

635

15
y 1

PRICE 15 CENTS

The Good Old Days

Alice C. Thompson

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY



SHOEMAKER'S BEST SELECTIONS

For Readings *and* Recitations

Nos. 1 to 27 Now Issued

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|----------|
| Paper Binding, each number. | • | • | • | 30 cents |
| Cloth " " " | • | • | • | 50 cents |

Teachers, Readers, Students, and all persons who have had occasion to use books of this kind, concede this to be the best series of speakers published. The different numbers are compiled by leading elocutionists of the country, who have exceptional facilities for securing selections, and whose judgment as to their merits is invaluable. No trouble or expense is spared to obtain the very best readings and recitations, and much material is used by special arrangement with other publishers, thus securing the best selections from such American authors as Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Lowell, Emerson, Alice and Phœbe Cary, Mrs. Stowe, and many others. The foremost English authors are also represented, as well as the leading French and German writers.

This series was formerly called "The Elocutionist's Annual," the first seventeen numbers being published under that title.

While the primary purpose of these books is to supply the wants of the public reader and elocutionist, nowhere else can be found such an attractive collection of interesting short stories for home reading.

Sold by all booksellers and newsdealers, or mailed upon receipt of price.

The Penn Publishing Company

226 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia

The Good Old Days

A Comedy in One Act

BY

ALICE C. THOMPSON

Author of "Molly's Way," "A Knot of White Ribbon,"
"A Suffragette Baby," etc.



PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1912

79635
Z9 T3515

COPYRIGHT 1912 BY THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

The Good O.d Days

© Cl. D 31814

201

The Good Old Days

CHARACTERS

MRS. MINT *Penelope's mother.*
PENELOPE *a young lady with old-fashioned tastes.*
MAUD *Penelope's sister, and very modern.*
MISS MARTHA MINT *Penelope's aunt.*
IDA
SALLY
DOROTHY } *girl friends of Penelope and Maud.*
GRACE
JULIA
MISS ABIGAIL JAMES *the aunt in Penelope's dream.*
BIDDY *a servant in Penelope's dream.*
ABIGAIL and BIDDY double with MRS. MINT and MARTHA.

TIME OF PLAYING.—Thirty minutes.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Penelope Mint, a girl of eighteen, is "perfectly crazy" about the good old days of stage-coach and minuet. She wishes she had lived at the time when her great-great-grandmother was a belle. While preparing for a party and awaiting her girl friends Penelope falls asleep. She wakes, as she thinks, in the old days, asks for matches, and is bidden to fetch "flint and tinder." She is startled to find the household has never heard of telephone, telegraph, ice-cream, furnaces, rocking-chairs. "What a life! No golf, no bridge, no motoring!" Aunt Abigail thinks she's bewitched. The coach of Penelope's friends is attacked by highwaymen. Loud shouts of terror—"The Indians be upon us!" Penelope hunts wildly for the 'phone, finds an old rifle, points and fires it and faints. Then she awakes. "Ah, I'm thankful I'm in the twentieth century."

COSTUMES, ETC.

MRS. MINT. In the opening scene wears a modern house dress that may be quickly changed at end of scene to colonial dress. As Miss Abigail in the second scene (Penelope's dream) she appears as a stately woman, wearing a high-waisted, short-sleeved, low-necked dress, of silk, if possible; around her neck a white lace-edged fichu, pinned with a large brooch. Her gray hair is parted, done up high with a comb, with small curls hanging in front of the ears. Black lace mitts on her hands, and around her waist a black ribbon, on which are keys. She carries a small black bag, in which are a handkerchief, smelling salts, a piece of embroidery, thimble, silk, needle, and scissors.

PENELOPE. In scene one wears high-waisted Empire gown, or a modern dress, or loose gown that may be readily changed for colonial costume at close of the scene. Her colonial costume should be one of the narrow, high-waisted, low-necked dresses of that time, similar to the "Empire" gown of to-day. With it go heelless slippers, white stockings, hair parted and arranged with side curls, and embroidered or beaded reticule.

MAUD. Modern house dress, and long apron.

MISS MARTHA. In opening scene wears plain modern gown. She is elderly and severe. In second scene, as BIDDY, she wears a colonial gray dress plainly made, with long apron, and a large white cap, like a hood, but without strings.

IDA, SALLY, DOROTHY, GRACE, JULIA. All wear colonial costumes, similar to that described above for Penelope. They also wear long cloaks, one or two trimmed with fur, large bonnets tied under their chins, and mitts or long gloves. Sally and Ida carry large brocaded bags, and Grace and Julia large chintz-covered bandboxes tied with ribbon.

ABIGAIL (see MRS. MINT, above).

BETTY (see MISS MARTHA, above).

PROPERTIES

One or two vases, flowers, desk telephone, a book, an old-fashioned blue and white patchwork quilt, basket with sewing materials, five suit-cases or traveling bags, two brass candlesticks, black paper silhouettes, two large round hat-boxes tied with ribbon, square embroidery frame holding a piece of embroidery, an old rifle.

The Good Old Days

SCENE.—MRS. MINT'S *sitting-room*. At L. C. a small table with a desk telephone on it, two vases and some flowers and a small basket with needle, cotton, thimble and scissors. An armchair beside table. At R. C. a sofa and a rocking-chair. Entrances C. and down L. and R.

(At rise MRS. M. discovered arranging flowers in vases at table.)

MISS MARTHA MINT (*off L.*). Penelope! Penelope! (*Enters L. She is elderly and stern looking.*) Where is Penelope?

MRS. M. I thought she was helping you do up the bedrooms, Martha.

MARTHA. She was helping me, but she went away half an hour ago to find some extra bed-spreads, and I haven't seen her since. I s'pose she's discovered some more old books, and is lost to the world—the modern world at least. And the party to-morrow!

MRS. M. Oh, she's so busy getting up her paper for the Historical Society—on the olden times. "Stage-Coach Days," she calls it. She's perfectly crazy about it.

MARTHA. Yes, I know the sort of thing. And when she found that piece about her great-great-grandmother, Penelope James, she was so excited she couldn't eat her dinner. And she's given up her lessons in stenography and type-writing with Mrs. Fairchild. It's a pity, I say.

MRS. M. Penelope James was a great belle.

MARTHA. Yes, and kept in order by her Aunt Abigail, from all accounts. Girls had to mind in those days. I wish Penelope would copy Maud's example. There's a sensible, practical girl for you.

MRS. M. Indeed she is. She's making pies. How do these flowers look, Martha?

MARTHA. Humph! They'll do. How many girls are coming?

MRS. M. There's Ida and Sally, Dorothy, Grace and Julia.

MARTHA. And all of them to sleep over night—and the dance to-morrow. My goodness! I'll never get through in time. Rooms to be aired and dusted and clean bedspreads and bureau covers. Oh, my! Oh, my! (*Crosses L.*) Penelope! Penelope!

(*Exit, L.*)

(*Enter MAUD, R. She wears a long apron and has flour on her hands.*)

MAUD. Oh, mother, where's Penelope? Can't she go for some baking powder? I'm so busy, and there's not a bit in the house.

MRS. M. I hardly like to ask her, Maud. Her paper for the Historical Club must be finished, you know. Why not telephone?

MAUD. It's such a small order, and they're sure to keep me waiting. But I'll try. (*Sits beside table and takes up receiver.*) Main 1121.....Yes, please. Is that Hudson's?This is Mrs. Mint's. Will you send me over a can of baking powder?.....When can you send it?.....Oh, he's coming now?.....Thank you. (*Hangs up receiver.*) They were just sending up this way. I'm so relieved. Whatever should we do without the telephone? Oh, goodness, I smell my pies burning!

(*Exit, R. MRS. M. picks up the vases of flowers and exits R.*)

(*Enter PENELOPE, L. She carries a large book under one arm and in the other an old patchwork quilt. The quilt drags on the floor as she walks. In the book are a paper and pencil. PENELOPE sits beside table, takes paper from book and reads aloud with a pleased smile.*)

PENELOPE. So I have taken this old letter, written so long ago, and have quoted it at length, as it gives a very good picture of those merry days. "Miss Dorothy Primrose to Miss Tabitha Short. September, 1765. My dearest Friend: It is midnight and the household well asleep, so I shall now endeavour to write you of our Great Doings. We have been very gay with Balls, Picknicks and Parties of

various kinds. At the Ball was a grand Company of Belles and Beaux in their best Brocade, Patches and a-plenty of Powder; Miss Penelope James being the Toast of the Evening, tho she did but come in white sprigged muslin, her new pink Taffetas being on its way this six weeks from England, but the ship we fear delayed by Great storms. Nevertheless her Hand was much sought amongst the Gentlemen and they do say she was fetched to the Ball in Mr. Randolph's chair, all the rest of the Company being afoot, or at the best on Horse." (*The telephone bell rings. PENELOPE starts, looks up and returns to her paper. It rings again. PENELOPE removes receiver from hook. Impatiently.*) Hello!.....No, it isn't. You have the wrong number.

(*Puts receiver on hook.*)

(*Enter MARTHA, L.*)

MARTHA. I thought I heard the telephone.

PENELOPE. You did. Wrong number. I hate the telephone. Just think, Aunt Martha; once, not so very long ago, this town had no telephones, no electric light, no gas. There wasn't such a thing as a train in all the land, and every one used wax candles and traveled by stage-coach. Some had sedan chairs—at least in Boston. Oh, how delightful it must have been! They talk about the hardships of the pioneers, but I think they had lovely times.

MARTHA. Lovely! Delightful! Mighty uncomfortable, I call it. You ought to be thankful that you are living at a time when comfort, convenience and safety are the universal portion. Now, where did you come across that old quilt of my grandmother's?

PENELOPE. I found it in the attic. It will do for Dorothy's bed. She likes old things. I'm going to mend it.

MARTHA. That's old enough, goodness knows! I haven't seen it for years. You had better get to work on it, for it seems to me it will take a deal of mending.

PENELOPE. I will, Aunt Martha. But let me finish this first. It's all about a party in the olden days, when everything was so different and so romantic.

MARTHA. But what about your party that's going to happen to-morrow night?

PENELOPE. Lots of time. I am going to work hard when I finish my essay. Do listen to this letter, Aunt

MARtha. I got it out of an old book, and I'm copying it. All the nouns begin with capitals. It's so funny. (MARtha sits with an air of resignation. PENELOPE reads.) "I am told that against the Expressed wishes of her Parents Penelope begged the Loan of her Cousin Julia's famous Pearl necklace and must needs wear it to the Ball. In the midst of a Minuet I heard her of a sudden cry out, 'Oh, I am undone, I am undone.'"

MARtha (*interrupting*). Such language in a ballroom. Why didn't she ask some lady quietly to button her up?

PENELOPE. Wait a minute. Let me finish. (*Reads.*) "And then I saw the String had bursted and all the Jewels lay scattered on the Floor. The Musick ceased and every Gallant went down on his Knees to find them, and very glad I am to declare they was all Restored to her, at which her Composure happily returned and the Ball continued in Great Gaiety till long after Midnight."

MARtha (*sarcastically*). Was they indeed? I wonder why they didn't learn grammar?

PENELOPE. It seems it was very common then to say "was" when we should say "were"; but isn't it interesting? I'll go on.

(*Enter MAUD, R.*)

MAUD. Oh, Aunt Martha, please come. Mother wants you to help us decide where to place the orchestra to-morrow night.

(*MARtha rises.*)

PENELOPE. I wish we could have a minuet.

MAUD. Minuet! What nonsense! There's nothing like the two-step. (*Dances out L., humming air.*)

MARtha (*sternly*). Now, Penelope, put away that foolish essay and get to work on this quilt if you really intend to do it. (*Gives her basket.*) Here are needles, thimble, and all you want. Don't waste any more time in looking backward.

PENELOPE. No. I will work.

(*Exit MARtha, L.*)

(*PENELOPE begins to sew very industriously, then yawns, drops quilt, picks it up again and finally settles down into the chair, drawing quilt up all around her, and sleepily closing eyes.*)

The lights are turned out, and the curtain descends and remains down while the scene is slightly changed. The interval should be as short as possible.

The telephone and rocking-chair are removed. Some black paper silhouettes or old pictures are hung on walls, a brass candlestick holding a wax candle is on the table and at back L. a high backed chair and a piece of embroidery in a square frame on floor against wall. The quilt is also removed.

At rise of curtain PENELOPE is seen standing by the door C., looking out. She wears the same gown. The stage is dimly lit. MISS ABIGAIL JAMES heard off R., calling PENELOPE. She enters R.)

ABIGAIL. How now, Penelope? Idling at the door when so many tasks await you, and the party this very night? Fie, fie!

(Sits and takes embroidery out of bag and begins to sew.)

PENELOPE. I'm watching for the girls. I wonder if the train is on time.

ABIGAIL. The train! What do you mean, child? Likely the stage-coach is bemired. The roads at this season of the year are none too good.

PENELOPE *(clasping her hands)*. Oh, a real stage-coach! How delightful!

ABIGAIL. Aye, one of these newfangled affairs, all cushioned, if ye please. The ladies are growing very delicate. In my young days we rode on horse, and was content enough. Come, child, close the door and light the candles; the night is drawing in.

(PENELOPE comes down C.)

PENELOPE. Where are the matches?

ABIGAIL *(dropping her embroidery)*. The what?

PENELOPE. The matches. To light the candles.

ABIGAIL *(shortly)*. Fetch the flint and tinder. I think you have been moping too long in the dark. *(Enter BIDDY, L. She carries two candles in brass candlesticks. Lights up.)* No, never mind. Here's Bidy with lights.

(BIDDY puts candles on table.)

BIDDY (*curtseying*). Mistress, if ye please, I need eggs for the custard and wax candles for the dancing-room. We has but six left.

ABIGAIL. Oh, we must have forty at the least, for 'tis a large apartment, and I am determined on a genteel rout. Bid Mary take a letter down to Mr. Cunningham's shop. And give her a farthing for her pains. Have you gotten ready the victuals?

BIDDY. Yes, ma'am; there be a-plenty cold fowl, syllabubs, trifle, custards, cinnamon nuts and frosted plum cake, and to wash it down elderberry wine, gooseberry wine and cider.

PENELOPE (*disappointed*). No ice-cream?

BIDDY (*staring*). Eh?

PENELOPE. No vanilla or maple mousse ice-cream?

ABIGAIL. I don't know what you mean, Penelope, but I think we have provided in a becoming manner. Now, Biddy, you'd best put a warming-pan in the beds. The young ladies will be here soon. And a bit of fire, too, in the chimney piece would not be amiss this cold night.

PENELOPE. What! Haven't you a furnace?

BIDDY. A what? I never heard you use such queer outlandish words in all my life, Miss Penelope.

(*Exit BIDDY, L., looking back at PENELOPE as if bewildered.*)

ABIGAIL. Penelope, this idleness is growing upon you. It will surely breed a distemper in you.

PENELOPE. Good gracious, Aunt Abigail! Distemper! You speak as though I were a puppy.

ABIGAIL. Hoity toity! Don't answer back, miss, but get your sampler. Another word now and I'll put you to the backboard for an hour.

PENELOPE. Well, I never! (*Sits in small chair picking up embroidery frame.*) What an uncomfortable chair! Where is the rocking-chair?

ABIGAIL. What do you mean? Never have I seen aught that rocked except a cradle. 'Tis about time you made your father some shirts, I think.

PENELOPE (*laughing*). I make father's shirts! Why, the idea! I couldn't make one to save my life.

ABIGAIL (*raising her hands in horror*). An idle, saucy maid! When I was younger than you I could make a shirt,

bake, brew, and answer my elders civilly. Aye, and play passable well on the spinet.

PENELOPE. What a life! No golf, no bridge, no matinéés, no motoring. Oh, my!

(*Enter BIDDY, L.*)

BIDDY. Oh, mistress, the fiddlers has come, and the big game pie I made for to-night is gone from the larder. 'Tis my belief the harpist has took it. Whatever shall we do, ma'am, and the kitchen fire gone out?

PENELOPE (*promptly*). Telephone the butcher for some lamb chops and cook them on the gas stove, of course.

ABIGAIL. Silence, miss! 'Tis sad news, Biddy. If it was not for our rout to-night I should have him in the stocks; but we need him. Say nought about it to-night, Biddy; but pray fetch me a dish of tea. I feel a faintness coming on.

BIDDY. I will, ma'am. The town constable will look after him to-morrow, I reckon.

(*PENELOPE rises and goes to window.*)

PENELOPE. When are those girls coming? Something must have happened. Why don't they telegraph? Oh, they could hire a motor. It's only a few hours' run from Boston.

BIDDY. A few hours! A whole day's journey. Lawks-a-massey!

ABIGAIL. That's the way she's been talking all day. I can't understand her, or the strange words she utters.

BIDDY. Belike Goody Fairchild has bewitched her. I've seen her down at her cottage.

ABIGAIL. You're right, Biddy. I know you have been there, Penelope.

PENELOPE. Of course I have. Mrs. Fairchild is giving me lessons in stenography and typewriting. She's a stenographer, you know.

BIDDY. Oh, she's gone clean daft.

ABIGAIL (*emphatically and to PENELOPE*). A witch, you mean. I tell you what, missy, I'll have Mr. Codman up to bleed you.

PENELOPE. Dr. Codman? Oh, Aunt Abigail, he wouldn't do anything so foolish. Why, when I went to see him a few days ago because I had a little cold, he advised

me to sleep with both my windows wide open and to take a cold bath in the morning.

(BIDDY *stares at* PENELOPE *dumbfounded.*)

ABIGAIL. Then he's crazy, too. I'll see to it that your bed curtains are drawn snug and close; that your windows are shut tight that not a breath of the chill night air may reach you.

BIDDY. Aye, and sand bags for every window sill. I'll fetch 'em down from the attic. I'll fetch 'em now.

(*Exit, L.*)

PENELOPE. And is this America? (*A horn heard off c.*) Thank goodness! There's the motor.

ABIGAIL. Enough of this levity, Penelope. 'Tis most unseemly in a young gentlewoman. Unbar the door.

(PENELOPE *runs up c., and opens door. Enter* IDA, SALLY, DOROTHY, GRACE *and* JULIA. *All are in great distress and alarm.*)

DOROTHY. A haven at last! (*Drops into a chair.*)

SALLY (*running to* PENELOPE). My dearest Penelope! I thought my time had surely come.

(*Falls into her arms.*)

IDA. 'Tis only by good fortune we are here to tell the tale.

ABIGAIL. Whatever is amiss? What is it? Pray tell us.

JULIA. A horrible misadventure, ma'am. Our coach was held up by highwaymen.

PENELOPE. How thrilling! Not real highwaymen?

JULIA. Oh, ruffians, my love, equipped with masks and horse pistols, which they presented to us, demanding our money or our lives.

(DOROTHY *closes eyes.*)

GRACE. Oh, see, our dear Dorothy has swooned.

IDA. The hartshorn! Bring the hartshorn and camphor.

ABIGAIL. I will tend her. (*Goes to* DOROTHY *and taking small bottle from her reticule, holds it to* DOROTHY'S *nose.*) 'This venture has been too much for her.

GRACE. I have lost every shilling.

JULIA. And I—as well as the little silk purse sister Mary knit for me.

DOROTHY (*opening her eyes*). Oh, where is my best bonnet?

ABIGAIL. She's coming to herself.

DOROTHY. I bore it with me in a bandbox. (*Sits up.*)

JULIA. Indeed 'tis gone, Dorothy. When we fell into the quagmire it rolled off and down the hill.

DOROTHY. Oh, dear, oh, dear! 'Twas a sweet thing from London with a bird of Paradise a top it, and a knot of puce-colored ribbon on the side. I shall never look upon its like again.

PENELOPE. Yes, you will, Dorothy. You can get another hat. (*Seizes her hand.*) Come, I'm going to play the loveliest two-step for you.

ABIGAIL. Be more discreet, Penelope. You alarm your friends.

(*Loud noise and shouts heard off c.*)

IDA. What is that? (*Runs to door.*)

(*Enter BIDDY, L.*)

BIDDY. Oh, mistress, the Injuns be upon us. What shall we do? What shall we do?

ABIGAIL. The Indians!

(*DOROTHY faints.*)

IDA. Scores of them surround the house. Oh, we are undone! We are undone!

(*BIDDY puts fingers in her ears and shrieks. IDA faints.*)

JULIA rushes wildly about.)

JULIA. The Indians! The Indians!

PENELOPE. Call the police. Where's the telephone? Oh, where's the telephone?

ABIGAIL. She's lost her wits. (*Noise off stage grows louder.*) Oh, we are undone!

(*PENELOPE seizes the old rifle, drops on knees in the doorway, discharges it and faints. The stage becomes dark, and the curtain descends for a moment. At rise PENELOPE is seen just waking up wrapped in the old patchwork quilt. Room as in Scene I.*)

PENELOPE (*rising excitedly*). The Indians! The Indians! Save us! (*Enter MARTHA, R.*) So we won't have the dance after all.

(*Enter MAUD and MRS. M., L.*)

MARTHA. Of course we're going to have the dance. What's the matter?

PENELOPE (*sitting up*). Where am I? (*Looks around.*) Oh, I've been dreaming. There are no Indians here, and I'm thankful to say I'm really living in the twentieth century. Oh, you were right, Aunt Martha, you were right.

(*A motor horn off C.*)

MAUD. There are the girls.

(*Goes up C.* PENELOPE *runs to table, sits and picks up pencil and paper.*)

PENELOPE. I have just one thing more to say in my essay. (*Writes and reads.*) "But after all, whatever may be said in favor of the olden days, I am sure we should all be very thankful that we are living at a time when comfort, convenience and safety are the universal portion." (*Puts down pencil and rises. Enter C., IDA, SALLY, DOROTHY, GRACE and JULIA, all laughing and talking at once. They wear modern costumes, and carry suit-cases and bags. PENELOPE hugs several of the girls at once.*) Oh, girls, I am glad to see you! I've just had the queerest dream about you, and stage-coaches and Indians. I thought we were all back in the eighteenth century.

DOROTHY. Indians! Bless me. I'd rather be living right here and now, thank you.

PENELOPE. You're right, Dorothy. Those good old days were well enough for people who didn't know any better, but for me—give me the twentieth century.

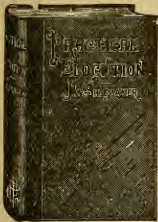
(*They all laugh.*)

CURTAIN



DEC 28 1912

Practical Elocution



By J. W. SHOEMAKER, A. M.

300 pages

Cloth, Leather Back, \$1.25

This work is the outgrowth of actual class-room experience, and is a practical, common-sense treatment of the whole subject. It is clear and concise, yet comprehensive, and is absolutely free from the entangling technicalities that are so frequently found in books of this class.

Conversation, which is the basis of all true Elocution, is regarded as embracing all the germs of speech and action. Prominent attention is therefore given to the cultivation of this the most common form of human expression.

General principles and practical processes are presented for the cultivation of strength, purity, and flexibility of Voice, for the improvement of distinctness and correctness in Articulation, and for the development of Soul power in delivery.

The work includes a systematic treatment of Gesture in its several departments of position, facial expression, and bodily movement, a brief system of Gymnastics bearing upon vocal development and grace of movement, and also a chapter on Methods of Instruction, for teachers.

Sold by all booksellers, or sent, prepaid, upon receipt of price.

The Penn Publishing Company

226 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia



Do you want to be an Orator

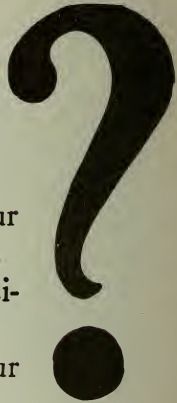
Do you want to be a Teacher
of Elocution

Do you want to be a Public
Reader

Do you want to improve your
conversation

Do you want training in Physi-
cal Culture

Do you want to increase your
power in any direction



A CATALOGUE GIVING FULL INFORMA-
TION AS TO HOW ANY OF THESE AC-
COMPLISHMENTS MAY BE ATTAINED
WILL BE SENT FREE ON REQUEST

The National School of Elocution and Oratory

Parkway Building

Philadelphia