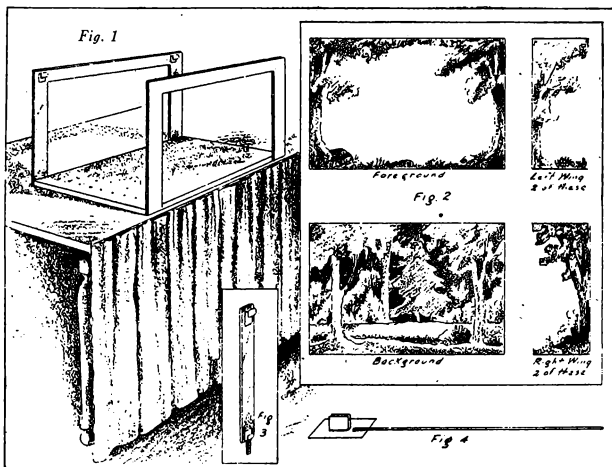


A PUPPET THEATER FOR CHRISTMAS



DO YOU want a theater of your own for Christmas at your own home? I mean, of course, a puppet theater, in which the actors are small cardboard figures which are operated by the stage manager. Such a theater will be a never-ending source of joy to the children of your neighborhood—and some of the grown-ups, too. You can have little Christmas plays—as many as you are willing to prepare.

Long after Christmas is over, the puppet theater would be splendid for a school room, and any enterprising teacher, with the help of some of her pupils, can make a very attractive puppet theater for the pupils of her room to enjoy.

The stage is of wood and has a floor two feet long by fourteen inches deep, with an upright wooden frame fastened

to the front and another to the back, the opening twelve inches high and eighteen inches across. (Figure 1) It stands on a larger table so that one can have properties conveniently at hand. A table cover hangs to the floor, completely hiding the feet of the play producers behind the scenes. Two curtains (or one split into two parts, so that it can reveal the stage) hang in front of the table and stage. There must be no chance for the audience to catch a glimpse of the play producers, or giggles and comments will spoil your choicest play.

Our scenery, even the curtain, is made of cardboard, but if one is clever he can do successful things with cloth.

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CHRISTMAS GOLD

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Into every room she went, blessing the house with the Christmas blessing as she went on her way.

At last she came to the great room where the little spider slept in the corner and where the big Christmas tree stood covered with common cobwebs, a sorry sight to see.

She blessed the picture of Jesus and His mother Mary, and the little shrine where prayers were said, and all the spotless room. Last of all she blessed the Christmas tree, standing as a disgrace to all the household in its gray cobwebs.

In the morning it was Christmas. The sunbeams sparkled and the Christmas bells rang out clear and sweet.

In the great room in the good woman's house stood the Christmas tree, covered from top to bottom in shining gold. You see, the little spider had spun a web all over the Christmas tree, and the Christmas fairy had turned the web into sparkling gold.

It was Christmas magic, the magic of the Christmas blessing which turns everything into shining gold.—
Adapted from "The Instructor."

PUPPET THEATER

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In some scenes the entire depth of the stage is used; in others only half, or even one-fourth. A forest scene consists, for example, of six pieces of scenery: a background, four wing pieces (two for each side), and an open foreground. (Figure 2) Two extra wings add to the possibilities.

For the Christmas story the background may show the interior of the stable, while a manger and animals may be among the figures. The outdoor scene may represent a starry night with shepherds and their sheep in the background. The scene of the wise men may represent a starry background with one large guiding star. The wise men mounted on camels are among the puppet figures.

On the back upright frame, on each side, a piece of zinc near the top is fastened and bent downward to hold the scene in place. (Figure 1) Most of our backgrounds are on stiff cardboard, but some are of paper, with only strips of cardboard pasted back of the two ends. By setting a lamp directly behind it, we can create moonlight or sunsets or early dawn.

The wings of the puppet theater are extremely important. To hold them in

BOYHOOD CHRISTMAS

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5. Why was the narrator of this story lonely?

6. What was his "precious Christmas gift"?

7. Did you like this story? Why?

8. Could the events of this story occur in many different parts of the Philippines? (The author states that this is a true story.)

9. Does this story have "human interest"?

10. What have you learned from this story?

place, we use wooden slats in which there are round pegs at one end. These pegs are set in holes bored in the wooden floor of the stage. The advantage of this arrangement is that wings can be turned diagonally, giving better perspective, preventing the audience from peering in behind the scenes, and also making it possible to open stage doors and the like.

At the bottom and top of each slat are pieces of zinc, similar to those on the back upright frame, one bent upward, the other downward. These serve as clamps to hold the wings in place. (Figure 3) The wings make many things possible, like setting a house in the middle of the woods, or creating optical illusions.

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