THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
FOR EIGHT MALES AND TWELVE FEMALES.

CHARACTERS.
(In the order of their appearance.)

Miss MELVINA MULLINS...........Country School Ma'am
HENRY HAWKINS....................A Backward Schoolboy
MRS. HAWKINS......................Henry's Ma
MILLY SIMPSON....................Half of the Twins
TILLY SIMPSON......................The Other Half
MRS. SIMPSON......................Their Ma
CALEB BOGGS......................A Hustling Student
JASON BOGGS......................His Bashful Brother
MRS. POTTER......................A Cautious Mother
TOMMY POTTER......................Her Delicate Child
MRS. GUNN.........................An Impressive Parent
CORA GUNN.........................Her Precocious Pet
MRS. WILCOX.........................Johnny's Talkative Ma
JOHNNY WILCOX....................Headed for College
PETER JENKINS....................
SARAH JENKINS.................... Just a Few of
ROSY JENKINS...................... The Jenkins Family
JOSH JENKINS.....................
ANNIE TIBBETTS....................A Real Bright Gal
OLE OLSON.........................He Ban Yust In Time

PLACE—A Country Schoolroom.

TIME—Opening Day of the District School.

TIME OF PLAYING—About Thirty Minutes.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

All the characters should be played by adult persons, dressed in old-fashioned country clothes. All the mothers except MRS. GUNN wear everyday dresses, odd hats and eccentric wraps. The pupils all dress as children, the boys wearing knee-breeches or trousers halfway to the ankles, with bright stockings. Some of the pupils may bring lunch pail, box or basket.

Miss MULLINS is a typical old maid school ma'am, with corkscrew curls, spectacles, bright skirt of one color and waist of another, bright ribbon sash, jewelry.

THE HAWKINSES are very rustic.
MRS. SIMPSON is fat and smiling.
MILLY and TILLY should be girls of good size, dressed alike in white with bright sashes and hair-ribbons. Their hair is worn in braids. The two should be as much alike as possible, in size and complexion as well as in costume.
CALEB is short and fat.
JASON, his older brother, is tall, slender and very bashful. His hair is parted in the middle, his coat is too tight and his pants are too short.
MRS. POTTER is small and slight.
A big, fat, bald-headed man will make a hit as TOMMY, her son. He should wear a ruffled waist with large collar, a large bright bow tie, and loud stockings.
MRS. GUNN tries to be very impressive, and is loudly dressed.
CORA is prim and well dressed.
MRS. WILCOX is tall and thin.
JOHNNY should be a good-sized man, but should dress and act as if he were about seven.
The JENKINS children are of various sizes, and very countrified in dress and manner.
ANNA is tall, overgrown and rather "simple." She wears slouchy clothes, including a rather long skirt, a short, old-fashioned waist and a funny apron. Her hair is done in a pigtail with a large bow at the back. A hair switch of the same shade as her own is lightly fastened to this bow, so that it will come off easily when JOHNNY pulls it. She wears a sunbonnet, which she does not remove until she has been in the schoolroom for several minutes.
OLE is a lanky, grinning, good-natured Swede. He wears overalls which are shrunk halfway up to his knees, cotton jacket, red handkerchief around his neck. He should have light hair and very healthy red cheeks.

REMARKS.

Since a great deal depends on the novelty of the costumes as well as the acting of the players, due attention should be paid to getting effective garments.
Keep up the action constantly. Have all entrances made promptly, and do not allow the performance to drag at any point.
The pupils may be permitted to do a few amusing side stunts, but never in a manner to detract attention from the performers who are speaking. Some of the pupils may eat from their lunch pails on the sly. Others may "pass notes," and indulge in the other bits of by-play characteristic of school life.
The entertainment is so devised that it can be presented on any platform, without special scenery or properties. The list of performers may be easily lengthened or reduced. Additional specialties may be introduced, or substituted for those that are suggested.
"The First Day of School" is recommended for any occasion where a wholesome, humorous entertainment is desired, and if it is sufficiently rehearsed and the parts are well taken, it will go with a rush from start to finish. While designed for use with an adult cast, it may be presented with juvenile talent if desired.
ACCESSORIES.

Clock, bell, mirror, books for children, dinner pails, apple for TOMMY, tack for HENRY, crayon for drawing and writing. There should be several picture books on the desk which the teacher can give to TOMMY, JOHNNY and the others to look at, when she seats them.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Up stage means away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. In the use of right and left, the actor is supposed to be facing the audience.
THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

SCENE: A country schoolroom. Only one door or entrance is used, and it may be located wherever convenient. At the back of the stage is a blackboard, with chalk and erasers. Two or three maps or cheap colored pictures can adorn the walls. The teacher's desk or table, with chair back of it, is down stage, either right or left. A water pail and dipper are on a stool at the back of the room. There should be either a clothes rack, or else a row of pegs or hooks on the wall. Cracked mirror on wall. The chairs or benches for the pupils' seats are in rows running up and down stage, so that the pupils sit sideways to the audience. There should be sufficient open space across the back of the stage, and across down stage as well, to allow for the action of the entertainment.

Lively "kid" music, such as "A B C Days," may accompany the rise of the curtain.

As soon as the curtain is up, Miss MULLINS enters. She carries a small clock, a bell, a dinner pail and some books.

Miss M. (to herself). Well, I'm here very early, but I like to have plenty of time the first day of school. (Hangs up hat, puts clock and other articles on desk, etc.) How delightful to have school begin again. I do love the dear little folks. They are so interesting, and so—so fascinating. I wouldn't teach school if it weren't for the nice children. I do hope they will all love me very much. I am quite sure they learn better when they love their teacher. (Discovers the cracked mirror on the wall. Stands before it and prims, then goes to her desk.) Now I am ready to welcome the dear children when they arrive.

MRS. HAWKINS and HENRY enter. She is leading him by the hand.

MRS. H. Good mornin'. I s'pose you're the new teacher. (Stands and looks Miss M. over. Miss M. bows and smiles.) I'm Mis' Hawkins, and I've brung my boy to start school. (Shakes hands awkwardly with Miss M.)

Miss M. How very nice. What is his name?

MRS. H. (to HENRY). Wal, speak up an' tell the teacher what's your name.

HENRY (in low voice). Hank.

MRS. H. Now, she can't hear that. Speak up like you've got life 'nough to kill a miskeeter.

HENRY (in loud voice). Hank.

MRS. H. No, no! "Henry."

HENRY (louder). No, no. Henry.

Miss M. (shakes hands with him). Well, Henry, I hope we shall think a great deal of each other and get along very well.

MRS. H. Now, teacher, look here. I don't want Hank— that is, Henry—foolin' 'way his time. I'm sendin' him to school to larn, an' I want 'im teached somethin' new all the time. Mebbe he can't be kep' in school many years, an' I want 'im to make hay while the sun shines.
Miss M. Of course.

HENRY Maw, I didn't know's they made hay to school. I thought they larnt.

MRS. H. (shaking finger at him). Teacher knows what I mean. Now, you behave all day an' have somethin' to tell' me that you've larnt when you come home to-night. None o' your diddledawlin', young man. Now, teacher, I got to go home an' see to bakin' my bread. Some night you drop home with Hank—that is Henry—an' take supper with us. (They shake hands, say good-bye, etc. MRS. H. goes out.)

HENRY. Teacher, do I haft to begin larnin' right now now?

Miss M. No, not until school takes up. (HENRY sits at front bench.)

Enter MRS. SIMPSON, with MILLY and TILLY.

MRS. S. How-do-do. You the new teacher? (Miss M. bows, etc.) Wal, girls, this is her. I'm Mis' Simpson (shakes hands). I've fetched my twins over to have 'em start school. I like to know they git a good startin' out. Girls, make your manners. (Girls bow.)

Miss M. (shaking hands with twins). Oh, isn't it nice to have twins come to school! I think it's delightful to be twins. What are your names?

MRS. S. Wal, tell teacher your names, an' no foolin'.

MILLY (swinging her skirt, and grinning). I'm Milly an' she's Tilly.

TILLY (doing the same). I'm Tilly an' she's Milly.

MILLY (pointing). An' she's Tilly an' I'm Milly.

TILLY (pointing). An' she's Milly an' I'm Tilly.

Miss M. (bewildered). Oh, yes, you're—(looks from one to other). 

MILLY (rapidly). I'm Milly an' she's Tilly.

TILLY (rapidly). I'm Tilly an' she's Milly.

MILLY. She's Tilly an' I'm Milly.

TILLY. She's Milly an' I'm Tilly.

MRS. S. (pushing MILLY to one side.) That's Milly. (Pushes TILLY to other side.) An' that's Tilly. They're awful good girls, an' you won't have a mite o' trouble with 'em. Some of the younguns in this deestrick acts jes' terrible, but Milly an' Tilly has been brought up to behave. I allus tell 'em if they don't behave to school they're goin' to git a good spankin' to home. But they won't need no spankin', 'cause they behave good. Now (shakes finger at them), you heerd me tell teacher you're goin' to behave.

MILLY. Yes, maw.

TILLY. Yes, maw.
MRS. S. I thought I'd come over with 'em this mornin' an' tell you that you wouldn't have no trouble with 'em, but that they's some o' these children that acts up awful. An' them that acts up, don't you be 'fraid to lick 'em. It's what they need. Now, teacher, I got to go, 'cause I got a bunch o' men to cook dinner for. Don't you be 'fraid to come over some day to a meal. Mebbe I ain't a very good cook, but they ain't nothin' poison. (With a good-bye to teacher and girls, she exits.)

Miss M. Well, now—(looks hesitatingly at one twin, then at the other).

MILLY (rapidly). I'm Milly an' she's Tilly.

TILLY (rapidly). I'm Tilly an' she's Milly.

MILLY. She's Tilly an' I'm Milly.

TILLY. She's Milly an' I'm Tilly.

Miss M. Well, children, you sit down until some more of the children get here.

(MILLY and TILLY sit behind HENRY.)

CALEB enters, leading JASON by the hand.

CALEB (stands grinning at teacher). Mornin'.

Miss M. Oh, good morning. These are some more of my nice new pupils, are they not? I'm glad to see you. What are your names?

CALEB. I'm Caleb Boggs. (Pulls JASON'S hand.) Tell teacher what your name is. (JASON grins bashfully and shakes his head.) You know maw said she'd wallop you if you didn't speak up to teacher. (JASON hides back of CALEB and shakes his head.) He's bashful. He's awful easy skeert of women. (To JASON.) Now you be good an' tell teacher your name. (JASON shakes his head.) Come on, now, an' be good, like maw said as how to.

Miss M. (coaxing). Oh, now, don't be scared of teacher. I like little boys very much. We're going to think lots of each other. Tell me what your name is. (JASON acts very much frightened and shakes his head.)

MILLY (giggles). Oh, he's growed up awful tall.

TILLY (giggles). Don't dare open his mouth at all. (Both giggle.)

Miss M. How old are you?

CALEB. I'm eight, teacher, an' brother, he's ten. But he's allus been awful skeert o' women an' I ain't skeert a-tall.

Miss M. (to JASON). You mustn't be scared of me. (Starts to put her hand on JASON'S shoulder. He jumps around and hides back of CALEB.)

JASON (terrified). D-d-don't let 'er git me, Caleb!

TILLY AND MILLY (giggle and point fingers). 'Fraid cat, 'fraid cat!
Miss M. Well, you boys sit down, and after awhile, when he finds out how nice teacher is, he won't be afraid.

(Caleb and Jason sit with pupils.)

Caleb (to Jason). I'm goin' to tell maw on you, I be.

Henry. Say, Caleb, you oughter brung a bottle long for him, he's sech a baby. (laughs.)

Milly and Tilly. Te, he, he! Such a baby! (Giggle.)

Miss M. Children, children; don't tease him.

Mrs. Potter and Tommy enter.

Mrs. P. Good mornin', teacher. (Shakes hands with Miss M.) I s'pose my little Tommy might have come alone, but I thought as how I might's well come 'long an' see first off what the new teacher looks like. You know, I think they's quite a little in how a teacher looks, 'bout whether the children likes her.

Miss M. Oh, yes, indeed. My pupils always like me very much.

Mrs. P. Wal, now, you don't say! Wal, wall But then, looks is quite often deceivin'. Yes, this is Tommy. (Miss M. shakes hands with Tommy.) Wal, Tommy, say somethin' to teacher. Don't stan' there like a bump on a log an' make 'er think you can't talk.

Tommy (stammers). I—teacher, I got a red calf—to home. (Twists and grins.)

Miss M. Oh, isn't that nice. A red calf.

Mrs. P. Now teacher, Tommy is an awful delicate little boy. He's tall, but you can see he don't look very rugged, an' I hope you'll take real good care of 'im. He's real easy to git sick an' have spells. Sometimes he can't eat hardly nothing 'cause he don't feel good. I've allus watched over 'im awful careful an' I hope you'll do the same. I want 'im to be larnt but I hope you won't let 'im study too hard. If he gits real tired out, couldn't you let 'im take a little nap? I went to school to an awful kind teacher once that let the little ones take naps in school.

Miss M. Well—why, really, I don't know where he could sleep.

Mrs. P. Shucks! Couldn't you put your jacket down on a bench for 'im to sleep on?

Miss M. Well—dear me. I hate to get my jacket all wrinkled.

Mrs. P. Good lan' sakes, I guess a little fellow like Tommy wouldn't hurt it none!

Tommy (yawns and rubs his eyes). Maw, I'm sleepy right now.
MRS. P. Oh, no. Now, Tommy, you ain't sleepy yet. You hain't hardly been up any time a-tall. School's goin' to take up by-an'-by, an' maybe teacher'll tell you a story 'bout a nice little boy.

TOMMY. I want to hear a story 'bout a red calf.

HENRY. Teacher, I want to hear a story 'bout a bear.

MILLY. Oh, teacher, won't you tell a story 'bout Injuns?

TILLY. An' have 'em scalp somebody, teacher.

TOMMY. Maw, I want to go home with you.

MRS. P. No, Tommy, you've got to stay an' git larnt something. Here's your nice apple. (Gives him an apple from her pocket.)

TOMMY (sobs). I don't—want to—git—scalped by Injuns.

MRS. P. Now, don't worry. Teacher won't let the Injuns hurt you, not a bit. You mus' be maw's brave little boy. (Aside to Miss M.) Now, you see, teacher, you have to be awful careful with the little fellow an' not let 'im git nervous, or he'll be sick.

Miss M. I see. I'll do the best I can, I promise you.

MRS. P. I wish I could stay an' see Tommy git larnt something, but I've got to trot home an' do up the breakfast dishes. Now, Tommy, you do just what teacher says, an' be good so teacher'll like you. Goodbye, teacher. Goodbye, Tommy, an' be maw's nice little boy. (Exit.)

(During the aboi'c scene, MILLY has been teasing JASON.)

CALEB (to MILLY). Now, you let him alone an' quit pick-in' on 'im or I'll hit you in the face.

Miss M. Oh, oh, my! Don't talk like that.

CALEB. Well, she's a-teasin' my brother an' she's got to quit.

MILLY. I wasn't teasin' him, teacher. I was only tryin' to make him tell me his name, so now. (Makes face at CALEB.)

TOMMY (who is still standing). Teacher, where can I set me down? (Miss M. puts him in a seat by himself.) I'm sleepy.

Miss M. Oh, no, you aren't sleepy yet, Tommy. (He starts to eat his apple.)

HENRY. Teacher, ain't it time for school to begin?

Miss M. No, not yet. You got here real early.

(TILLY and MILLY cross over and sit by TOMMY. First one, and then the other, keeps taking his apple and biting it.)

MRS. GUNN and CORA enter.
MRS. G. Good morning, teacher. Is this you? I'm Mrs. Gunn an' I am glad to enjoy your acquaintance. I came over to bring Cora because she was a litt'le disinclinationed to come alone on the first morning. Cora, this is teacher. Be glad to git acquainted with her.

CORA (bows). I'm glad to git acquainted, teacher.

(Miss M. shakes hands with them.)

TOMMY (cries). Boo-hoo-hoo! Boo-hoo-hoo!

(MILLY and TILLY slip back to their own seats.)

Miss M- Tommy, what's the matter? (He sobs.) Tell teacher what's the matter, Tommy.

TOMMY. They et my apple till it's all gone. (Sobs.)

Miss M. Why, why, girls, how naughty! (Looks at MILLY.) Tilly, that was very bad.

MILLY. I'm Milly an' she's Tilly.

TILLY. I'm Tilly an' she's Milly.

MILLY. She's Tilly an' I'm Milly.

TILLY. She's Milly an' I'm Tilly.

MRS. G. Some children in this district are very dilapidated in their etiquetical behavior, teacher.

TILLY. Teacher, maw says if Mis' Gunn don't stop shooting off big words she'll hurt herself some day.

MRS. G. Teacher, I hope you will apply chastisement in the cases where it is plainly necessary. I am thankful my Cora never needs correcting. You will find her very bright, too, teacher. She takes after my family that way, teacher. My folks has been real hands to acquire learning. Her father's side of the house leaned more to manual occupations—not but what they are splendiferous people, teacher. I am quite sure Cora is going to be a fine student. She can spell "cat" already. Cora, spell "cat." for teacher. Spell "cat."

CORA (after deep thought). C-o-w.

MRS. G. Oh, you thought I said to spell "cow," didn't you? Well, that was right. Didn't she spell "cow" finely, teacher? I hope you will be very careful to have her acquire knowledge. Now, teacher, I am so pressed with occupations that I must take my departure. Good-bye. (Exit.)

MILLY. Teacher, if she had left her departure here, 'stead of takin' it, what would it look like? Is" it somethin' to eat?

TOMMY. Teacher, I want some departure to eat. I'm hungry.
MRS. WILCOX and JOHNNY enter.

MRS. W. Well, here we be, teacher. I thought maybe we'd be late, but I couldn't git here a minute sooner with all I had to do this mornin'. At the last minute the old hog got int' the garden an' we had to chase him. Then Johnny, here, dropped his bread an' molasses out' his waist an' I had to wait an' scrub off the spot. Lan' sakes, I'm mos' petered out.

Miss M. Sit down and rest a while. It isn't quite time to take up school. Every one came early this morning.

(During the next speech MILLY and TILLY go to the board and draw a comical picture and write "teacher" by it. The other children giggle, then the twins erase it.)

MRS. W. (sits in teacher's chair). I s'pose you'll have a time, teacher, gittin' Johnny to stay to school. He don't like the idee of school though I don't see why, 'cause his paw liked school fine an' once won a prize for standin' good in his class, an' I used to mos' bawl my eyes out if I had to miss school. I'm drefful put out with Johnny, for I've made up my mind I want him to be a perfesser in a college. He can, jes' as well's not. There was a college perfesser stopped to our house one summer, an' honest-to-goodness, he didn't know nothin'. Why, teacher, he didn't know how long a hen had to set on eggs to hatch 'em, an' he didn't know how sauerkraut was made, an' one day I showed 'im a egg my Injun runner duck had laid, an' I tole 'im a Injun runner laid it, an' he says, "I've heard some o' the Injuns was great runners but, dear me, I never knew before that they laid eggs." My sakes, he didn't know hardly nothing, an' I've heerd tell of lots other of them college perfessers that's the same, so I know Johnny can git to be one. An', then, too, Johnny's an awful good forgitter, arr' I've read 'bout lots of the perfessers that is great hands to forgit things. You'll have to watch Johnny, teacher, or he'll forgit to learn his lessons. (During this time JOHNNY has stood by his mother, holding to her skirt.) Now I s'pose I've got to mosey 'long home an' do some bakin', for Sim's brother Nathan an' his wife are comin' to visit an' Nathan does beat all the world to eat. He says he eats more than usual to our house, 'cause he likes my cookin' so well, but I guess he's jes' tryin' to excuse his terrible appytite. (Rises.) Now, Johnny, good-by, an' be a nice little boy so's teacher'll like you.

JOHNNY. Maw, I want to tell you somethin'. (Whispers to her.)

MRS. W. No, you can't go home with me. You've got to stay here an' learn to be a college perfesser.

Miss M. Oh, Johnny will stay with me. We are going to have just a fine time in school. Teacher will tell a story.

MRS. W. Now, won't that be nice?

(Miss M. takes JOHNNY by the hand and leads him over to a seat. MRS. WILCOX starts out.)

JOHNNY (runs after her and catches hold of her skirt). Maw, I want to go home. I—I—don't feel good. I'm sick.

MRS. W. Now you ain't sick, no more'n I be. You go back an' stay with teacher.
MISS M. takes his hand and leads him back to seat. When nearly there he breaks away from her, runs after his 'mother and catches her skirt.)

JOHNNY. Maw, say, I-I-my tooth aches.

(The other children watch him and giggle, whispering things about him behind their hands.)

MRS. W. Now, young man, your tooth don't ache no more'n mine does. You quit this foolin' an' go to behavin'. What'll teacher think of you?

(Miss M. takes him by the hand again and starts toward a seat. MRS. WILCOX exits.)

JOHNNY (calling). Maw, maw, I-I'm hungry!

Miss M. Now, Johnny, you be a nice little boy and sit here and I'll give you a cookie. (Puts him in a seat.)

TOMMY (loudly). Teacher, I want a cookie, too.

TILLY (eagerly). Oh, teacher, can't me'n Milly have a cookie, too? We had to come to school so early we didn't hardly git much breakfas'.

CORA (politely). If you please, teacher, I'd be pleased to have a cookie too, please. (Addresses the twins scornfully.) I asked politer'n you did.

MILLY. Huh! I guess we can say "Please teacher please gimme a please cookie, please," too, if we want to. That ain't nothin'. an' our dress is purtier'n your'n, so! (The twins make faces at CORA.)

(JASON has been whispering to CALEB.)

CALEB. Teacher, my brother says he'll tell you his name if you'll give him a cookie.

HENRY. Shucks, ain't you any of you got no manners? Teacher ain't got cookies 'nough to give all you hungry birds one. Besides, 'tain't time to eat till recess time. (MILLY reaches over and pinches HENRY.) Ouch! Now, you quit that, now. I'll lambast you one in the mug. (Twins make faces at him, other children giggle.)

Miss M. Oh, oh, now, children, teacher won't love you if you talk so naughty.

PETER, SARAH, ROSY and JOSH JENKINS enter, carrying books, dinner pails, etc.

HENRY. Hello, Pete.

MILLY. Peter, Peter, pun'kin eater-

TILLY. Had a wife an' couldn't keep her. (Twins giggle.)

PETER. Milly, Tilly, fat an' silly.
Miss M. Oh, good morning. You are some more of my nice pupils, aren't you? I'm very glad to see you. (Shakes hands with them.) What are your names?

PETER. I'm Peter Jenkins, an' she's (points to SARAH)—

SARAH (interrupting). Don't you tell 'er my name. I guess I can tell it my own self, smarty. (To Miss M.) I'm Miss Sarah Jenkins. (Bows.) I'm twelve years old an' I can read in the fourth reader. An' this is my sister—

ROSY (interrupting). Now, Sarah, you shut up. I can tell teacher my name jes' as good as you can. (To Miss M.) My name is Rosy. Some folks thinks I was named after the rose flowers, but I wasn't, 'cause I was named Rosy after my aunt Rosy Stebbins.

PETER (pointing). An' thi's is our brother Joshua, but we all call 'im Josh fer short. They's another one of us to come to school, but maw said to tell you he tore his pants so bad yisterday that she hadn't got 'em mended yet an' so he won't be able to start till tomorrer.

SARAH. Maw said to tell you she hoped you'd please excuse him for bein" absence, an' she'll try an' git 'im reseated today an' if you'll save a seat for 'im he'll start tomorrer.

Miss M. That will be all right. I'm glad your mother has such a nice large family to send to school

(JOSH whispers to PETER.)

PETER. Teacher, Josh can speak a piece, an' he wants to say it to you.

Miss M. Well, he may say it right now. Listen, children, and hear the nice piece Joshua is going- to speak for us. Now speak loudly, Joshua, so we can all hear.

JOSH (after fussing and tunsting and making several bows).

Mary had a little ba-ba-ba;
He tagged after her to school
An' made the children ha-ha-ha.
(He giggles and all the rest laugh.)

Miss M. That was very nice. Now you all find seats, because it is almost time to take up school. (They take seats.)

ANNIE TIBBETTS enters.

ANNIE. Be you the teacher? Wal, maw said I could come to school if I wanted to an' if I liked the teacher I could stay an' larn something. (Looks Miss M. over.) I dunno's I want to stay, an' I dunno's they's much fer me to larn, anyhow.

Miss M. Can you read nicely?

ANNIE. Wal, I can read all the words of one letter jes' fine.

Miss M. And can you add?
ANNIE. I can add the ciphers all right, but the figgers bothers me pretty much.

Miss M. Do you know geography?

ANNIE. Joggerphy? What's that?

MILLY (eagerly). Oh, teacher, teacher. I know what it's about. It's like, "A pen-in-suler is a narrow necktie of land joinin' together two larger pieces of land."

SARAH. Teacher, please, I know what geography is. It's a descripin' of the earth's surface.

TILLY (laughs). Oh, ho, oh, ho! Smarty! (Mocks SARAH.) "A descrip-taking of"—

Miss M. Now, children, it is almost time for the bell to ring, and—

OLE OLSON enters, running.

OLE. I ban running yust as fast like lightning so I skal not ban come late. Skall I ban here?

Miss M. Why, yes, you seem to be here.

OLE. I mean, skall I ban here in times so I ain't ban tardy mark?

Miss M. Yes, you got here just in time.

OLE (looking teacher over). Skall you ban the teacher?

Miss M. Yes, I hope we shall be good friends.

OLE. Oh, I tank I skal ban liking you purty good. My oncle, Yens Yenson, he want I skal ban learning lot so I ban smart feller.

Miss M. How old are you?

OLE. Oh, I ban born yust same time my cousin Yerda Yenson was. Yerda ban purty big girl now.

Miss M. But how old are you?

HENRY. He's fourteen, I'll bet, teacher.

OLE. Dat hain't ban no such t'ings, teacher. Last year I ban twelve year old. Dis year I ban one year more, so you skal see I ain't ban no fourteens. (To Miss M.) How old you ban, teacher?

Miss M. (embarrassed). Oh, I—well, that is—you see, children, it is time for school to take up. You may all pass out of doors, and when I ring the bell you must see how nicely you can march in and take your seats.

OLE. Where you wants we skal take 'em to, teacher?

Miss M. Take what?
OLE. You say we shall take our seats. Where we ban goin' take 'em to?

Miss M. You march in and do what you see the others do.

Children all pass out. Miss M. rings the bell and they come marching in, CALEB leading JASON by the hand.

TOMMY is next to the last to come in. HENRY, who has taken his seat, sits with his foot out and trips TOMMY so he falls on the floor. OLE is last in line. When TOMMY falls down OLE falls on top of him. TOMMY begins to cry.

Miss M. Oh, Tommy, that was too bad. (She helps him up. He stands and cries.) Are you hurt?

TOMMY (stammers). Y-y-yes. (Sobs.)

Miss M. Ole, what did you fall down for? The idea!

OLE. Didn't you ban telling me I skal do yust like I see others do?

Miss M. Well, you get up and sit down. (OLE takes seat.) Tommy, I'm very sorry. I guess you'll be all right soon if you sit down.

TOMMY. Teacher, won't you hold me on your lap? Maw always holds me when I git hurt.

Miss M. (confused). Oh—oh, my, Tommy—really, now, teacher can't do that. You go sit in your seat and you'll be all right, Tommy.

TOMMY (sobs). Teacher, can't you kiss me? Maw always kisses me when I git hurt. (Children laugh.)

Miss M. Why,—Oh, my, Tommy, teacher can't do that! If I kiss you I'll have to kiss all the boys and girls and you know I mustn't do that. I haven't time. You sit down like a good boy. (He sits.) Now, dear boys and girls, this is our first day of school, and I am very glad to see so many fine, nice-looking children here.

TILLY. Teacher, Milly an' me's better-lookin' than she is. (Points to CORA.)

COR. No, ma'am; no ma'am; they ain't neither.

TILLY and MILLY (together). Yes, ma'am; yes, ma'am.

OLE. I tank I skall ban purty good-lookin', too

Miss M. Now, children, let us sing a nice song. Let us sing, "The Bear Came Over the Mountain."

(JASON whispers to CALEB.)

CALEB. Teacher, can't we sing somethin' else? Jason, he's awful skeert of bears an' he don't want to sing 'bout 'em.
Miss M. All right. We'll sing, "The Cow Went Over the Mountain." Now, all sing as sweetly as possible, children, and let us see how nice we can make our first song.

SARAH. Teacher, I don't know 'bout that cow that went Over the mountain. What'd she go over for?

Miss M. She went over to see what she could see.

SARAH. Well, what'd she see?

Miss M. The other side of the mountain was all that she could see. Well, children dear, we'll sing something else. We'll sing the song called, "Good Morning To You." (She makes several attempts to get them started, beating time., reproving the silent ones, etc., before the song gets under way.)

CHILDREN (sing).

Good morning to you,
Good morning to you,
Good morning dear teacher,
Good morning to you.

(The children get mixed up during the singing. Some of the younger ones do not keep up with the others. TOMMY comes out strong once in a while with a word that the others have just sung. OLE mispronounces the words, the twins giggle, etc.)

Miss M. (after the song). That was real fine, children, Now, Tommy and Joshua may go to the board and learn to write. (She goes to the blackboard and writes the word "cat," and TOMMY and JOSH go to the board.) Now, the fourth reader class may recite, and the rest of you may study.

(During the ensuing dialogue TOMMY and JOSH try to copy the word she has written, after which they draw comic pictures.)

PETER (waving his hand in the air). Teacher, kin I git a drink?

Miss M. Yes, if you are very quiet.

(PETER goes to water pail and while he is gone HENRY puts a tack on the seat.)

Miss M. I want the fourth reader class to have a piece ready to read to me. I want to see how nice you can read.

(PETER comes back, sits and then jumps up with a loud yell.)

PETER. O-o-w!

Miss M. Oh, my! Oh, mercy! What is the matter?

ROSY. Teacher, somebody put a tack on his seat.

Miss M. Oh, how dreadful! Is it still on the bench?

PETER. No, ma'am. It's in me, now.
SARAH. No, teacher, it fell off on the floor.

Miss M. I shall deal with the one who did this after school to-night. Now we will have the fourth reader class. Stand. Pass.

(PETER, SARAH, MILLY, TILLY and OLE rise at the command and come forward with their reading books, forming a line across the front of the stage.)

Miss M. Peter, you may read first.

PETER (with difficulty). "Hear—the-sled—sled"—Oh, I know, "Hear the sledges with the bells, silver bells! What a world of—mur—mur—" I mean "merry—merry—merriment their mel—mell—melody foretells! How they—"

Miss M. (interrupting). Peter, I don't think you are well prepared with that selection.

PETER. Oh, I can read it fine when it gets down where it says "bells, bells, bells, bells—"

Miss M. Never mind. Sarah, you may read next. SARAH (reads in sing-song voice).

"The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed.
And the heavy night—"

Miss M. (interrupting). Wait a minute, Sarah. Can't you put more expression in it?

SARAH. Yessum (as lifelessly as before).

"And the heavy night hung, dark,
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles—"

Miss M. (interrupting). Sarah, do you know the meaning of the word "exile"?

SARAH. Yessum.

Miss M. Well, what is an exile?

SARAH. An exile is what a wheel goes around on.

Miss M. (looking at MILLY). Now, Tilly, you may read.

MILLY. I'm Milly an' she's Tilly.

TILLY. I'm Tilly an' she's Milly.

MILLY. She's Tilly an' I'm Milly.

TILLY. She's Milly an' I'm Tilly.

Miss M. Well, Milly, then. You may read. MILLY (with fast and heavily emphasised rhythm, reads).
"Up from the meadows rich with corn,
    Clear in the cool September morn,
The clustered spires of Frederick stand,
    Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.
    Round about them orchards sweep,"

HENRY (interrupts in same tone of voice). Oh, gee-whiz, my foot's asleep!

Miss M. (to HENRY). Henry, you will have to stay after school to-night.
(To TILLIE.) Now, Milly-er, Tilly-er --well, the other twin may read.

TILLY (very slowly and dramatically, reads).
"England's sun was slowly setting o'er the hills so far away,
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad day.
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair,
He with step so slow and weakened, she with sunny, floating hair.
He with sad, bowed head and--"

Miss M. Now, Milly-er, Tilly-er--well, that will do. Ok, let me hear you read.

OLE (seriously and with great effort, reads haltingly). "Lis-ten, mai chil'ren, an' you skall hear Of de midniggit-midniggit-midnight ride of Paul Re-were.
On de eighteen April, Sev'ty-fiwe, Har'ly a man iss now alive--"

Miss M. That is very good, Ole. Now that I have found how far advanced the fourth reader class is, I want to hear Annie and Rosy; 'id Johnny and Caleb and Henry and Jason read.

(JASON whispers to CALEB.)

CALEB. Teacher, Jason doesn't want to read to-day. His head aches.

Miss M. Well, he may be excused. Stand. Pass.

(ANNIE, ROSY, JOHNNY, CALEB and HENRY, with their books, form a line across the front of the stage.)

Miss M. Henry, you may read first.

HENRY (reads, very fast and without any expression).

"Oh why should the spirit of mortal be proud
Like a swift-flying meteor a fast-flying cloud
A flash of the lightning a break of the wave
Man passeth from life to his rest in the grave
The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade
Be scattered around and together be--"

(While HENRY is reading the above, JOHNNY gives ANNIE'S hair a pull and the switch comes off in his hand. Holding it out in front of him, he begins to cry loudly. ANNIE looks at it and also starts to weep aloud, until HENRY'S voice is no longer audible.)

ANNIE (boo-hoo-ing loudly). Oh, he's pulled off my hair.
JOHNNY (badly scared, and crying). O-o-h, teacher, I didn't mean to. I didn't mean to! (Bawls.)

Miss M. Oh, my! Oh, my!

SARAH. He ought to have a good lickin'.

(The other pupils chime in with a mixture of comments such as, "Yes, ma'am, he ought to." "Look what Johnny did!" "He ought to have a lickin'!" "Johnny's goin' to catch it!" etc.)

JOHNNY (weeping louder). I—didn't—mean—to!

Miss M. (taking switch from JOHNNY). Well, children, you may have a recess and run out-of-doors to play for a while. I shall have to see what I can do to fix Annie's hair.

JOHNNY (crying). Will she die? Will—she—die, teacher?

ANNIE (slapping him). You didn't need to pull my maw's switch loose!

(Miss M. rings the bell. Children all make a mad rush for the door, shouting, "Recess! Recess!")

CURTAIN.