

The House that Jack Built

Pictures from Photos by
The Bee Staff Artist



IN THE SCARF DRILL.



MR. AND MRS. JACK SPRATT.



THE FLOWERS.



THE BLACK BIRDS.



PETER P. PUMPKINEATER AND WIFE AND LITTLE BO-PEEP.



HUMPTY DUMPTIES.

DURING the last three weeks the air of seriousness and solemnity that pervades the city hall has frequently been broken by bursts of melody in sweet childish treble, singing, "Oh, this is the house that Jack built—that Jack built—that Jack built." "Old King Cole was a merry old soul," "Sing a song of sixpence," or "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold," accompanied by a clapping of hands or a shuffling of feet that has made the astonished hearers forget the perplexities of municipal affairs and taken them back through the years to a time when Old King Cole was indeed the jolliest old soul in the world; when the old woman who lived in the shoe was the only one who had a real problem to deal with, and when all of those quaint, delightful people who were her associates between the covers of that first and dearest of all books, were their companions, too, and served to entertain and please as nothing else ever could or ever has since.

Considering that nearly 200 children have had part in it, it would be almost superfluous to explain that the occasion for all of this is the rehearsal of "The House that Jack Built," Mrs. Jessie Gaynor's charming juvenile operetta, which is to be given by the school children on Friday and Saturday evenings and Saturday afternoon, May 1 and 2, at the Boyd theater, for the benefit of the Teachers' Annuity and Aid association. And it may be added right here that unless the parents and music lovers of Omaha are less appreciative than the patrons of other cities have been, these three performances will not suffice to satisfy, for extra performances have been the rule. Indeed, "The House that Jack Built" is all that has been said of it, and a great deal more, too, for who can adequately describe an excursion back to childhood to see the nursery rhymes illuminated by the bright faces and enthusiasm of our own little brothers and sisters and sons and daughters. The music is of the sort that

is as hard to forget as the words that are set to it, and the children of Mother Goose each contribute their own enterprising pranks to the plot, those included being: Jack, Old King Cole, Queen of Hearts, Knave of Hearts, three Humpty Dumptys, Three Crows, Three Blind Mice, the Farmer's Wife, Little Bo Peep, Little Boy Blue, Tom Tucker, Simple Simon, Jack Horner, Old Mother Hubbard, Jack Spratt and his wife, Jack and Jill, the little man with the little gun, the crooked man, the old woman who lived in the shoe, her children, Little Miss Muffet, Little Polly Flinders, Mary Quite Contrary, Little Red Ridinghood, Bobby Shafto, Daffy Down Dilly, Man All Tattered and Torn, Maiden A' For'orn, Priest All Shaven and Shorn, Little Man All Dressed in Leather, Maid in the Garden, Peter Pumpkineater and his wife, fairies, sweet peas, grassblades, blackbirds, stars, clouds, the man in the moon and the attendants of the king and queen.

The curtain rises on "The House That Jack Built," in a clearing of the forest, the abode of Mother Goose and her son Jack. A band of fairies, grass blades and sweet peas discover the queer little house just as the good mother comes out and bids Jack go hunt for the golden eggs laid by her famous goose. The little strangers

hide while she awaits his return with the eggs, which she names Humpty Dumptys, and carefully locks in the house, hanging the key outside as she unfolds to Jack a plan for a wonderful party to which all of her children are to be invited, and then dispatches him with the invitations while she goes to market to buy the goodies. It happens that the "Black Birds" have also overheard the plan, and, being angry that they are not to be invited—doubtless because of their bad reputation since the incident in the garden—determine to spoil the party by stealing the key. The arrival of the Knave of Hearts enables them to accomplish their purpose, for this light fingered fellow easily steals the key and hides it.

Mother Goose scarcely gets home and discovers her loss before the guests begin to arrive, and she is compelled to tell them her troubles, also to receive and entertain them out of doors. This does not prove half bad after all, and a gay fete follows, each guest of prominence being received with a chorus, and the curtain goes down on a gay scene of merrymaking.

The second act represents the evening of the same day and the guests weary with all of their frolics, are resting on the grass

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