsel, tasting?
Aren't you ashamed?
Out with your fingers
quick, greedy boy!

(*Gives him a rap on the fingers.*)

Get back to your work
again, be quick,
that we may both have
done in time!
If mother comes and we
haven't done right,
then badly it will fare
with us to-night!

HÄNSEL.

Work again? No, not for
me!
That's not my idea at all;

it doesn't suit me! It's
such a bore!
Dancing is jollier far, I'm
sure!

GRETEL (*delighted*).

Dancing, dancing! O yes,
that's better far;
and sing a song to keep
us in time!
One that our
grandmother used to
sing us:
sing then, and dance in
time to the singing!

(*Claps her hands*.)

Brother, come and dance
with me,
both my hands I offer
thee;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back
again!

HÄNSEL (*tries to do it,
but awkwardly*).

I would dance, but don't
know how,
when to jump, and when
to bow;
show me what I ought to
do,

so that I may dance like
you.

GRETEL.

With your foot you tap,
tap, tap;
with your hands you
clap, clap, clap;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back
again!

HÄNSEL.

With your hands you
clap, clap, clap;
with your foot you tap,
tap, tap;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back
again!

GRETEL.

That was very good
indeed,
O, I'm sure you'll soon
succeed!
Try again, and I can see
Hänsel soon will dance
like me!

(*Claps her hands.*)

With your head you

nick, nick, nick;
with your fingers you
click, click, click;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back
again.

HÄNSEL.

With your head you
nick, nick, nick;
with your fingers you
click, click, click;
right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back
again!

GRETEL.

Brother, watch what
next I do,
you must do it with me
too.
You to me your arm
must proffer,
I shall not refuse your
offer!
Come!

BOTH.

What I enjoy is dance
and jollity,
love to have my fling;
in fact, I like frivolity,

and all that kind of
thing.

GRETEL.

Tralala, tralala, tralala!
Come and have a twirl,
my dearest Hänsel,
come and have a turn
with me, I pray;
come here to me, come
here to me,
I'm sure you can't say
nay!

HÄNSEL (*gruffly*).

Go away from me, go
away from me,
I'm much too proud for
you:
with little girls I do not
dance,
and so, my dear, adieu!

GRETEL.

Go, stupid Hans,
conceited Hans,
you'll see I'll make you
dance!
Tralala, tralala, tralala!
Come and have a twirl,
my dearest Hänsel,
come and have a turn
with me, I pray!

HÄNSEL.

O Gretel dear, O sister
dear,
your stocking has a hole!

GRETEL.

O Hänsel dear, O brother
dear,
d'you take me for a fool?
With naughty boys I do
not dance,
and so, my dear, adieu!

HÄNSEL.

Now don't be cross,
you silly goose,
you'll see I make you
dance!

GRETEL.

Tralala,
tralala,
tralala!
Come and have
a twirl, my
dearest
Hänsel,
come and have
a turn with
me, I pray.
Sing lustily
hurrah!

hurrah!
while I dance
with you;
and if the
stockings are
in holes,
why, mother'll
knit some
new!

HÄNSEL.

Tralala,
tralala,
tralala!
Sing lustily
hurrah!
hurrah!
while I dance
with you;
and if the shoes
are all in
holes,
why mother'll
buy some
new!
Tralala,
tralala,
tralala!

(*They dance round each other as before. They then seize each other's hands and go round in a circle, quicker and*

quicker, until at length they lose their balance and tumble over one another on the floor.)

Zweite Scene.

MUTTER (*mit einer Kiepe auf dem Rücken*).

Holla!

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL (*erschreckt aufspringend*).

Himmel, die Mutter!

(*Verlegenheit.*)

MUTTER.

Was ist das für eine Geschichte?

GRETEL.

Der Hänsel....

HÄNSEL.

Die Gretel....

GRETEL.

Er wollte....

HÄNSEL.

Ich sollte....

MUTTER (*in Zorn ausbrechend*).

Wartet, ihr
ungezogenen
Wichte!

(*Setzt ihre Kiepe nieder.*)

Nennt ihr das Arbeit?
Johlen und singen?
Wie auf der Kirmes
tanzen und
springen?
Indes die Eltern vom
frühen Morgen
bis spät in die Nacht
sich mühen und
sorgen?
Dass dich! (*Giebt Hänseln einen Puff.*)
Lasst seh'n, was
habt ihr
beschickt?
—Wie, Gretel, den
Strumpf nicht fertig
gestrickt?
—Und du?—Du,
Schlingel! In all den
Stunden
nicht mal die wenigen
Besen gebunden?

Ihr unnützigen
Rangen! Den Stock
will ich holen,
den Faulpelz werd' ich
euch beiden
versohlen!

(*In ihrem Eifer hinter den Kindern her stösst sie den Milchtopf vom Tisch, dass er klirrend zu Boden fällt.*)

Jesses! Nun auch den
Topf noch
zerbrochen!

(*Weinend.*)

Was soll ich nun zum
Abend kochen?

(*Besieht ihren mit Milch begossenen Rock; Hänsel kichert verstohlen.*)

Was, Bengel, du lachst
mich noch aus?

(*Mit dem Stock hinter Hans her, der zur offenen Thür hinausrennt.*)

Wart, kommt nur der
Vater nach Haus—

(*Reisst einen kleinen Korb von der Wand und drängt ihn Gretel in die Hand.*)

Marsch, fort—in den Wald!
Dort sucht mir Erdbeeren!—Nun, wird es bald?

(*Treibt auch Gretel zur Stube hinaus und droht mit dem Stocke den sich furchtsam umschauenden Kindern.*)

Und bringt ihr den Korb nicht voll bis zum Rand,
so hau ich euch, dass ihr fliegt an die Wand!

(*Setzt sich erschöpft an den Tisch.*)

Da liegt nun der gute Topf in Scherben!
Ja, blinder Eifer bringt immer Verderben.—
Herrgott, wirf Geld herab! Nichts hab' ich zu leben,
kein Krümchen den Würmern zu essen

zu geben;
kein Tröpfchen im
Topfe, kein
Krüstchen im
Schrank,
schon lange nichts als
Wasser zum Trank.

(*Stützt den Kopf mit der Hand.*)

Müde bin ich—müde
zum Sterben—
Herrgott, wirf Geld
herab— —

(*Legt den Kopf auf den Arm und schläft ein.*)

Scene II.

(*At this moment the door opens, the mother appears, whereupon the children jump up quickly.*)

MOTHER.

Hallo!

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL.

Heavens! Here's mother!

MOTHER.

What is all this
disturbance?

GRETEL.

'Twas Hänsel, he wanted
—

HÄNSEL.

'Twas Gretel, she said I—

MOTHER.

Silence, idle and ill-
behaved children!

(*The mother comes in, unstraps the basket, and puts it down.*)

Call you it working,
yodelling and singing?
As though 'twere fair
time, hopping and
springing!
And while your parents
from early morning
till late at night are
slaving and toiling!
Take that!

(*Gives Hänsel a box on the ear.*)

Now come, let's see what
you've done.
Why, Gretel, your

stocking not ready
yet?
And you, you lazybones,
have you nothing to
show?
Pray how many besoms
have you finished?
I'll fetch my stick, you
useless children,
and make your idle
fingers tingle!

(*In her indignation at the children she gives the milk-jug a push, so that it falls off the table with a smash.*)

Gracious! there goes the
jug all to pieces!
What now can I cook for
supper?

(*She looks at her dress, down which the milk is streaming. Hänsel covertly titters.*)

How, saucy, how dare
you laugh?

(*Goes with a stick after Hänsel, who runs out at the open door.*)

Wait, wait till the father
comes home!

(*With sudden energy she snatches a basket from the wall, and pokes it into Gretel's hands.*)

Off, off, to the wood!
There seek for
strawberries! Quick,
away!
And if you don't bring
the basket brimful,
I'll whip you so that
you'll both run away!

(*The children run off into the wood. She sits down exhausted by the table.*)

Alas! there my poor jug
lies all in pieces!
Yes, blind excitement
only brings ruin.
O Heaven, send help to
me!
Nought have I to give
them—

(*Sobbing.*)

No bread, not a crumb,
for my starving
children!
No crust in the
cupboard, no milk in
the pot—

(*Resting her head on her hands.*)

Weary am I, weary of
living!
Father, send help to me!

(*Lays her head down on her arm and drops to sleep.*)

Dritte Scene.

(*Man hört eine Stimme von draussen:*)

Ach, wir armen, armen
Leute!
Alle Tage so wie heute:
In dem Beutel ein
grosses Loch
und im Magen ein
gröss'res noch—
Rallalala,
rallalala,
Hunger ist der beste
Koch!

(*Am Fenster wird der Kopf des Vaters sichtbar, der während des Folgenden in angeheitertem Zustande mit einem Kober auf dem*

Rücken in die Stube tritt.)

Ja, ihr Reichen könnt
euch laben!
Wir, die nichts zu
essen haben,
nagen, ach, die ganze
Woch',
sieben Tag an einem
Knoch'!
Rallalala,
rallalala,
Hunger ist der beste
Koch!
Ach, wir sind ja gern
zufrieden,
denn das Glück ist so
verschieden,
aber, aber wahr ist's
doch:
Armut ist ein schweres
Joch!
Rallalala,
rallalala,
Hunger ist der beste
Koch!

(*Er setzt seinen Kober nieder und tritt an die Rampe.*)

Ja ja, der Hunger
kocht schon gut,
sofern er
kommandieren thut.
Allein was nutzt der

Kommandör,
fehlt euch im Topf die
Zubehör?
Rallalala,
rallalala,
Kümmel ist mein
Leiblikör!
Rallalala,
rallalala,
Mutter, schau, was ich
bescheer!

(*Giebt ihr einen derben Schmatz.*)

MUTTER (*sich die Augen reibend*).

Hoho!—
Wer spek—
spektakelt
mir da im Haus
und rallalakelt
aus dem Schlaf
mich heraus?

VATER (*lallend*).

Das tolle Tier,
im Magen hier,
das bellte so,
das glaube
mir!
Rallalala,
rallalala,
Hunger ist ein
tolles Tier.

Rallalala,
rallalala,
beisst und
kratzt, das
glaube mir!

MUTTER.

So, so!
Das tolle Tier,
es ist wohl
schier
stark angezecht—das
glaube mir!

VATER.

Nun ja, 's war heut ein
heitrer Tag!
Fandst du nicht auch,
lieb' Weib?

MUTTER (*ärgerlich*).

Ach geh! Du weisst,
nicht leiden mag
ich Wirtshaus-
Zeitvertreib!

VATER (*zu seinem Kober sich wendend*).

Auch gut! So sehen
wir, wenn's beliebt,
was es für heut zu
schmausen giebt.

MUTTER.

Höchst einfach ist das
Speisregister
der Abendschmaus—
zum Henker ist er!
Teller leer,
Keller leer,
und im Beutel ist gar
nichts mehr.

VATER.

Rallalala,
rallalala,
lustig, Mutter, bin
auch noch da!
Rallalala,
rallalala,
bringe Glück und
Gloria!

(*Nimmt den Kober
und kramt aus.*)

Schau, Mutter!
Wie gefällt Dir dies
Futter?

MUTTER.

Mann, was seh' ich?
Speck und Butter!
Mehl und Würste!...
vierzehn Eier—
—Mann! Sie sind
jetztunder teuer!—
Bohnen, Zwiebeln und
—herrjeh!

Gar ein viertel Pfund
Kaffee!

VATER (*kehrt den Kober vollends um. Ein Haufen Kartoffeln rollt zur Erde. Beide fassen sich am Arm und tanzen in der Stube umher*).

Rallalala,
hopsassa!
Heute woll'n wir lustig
sein!
Ja, hör nur,
Mütterchen, wie's
geschah!

(*Die Mutter kramt die Sachen in den Schrank ein, macht Feuer im Herd an, schlägt Eier in eine Schüssel u. s. w.*)

Drüben hinterm
Herrenwald
prächt'ge Feste giebt's
da bald,
Kirmes, Hochzeit,
Jubiläum,
Böllerknall und gross
Tedeum.
Mein Geschäft kommt
nun zur Blüte;
dessen froh sei Dein

Gemüte!
Sieh! wer feines Fest
will feiern,
der muss kehren,
schrubben und
scheuern.
Bot drum meine Waren
aus,
zog damit von Haus zu
Haus:
„Kauft Besen!
Gute Feger!
Feine Bürsten!
Spinnejäger!“
Sieh, da verkauft' ich
massenweise
meine Waren zum
höchsten Preise!—
Schnell nun her mit
Topf und Pfanne,
her mit Kessel,
Schüssel, Kanne!

BEIDE.

Vivat hoch die
Besenbinder!

VATER.

Doch halt—wo bleiben
die Kinder?
Hänsel! Gretel!—Wo
steckt der Hans?
Wo er steckt? Ja,
wüsste man's!
Nur das weiss ich klar

wie Tag,
dass der Topf in
Scherben lag!

VATER (*zornig*).

Was? der neue Topf
entzwei?

MUTTER.

Und am Boden quoll
der Brei!

VATER (*mit der Faust
auf den Tisch
schlagend*).

Donnerkeil! So haben
die Rangen
Unfug wieder
angefangen?

MUTTER.

Unfug viel und Arbeit
keine
hatten sie getrieben
alleine.
Hörte schon draussen
sie juchzen und
johlen,
hopsen und springen
wie wilde Fohlen,
wusste nicht, wie mir
stand der Kopf,
Und vor Zorn

VATER.

—zerbrach der
Topf.
Hahahaha!

(*Beide lachen aus vollem Halse.*)

Na, Zornmütterchen,
nimm mir's nicht
krumm,
solche Zorntöpfe find'
ich recht dumm!
Doch sag, wo mögen
die Kinderchen sein?

MUTTER
(*schnippisch*).

Meinethalben am
Ilsenstein!

VATER (*erschrocken*).

Am Ilsenstein?—Ei,
juckt Dich das Fell?

(*Nimmt einen Besen von der Wand.*)

MUTTER.

Den Besen lass nur an
seiner Stell.

VATER (*lässt den Besen fallen und ringt*

die Hände.)

Wenn sie sich verirrten
im Walde dort,
in der Nacht, ohne
Stern und Mond!
Kennst Du nicht den
schauerlich düstern
Ort?
Weisst nicht, dass die
Böse dort wohnt?

MUTTER (*betroffen*).

Die Böse? Wen meinst
Du?

VATER (*mit geheimnisvollem Nachdruck*).

Die *Knusperhexe*!—

MUTTER (*fährt zusammen*).

Die Knusperhexe!—

(*Zurückweichend, da der Vater den Besen wieder aufnimmt.*)

Mein! Sag doch, was
soll denn der Besen?

VATER.

Der Besen! Der Besen!

Was macht man
damit? Was macht
man damit?
Es reiten drauf, es
reiten drauf die
Hexen!
Eine Hex'
steinalt,
haust tief im
Wald,
vom Teufel selber hat
sie Gewalt!
Um Mitternacht,
wann niemand
wacht,
dann reitet sie aus zur
Hexenjagd.
Zum
Schornstein
hinaus
entschlüpft sie
dem Haus;
auf dem Besen, o
Graus; in Saus und
Braus!
Über Berg und
Kluft,
über Thal und
Gruft
durch Nebelduft
im Sturm durch
die Luft:
Ja so reiten, ja so
reiten,
juchheissa, die Hexen!

MUTTER.

Entsetzlich!

VATER.

Ja, bei Tag, o
Graus:
zum
Hexenschmaus
ins Knisper-Knasper-
Knusperhaus
die Kinderlein,
Armsünderlein,
mit Zauberkuchen
lockt sie herein.
Doch
übelgesinnt
ergreift sie
geschwind
das arme Kuchen
knuspernde Kind.
In den Ofen,
hitzhell,
schiebt's die
Hexe
blitzschnell;
dann kommen
zur Stell,
gebräunt das
Fell,
aus dem Ofen, aus dem
Ofen
die *Lebkuchenkinder*!

MUTTER.

Und die
Lebkuchenkinder?

VATER.

Die werden gefressen!

MUTTER.

Von der Hexe?

VATER.

Von der Hexe.

MUTTER
(*händeringend*).

O Graus!
Hilf, Himmel! die
Kinder! Ich halt's
nicht mehr aus!

(*Rennt aus dem Hause.*)

VATER (*nimmt die Kümmelflasche vom Tisch*).

He, Alte, so wart'
doch! Nimm mich
mit!
Wir wollen ja beide
zum Hexenritt!

(*Eilt ihr nach. Der Vorhang fällt schnell.*)

Scene III.

(*A voice is heard in the distance.*)

Tralala, tralala! little
mother, here am I!
Tralala, tralala! bringing
luck and jollity!

(*Rather nearer.*)

O, for you and me, poor
mother,
every day is like the
other;
with a big hole in the
purse,
and in the stomach an
even worse.
Tralala, tralala!
Hunger is the poor man's
curse!
Tralala, tralala!
Hunger is the poor man's
curse!

(*The father appears at the window, and during the following he comes into the room in a very happy mood, with a basket on his back.*)

'Tisn't much that we
require,
just a little food and fire!

But alas! it's true
enough,
life on some of us is
rough!
Hunger is a customer
tough! (*or*)
Yes, the rich enjoys his
dinner,
while the poor grows
daily thinner!
Strives to eat, as well he
may,
somewhat less than
yesterday!

(*Complainingly.*)

Tralala, tralala!
hunger is the devil to
pay!
Tralala, tralala!
hunger is the devil to
pay!

(*He puts down his basket.*)

Yes, hunger's all very
well to feel,
if you can get a good
square meal;
but when there's nought,
what can you do,
supposing the purse be
empty too?
Tralalala,
tralalala!

O for a drop of mountain dew!
Tralalala,
tralalala!
Mother, look what I have brought!

(Reels over to his sleeping wife and gives her a smacking kiss.)

MOTHER (*rubbing her eyes*).

Oho!—
Who's sing-sing-singing
all around the house,
and tra-la-la-ing me
out of my sleep?

FATHER (*inarticulately*).

How now!—
The hungry beast
within my breast
called so for food
I could not rest!
Tralala, tralala!
Hunger is an urgent beast!
Tralala, tralala!
pinches, gnaws,

and gives no
rest!

MOTHER.

So, so!
And this wild
beast,
you gave him a
feast.
He's had his fill,
to say the least!

FATHER.

Well, yes! H'm! it was a
lovely day,
don't you think so, dear
wife?

(*Wants to kiss her.*)

MOTHER (*pushing him
angrily away,
excitedly*).

Have done! You have no
troubles to bear,
'tis I must keep the
house!

FATHER.

Well, well,—then let us
see, my dear,
what we have got to eat
to-day.

MOTHER.

Most simple is the bill of fare,
our supper's gone, I know not where!
Larder bare, cellar bare,
nothing, and plenty of it to spare!

FATHER.

Tralalala, tralalala!
Cheer up, mother, for here am I,
bringing luck and jollity!

(*He takes his basket and begins to display he contents.*)

Look, mother, doesn't all this food please you?

MOTHER.

Man, man, what see I?
Ham and butter,
flour and sausage—
eggs, a dozen....
(Husband, and they cost a fortune!)
Turnips, onions, and—
for me!
Nearly half a pound of tea!

BOTH.

Tralala, tralala,
hip hurrah!
Won't we have a
festive time!
Tralala, hip
hurrah!
Won't we have a
happy time!
Now listen how it all
came about!

FATHER (*turns the basket topsy-turvy, and a lot of potatoes roll out. He seizes her by the arm and dances round the room. Sits down. Meanwhile the mother packs away the things, lights a fire, breaks eggs into a saucepan, etc.*).

Yonder to the town I
went,
there was to be a great
event,
weddings, fairs, and
preparation
for all kinds of
jubilation!
Now's my chance to do
some selling,
and for that you may be
thankful!
He who wants a feast to

keep,
he must scrub and brush
and sweep.
So I brought my best
goods out,
tramped with them from
house to house:
"Buy besoms! good
besoms!
Buy my brushes! sweep
your carpets,
sweep your cobwebs!"
And so I drove a roaring
trade,
and sold my brushes at
the highest prices!
Now make haste with
cup and platter,
bring the glasses, bring
the kettle—
here's a health to the
besom-maker!

MOTHER.

Here's a health to the
besom-maker!

FATHER.

But stay, why, where are
the children?
Hänsel, Gretel, what's
gone with Hans?

MOTHER.

Gone with Hans? O,
who's to know?
But at least I do know
this,
that the jug is smashed
to bits.

FATHER.

What! the jug is smashed
to bits?

MOTHER.

And the cream all run
away.

FATHER (*striking his fist on the table in a rage*).

Hang it all! So those
little scapegraces
have been again in
mischief!

MOTHER (*hastily*).

Been in mischief? I
should think so!
Nought have they done
but their mad
pranking;
as I came home I could
hear them
hopping and cutting the
wildest capers,
till I was so cross that I

gave a push—
and the jug of milk was
spilt!

FATHER.

And the jug of milk was
spilt!
Ha ha ha ha!

(*Both laughing.*)

Such anger, mother,
don't take it ill,
seems stupid to me, I
must say!
But where, where think
you the children can
be?

MOTHER (*snappishly and curtly*).

For aught I know, at the
Ilsenstein!

FATHER (*horror-struck*).

The Ilsenstein! Come,
come, have a care!

(*Fetches a broom from the wall.*)

MOTHER.

The besom, just put it

away again!

FATHER. (*lets the broom fall and wrings his hands*).

My children astray in the gloomy wood,
all alone without moon or stars!

MOTHER.

O Heaven!

FATHER.

Dost thou not know the awful magic place,
the place where the evil one dwells?

MOTHER (*surprised*).

The evil one! What mean'st thou?

FATHER (*with mysterious emphasis*).

The gobbling ogress!

(*The mother draws back, the father takes up the broom again.*)

MOTHER.

The gobbling ogress!
But—tell me, what help
is the besom!

FATHER.

The besom, the besom,
why what is it for?
They ride on it, they ride
on it, the witches!
An old witch within that
wood doth dwell
and she's in league with
the powers of hell.
At midnight hour, when
nobody knows,
away to the witches'
dance she goes.
Up the chimney
they fly,
on a broomstick
they hie—
over hill and dale,
o'er ravine and
vale,
through the
midnight air
they gallop full
tear—
on a broomstick,
on a
broomstick,
hop hop, hop hop,
the witches!

MOTHER.

O horror!
But the gobbling witch?

FATHER.

And by day, they say,
  she stalks around,
with a crinching,
  crunching, munching
  sound,
and children plump and
  tender to eat
she lures with magic
  gingerbread sweet.
    On evil bent,
    with fell intent,
she lures the children,
  poor little things,
    in the oven red-
      hot
    she pops all the
      lot;
    she shuts the lid
      down
    until they're done
      brown,
    in the oven, in the
      oven,
  (*Expressively.*)
    the gingerbread
      children!

MOTHER.

And the gingerbread
  children?

FATHER.

Are served up for dinner!

MOTHER.

For the ogress?

FATHER.

For the ogress!

MOTHER.

O horror!
Heav'n help us! the
children!
O what shall we do?

(*Runs out of the house.*)

FATHER.

Hi, mother, mother, wait
for me!

(*Takes the whisky bottle from the table and follows her.*)

We'll both go together
the witch to seek!

(*The curtain falls quickly.*)

ZWEITES BILD.

IM WALDE.

Erste Scene.

(*Im Hintergrunde der Ilsenstein, von dichtem Tannengehölz umgeben. Rechts eine mächtige Tanne; darunter sitzt Gretel auf einer moosbedeckten Wurzel und windet einen Kranz von Hagebutten; neben ihr liegt ein Blumenstrauss. Links, abseits im Gebüsch, Hänsel, nach Erdbeeren suchend. Abendrot.*)

GRETEL.

Ein Männlein steht im
  Walde
      ganz still und
        stumm;
es hat von lauter
  Purpur
      ein Mäntlein
        um.
Sagt, wer mag das
  Männlein sein,
das da steht im Wald

allein
mit dem purpurroten
Mäntelein?
Das Männlein steht im
Walde
auf einem Bein
und hat auf seinem
Kopfe
schwarz
Käpplein
klein.
Sagt, wer mag das
Männlein sein,
das da steht im Wald
allein
mit dem kleinen
schwarzen
Käppelein?

HÄNSEL (*kommt hervor und schwenkt jubelnd sein Körbchen*).

Juchhe!
Mein Erbelkörbchen ist
voll bis oben;
wie wird die Mutter
den Hänsel loben!

GRETEL.

Mein Kränzel ist auch
schon fertig, sieh!
So schön wie heute
ward's noch nie!

(*Will den Kranz Hänsel auf den Kopf setzen.*)

HÄNSEL (*barsch abwehrend*).

Buben tragen doch so
was nicht,
's passt nur für ein
Mädchengesicht.

(*Setzt ihr den Kranz auf.*)

Hei, Gretel, feins
Mädel!
Ei, der Daus,
siehst ja wie die
Waldkönigin aus!

GRETEL.

Seh ich wie die
Waldkönigin aus,
so reich' mir auch den
Blumenstrauss!

HÄNSEL.

Waldkönigin mit
Scepter und Kron',
da nimm auch die
Erbeln, doch nasch'
nicht davon!

(*Reicht ihr mit der einen Hand den*

Blumenstrauss, mit der andern das Körbchen voll Erdbeeren und huckt, gleichsam huldigend, vor ihr nieder. In diesem Augenblick ertönt der Ruf eines Kuckucks.)

HÄNSEL.

Kuckuck! Eierschluck!

GRETEL (*schalkhaft*).

Kuckuck!
Erbelschluck!

(*Holt eine Beere aus dem Körbchen und hält sie Hänsel hin, der sie schlürft, als ob er ein Ei austränke.*)

HÄNSEL (*springt auf*).

Hoho! Das kann ich
auch! Gieb nur acht!

(*Nimmt einige Beeren und lässt sie Gretel in den Mund rollen.*)

Wir machen's, wie der
Kuckuck schluckt,
wenn er in fremde
Nester guckt.

(*Der Kuckuck ruft abermals. Es beginnt zu dämmern.*)

HÄNSEL (*greift wieder zu*).

Kuckuck! Eierschluck!

GRETEL (*ebenso*).

Kuckuck!
Erbelschluck!

HÄNSEL.

Setzest Deine Kinder aus!
Kuckuck!
Trinkst die fremden Eier aus!
Gluckgluck!

(*Lässt sich eine ganze Handvoll Erdbeeren in den Mund rollen.*)

GRETEL.

Sammelst Erbeln schön zuhauf!
Kuckuck!
Schluckst sie, Schlauer, selber auf!
Schluckschluck!

(*Sie werden immer übermütiger und*

raufen sich schliesslich um die Beeren. Hänsel trägt den Sieg davon und setzt den Korb vollends an den Mund, bis er gänzlich leer geworden. Indessen hat die Dunkelheit immer mehr zugenommen.)

GRETEL (*Hänsel den Korb entreissend*).

Hänsel, was hast Du
gethan! O Himmel!
Alle Erbeln gegessen,
Du Lümmel!
Wart' nur, das giebt
ein Strafgericht,
denn die Mutter, die
spasst heute nicht!

HÄNSEL (*ruhig*).

Ei was, stell Dich doch
nicht so an,
Du, Gretel, hast es ja
selber gethan!

GRETEL.

Komm nur, wollen
rasch neue suchen!

HÄNSEL.

Im Dunkeln wohl gar,
unter Hecken und
Buchen?
Man sieht ja nicht
Blatt, nicht Beere
mehr!
Es wird schon dunkel
rings umher!

GRETEL.

Ach, Hänsel, Hänsel!
Was fangen wir an?
Was haben wir
thörichten Kinder
gethan?
Wir durften hier gar
nicht so lange
säumen!

HÄNSEL.

Horch, wie rauscht es
in den Bäumen! —
Weisst Du, was der
Wald jetzt spricht?
„Kindlein!“ sagt er,
„fürchtet ihr euch
nicht?“

(*Späht unruhig umher.*)

Gretel! Ich weiss den
Weg nicht mehr!

GRETEL (*bestürzt*).

O Gott! Was sagst Du?
den Weg nicht
mehr?

HÄNSEL (*sich mutig stellend*).

Was bist Du doch für
ein furchtsam Wicht!
Ich bin ein Bub', ich
fürchte mich nicht!

GRETEL.

Ach, Hänsel! Gewiss
geschieht uns ein
Leid!

HÄNSEL.

Ach, Gretel, geh, sei
doch gescheit!

GRETEL.

Was schimmert denn
dort in der
Dunkelheit?

HÄNSEL.

Das sind die Birken im
weissen Kleid.

GRETEL.

Und dort, was grinset
daher vom Sumpf?

HÄNSEL (*stotternd*).

D—d—das ist ein
glimmender
Weidenstumpf!

GRETEL.

Was für ein
wunderlich Gesicht
Macht er soeben—
siehst Du's nicht?

HÄNSEL (*sehr laut*).

Ich mach' dir 'ne Nase,
hörst du's, Wicht?

GRETEL (*ängstlich*).

Da, sieh', das
Lichtchen—es
kommt immer näh'r!

HÄNSEL.

Irrlichtchen hüpfet
wohl hin und her!
Gretel, Du musst
beherzter sein—
wart, ich will einmal
tüchtig schrein!

(*Ruft durch die
hohlen Hände.*)

Wer da?

ECHO.

Er da!

(*Die Kinder schmiegen sich erschreckt aneinander.*)

GRETEL (*zaghaft*).

Ist jemand da?

ECHO (*leise*).

Ja!

(*Die Kinder schaudern zusammen.*)

GRETEL.

Hast Du's gehört? 's
rief leise: Ja!
Hänsel, sicher ist
jemand nah'!
(*weinend*:)
Ich fürcht' mich, ich
fürcht' mich!—O
wär' ich zu Haus!
Wie sieht der Wald so
gespenstig aus!

HÄNSEL.

Gretelchen, drücke
Dich fest an mich!
Ich halte Dich, ich

schütze Dich!

(*Ein dichter Nebel steigt auf und verhüllt den Hintergrund gänzlich.*)

GRETEL.

Da kommen weisse
Nebelfrauen,
sieh', wie sie winken
und drohend
schauen.
Sie schweben
heran!
Sie fassen uns
an!
(*schreiend*:)
Vater! Mutter!

(*Eilt entsetzt unter die Tanne und verbirgt sich, auf die Kniee stürzend, hinter Hänsel. In diesem Augenblicke zerreisst links der Nebel; ein kleines graues Männchen, mit einem Säckchen auf dem Rücken, wird sichtbar.*)

HÄNSEL.

Sieh' dort das

Männchen,
Schwesterlein!
Was mag das für ein
Männchen sein?

ACT II.

IN THE FOREST.

Scene I.

(*The curtain rises. The middle of the forest. In the background is the Ilsenstein, thickly surrounded by fir-trees. On the right is a large fir-tree, under which Gretel is sitting on a mossy tree-trunk and making a garland of wild roses. By her side lies a nosegay of flowers. Amongst the bushes on the left is Hänsel, looking for strawberries. Sunset.*)

GRETEL (*humming quietly to herself*).

There stands a little man
in the wood alone,
he wears a little mantle
of velvet brown.

Say, who can the mankin
be,
standing there beneath
the tree,
with the little mantle of
velvet brown?
His hair is all of gold,
and his cheeks are red,
he wears a little black
cap upon his head.
Say, who can the mankin
be,
standing there so
silently,
with the little black cap
upon his head?

(*She holds up the garland of roses, and looks it all round.*)

With the little black cap
upon his head!

HÄNSEL (*comes out, swinging his basket joyfully*).

Hurrah! my strawberry
basket is nearly
brimful!
O won't the mother be
pleased with Hänsel!

GRETEL (*standing up*).

My garland is ready also!

Look! I never made one
so nice before!

(*Tries to put the wreath on Hänsel's head.*)

HÄNSEL (*drawing back roughly*).

You won't catch a boy
wearing that!
It is only fit for a girl!

(*Puts the wreath on her.*)

Ha, Gretel! "Fine
feathers!"
O the deuce!
You shall be the queen
of the wood!

GRETEL.

If I am to be queen of
the wood,
then I must have the
nosegay too!

HÄNSEL (*gives her the nosegay*).

Queen of the wood, with
sceptre and crown,
I give you the
strawberries,
but don't eat them all!

(*He gives the basket full of strawberries into her other hand, at the same time kneeling before her in homage. At this moment the cuckoo is heard.*)

Cuckoo, cuckoo, how
d'you do?

GRETEL.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, where
are you?

(*Takes a strawberry from the basket and pokes it into Hänsel's mouth; he sucks it up as though he were drinking an egg.*)

HÄNSEL (*jumping up*).

Oho, I can do that just
like you!

(*Takes some strawberries and lets them fall into Gretel's mouth.*)

Let us do like the cuckoo
too,
who takes what doesn't
belong to him!

(*It begins to grow dark.*)

HÄNSEL (*helping himself again*).

Cuckoo, how are you?

GRETEL.

Cuckoo, where are you?

HÄNSEL.

In your neighbour's nest you go.

GRETEL (*helping herself*).

Cuckoo, cuckoo!

HÄNSEL.

Cuckoo, why do you do so?

(*Pours a handful of strawberries into his mouth.*)

GRETEL.

And you are very greedy too!
Tell me, cuckoo, why are you?

HÄNSEL.

Cuckoo, cuckoo!

(*They get rude and begin to quarrel for the strawberries. Hänsel gains the victory, and puts the whole basket to his mouth until it is empty.*)

GRETEL (*horrified, clasping her hands together*).

Hänsel, what have you done?
O Heaven! all the strawberries eaten.
You glutton! Listen, you'll have a punishment
from the mother—this passes a joke!

HÄNSEL (*quietly*).

Now come, don't make such a fuss;
you, Gretel, you did the same thing yourself!

GRETEL.

Come, we'll hurry and seek for fresh ones!

HÄNSEL.

What, here in the dark,
under hedges and
bushes?
Why, naught can we see
of fruit or leaves!
It's getting dark already
here!

GRETEL.

O Hänsel! O Hänsel! O
what shall we do?
What bad disobedient
children we've been!
We ought to have
thought and gone
home sooner!

(*Cuckoo behind the scenes, rather nearer than before.*)

HÄNSEL.

Hark, what a noise in the
bushes!
Know you what the
forest says?
"Children, children," it
says,
"Are you not afraid?"

(*Hänsel spies all around uneasily, at last he turns in despair to Gretel.*)

Gretel, I cannot find the

way!

GRETEL (*dismayed*).

O God! what say you?
Not know the way?

HÄNSEL (*pretending to be very brave*).

Why, how ridiculous you are!
I am a boy, and know not fear!

GRETEL.

O Hänsel, some dreadful thing may come!

HÄNSEL.

O Gretel, come, don't be afraid!

GRETEL.

What's glimmering there in the darkness?

HÄNSEL.

That's only the birches in silver dress.

GRETEL.

But there, what's grinning so there at

me?

HÄNSEL (*stammering*).

Th—that's only the
stump of a willow-
tree.

GRETEL (*hastily*).

But what a dreadful form
it takes,
and what a horrid face it
makes!

HÄNSEL (*very loud*).

Come, I'll make faces,
you fellow!
D'you hear?

GRETEL (*terrified*).

There, see! a lantern,
it's coming this way!

HÄNSEL.

Will-o'-the-wisp is
hopping about—
Gretel, come, don't lose
heart like this!
Wait, I'll give a good
loud call!

(*Goes back some steps to the back of the stage and calls through his*

hands.)

Who's there?

ECHO.

You there!
There!

(*The children cower together.*)

GRETEL.

Is some one there?

ECHO.

Where?
Here!

GRETEL (*softly*).

Did you hear? a voice
said, "Here!"
Hänsel, surely some
one's near.

(*Crying.*)

I'm frightened, I'm
frightened,
I wish I were home!
I see the wood all filled
with goblin forms!

HÄNSEL.

Gretelkin, stick to me

close and tight,
I'll shelter you, I'll shelter you!

(*A thick mist rises and completely hides the background.*)

GRETEL.

I see some shadowy women coming!
See, how they nod and beckon, beckon!
They're coming, they're coming,
they'll take us away!

(*Crying out, rushes horror-struck under the tree and falls on her knees, hiding herself behind Hänsel.*)

Father! mother! Ah!

HÄNSEL.

See there, the mankin, sister dear!
I wonder who the mankin is?

(*At this moment the mist lifts on the left; a little grey man is seen with a little sack on his back.*)

Zweite Scene.

SANDMÄNNCHEN
(*nähert sich mit freundlichen Gebärden den Kindern, die sich allmählich beruhigen, und wirft ihnen während des Folgenden Sand in die Augen*).

Der kleine Sandmann
bin ich — s-t!
und gar nichts Arges
sinn ich — s-t!
Euch Kleinen lieb ich
innig — s-t!
bin euch gesinnt gar
minnig — s-t!
Aus diesem Sack zwei
Körnelein
euch Müden in die
Äugelein;
die fallen dann von
selber zu,
damit ihr schlaft in
sanfter Ruh.
Und seid ihr fein
geschlafen ein,
dann wachen
auf die
Sterne,
und nieder steigen

Engelein
aus hoher
Himmelsferne
und bringen
holde
Träume.
Drum träume,
Kindchen,
träume!

(*Verschwindet. Völlige Dunkelheit.*)

HÄNSEL
(*schlaftrunken*).

Sandmann war da!

GRETEL (*ebenso*).

Lass uns den
Abendsegen beten!

(*Sie kauern nieder und falten die Hände.*)

BEIDE.

Abends, will ich
schlafen gehn,
vierzehn Engel um
mich stehn,
zwei zu meinen
Häupten,
zwei zu meinen
Füssen,
zwei zu meiner

Rechten,
zwei zu meiner
Linken,
zweie, die mich
decken,
zweie, die mich
wecken,
zweie, die mich
weisen
zu
Himmelsparadeisen.

(*Sie sinken aufs Moos zurück und schlummern Arm in Arm verschlungen alsbald ein.*)

Scene II.

SANDMAN (*the Sleep Fairy*).

(*The little man approaches the children with friendly gestures, and the children gradually calm down. He is strewing sand in the children's eyes.*)

I shut the children's
peepers, sh!
and guard the little
sleepers, sh!
for dearly do I love
them, sh!

and gladly watch above
them, sh!
And with my little bag of
sand,
By every child's bedside I
stand;
then little tired eyelids
close,
and little limbs have
sweet repose.
And if they're good and
quickly go to sleep,
then from the starry
sphere above
the angels come with
peace and love,
and send the children
happy dreams,
while watch they keep!
Then slumber, children,
slumber,
for happy dreams are
sent you
through the hours you
sleep.

(*Disappears. Darkness.*)

HÄNSEL (*half asleep*).

Sandman was there!

GRETEL (*ditto*).

Let us first say our
evening prayer.

(*They cower down and fold their hands.*)

BOTH.

When at night I
go to sleep,
fourteen angels
watch do keep:
two my head are
guarding,
two my feet are
guiding,
two are on my
right hand,
two are on my left
hand,
two who warmly
cover,
two who o'er me
hover,
two to whom 'tis
given
to guide my steps
to Heaven.

(*They sink down on to the moss, and go to sleep with their arms twined round each other. Complete darkness.*)

Dritte Scene.

(*Plötzlich dringt von*

obenher ein heller Schein durch den Nebel, der sich wolkenförmig zusammenballt und die Gestalt einer in die Mitte der Bühne hinabführenden Treppe annimmt. Vierzehn Engel, die kleinsten voran, die grössten zuletzt, schreiten paarweise, während das Licht an Helligkeit zunimmt, in Zwischenräumen die Wolkentreppe hinab und stellen sich, der Reihenfolge des Abendsegens entsprechend, um die schlafenden Kinder auf, das erste Paar zu Häupten, das zweite zu Füssen, das dritte rechts, das vierte links; dann verteilen sich das fünfte und sechste Paar zwischen die übrigen Paare, so dass der Kreis der Engel vollständig geschlossen wird. Zuletzt tritt das siebente Paar in den Kreis und nimmt als

„Schutzengel“ zu beiden Seiten der Kinder Platz, während die übrigen sich die Hände reichen und einen feierlichen Reigen um die Gruppe aufführen. Indem sie sich zu einem malerischen Schlussbilde ordnen, schliesst sich langsam der Vorhang.)

Scene III.

(*Here a bright light suddenly breaks through the mist which forthwith rolls itself together into the form of a staircase, vanishing in perspective, in the middle of the stage. Fourteen angels, in light floating garments, pass down the staircase, two and two, at intervals, while it is getting gradually lighter. The angels place themselves, according to the order mentioned in the evening hymn, around the sleeping children; the first couple at their heads, the*

second at their feet, the third on the right, the fourth on the left, the fifth and sixth couples distribute themselves amongst the other couples, so that the circle of the angels is completed. Lastly the seventh couple comes into the circle and takes its place as "guardian angels" on each side of the children. The remaining angels now join hands and dance a stately step around the group. The whole stage is filled with an intense light. Whilst the angels arrange themselves in a picturesque tableau, the curtain slowly falls.)

DRITTES BILD.

DAS

KNUSPERHÄUSCHEN.

Erste Scene.

(*Scene wie vorhin. Der Hintergrund noch*

von Nebel verhüllt, der sich während des Folgenden langsam verzieht. Die Engel sind verschwunden.)

(*Früher Morgen. Taumännchen tritt auf und schüttelt aus einer Glockenblume Tautropfen auf die schlafenden Kinder; diese beginnen sich zu regen.*)

TAUMÄNNCHEN.

Der kleine Tau-Mann
heiss' ich—kling!
Mit Mutter Sonne reis'
ich—klang!
Von Ost bis Westen
weiss ich—kling!
Wer faul ist und wer
fleissig—klang!
Ich komm mit lichtem
Sonnenschein
und strahl in eure
Äugelein,
und weck mit kühlem
Taue,
was schläft auf Flur
und Aue.
Dann springet auf, wer
fleissig
zur frühen
Morgenstunde,

denn sie hat Gold im
Munde.
Drum, Schläfer, auf,
erwachet,
der lichte Tag schon
lachet!

(*Ab.*)

GRETEL (*öffnet die Augen, richtet sich halb auf und blickt verwundert um sich, während Hänsel sich auf die andere Seite legt, um weiter zu schlafen*).

Wo bin ich? Wach ich?
Ist es ein Traum?
Hier lieg' ich unterm
Tannenbaum.
Hoch in den Zweigen
lispelt es leise,
Vöglein singen so süsse
Weise.
Wohl früh schon
waren sie
aufgewacht
und haben ihr
Morgenlied
dargebracht.
Guten Morgen, liebe
Vöglein, guten
Morgen!
(*Sie erblickt Hänsel.*)
Sieh da, der faule

Siebenschläfer!
Wart nur, Dich weck' ich!
(*Sie bückt sich zu ihm nieder und singt ihm ins Ohr.*)
Tirelireli,
's ist nicht mehr früh!
Die Lerche hat's gesungen
und hoch sich aufgeschwungen.
(*Aufspringend.*)
Tirelireli!

HÄNSEL (*der während des Liedes erwacht ist, reibt sich die Augen, gähnt, dehnt sich und stimmt, gleichfalls aufspringend, munter in Gretels Weise ein*).

Kikeriki!
's ist noch früh!
Ja, hab's wohl vernommen,
der Morgen ist gekommen,
Kikeriki!
Mir ist so wohl, ich weiss nicht wie;
so gut wie heute schlief ich nie.

GRETEL.

Doch höre nur! Hier
unter dem Baum,
da hatt' ich einen
wunderschönen
Traum.

HÄNSEL.

Richtig! Auch mir
träumte so was!

GRETEL.

Mir träumt' ich hört'
ein Rauschen und
Klingen,
wie Chöre der Engel
ein himmlisches
Singen;
lichte Wölkchen im
rosigen Schein
wallten und wogten
ins Dunkel herein.
Siehe, hell ward's mit
einem Male,
lichtdurchflossen vom
Himmelsstrahle;
eine goldene Leiter sah
ich sich neigen,
Englein zu mir
herniedersteigen,
Engel mit goldenen
Flügelein—

HÄNSEL (*der ihrer Erzählung mit Zeichen lebhafter Zustimmung*

gefolgt ist).

Vierzehn müssen's
gewesen sein!

GRETEL (*erstaunt*).

Hast Du denn alles das
auch gesehn?

HÄNSEL.

Freilich! 's war halt
wunderschön—
Und dort hinaus sah
ich sie gehn!

(*Er wendet sich nach dem Hintergrunde. In diesem Augenblick zerreisst der letzte Nebelschleier. An Stelle des Tannengehölzes erscheint glitzernd im Strahl der aufgehenden Sonne das „Knusperhäuschen“ am Ilsenstein. Links davon in einiger Entfernung befindet sich ein Backofen, diesem rechts gegenüber ein grosser Käfig, beide mit dem Knusperhäuschen*

durch einen Zaun von Kuchenmännern verbunden.)

ACT III.

THE WITCH'S HOUSE.

Scene I.

(*The curtain rises. Scene the same as the end of Act II. The background is still hidden in mist, which gradually rises during the following. The angels have vanished. Morning is breaking. The Dawn Fairy steps forward and shakes dewdrops from a bluebell over the sleeping children.*)

DEWMAN (*Dawn Fairy*).

I'm up with early dawning,
and know who loves the morning,
who'll rise fresh as a daisy,
who'll sink in slumber

lazy!
Ding! dong! ding! dong!
And with the golden
light of day
I chase the fading night
away,
fresh dew around me
shaking,
and hill and dale
awaking.
Then up, with all your
powers
enjoy the morning hours,
the scent of trees and
flowers—
then up, ye sleepers,
awaken!
The rosy dawn is
smiling,
then up, ye sleepers,
awake, awake!

(*Hurries off singing. The children begin to stir. Gretel rubs her eyes, looks around her, and raises herself a little, whilst Hänsel turns over on the other side to go to sleep again.*)

GRETEL.

Where am I? Waking? Or
do I dream?
How come I in the wood
to lie?

High in the branches I
hear a gentle
twittering,
birds are beginning to
sing so sweetly;
from early dawn they are
all awake,
and warble their
morning hymn of
praise.
Dear little singers, little
singers,
good morning!
(*Turns to Hänsel.*)
See there, the sleepy
lazybones?
Wait now, I'll wake him!
Tirelireli, it's getting
late!
Tirelireli, it's getting
late!
The lark his flight is
winging,
on high his matin
singing,
Tirelireli! tirelireli!

HÄNSEL (*suddenly jumps up with a start*).

Kikeriki! it's early yet!
Kikeriki! it's early yet!
Yes, the day is dawning;
awake, for it is morning!
Kikeriki! kikeriki!
I feel so well, I know not
why!

I never slept so well, no,
not I!

GRETEL.

But listen, Hans; here
'neath the tree
a wondrous dream was
sent to me!

HÄNSEL (*meditatively*).

Really! I, too, had a
dream!

GRETEL.

I fancied I heard a
murmuring and
rushing,
as though the angels in
Heav'n were singing;
rosy clouds above me
were floating—
hovering and floating in
the distance away,
Sudden—all around a
light was streaming,
rays of glory from
Heaven beaming,
and a golden ladder saw
I descending,
angels adown it gliding,
such lovely angels with
shining golden wings.

HÄNSEL (*interrupting*

her quickly).

Fourteen angels there
must have been!

GRETEL (*astonished*).

And did you also behold
all this?

HÄNSEL.

Truly, 'twas wondrous
fair!
And upward I saw them
float.

(*He turns towards the background; at this moment the last remains of the mist clear away. In place of the fir-trees is seen the "Witch's house at the Ilsenstein," shining in the rays of the rising sun. A little distance off, to the left, is an oven; opposite this, on the right, a large cage, both joined to the Witch's house by a fence of gingerbread figures.*)

Zweite Scene.

GRETEL (*hält Hänsel*

betroffen zurück).

Bleib stehn! Bleib
stehn!

HÄNSEL (*eine Weile
sprachlos vor
Staunen*).

Himmel, welch
Wunder ist hier
geschehn!
Nein, so was hab ich
mein Tag nicht
gesehn!

GRETEL (*gewinnt
allmählich die
Fassung wieder*).

Wie duftet's von
dorten,
O schau nur die
Pracht!
Von Kuchen und
Torten
Ein Häuslein
gemacht!
Mit Fladen, mit Torten
ist's hoch
überdacht!
Die Fenster wahrhaftig
wie Zucker so
blank,
Rosinen gar saftig
den Giebel
entlang!

Und—
traun!
Rings zu
schaun
gar ein Lebkuchen-
Zaun!

BEIDE.

O herrliches
Schlösschen,
so schmuck du
und fein,
welch Waldes-
Prinzesschen
mag drinnen
wohl sein?
Ach möchte zu Hause
die
Waldprinzess
sein!
Bei leckerem
Schmause
mit Kuchen und
Wein
sie lüde zur Klause
uns beide wohl
ein!

HÄNSEL (*nach einer Pause*).

Alles bleibt still. Nichts
regt sich da drinnen.
Komm lass uns
hineingehn!

GRETEL (*erschrocken ihn zurückhaltend*).

Bist du bei Sinnen?
Junge, wie magst du
so dreist nur sein?
Wer weiss, wer da drin
wohl im Häuschen
fein?

HÄNSEL.

O sieh nur, wie das
Häuschen uns lacht!
(*Begeistert.*)
Die Englein haben's
uns hergebracht!

GRETEL (*sinnend*).

Die Englein?—Ei, so
wird es wohl sein!

HÄNSEL.

Ja, Gretel, sie laden
freundlich uns ein!
Komm, wir knuspern
ein wenig vom
Häuschen!

BEIDE.

Ja, knuspern wir, wie
zwei Nagemäuschen!

(*Sie hüpfen Hand in Hand nach dem*

Hintergrunde, bleiben wiederum stehen und schleichen dann vorsichtig auf den Fussspitzen bis an das Häuschen heran. Nach einigem Zögern bricht Hänsel an der rechten Kante ein Stückchen Kuchen heraus.)

Scene II.

GRETEL (*holds Hänsel back in astonishment*).

Stand still, be still!

HÄNSEL (*surprised*).

O Heaven, what
wondrous place is this,
as ne'er in all my life
have I seen!

GRETEL (*gradually regains her self-possession*).

What odor
delicious!
O say, do I
dream?

BOTH.

A cottage all
made
of chocolate
cream.
The roof is all
covered
with Turkish
delight
the windows with
lustre
of sugar are
white;
and on all the
gables
the raisins invite,
and think! all
around
is a gingerbread
hedge!
O magic castle,
how nice you'd be
to eat!
Where hides the
princess
who has so great
a treat?
Ah, could she but
visit
our little cottage
bare,
she'd ask us to
dinner,
her dainties to
share!

HÄNSEL (*after a while*).

No sound do I hear; no,
nothing is stirring!
Come, let's go inside it!

GRETEL (*pulling him back horrified*).

Are you senseless?
Hänsel, however can you
make so bold?
Who knows who may
live there,
in that lovely house?

HÄNSEL.

O look, do look how the
house seems to smile!
(*Enthusiastically.*)
Ah, the angels did our
footsteps beguile!

GRETEL (*reflectively*).

The angels? Yes, it must
be so!

HÄNSEL.

Yes, Gretel, the angels
are beck'ning us in!
Come, let's nibble a bit
of the cottage.

BOTH.

Come, let's nibble it,
like two mice

persevering!

(*They hop along, hand in hand, towards the back of the stage; then stand still, and then steal along cautiously on tiptoe to the house. After some hesitation Hänsel breaks off a bit of cake from the right-hand corner.*)

Dritte Scene.

STIMME AUS DEM HÄUSCHEN.

Knusper, knusper
Knäuschen,
wer knuspert mir am
Häuschen?

HÄNSEL (*lässt erschrocken das Stück zu Boden fallen*).

GRETEL (*zaghaft*).

Der Wind!

HÄNSEL (*ebenso*).

Der Wind!

BEIDE.

Das himmlische Kind.

GRETEL (*hebt das Stück wieder auf und versucht es*).

Hm!

HÄNSEL (*Gretel begehrlich anschauend*).

Wie schmeckt das?

GRETEL (*ihn beissen lassend*).

Da hast du auch was!

HÄNSEL (*legt entzückt die Hand auf die Brust*).

Hei!

GRETEL (*ebenso*).

Hei!

BEIDE.

O köstlicher
Kuchen,
Wie schmeckst
du nach
mehr!
Mir ist ja, als
wenn ich

im Himmel
schon wär!

HÄNSEL.

Hei, wie das schmeckt!
's ist gar zu lecker!

GRETEL.

Vielleicht gar wohnt
hier ein
Zuckerbäcker!

HÄNSEL (*ruft*).

He, Zuckerbäcker,
nimm dich in acht,
Ein Loch wird dir jetzt
vom Mäuslein
gemacht!

(*Bricht ein grosses Stück aus der Wand heraus.*)

STIMME AUS DEM HÄUSCHEN.

Knusper, knusper
Knäuschen,
wer knuspert mir am
Häuschen?

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL.

Der Wind, der Wind,

das himmlische Kind!

(*Der obere Teil der Hausthüre öffnet sich leise, und der Kopf der Knusperhexe wird sichtbar. Die Kinder bemerken sie nicht und schmausen lustig weiter.*)

GRETEL.

Wart, du näschiges
Mäuschen,
gleich kommt die Katz'
aus dem Häuschen!

HÄNSEL.

Knuspre nur zu
und lass mich in Ruh!

GRETEL (*entreisst ihm ein Stück Kuchen*).

Nicht so geschwind,
Herr Wind, Herr Wind!

HÄNSEL (*nimmt es ihr wieder ab*).

Himmlisches Kind,
ich nehm, was ich
find!

(*Sie lachen beide hell auf. Während des*

letzten Gespräches ist die Thüre des Häuschens aufgegangen, und die Hexe tritt, von den Kindern nicht bemerkt, daraus hervor, behutsam auf diese zuschleichend. Rasch wirft sie dem ahnungslosen Hänsel einen Strick um den Hals, eben in dem Augenblick, als die Kinder lachen.)

HEXE (*kichernd*).

Hihi, hihi, hihihi!

(*Die Kinder blicken sich erschrocken um.*)

HÄNSEL (*entsetzt*).

Lass los!—Wer bist du?

HEXE (*Gretel übers Gesicht streichelnd*).

Engelchen!
Und du, mein Zuckerbengelchen!
Ihr kommt mich besuchen?—Das ist nett!
Liebe Kinder!—So

rund und fett!

HÄNSEL.

Wer bist du, Garstige?
—Lass mich los!

HEXE.

Na, Herzchen, zier
dich nicht erst gross!
Wisst denn, dass euch
vor mir nicht graul:
Ich bin *Rosina*
Leckermaul,
höchst
menschenfreundlich
stets gesinnt,
unschuldig wie ein
kleines Kind.
Drum hab ich die
kleinen Kinder so
lieb,
So lieb—ach zum
Aufessen lieb!

(*Sie streichelt die Kinder wieder.*)

HÄNSEL (*barsch abwehrend*).

Geh!—bleib mir doch
aus dem Gesicht!
Hörst du? Ich mag
dich nicht!

HEXE.

Hihihi!
Was seid ihr für
leckere
Teufelsbrätchen,
besonders du, mein
herzig Mädchen!

(*Lockend.*)

Kommt, kleine
Mäuslein,
kommt in mein
Häuslein!
Sollt es gut bei mir
haben,
Will drinnen köstlich
euch laben.
Schokolade, Torten,
Marzipan,
Kuchen, gefüllt mit
süsser Sahn',
Johannisbrot und
Jungfernleder
und Reisbrei—auf dem
Ofen steht er—
Rosinen, Mandeln und
Feigen,
's ist alles im Häuschen
eur eigen!

HÄNSEL.

Ich geh nicht mit dir,
garstige Frau!—
Du bist gar zu
freundlich.

HEXE.

Schau, schau, wie
schlau,
Ihr Kinder, ich mein's
doch so gut mit
euch,
seid ja bei mir wie im
Himmelreich!
Kommt, kleine
Mäuslein!
kommt in mein
Häuslein!
Sollt es gut bei
mir haben,
will drinnen
köstlich euch
laben!

(*Sie will Hänsel fortziehen.*)

GRETEL.

Was willst du meinem
Bruder thun?

HEXE.

Gutes, mein Kind, sehr
Gutes! I nun,
mit allerhand
vortrefflichen
Sachen
will ich ihn zart und
wohlschmeckend
machen

und ist er dann recht
zahm und brav,
geduldig und fügsam
wie ein Schaf,
dann—höre, Hänsel,
ich sag dir's ins Ohr:
dir steht eine grosse
Freude bevor!

HÄNSEL.

So sag's doch laut und
nicht ins Ohr!
Welche Freude steht
mir bevor?

HEXE.

Ach, liebe Püppchen,
Hören und Sehn
wird euch bei diesem
Vergnügen vergehn!

HÄNSEL.

Ei, meine Augen und
Ohren sind gut,
haben wohl acht, was
Schaden mir thut.
Gretel, trau nicht dem
gleissenden Wort.

(*Leise.*)

Schwesterchen, komm,
wir laufen fort!

(*Er hat sich*

allmählich von der Schlinge befreit und will mit Gretel fortlaufen; sie werden aber von der Hexe zurückgehalten, die gebieterisch ihren Stab gegen die beiden erhebt.)

HEXE.

Halt!

(*Macht mit dem Stabe die Gebärde des Hexenbannes. Die Bühne verfinstert sich.*)

Hocus pocus,
Hexenschuss!
Rühr dich, und dich
beisst der Fluss!
Nicht mehr vorwärts,
nicht zurück,
bann dich mit dem
bösen Blick;
Kopf steh starr dir im
Genick!

(*Neue Gebärde; die Spitze des Stabes fängt an zu leuchten.*)

Hocus pocus, nun
kommt Jocus!

Kinder, schaut den
Zauberknopf!
Äuglein, stehet still im
Kopf!—
Nun zum Stall hinein,
du Tropf!
Hocus pocus, bonus
jocus,
Malus locus, hocus
pocus!

(*Leitet den starr auf den Knopf blickenden Hänsel zum Stalle und schliesst hinter ihm die Gitterthüre, während Gretel regungslos dasteht. Die Bühne erhellt sich wieder.*)

HEXE (*vergnügt zu Gretel*).

Nun, Gretelchen, sei
vernünftig und nett!
Der Hänsel wird nun
balde fett.
Wir wollen ihn, so ist's
am besten,
mit Mandeln und
Rosinen mästen.
Ich geh ins Haus und
hol sie schnell—
Du rühre dich nicht
von der Stell!

(*Hinkt ins Haus.*)

GRETEL (*starr und unbeweglich*).

Hu—Wie mir vor der
Hexe graut!

HÄNSEL.

Gretel! Pst! sprich
nicht so laut!
Sei hübsch gescheit
und gieb fein acht
auf jedes, was die
Hexe macht.
Zum Schein thu alles,
was sie will—
da kommt sie schon
zurück—Pst! still!

HEXE (*dem Hänsel aus einem Korbe Mandeln und Rosinen hinstreuend*).

Nun,
Jüngelchen,
ergötze dein
Züngelchen!
Friss, Vogel,
oder stirb—
Kuchen-Heil dir
erwirb!

(*Wendet sich zu Gretel und entzaubert*

sie mit einem Wachholderbusch.)

Hocus pocus,
Holderbusch!
Schwinde,
Gliederstarre, husch!
Nun wieder kregel,
süsses Kleinchen,
rühr mir geschwind
die runden
Beinchen!
Geh, Zuckerpüppchen,
flink und frisch
und decke drinnen
hübsch den Tisch!
Schüsselchen,
Tellerchen,
Messerchen,
Gäbelchen,
Serviettchen für mein
Schnäbelchen;
und mach nur alles
recht hurtig und
fein,
sonst sperr ich auch
dich in den Stall
hinein!

(*Sie droht kichernd; Gretel geht ins Haus.*)

HEXE (*zu dem sich schlafend stellenden Hänsel*).

Der Lümmel schläft ja

nun—sieh mal an,
wie doch die Jugend
schlafen kann!
Na, schlaf nur brav, du
gutes Schaf,
bald schläfst du deinen
ewigen Schlaf.
Doch erst muss mir die
Gretel dran;
mit dir, mein
Liebchen, fang ich
an,
bist so niedlich, zart
und rund,
wie gemacht für
Hexen-Mund!

(*Sie öffnet die Backofenthür und riecht hinein.*)

Der Teig ist gar, wir
können voran
machen.
Hei, wie im Ofen die
Scheite krachen!

(*Schiebt noch ein paar Holzscheite unter und reibt sich dann schmunzelnd die Hände.*)

Ja, Gretelchen,
wirst bald ein
Brätelchen!
Schau, schau,

wie ich schlau bin, so
  schlau!
Sollst gleich im
  Backofen hucken
und nach dem
  Lebkuchen gucken.
Und bist du dann drin
  —schwaps,
geht die Thür—klaps!
Dann ist fein
  Gretelchen
    mein
      Brätelchen!
Das Brätelchen soll
  sich verwandeln
in Kuchen mit Zucker
  und Mandeln!
    Im Zauberofen
      mein
wirst du ein
  Lebkuchen fein!

(*In wilder Freude ergreift sie einen Besenstiel und reitet ausgelassen auf ihm ums Haus. Gretel steht lauschend am kleinen Fenster.*)

    Hurr, hopp,
      hopp, hopp!
    Galopp, Galopp!
    mein Besengaul,
    hurr, hopp, nit
      faul!

Sowie ich's mag
am lichten Tag
spring kreuz
und quer
um Häuschen
her!

Bei dunkler
Nacht,
wann niemand
wacht,
zum
Hexenschmaus
am Schornstein
raus!

Aus fünf und
sechs,
so sagt die Hex,
mach sieb und
acht,
so ist's
vollbracht;
und neun ist
eins,
und zehn ist
keins,
und viel ist
nichts,
die Hexe
spricht's.

So reitet sie
bis morgens
früh—
Prr! Besen! hüh!

(*Vom Besen steigend hinkt die Hexe zu Hänsel und kitzelt ihn mit einem Besenreis wach.*)

Auf, auf, mein
Jüngelchen!
Zeig mir dein
Züngelchen!

(*Hänsel streckt die Zunge heraus.*)

(*Schnalzend.*)

Schlicker,
schlecker,
lecker, lecker!
Kleines leckres
Schlingerchen,
Zeige mir dein
Fingerchen!
(*Hänsel streckt ein Stöckchen heraus.*)
Jemine, je!
Wie ein Stöckchen, o
weh!
Bübchen, deine
Fingerchen
sind elende
Dingerchen!

(*Ruft.*)

Mädel! Gretel!

(*Gretel zeigt sich an der Thür.*)

Bring Rosinen und
Mandeln her;
Hänsel meint, es
schmeckt nach
"mehr!"

(*Gretel bringt in einem Korbe Rosinen und Mandeln; sie stellt sich, während die Hexe sie dem Hänsel reicht, hinter sie und macht gegen Hänsel die Entzauberungsgebärde mit dem Wachholderbusch.*)

GRETEL (*leise*).

Hocus pocus,
Holderbusch!
Schwinde,
Gliederstarre—
husch!

HEXE (*sich rasch umwendend*).

Was sagtest du, mein
Gänselchen!

GRETEL.

Meint' nur: wohl

bekomm's, mein
Hänselchen!

HEXE.

Hihihi! Mein gutes
Tröpfchen,
da—steck dir was ins
Kröpfchen!
Friss, Vogel,
und stirb—
Kuchen-Heil dir
erwirb!

(*Sie öffnet die Backofenthür; Hänsel giebt Gretel lebhafte Zeichen.*)

HÄNSEL (*leise die Stallthür öffnend*).

Schwesterlein,
hüt dich fein!

HEXE (*Gretel gierig betrachtend*).

Wie wässert mir das
Mündchen
nach diesem süssen
Kindchen!
Komm,
Gretelchen!
Zuckermädelchen!
Sollst in den Backofen
hucken

und nach den
Lebkuchen gucken,
sorgfältig
schaun—ja,
ob sie schon
braun da,
oder ob's zu
früh—
's ist kleine
Müh!

HÄNSEL (*aus dem Stall schleichend*).

Schwesterlein,
hüt dich fein!

GRETEL (*sich ungeschickt stellend*).

Ei, wie fang ich's an,
dass ich komme dran?

HEXE.

Musst dich nur eben
ein bisschen heben,
Kopf vorgebeugt—
's ist kinderleicht!

HÄNSEL (*immer näher den beiden*).

Schwesterlein,
hüt dich fein!

GRETEL (*schüchtern*).

Bin gar so dumm,
nimm mir's nicht
krumm;
drum zeige mir eben,
wie soll ich mich
heben?

HEXE (*macht eine ungeduldige Bewegung*).

Kopf vorgebeugt!
's ist kinderleicht!

(*Indem sie sich vorbeugt und mit halbem Leibe hineinkriecht, geben ihr Hänsel und Gretel von hinten einen derben Stoss, sodass sie vollends hineinfliegt, und schlagen dann rasch die Thür zu.*)

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL.

Und bist du dann drin
—schwaps!
Geht die Thür—klaps!
Du bist dann statt
Gretelchen
ein Brätelchen!

(*Hänsel und Gretel*

fallen sich jubelnd in die Arme, fassen sich bei der Hand und tanzen.)

Juchhei! Nun ist die
Hexe tot,
mausetot!
Nun ist geschwunden
Angst und Not!

Juchhei! Nun ist die
Hexe still,
mäuschenstill,
Und Kuchen giebt's die
Hüll und Füll!

Juchhei! Nun ist zu
End der Graus,
Hexengraus!
Und böser Zauberspuk
ist aus!

Drum lasst uns
fröhlich sein,
tanzen im
Feuerschein,
halten im
Knusperhaus
herrlichsten
Freudenschmaus!
Juchhei,
juchhei!

(*Sie umfassen sich und walzen zum Knusperhaus, wo sie*

alle Herrlichkeiten in Besitz nehmen. Im Hexenofen knistert es gewaltig und die Flamme schlägt hoch empor; dann erfolgt ein starker Krach, und der Ofen stürzt zusammen. Hänsel und Gretel eilen herbei, und stehen erstaunt da. Ihre Verwunderung steigt aufs höchste, als sie die Kinder gewahr werden, deren Kuchenhülle inzwischen abgefallen ist.)

Scene III.

A VOICE FROM THE HOUSE.

Nibble, nibble,
mousekin,
who's nibbling at my
housekin?
who's nibbling at my
housekin?

(*Hänsel starts, and in his fright lets the piece of cake fall.*)

HÄNSEL.

O, did you hear?

GRETEL (*somewhat timidly*).

The wind—

HÄNSEL.

The wind!

BOTH.

The heavenly wind!

GRETEL (*picks up the piece of cake and tastes it*).

H'm!

HÄNSEL (*looking longingly at Gretel*).

D'you like it?

GRETEL (*lets Hänsel bite it*).

Just taste and try it!

HÄNSEL (*lays his hand on his breast in rapture*).

Hi!

GRETEL (*ditto*).

Hi!

BOTH.

Hi, hi! O cake
most delicious,
some more I must
take!
It's really like
Heaven
to eat such plum-
cake!

HÄNSEL.

O how good, how sweet,
how tasty!

GRETEL.

How tasty, how sweet!
It's p'r'aps the house of a
sweety-maker!

HÄNSEL.

Hi, sweety-maker! Have
a care!
A little mouse your
sweeties would share!

(*He breaks a big piece of cake off the wall.*)

A VOICE FROM THE HOUSE.

Nibble, nibble,

mousekin,
who's nibbling at my
housekin?

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL.

The wind, the wind,
the heavenly wind!

(*The upper part of the house-door opens gently, and the Witch's head is seen at it. The children at first do not see her, and go on feasting merrily.*)

GRETEL.

Wait, you gobbling
mousekin,
here comes the cat from
the housekin!

HÄNSEL (*taking another bite*).

Eat what you please,
and leave me in peace!

GRETEL (*snatches the piece from his hand*).

Don't be unkind,
Sir wind, Sir wind!

HÄNSEL (*takes it back from her*).

Heavenly wind,
I take what I find!

BOTH (*laughing*).

Ha, ha, ha!

THE WITCH (*who had meanwhile opened the whole door, and had been warily stealing up to the children, throws a rope round the neck of Hänsel, who, without any misgivings, turns his back to her*).

Hi, hi! hi, hi!

HÄNSEL (*horror-struck*).

Let go! Who are you?
Let me go!

THE WITCH (*drawing the children towards her*).

Angels both!
(And goosey-ganders!)
(*Caresses the children.*)
You've come to visit me,
that is sweet!
You charming children,
so nice to eat!

HÄNSEL (*makes*

despairing efforts to free himself).

Who are you, ugly one?
Let me go!

THE WITCH.

Now, darling, don't you
give yourself airs!
Dear heart, what makes
you say such things?
I am Rosina Dainty-
mouth,
and dearly love my
fellow-men.
I'm artless as a new born
child!
That's why the children
to me are so dear,
so dear, so dear, ah, so
che-arming to eat!
(*Caresses Hänsel.*)

HÄNSEL (*turning roughly away*).

Go, get you gone from
my sight!
I hate, I loathe you
quite!

THE WITCH.

Hi hi! hi hi!
These dainty morsels I'm
really gloating on,

and you, my little
maiden, I'm doting on!
Come, little mousey,
come into my housey!
Come with me, my
precious,
I'll give you sweetmeats
delicious!
Of chocolate, tarts, and
marzipan
you shall both eat all
you can,
and wedding-cake and
strawberry ices,
blancmange, and
everything else that
nice is,
and raisins and almonds,
and peaches and citrons
are waiting—
you'll both find it quite
captivating,
yes, quite captivating!

HÄNSEL.

I won't come with you,
hideous fright!
You are quite too
friendly!

THE WITCH.

See, see, see how sly!
Dear children, you really
may trust me in this,
and living with me will

be perfect bliss!
Come, little mousey,
come into my housey!
Come with me, my
precious,
I'll give you sweetmeats
delicious!

GRETEL.

But say, what will you
with my brother do?

THE WITCH.

Well, well!
I'll feed and fatten him
up well,
with every sort of dainty
delicious,
to make him tender and
tasty.
And if he's brave and
patient too,
and docile and obedient
like a lamb,
then, Hänsel, I'll whisper
it you,
I have a great treat in
store for you!

HÄNSEL.

Then speak out loud and
whisper not.
What is the great treat in
store for me?

THE WITCH.

Yes, my dear children,
hearing and sight
in this great pleasure
will disappear quite!

HÄNSEL.

Eh? both my hearing and
seeing are good!
You'd better take care
you do me no harm!

(*Resolutely.*)

Gretel, trust not her
flattering words,
come, sister, come, let's
run away!

(*He has in the meantime got out of the rope, and runs with Gretel to the foreground. Here they are stopped by the Witch, who imperiously raises against them both a stick which hangs at her girdle, with repeated gestures of spellbinding.*)

THE WITCH.

Hold!

(*The stage becomes gradually darker.*)

Hocus pocus, witches'
charm!
Move not, as you fear
my arm!
Back or forward do not
try,
fixed you are by the evil
eye!
Head on shoulders fixed
awry!
Hocus, pocus, now
comes jocus,
children, watch the
magic head,
eyes are staring, dull as
lead!
Now, you atom, off to
bed!

(*Fresh gestures; then she leads Hänsel, who is gazing fixedly at the illuminated head, into the stable, and shuts the lattice door upon him.*)

Hocus pocus, bonus
jocus,
malus locus, hocus
pocus,
bonus jocus, malus
locus!

(*The stage gradually becomes lighter, whilst the light of the magic head diminishes. The*

Witch, contentedly to Gretel, who still stands there motionless.)

Now Gretel, be obedient
and wise,
while Hänsel's growing
fat and nice.
We'll feed him up, you'll
see my reason,
and with sweet almonds
and raisins season.
I'll go indoors, the things
to prepare,
and you remain here
where you are!

(*She grins as she holds up her finger warningly, and goes into the house.*)

GRETEL (*stiff and motionless*).

O, what a horrid witch
she is!

HÄNSEL (*whispering hastily*).

Gretel, sh! don't speak so
loud!
Be very sharp, watch
well and see
whatever she may do to
me!

Pretend to do all she
commands—
O, there she's coming
back, sh! hush!

(*The Witch comes out, satisfies herself that Gretel is still standing motionless, and then spreads before Hänsel almonds and raisins from a basket.*)

THE WITCH.

Now, little man,
come prithee enjoy
yourself!

(*Sticking a raisin into Hänsel's mouth.*)

Eat, minion, eat or die!
Here are cakes, O so
nice!
(*Turns to Gretel and disenchants her with a juniper-branch.*)
Hocus pocus, elder-bush!
Rigid body loosen, hush!
(*Gretel moves again.*)
Now up and move again,
bright and blithesome,
limbs are become again
supple and lithesome.
Go, my poppet, go my
pet,

you the table now shall
set,
little knife, little fork,
little dish, little plate,
little serviette for my
little mate!
Now get everything
ready and nice,
or else I shall lock you
up too in a trice!

(*She threatens and titters. Gretel hurries off. The Witch, to Hänsel, who pretends to be asleep.*)

The fool is slumb'ring, it
does seem queer
how youth can sleep and
have no fear!
Well, sleep away, you
simple sheep,
soon you will sleep your
last long sleep!
But first with Gretel I'll
begin—
off you, dear maiden, I
will dine;
you are so tender,
plump, and good,
just the thing for
witches' food!

(*She opens the oven door and sniffs in it, her face lighted up by the*

deep red glare of the fire.)

The dough has risen, so
we'll go on preparing.
Hark, how the sticks in
the fire are crackling!

(*She pushes a couple more faggots under, the fire flames up and then dies down again. The Witch rubbing her hands with glee.*)

Yes, Gretel mine,
how well off you I'll
dine!
See, see, O how sly!
When in the oven she's
peeping,
quickly behind her I'm
creeping!
One little push, bang
goes the door, clang!
Then soon will Gretel be
just done to a T!
and when from the oven
I take her
she'll look like a cake
from the baker,
by magic fire red
changed into
gingerbread!
See, see how sly!
Hi hi! hi hi!

(*In her wild delight she seizes a broomstick and begins to ride upon it.*)

So hop, hop, hop,
gallop, lop, lop!
My broomstick
nag,
come do not lag!

(*She rides excitedly round on the broomstick.*)

At dawn of day
I ride away,
am here and there
and everywhere!

(*She rides again; Gretel meanwhile is watching at the window.*)

At midnight hour, when
none can know,
to join the witches'
dance I go!
And three and
four
are witches' lore,
and five and six
are witches' tricks,
and nine is one,
and ten is none,
and seven is nil,
or what she will!
And thus they ride till

dawn of day!

(*Hopping madly along, she rides to the back of the stage and vanishes for a time behind the cottage. Here the Witch becomes visible again; she comes to the foreground, where she suddenly pulls up and dismounts.*)

Prr, broomstick, hi!

(*She hobbles back to the stable and tickles Hänsel with a birch twig till he awakes.*)

Up, awake, my mankin young;
come show to me your tongue!

(*Hänsel puts his tongue out. The Witch smacks with her tongue.*)

Dainty morsel! dainty morsel!
Little toothsome mankin come,
now let me see your thumb!

(*Hänsel pokes out a*

small bone.)

Gemini! Oho!
O how scraggy, how
lean!
Urchin, you're a scraggy
one,
as bad as a skeleton!

(*Calls.*)

Maiden, Gretel!

(*Gretel appears at the door.*)

Bring some raisins and
almonds sweet,
Hänsel wants some more
to eat.

(*Gretel runs into the house, and returns immediately with a basket full of almonds and raisins.*)

GRETEL.

Here are the almonds.

(*Whilst the Witch is feeding Hänsel, Gretel gets behind her and makes the gestures of disenchantment with the juniper-branch.*)

GRETEL (*softly*).

Hocus pocus, elder-bush,
Rigid body loosen, hush!

THE WITCH (*turning suddenly round*).

What were you saying,
little goose?

GRETEL (*confusedly*).

Only—much good may it
do to Hans!

THE WITCH.

Eh?

GRETEL (*louder*).

Much good may it do to
Hans!

THE WITCH.

He he he, my little miss,
I'll stop your mouth with
this!

(*Sticks a raisin into Gretel's mouth.*)

Eat, minion, eat or die!
Here are cakes, O so
nice!

(*She opens the oven*

door; the heat has apparently diminished. Meanwhile Hänsel makes violent signs to Gretel.)

HÄNSEL (*softly opening the stable door*).

Sister dear,
O beware!

THE WITCH (*looking greedily at Gretel*).

She makes my mouth
water,
this pretty little
daughter!
Come, Gretel
mine,
sugar-maiden
mine!

(*Gretel comes towards her.*)

Peep in the oven, be
steady,
see if the gingerbread's
ready!
Carefully look,
pet,
whether it's
cooked yet,
but if it wants
more,

shut quick the
door!

(*Gretel hesitates.*)

HÄNSEL (*slipping out of the stable)*.

Sister dear,
have a care!

GRETEL (*making herself out very awkward*).

I don't understand what I
have to do!

THE WITCH.

Just stand on tip-toe,
head bending forward;
try it, I pray,
it's merely play!

HÄNSEL (*pulling Gretel back by her frock*).

Sister dear,
now take care!

GRETEL (*shyly*).

I'm such a goose, don't
understand!
You'll have to show me
how to stand on tip-toe!

THE WITCH (*makes a*

movement of impatience).

Do as I say,
it's merely play!

(*She begins creeping up to the oven, muttering all the time, and just as she is bending over it, Hänsel and Gretel give her a good push, which sends her toppling over into it, upon which they quickly shut the door.*)

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL
(*mocking her*).

Then "One little push,
bang
goes the door, clang!"
You, not Gretel, then
will be
just done to a T!

(*Hänsel and Gretel fall into one another's arms.*)

BOTH.

Hurrah! now sing the
witch is dead,
really dead!
No more to dread!

Hurrah! now sing the

witch is still,
deathly still!
We can eat our fill!

Now all the spell is o'er,
really o'er!
We fear no more!

(*They seize each other's hands.*)

Yes, let us happy
be,
dancing so
merrily;
now the old witch
is gone,
we'll have no end
of fun!
Hey! hurrah,
hurrah!
Hip hurrah! Hip
hurrah!
Hurrah!

(*They take each other round the waist and waltz together, first in the front of the stage, and then gradually in the direction of the Witch's house. When they get there Hänsel breaks loose from Gretel and rushes into the house, shutting the door after him. Then from*

the upper window he throws down apples, pears, oranges, gilded nuts, and all kinds of sweetmeats into Gretel's outstretched apron. Meanwhile the oven begins crackling loudly, and the flames burn high. Then there is a loud crash, and the oven falls thundering into bits. Hänsel and Gretel, who in their terror let their sweetmeats all fall down, hurry towards the oven startled, and stand there motionless. Their astonishment increases when they become aware of a troop of children around them, whose disguise of cakes has fallen from them.)

HÄNSEL AND GRETEL
(*spoken*).

There, see those little
children dear,
I wonder how they all
came here!

Vierte Scene.

GRETEL (*nach einer Weile*).

Da, sieh nur die
artigen Kinderlein,
wo mögen die
hergekommen sein?

DIE KUCHENKINDER (*ganz leise*).

Erlöst—befreit
für alle Zeit!

GRETEL.

Geschlossen sind ihre
Äugelein;
sie schlafen und singen
doch so fein!

KUCHENKINDER (*leise*).

O rühre mich an,
dass ich erwachen
kann!

HÄNSEL (*verlegen*).

Rühr du sie doch an—
ich traue mir's nicht.

GRETEL.

Ja, streicheln will ich
dies hübsches
Gesicht!

(*Sie streichelt das nächste Kind; dieses öffnet die Augen und lächelt.*)

ANDRE KUCHENKINDER.

O rühre auch mich—
auch mich rühr' an,
dass ich die Äuglein
öffnen kann.

(*Gretel geht streichelnd zu den übrigen Kindern, die lächelnd die Augen öffnen, ohne sich zu rühren; endlich ergreift Hänsel den Wachholder.*)

HÄNSEL.

Hocus pocus,
Holderbusch!
Schwinde,
Gliederstarre—
husch!

DIE KUCHENKINDER
(*springen auf, schliessen sich zu einem Ringelreigen um Hänsel und Gretel und verbeugen sich zierlich*).

Habt Dank, habt
Dank
euer Leben
lang!
Juchhei!
Die Hexerei
ist nun vorbei;
nun singen und
springen wir froh
und frei!
Kommt,
Kinderlein,
zum
Ringelreihn,
reicht allzumal die
Händchen fein!
Drum singt und
springt,
drum tanzt und
singt,
dass laut der Jubelruf
durchdringt den
Wald,
und rings
erschallt
von Lust der
Wald.

HÄNSEL UND
GRETEL.

Die Englein haben's im
Traum gesagt
in stiller Nacht,
was nun so herrlich
uns der Tag
hat wahr

gemacht.
Ihr Englein, die uns so
treu bewacht
bei Tag und
Nacht,
habt Lob und Dank für
all die Pracht,
die uns hier
lacht.

DIE KUCHENKINDER.

Habt Dank, habt
Dank
euer Leben
lang!

Scene IV.

THE GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*motionless and with closed eyes, as the cake figures were before*).

We're saved, we're
freed
for evermore!

GRETEL.

Your eyes are shut—pray
who are you?
You're sleeping, and yet
you're singing too!

THE GINGERBREAD

CHILDREN (*always very softly*).

O touch us, we pray,
that we may all awake!

HÄNSEL (*to Gretel, embarrassed*).

O touch them for me,
I dare not try!

GRETEL.

Yes, let me stroke this
innocent face!

(*She caresses the nearest child, who opens its eyes and smiles.*)

OTHER GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*softly*).

O touch me too, O touch
me too,
that I also may awake!

(*Gretel goes and caresses all the rest of the children, who open their eyes and smile, without moving; meanwhile Hänsel seizes the juniper-branch.*)

HÄNSEL.

Hocus pocus, elder-bush!
Rigid body loosen, hush!

SOME OF THE CHILDREN (*jump up and hurry towards Hänsel and Gretel from all sides*).

We thank, we thank you both!

THE CHILDREN.

The spell is broke and we are free,
we'll sing and we'll dance and we'll shout for glee!
Come, children all, and form a ring,
join hands together while we sing.
Then sing and spring,
then dance and sing,
for cakes and all good things we bring.
Then sing and spring,
then dance and sing,
that through the wood
our song of praise may sound,
and echo repeat it all around!
We thank, we thank, we thank!

HÄNSEL.

The angels whispered in dreams to us in silent night
what this happy, happy day has brought tonight.

(*Four Gingerbread Children at a time surround Hänsel and Gretel, and bow gracefully to them.*)

GRETEL.

Ye angels, who have watched o'er our steps and led them right,
we thank for all our joy and wondrous delight.

THE GINGERBREAD CHILDREN (*who all press round Hänsel and Gretel to shake hands with them*).

We'll thank you both all our life!

FATHER (*behind the scene*).

Tralala, tralalala!
Were our children only here!

Tralala, tralalala!

(*The Father appears in the background with the Mother, and stops when he sees the children.*)

Ha! Why, they're really there!

Letzte Scene.

(*Aus dem Hintergrund ertönt die Stimme des Vaters.*)

VATER.

Rallalala,
rallalala,
wären doch
unsre Kinder
da!
Rallalala,
rallalala.—

(*Er erblickt Hänsel und Gretel.*)

Juch—! Ei, da sind sie ja!

HÄNSEL UND GRETEL (*den Eltern entgegen eilend*).

Vater! Mutter!

MUTTER.

Kinderchen!

VATER.

Da sind ja die armen Sünderchen!

(*Frohe Umarmung; unterdes haben zwei Knaben die Hexe als grossen Lebkuchen aus den Trümmern des Zauberofens gezogen. Der Vater stellt dieselbe vor sich hin.*)

VATER.

Kinder, schaut das
Wunder an,
wie solch Hexlein
hexen kann,
Wie sie hart,
knusperhart
selber nun zum
Kuchen ward!
Merkt des Himmels
Strafgericht:
böse Werke dauern
nicht!
Wenn die Not aufs
höchste steigt,
Gott der Herr die Hand
uns reicht!

ALLE.

Wenn die Not aufs
höchste steigt,
Gott der Herr die Hand
uns reicht!

(*Indem die Kinder*

einen lustigen Reigen um die Gruppe tanzen, fällt der Vorhang.)

ENDE.

Last Scene.

HÄNSEL (*running towards them*).

Father! mother!

GRETEL (*the same*).

Father! mother!

MOTHER.

Children dear!

FATHER.

O welcome,
poor children innocent!

(*Joyfully embracing. Meanwhile two of the boys have dragged the Witch, in the form of a big gingerbread cake, out of the ruins of the magic oven. At the sight of her they all burst into a shout of joy. The boys place the Witch in the middle of the stage.*)

FATHER.

Children, see the wonder
wrought,
how the Witch herself
was caught
unaware
in the snare
laid for you with
cunning rare!

ALL THE REST.

See, O see the wonder
wrought,
how the Witch herself
was caught
unaware
in the snare
laid for us with cunning
rare!

(*The two boys drag the Witch in the cottage.*)

FATHER.

Such is Heaven's
chastisement;
evil works will have an
end.
"When past bearing is
our grief,
Then 'tis Heaven will
send us sure relief!"

ALL.

"When past bearing is
our grief,
Then 'tis Heaven will
send relief!"

THE END.

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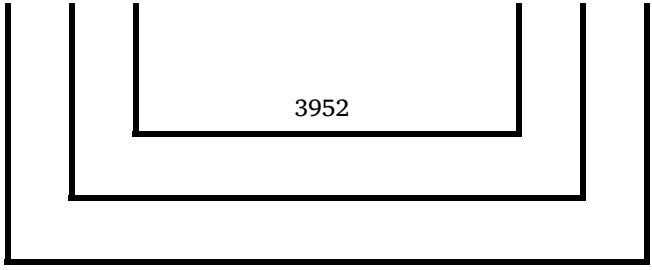
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Transcriber's notes:

The title on the cover image shows "Hansel und Gretel"; this has been changed to "Hänsel und Gretel" in the transcribed text.

A missing speaker's name in the German version following "Herrjemine, den möcht' ich ganz verschlecken!" has been added.

An additional header for "Dritte Scene" in the third act has been removed.

The following is a list of other changes made to the original. The first line is the original line, the second the corrected one.

In the background is the Ilsensein.
In the background is the Ilsenstein.

For weaks I've eaten nought but bread
For weeks I've eaten nought but bread

As through 'twere fair time, hopping and springing!
As though 'twere fair time, hopping and springing!

Gracious! there's goes the jug all to pieces!
Gracious! there goes the jug all to pieces!

he wears a little black cup upon his head.
he wears a little black cap upon his head.

A thick mist rises and competely hides the background.
A thick mist rises and completely hides the background.

Rühr dich, und dich deisst der Fluss!
Rühr dich, und dich beisst der Fluss!

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HÄNSEL AND GRETEL: A FAIRY OPERA IN THREE ACTS ***

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