
The Babes in the Wood

Durham George R

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THE BABES IN THE WOOD.

GEORGE R. DURHAM'S

LAST PANTOMIME

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.

Dedicated

TO THE MEMORY OF A

DUTIFUL AND AFFECTIONATE SON.

WITH PREFACE BY ONE OF THE COMPANY.

PORTOBELLO:

THOMAS ADAMS & SONS, TOWER STREET.

1903.

Thy Life was full of winsome grace,
With love thy heart was warm ;
'Twas joy to greet thy smiling face,
Thy goodness was thy charm.

Thy talents rare were all God-given,
Used by thee wisely, well ;
Thou brought'st sunshine to hearts and homes,
The poor this tale may tell.

Forbid that we should mourn and weep,
Or grudge thy peaceful rest !
Thy work is done, sweet is thy sleep—
God's will is ever best !

MADGE FORTUNE.

7th April 1902.

P R E F A C E.

FOR the past five years the late Mr George Durham produced a pantomime in Portobello at Christmas-time which had become gradually more ambitious as success crowned each yearly effort. The proceeds of these performances, given latterly at the Town Hall, were devoted to charitable objects, and in this way considerable assistance was rendered to various local institutions.

The general public, seeing only the public performances of these productions, can have little or no conception of the amount of labour, both physical and mental, entailed in the organising of such entertainments. This labour extended over a period of many months, during which Mr Durham wrote an original book in rhyme around the fairy tale chosen as the theme of his pantomime, the lines bristling with local allusions. The selection and arrangement of melodies and verses for the song medleys, without which no pantomime would be complete, was in itself no small undertaking. But perhaps it was as the time for production drew near that Mr Durham worked hardest and most indefatigably, stage managing every rehearsal for several weeks, inventing and teaching the dances for the various characters and training his chorus. Thereafter he frequently worked into the small hours of the morning on clerical work in connection with the approaching performances, and allowed no detail to pass without his personal attention.

That these efforts were appreciated by the public was evidenced by the crowded houses which gathered to view the representations, two hundred people being turned from the door on one occasion, and that on the third night of the pantomime.

The Press, too, was always warm in its praise of Mr Durham and his work. But comparatively few know how tactfully that work was accomplished. Those who had the pleasure of being associated with him in his productions alone know of his never failing courtesy to young and old, his love of the art which helped to inspire the novice, his willingness to set self aside on every occasion, and his kindness in smoothing apparently insurmountable difficulties. These qualities, as much perhaps as his more brilliant talents, drew his company together, so that his book received a thoroughly sound treatment, everyone working with a will and putting forth his or her best effort for Mr Durham's sake as well as for their own.

Yet all this work was carried out in Mr Durham's spare time. In his business life he was as highly esteemed and proved himself as indispensable, never allowing his hobby to intrude upon his business hours.

With kindly thought for those who assisted her son in his work, either by personal effort or with that appreciation without which all effort seems in vain, Mrs Durham has decided to publish her son's latest composition, "The Babes in the Wood," thinking that some memento of the colleague they worked so loyally to support, or the entertainer they applauded so enthusiastically, may be welcome.

Of this pantomime seven performances in all were given, four in Portobello and three in Edinburgh, and all with complete success. Of Mr Durham himself in these performances the *Portobello Advertiser* said he "acted with all his accustomed verve and inimitable humour. His singing was very good, but

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it was in the funny bye-play that he excelled." Unhappily within a month after the date of the final performance Mr Durham was laid low with a fatal illness, and in less than a week he passed away at the early age of twenty-four.

Much sympathy has been expressed for his relatives, and when the festive season comes round again year by year it will ever bring with it sad regrets of the young life cut off, as it would seem, in the promise of a brilliant career.

"The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing,
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing
When blighting was nearest.
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone and for ever!"

P. C.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BARON BALDERDASH	...	...	...	...	<i>Inwardly a Villain.</i>
LADY TERESA	...	...	...	...	<i>His Sister.</i>
REDROSE	...	...	...	...	<i>The Baron's Elder Daughter.</i>
SNOW WHITE	...	...	...	...	<i>The Baron's Younger Daughter.</i>
ERIC	...	...	...	...	<i>His Nephew.</i>
IRINA	...	...	...	...	<i>His Niece.</i>
JAMIE	...	...	...	...	<i>A supposed Lunatic.</i>
BURKE	...	...	...	...	<i>A Villain of the deepest dye.</i>
HARE	...	...	...	...	<i>Another of the same.</i>
MIGNONETTE	...	...	...	...	<i>A Nurse, sweet as the flower.</i>
SIR MONTAGUE MARTIN	<i>Imperial Magistrate of the County of Broadfield.</i>				
LADY MONTAGUE	...	...	...	...	<i>His Wife.</i>
FAIRY	...	...	...	...	<i>An Emblem of Love.</i>
VILLAGERS, ELVES, ETC.					

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

SCENE 1	...	...	...	...	The Fairies' Glade.
SCENE 2	...	...	...	...	The Village of Honeysuckle.
SCENE 3	...	...	...	...	Near the Baron's Mansion.
SCENE 4	...	...	...	...	Fringe of Broadfield Woods.
SCENE 5	...	...	...	...	A Road in Broadfield County.
SCENE 6	...	...	...	...	The Outskirts of Honeysuckle.
<i>INTERVAL.</i>					
SCENE 7	...	...	...	...	The Baron's Mansion.
SCENE 8	...	...	...	...	Another part of Broadfield.
SCENE 9	...	...	...	...	In Broadfield Woods.
SCENE 10	...	...	...	...	Road from the Woods.
SCENE 11	...	...	...	...	Sir Montague Martin's Mansion.

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.

SCENE I.—*The Fairy's Glade.*

Opening Chorus of Elves—Air, "Will you walk into my parlour"?

Now we impart to aching heart
The true love of a fairy,
A watch we keep and never sleep,
So wide-awake and wary.
No one can say in spiteful way
That we are so contrary,
For we are meek to all who seek
The sympathetic fairy.

(Chorus.)

Elves. Light and airy!

Male Voices (in wings). Light and airy!

Elves. Is each fairy!

Male Voices (in wings). Is each fairy!

Elves. In their happy home;

Bright eyes glancing, joys advancing
Everywhere we roam.

Enter FAIRY.

Fairy. Welcome, little elves of bright and sparkling youth!
Here, in this lovely bower of happiness and truth,
Your little fairy hearts that never seem to fade
Are ready to respond to all who seek your aid.
'Twas by your power, I ween, when Crusoe left his home
That he was borne to land across the surging foam.
In the shape of a magic ring you lent a hand to save
Alladin from distress while shut in a mystic cave.