

THE JOYOUS LAND

*A Play for Childhood
and Youth Week*

By
REBECCA CAUDILL



Issued by
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“ A Joyous Land
Where waters gushed and fruit trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honeybees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings.”

— From “The Pied Piper of Hamelin.” By Robert
Browning. Used by permission of The Macmillan
Company.

THE JOYOUS LAND

A PLAY FOR CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH WEEK

THE CHARACTERS

THE PIED PIPER.

Six Children Who Followed the Piper from Hamelin:

FIRST CHILD—a girl of thirteen, daughter of the Mayor.

SECOND CHILD—a girl of ten, a Japanese.

THIRD CHILD—a boy of eight, an orphan.

FOURTH CHILD—a boy of fourteen whose father was killed in a war.

FIFTH CHILD—a boy of nine, who sells papers on the street.

SIXTH CHILD—a girl of six.

THE MOTHER OF CHILDREN WHO LACK.

THE WEAVER OF BEAUTIFUL DREAMS.

THE KNIGHT IN THE SHINING ARMOR OF TRUTH.

THE PRINCE WITH THE BOOK OF LOVE.

(The lights in the church are turned off while the light on the stage is dimmed to represent twilight. Palms and potted ferns may be used to give the effect of an outdoor scene, while if a more elaborate stage setting is desired, a forest nook may be arranged, with moss-covered stones to serve as seats for the Mother and the Piper. The children sit on the floor. As the play opens, notes from a pipe are heard in the distance, and the Piper comes from a door back of the stage—the "hole in the hill" through which he passed, followed by the children. They are weary, as if they have come a long distance. The Piper carries the smallest child tenderly in his arms. When they reach the stage the children look about them in great awe and wonder which gives way to subdued exclamations of delight before any one speaks).

THIRD CHILD: Is *this* the Joyous Land?

PIPER: This, my children, is the doorway to the Joyous Land. The Joyous Land itself lies just beyond that wall.

FIRST CHILD: O, how beautiful!

FIFTH CHILD: And may we go in there, Piper? May we go in at once?

FOURTH CHILD: Are the dogs in there, Piper? The dogs that can run faster than any deer in our forests at Hamelin?

SIXTH CHILD: I want to see the horses with the eagles' wings.

SECOND CHILD: And the sparrows that are like peacocks. Piper, do they really, truly spread their tails like a fan, just as the peacocks do? And do they fly about in the trees?

PIPER: Yes, my children. Now you are about to see that all I have told you is true. And more than that, too. In this Joyous Land the tree-tops are a harp, and the wind plays upon their strings all the day long. Listen. Do you not hear the strange sweet music? The wind now plays a lullaby, for the Weaver of Beautiful Dreams has just told the children a story, and it is the time when they close their eyes and dream. But in the middle of the day, when the world is a-thrill with the silvery notes of bird song, and tiny streams go tripping, and moth and bee are all a-flutter, and the little green leaves lisp tremulously, then the wind plucks the strings of her harp and plays such a rollicking, dashing tune that the children drop their playthings and their tools and dance for sheer joy. To-morrow you, too, shall dance on green hilltops with the wind.

SIXTH CHILD: Tell us more, Piper. Tell us about the horses with the eagles' wings.

PIPER: But my young travelers are weary. We should rest a bit before we go in.

FIRST CHILD: But we are not tired now, Piper. Indeed, the journey was so long I thought my feet should never climb that last hill, but now they are light as the feathery clouds. How strange that I should be so soon rested.

PIPER: Rested, my child? No one in the Joyous Land is ever weary for long. Listen again to the music of the wind. Listen closely. (*All listen intently*) Do you hear? Is it not joyous music? But it is only the echo of many singing hearts, and singing hearts are never weary. (*They continue to listen.*)

THIRD CHILD: O, I hear! I hear! It goes like this: (*He sings a rollicking air. Tra la la la la la la la. Tra la la la la la la. They listen again closely, then with the Piper all join hands and skip around in a circle, singing joyously.*)

SECOND CHILD: May we go in now, Piper? And play on the green hill top?

PIPER: In one minute now. The Mother is tucking in the last wee baby, and when that is finished she will come out to welcome you. She knows you are here. She says she can always tell by the song of the wind if children who lack are about to knock at her door.

FIFTH CHILD: By the song of the wind?

PIPER: Yes, the wind plays very, very softly then, so that only the Mother of the Children Who Lack may hear. She says the wind is telling her a secret. Listen again. I hear her skirts in the grass. She is coming now. (*The door opens slowly, and the Mother of the Children Who Lack enters, humming a lullaby. The Piper and the children have fallen back a little, and the Mother is near the center of the stage before she sees them.*)

MOTHER: My children! Piper! Welcome home! (*The Piper kneels quickly before her, and the children press about her, looking at her in admiration and awe.*) And where did you find so many children at once? What cruel thing have you found in the world that you must rescue a townful of children?

PIPER: Mother of the Children Who Lack, these children are sorely in need of the happiness to be found in the Joyous Land. I had only to play the first notes of a tune on my pipes when every child in the town left his play and followed me. The others—and there were scores of them, Mother—were so weary with the long journey that I played them a song until they went to sleep underneath a big tree. They are even now just a stone's throw from the gateway. In the morning I shall return for them. Shall I tell you my story, mother?

MOTHER: Yes, Piper. But first let us make these children comfortable. You are very weary, children?

ALL THE CHILDREN: No, Mother.

FIRST CHILD: Why, Mother, as soon as we passed through the doorway, the weariness dropped from our feet like a feather that drops from the breast of a bird, and it floated away, away, away.

FOURTH CHILD: Why, we've even heard the music in the Joyous Land. We couldn't keep our feet still, it was that rollicking.

MOTHER: Yes, my children, I heard you, and I was glad. Only I was alarmed that so many of you should arrive at once. Usually my Piper here brings only one child at a time, but that so many of you should seek admittance at once! Tell me, Piper, what is your story? (*The sixth child is beginning to nod, and the Piper picks her up and lays her in the arms of the Mother, where she goes to sleep.*) What is this, Piper? This child lacks

nothing. No child has ever been known to go to sleep at the doorway of the Joyous Land. Weary, yes, but never asleep. Quick, what is your story that we may right this wrong, if it be a wrong, and return this child.

PIPER: It was the day before yesterday, Mother that I was wandering up and down the earth looking for the children who lack the golden, glorious opportunities of happy, guided childhood. I had wandered all the day and I had listened carefully, for you know no child ever suffers a wrong but that the evil is borne to my heart on the wail of the wind. I even took the liberty of looking in on some homes by which I passed, to be sure that no smallest injury escaped me. But in every home I found only happiness. Love was in the homes and love was abroad in the community, and people sought not their own happiness but that of their neighbors. There was in the land a spirit of rapture so like that in the Joyous Land here that to make sure I was not deceived I even played gentle little tunes on my harp once in awhile. For you know, Mother, at the first note of my harp, if there be a damaged child about, he will rise up immediately and follow, and no power on earth can draw him back.

MOTHER: You were wise, Piper, not to play your tunes until you had first searched the hearts of the people to see if they were in tune with the joyousness of the universe.

PIPER: That I never do, Mother. Sometimes I discover a child whose father and mother have only forgotten the sacredness of their task. They are asleep while the great glad world moves on about them. Then I plant in their hearts such a love for all children and such a yearning for their welfare that they quickly repair the injury they have done to their own child.

FIRST CHILD: And the children, when you piped your gentle tunes, Piper, did they not follow?

PIPER: Not one. They did not even so much as prick up their ears to listen. Then I knew they had no need of this Joyous Land.

MOTHER: There are other Lands of Joy besides this one here, Piper. Wherever fathers and mothers in a community are together creating happiness for themselves and all the children whose lives are touched by their actions, there, then, is a Joyous Land.

PIPER: This, I think, Mother, must have been such a land.

THIRD CHILD: Did the wind play gay tunes there, Piper?

FIFTH CHILD: And the horses, Piper, are the horses born there with eagles' wings?

PIPER: No, my children. Such things as these are reserved for this Joyous Land to which all children who lack are brought—children who lack the gentle understanding of fathers and mothers; children who grow up in the world without great love and affection; children whose footsteps are allowed to stray where they will instead of being guided tenderly and patiently by the parents who brought them into the world; children who have been deprived, by whatever means, of the great joyousness of the universe which is their heritage. These are the children who lack, and only they who know not happiness in their own homes may enter here. Then, my dear children, a life that is new and beautiful begins for them. As soon as they enter this gateway their weariness leaves them; they forget the uglinesses of the world; they forget that they have known cross words and unkind deeds, and when once they hear the song of the wind, they answer, just as you did a moment ago.

FOURTH CHILD: And when you could find no children who lacked, Piper, then did you come to Hamelin?

PIPER: Yes, twilight was coming on and I came to the town for lodging for the night. But as soon as I set foot on the streets of the city, I knew that something was cruelly wrong. Pretty soon I met a bent old man. "Good friend," I said to him, "I have only just now arrived in your town, but I see some great curse has settled upon it. Will you tell me the cause of such gloom?" "Ah, indeed you are a stranger," he said, "else you had heard the awful calamity that has befallen Hamelin. The town is infested with rats—great rats, small rats, brawny rats, tawny rats, rats of every size and description. And try as hard as we may we cannot rid the town of them. They swarm over our houses, they bite our babies in their cradles, they steal our food, and they have become so bold that men go about armed with clubs and sticks to fight them. But that does no good. Even now the mayor sits in the town hall racking his brain for some deliverance."

Straightway I went to see the mayor. "I have come to rid your city of rats," I said to him. "Name your price, my good friend," he said at once. "Any price we will pay if only this pestilence may be driven from Hamelin." "A thousand guilders," I named. "Fifty thousand we will pay," he shouted, "if only you can rid our town of rats."

With that I began to play a little tune on my pipes and out swarmed the rats. The streets of the town were filled with the procession, such a swarm there was of them, and they followed straight to the brink of the river Weser where they rushed in and were drowned. Then I returned to the market place for my money. "I have come for my thousand guilders," I said. "Thousand!" the mayor shouted at me, and his voice was very ugly to hear. "I will pay you fifty!" "You promised me a thousand," I said, "and pay it you shall. Otherwise, you will regret it as long as you live, for I can play a tune of another sort." But he only laughed, a loud, cruel laugh, and said: "Dead rats don't bite."

For one moment I hesitated, Mother. It is a serious thing to bring children to the Joyous Land without giving their fathers and mothers a second chance. Yet how are children to fall heir to their rightful heritage of wisdom and strength and grace if the mayor and his council refuse to pay their lawful debts, and if the fathers and mothers elect to their highest offices men of such shameful character? Shall children be brought up in so dishonorable a society? So, "Will you reconsider?" I asked. "No," the mayor stormed. "Fifty guilders or nothing at all, you dirty fellow," and he and his councilmen fell to laughing as if this was indeed a funny joke.

With that I put my pipes to my lips and began playing, gently at first, then as rollicking a tune as I know, and just as I expected, out rushed the children. From every house they swarmed just as the rats had done before them, and when we reached the hole in the hill they passed through without so much as looking back. And, here we are, Mother.

MOTHER: Piper, you did wisely. But before we go through the doorway into the Joyous Land, suppose we learn from these children just what their lives have been. My dear (*speaking to First Child*), are you not the daughter of the mayor who refused to pay the Piper?

FIRST CHILD: I am, Mother. I knew father had been trying hard to rid Hamelin of rats, because the people had told him he would not be re-elected for mayor should the rats not be run out. We lived in a great white house outside the town and the rats never bothered us; but father likes to be the mayor so he was anxious to get rid of the rats. When father saw the rats actually following the Piper, it seemed so easy a thing that he regretted he had promised to pay so much. Then he and his councilmen

decided together that they would pay him only fifty guilders instead of the thousand the Piper had asked and the fifty thousand they had promised to pay. I heard my father laughing and saying: "Dead rats won't bite." And I heard one of the councilmen saying: "That's right, Mayor. Drive as hard a bargain as you can with the dirty rascal. He has piped the rats away, but he'll never pipe them back again."

MOTHER (*to Fourth Child*): My son, what did your father think about this?

FOURTH CHILD: My father, Mother, was killed in a war with Hanover.

MOTHER (*in a shocked tone*): In a war with Hanover? Can it be that you have been brought up in a world where brothers bear arms against brothers? No wonder you followed the Piper, damaged as you have been by such outrages as these. Tell me about this war with Hanover.

FOURTH CHILD: The River Weser flows between the town of Hamelin and the city of Hanover. There is in Hamelin a street called The Circle of the Elms. It incloses the city in a great wide circle and is bordered on each side with stately elm trees. Back of this street are great houses of commerce—banks and offices of custom. Indeed, so much money comes into these houses from the outside world that the Circle of the Elms has long been called the richest street in the world. But the town of Hanover also has a Circle of Oaks, and since both of the towns are river towns, there is much buying and selling and shipping going on. One day a rumor reached Hamelin that Hanover was claiming her Circle of Oaks to be the richest street in the world. At the same time they built a flagpole taller than ours, and with that Hamelin was outraged. The mayor called the people of the town together to discuss what should be done about the flagpole, and there seemed to be nothing to do about it but to haul down the flag and cut the pole off by a few inches. So they put our fathers in uniforms and gave them guns, and then played music for them to march by on their way to the boat waiting at the river. It sounded very pretty then, that music, but my father never came home again.

MOTHER: And what of the flagpole? Is it still taller?

FOURTH CHILD: No, Mother. The men of Hamelin made them saw it off by three inches so that it is now no taller than the flagpole of Hamelin.

MOTHER: And how long will Hanoverians let it remain that height?

FOURTH CHILD: I do not know, Mother. We in Hamelin were taught to watch it every day, and to watch the Hanoverians too, but never, never to speak to them. I have even carried a gun on my shoulder and marched in the streets as I remember my father marched, because the mayor told us another day might come when the Hanoverians should try again to raise their flagpole.

MOTHER: And the Hanoverian boys, do they carry guns too and refuse to speak to you?

FOURTH CHILD: Yes, Mother, the mayor of Hanover has instructed them as we have been instructed.

MOTHER: Piper, on the morrow you shall go straightway to Hanover to rescue the children there too. I fear they have lived too long already in this atmosphere of hate and crime.

FOURTH CHILD: Mother, why could not the flagpoles of Hamelin and Hanover be the same height, one as tall as but not taller than the other? In this Joyous Land you would not try to raise a flagpole higher than that of some town across the river, would you?

MOTHER: No, my son, because the heart of childhood and the heart of youth is the same the wide world over, and the dreams and the aspirations of the children of Hamelin, and the dreams and the aspirations of the

children of Hanover are alike sacred. Should Hamelin ever become a Joyous Land like this one here, no one would think of the height of flagpoles. Instead, your mayors would build a golden bridge of love across the River Weser, and that bridge would echo, not the tread of armed men, but the footsteps of friendly neighbors. And the mother and fathers of Hamelin would forget their flagpoles, as would the fathers and mothers of Hanover, and instead of guns they would buy books for their children; instead of drilling grounds they would equip playgrounds for those whom they have loved so unwisely. And together they could build for their children a city of love where there is no ugliness or hate or crime.

FOURTH CHILD: But, Mother, you will not send us away from the Joyous Land, will you? The Piper says the Joyous Land is filled with wonders so great that we in Hamelin do not know the half of them. He says boys in the Joyous Land have been known to soar up, up, up to the very stars. I would do that too, Mother. But back in Hamelin, I should only be laughed at. No, I must hate the Hanoverians back in Hamelin. I haven't time to soar to the stars.

MOTHER: My son, you are yet but a lad, a brave, comely lad. All that the Piper has told you is true. Boys in the Joyous Land have soared to the stars. But you might soar to the stars back in Hamelin, too, were the beautiful white wings of your imagination not clipped by dishonest mayors and frightened councilmen and compromising fathers and mothers. It was an evil day for Hamelin when you were awakened from your dreams. No, do not fear. The Joyous Land you shall never leave unless in Hamelin we discover some one to guide those dreams of yours. And who is this little girl, may I ask? (*Looking at Second Child.*)

SECOND CHILD: O, I lived with my father and mother in Hamelin.

MOTHER: But you have not always lived in Hamelin, have you, my dear?

SECOND CHILD: No, Mother. When I was a wee baby, only this big (*measuring with her hands*) my mother and father put on my brightest little kimono and we said good-by to our home away across the ocean, and came to Hamelin to live.

MOTHER: And why did you follow the Piper?

SECOND CHILD: O Mother, the music was so very sweet! You can't imagine what beautiful fairies I seemed to see in the grass as I listened to the Piper—fairies O so gay and fine with dancing feet and stars in their hair. They were much finer than any fairies my mother has ever seen, and she has seen the most beautiful fairies in the world. She told me all about them.

MOTHER: And why did you leave your mother, my dear, if she knew fairies so fine as that?

SECOND CHILD: Because, Mother, I wanted some one to play with, some little girl like me. When I heard the Piper, I wanted to run in the house and kiss my mother good-by, but the music—Mother, the music caught my feet up and I couldn't stop. Do you know what the music said to me, Mother? It said that somewhere on a green hill top a hundred little girls just like me were dancing in a fairy ring, and because no little girls ever played on the hill tops with me in Hamelin, I followed. There are little girls in the Joyous Land, aren't there, Mother?

MOTHER: Yes, my dear.

SECOND CHILD: And will they play with me when we pass through that doorway?

MOTHER: What were you doing in Hamelin that you never played with little girls?

SECOND CHILD: O, I only looked through the bars in the gate at them.

If I went out in the street, they laughed at me and said my clothes were queer. But they won't laugh at me here, will they, Mother?

MOTHER (*looking at First Child*): Is all this little girl has said true?

FIRST CHILD: Yes Mother. My mother told me not to play with her.

FIFTH CHILD: Why, I never saw her until the Piper came. I didn't know she lived in Hamelin.

THIRD CHILD: I saw her one day peeping through the gate. But we never played with her in Hamelin. I wonder why.

MOTHER: Do you not know why now, my son?

THIRD CHILD: O yes, because Hamelin is only Hamelin with parents who are interested in a tall flagpole and a Circle of Elms, and not a Joyous Land like this one.

MOTHER: But Hamelin could be a Joyous Land like this one. Suppose you tell me about yourself.

THIRD CHILD: O, I lived in a home. Not a real home, you know, but one where lots and lots of children came and we didn't have any mother or father.

MOTHER: Where are your mother and father?

THIRD CHILD: I never knew. I've never known anything but the home and these overalls like all the other children wear.

MOTHER: And why did you follow the Piper?

THIRD CHILD: O, Mother, when I heard the music I knew a mother just like you would be at the end of the journey, and I couldn't stop my feet.

MOTHER: But are there no mothers like me in Hamelin?

THIRD CHILD: No, Mother, not like you. Some of them look ever so beautiful, and I've seen some fathers that you just knew would tell you all about everything in the world—what makes the boats sail on the river, and how the big clock on the tower strikes the hour, and what makes the cuckoo come out—but not one of them ever wanted to take me home with him and be my real father or my real mother. They said I'd be too much trouble. They gave me money sometimes, and on holidays there were always beautiful presents for all of us. But they are not half so beautiful as the Piper's music. And when I heard him piping down the street, I couldn't keep my feet back.

MOTHER: Piper, it seems you did right to bring them. Unless one of them wants to go back, all of them may enter the Joyous Land. I do not know why this child should have fallen asleep. We shall wake her presently and find out. Will you tell me first why you followed the Piper, my boy? (*Looking at Fifth Child.*)

FIFTH CHILD: I was selling my papers, Mother, when I heard the music. And when I heard, there was nothing to do but to follow.

MOTHER: Why were you selling papers?

FIFTH CHILD: Because my father needed the money.

MOTHER: Where is your father?

FIFTH CHILD: He works in a mill near Hamelin. He gets up so early in the morning and comes home so late at night that I never see him. But the mayor pays him so little that I must work too.

MOTHER: And where is your mother?

FIFTH CHILD: O, she works too. She washes clothes all day long so that she never has time to play with me and tell me stories, and when night comes she is too tired.

SIXTH CHILD (*waking up*): I want to go home.

MOTHER (*excitedly*): Now! Did you hear, Piper? She wants to go home! Why, dear, do you want to go home? Tell me.

SIXTH CHILD: I want my mother to put me to bed. And daddy always tells me a story.

MOTHER: Why, my dear, did you follow the Piper?

SIXTH CHILD: Why, all the children came and I came because they did.

MOTHER: Did you not think the music was the sweetest music you have ever heard?

SIXTH CHILD: Why my mother can play tunes more beautiful than the Piper.

SECOND CHILD: I know her mother. She came to our house one day. She drank tea with my mother, and she told me a story about a little girl named Cinderella.

THIRD CHILD: I know her father, too. He took me to his office one day and gave me some books to read, and told me when I was bigger he would help me learn to be a doctor just like him.

MOTHER: Where was this child's father when the Piper was playing?

FIRST CHILD: I know, Mother. He had heard that my father would not pay the Piper the money he promised, and he went to talk to my father about it. He said my father ought to pay the money.

SIXTH CHILD: Will you let me go home now, Mother? The Piper will take me, won't you, Piper? I want to see my mother.

MOTHER: Piper, what shall we do about them?

PIPER: They must go back, Mother, all of them. I cannot think how this child followed except that there are so few fathers and mothers like hers in the town, and so many like the mayor. But those two alone can transform the town, and so the children must return.

MOTHER: My children (*addressing all of them*), you have followed the Piper here to-night because his music was a promise of the fulfillment of all the lovely, enchanting dreams that have been crushed out of your young hearts. Wherever children have been wronged, they rise up and follow that music because here in the Joyous Land we know how to build dreams that reach the stars, and we grow straight and tall like the trees because here there is no hate, only love; no ugliness, only beauty; no selfishness, only service.

But there are Joyous Lands other than this one, and they are built along the banks of any river, like Hamelin itself, or Hanover. In these Joyous Lands live fathers and mothers who rule themselves, their households, and their cities with love. In such Lands the children may also see visions as fair as any here, and the ascent to the stars is none the less real because it is more difficult. In your own town of Hamelin live such a father and mother, the parents of this little child. Even now they are trying to find you, for they love you and they understand the way you have gone. Will you go back with the Piper on the morrow? (*Pause while children think.*)

SECOND CHILD: Maybe you'd give us one of the sparrows with peacock wings to take back with us?

MOTHER: I shall give you something better than that.

(*Enter Weaver of Beautiful Dreams as if in answer to summons.*)

WEAVER OF BEAUTIFUL DREAMS: You called, Mother?

MOTHER: Yes. Children, this is the Weaver of Beautiful Dreams. Tomorrow I send him with you to Hamelin, and he shall stay with you until you are grown tall men and women. He shall lend you his eyes that you may look at the world through them. On a hill overlooking Hamelin stands a gnarled old tree. Its branches are crooked and dying. But once you look at the tree through the eyes of the Dreamer you see the tree standing tall and straight and beautiful, and on every twig is a flower as dewy

pink as the sky at sunrise. And so it shall be with everything, that you may help to fashion with your own hands this Joyous Land of Hamelin. The Dreamer knows all the lore of fairies, all the secrets of the past, all the mysteries of the future, and he will live with you so that you too may learn the wisdom never to be found in books but only hidden deep in the hearts of noble men and women.

WEAVER OF BEAUTIFUL DREAMS: Gladly I go, Mother.

(Enter Knight in the Shining Armor of Truth as if in answer to summons.)

KNIGHT IN THE SHINING ARMOR OF TRUTH: You called Mother?

MOTHER: Yes. And children, this is the Knight in the Shining Armor of Truth. He shall go with you also to Hamelin, and he shall be to you and to your fathers and mothers as a lamp to your feet in the darkness. Your parents have damaged you oftentimes because they knew not truth from falsehood, but when the Knight in the Shining Armor of Truth is come, they need never blunder again.

KNIGHT IN THE SHINING ARMOR OF TRUTH: Your bidding shall be done willingly, Mother.

(Enter Prince with the Book of Love as if in answer to summons.)

PRINCE WITH THE BOOK OF LOVE: You called, Mother?

MOTHER: Yes. Children, with the Knight in the Shining Armor of Truth I shall send the Prince with the Book of Love. Without him Hamelin could never become a Joyous Land, but he shall lead the people as a father would lead them into the green pastures of love and righteousness and unselfishness and service. He and the Knight shall teach the people all wisdom, all beauty, all truth, so that whenever the Piper comes again no one may hear his tunes, because he who dwells in love knows all the wonder of the earth. Is it agreed?

PRINCE WITH THE BOOK OF LOVE: Yes, Mother. Gladly my brothers and I go to create in this city a Joyous Land like our own here. We make ready now for the journey. *(They bow and go out.)*

FOURTH CHILD: Do we go now, Mother?

MOTHER: No, my children. My helpers must prepare for the journey, and you need rest. On the morrow you will go, with the Piper to play for you his sweetest tunes on the journey. Listen. Do you not hear the music of the wind? *(A lullaby is heard.)* The Weaver of Beautiful Dreams is bidding you sweet rest so your feet may be swift like wings for the journey. *(They listen a moment, then one by one fall asleep. The Piper goes about making them comfortable. The Third Child rouses, smiles, and says softly: "Good night, Mother.")*

THE END

Suggestions

The Joyous Land has been written with the facilities of both large churches and small in mind. The setting and the costumes may be as simple or as elaborate as each individual group wishes. The scene is an outdoor one, the "Gateway to the Joyous Land," and ferns and potted palms may be used sparingly or in abundance. A seat is provided for the Mother of the Children Who Lack, preferably a mound or a moss-covered stone. There may be a smaller one for the Piper, but the children group themselves on the ground.

In Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin," * the Piper is described as:

" The Strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head

*Used by permission of the Macmillan Company

Was half of yellow and half of red
 And he himself was tall and thin,
 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
 No tuft on cheek, nor beard on chin,
 But lips where smiles went out and in.
 round his neck
 A scarf of red and yellow stripe
 To match with his coat of the self-same cheque
 And at the scarf's end hung a pipe."

The Mother should wear a long light blue dress or robe, preferably of some heavy material, and simply made. A striped scarf may be worn around the waist, knotted loosely at the side.

The Weaver of Beautiful Dreams wears a flannel coat of some bright color, preferably green, and in his old felt hat, worn carelessly on his head, is a tall feather. He carries a gnarled walking stick as if he had just returned from a tramp over the hillside.

The Knight in the Shining Armour of Truth wears a medieval armor made of gilt paper or silver cambric, and carries not a sword but a torch or a seven-branched candlestick.

The Prince with the Book of Love carries a large leather-bound volume, preferably a Bible. He wears a white tunic with heavy trimmings of gold.

The Children must be dressed simply and inconspicuously as if they have left their playing and followed the Piper. The Japanese child wears a bright colored Japanese kimono, and the orphan child wears overalls.

Tennyson's "Sweet and Low" is suggested for use as a lullaby. At the end of the play, a concealed chorus may sing or hum the melody softly, or the organist may play it as the children go to sleep.

The service of dedication given at the end of the play is suggested for use wherever the play is presented. Additional separate copies are not obtainable, but the director of the play should furnish the congregation with sufficient typewritten or mimeographed copies so that every one may take part. It is suggested that the pastor or a father or mother lead the service of dedication.

Service of Dedication

LEADER: For the high privilege bequeathed to us, the fathers and mothers and the friends of little children.

RESPONSE: We are grateful, O Father.

LEADER: Verily Thou hast made the world a Joyous Land in which we may dwell in peace and happiness and love. The sun, the stars, the moon Thou hast ordained, and the seasons thou hast ordered for our delight. Thou hast given us to dream beautiful dreams, even to soar to the stars in our imaginations; thou hast given us the light of Truth to guide our feet, and the Book of Love that, obedient unto its precepts, and humble in the presence of the magnificent Christ, we may grow in thine own likeness.

RESPONSE: Fix our hearts on that which is highest Father, that we may never betray the sacred trust which thou has given us. We would bequeath to our sons and daughters unimpaired the great joy of living. We would guide their footsteps that they may climb life's hill with eagerness, and go down its farther slope in peace.

LEADER: To a friendlier understanding of these, our sons and daughters.

RESPONSE: We humbly dedicate ourselves.

LEADER: To more courageous living, to less of compromising, keeping ever in mind the high destiny which it is ours as fathers and mothers to fulfill.

RESPONSE: We humbly dedicate ourselves.

LEADER: To a closer companionship with thee, Father, in whose great heart is hidden the secret of life.

RESPONSE: We humbly dedicate ourselves.

ALL: Let us walk together in love all the days of our life.

Other Materials Available for Childhood and Youth Week

"Growing toward God. A program by Alleen Moon * for Churches not desiring a pageant.

"Childhood and Youth Week: Purposes and Plans."—A small leaflet. *

Articles in the Church periodicals for August, September, and October.

* Free, from the office of the Conference Sunday School Board.