

When Betty Saw The Pilgrims

—BY—
MARGARET HOWARD



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WHEN BETTY SAW THE PILGRIMS

**BY
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ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE
FRANKLIN, OHIO - DENVER, COLO.**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PS 635
Z9H852

A Mother
Robert } her children
Betty }
Six Pilgrim Men
Six Pilgrim Women
Three Pilgrim Girls
Two Pilgrim Boys
Three Dutch Women
Two Dutch Children
Two Indians

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRODUCTION

The tableaux may very easily be altered by omitting some or adding others, thus varying the length of the program. The number of characters also may be altered to suit the size of the platform.

The Pilgrim women and girls should be dressed in gray or some sombre color, with white caps, fischus and aprons. The men should wear dark suits with knickerbockers. The large white collars and cuffs may be cut from soft white cardboard and the buckles, at belt, knees and on the big black hats, may be made of cardboard, covered with tinfoil.

Suggestions for these and other costumes may be obtained from the book, "Costumes and Scenery for Amateurs," by Constance Mackay.

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Scene—The stage is divided by curtains of some dark material which may be drawn to reveal tableaux or scenes on the rear stage. To one side of the front stage are three chairs for the three main characters. Branches of trees and other greens may be used quite effectively as a background for the rear stage and also for general decorations.

At the opening of the play the curtains are drawn. The Mother, Robert and Betty enter the front stage.

Betty—Oh, Mother, I wish Sunday would hurry up and go away. There isn't anything to do on it.

Robert—No, nothin' but get washed and dressed and go to Sunday School.

Mother—But don't you like to go to Sunday School?

Betty—Well, sometimes; but we always have to go whether we want to or not, and we have to sit so still and be so good.

Mother—Did you ever hear about a little girl named Patience Brewster, I wonder, who lived a long, long time ago?

Betty—Oh, no, Mother. Is it a story? Please, please tell us a story. (The children pull their mother into a chair and seat themselves in the chairs on either side of her, looking at her eagerly.)

Robert—Yes, Mother, do.

Mother—All right. This little girl named Patience Brewster, lived with her father and mother in the northern part of England. She had a little sister named Fear and a brother, Jonathan. They wore queer-looking clothes, not at all like yours. Let us imagine that we can see them.

TABLEAU ONE

(The curtains are opened, revealing a Pilgrim man and woman, one boy and two girls grouped as naturally as possible.)

Betty—Oh, I can almost believe I see them. Aren't they funny and old-fashioned? What long skirts Patience and Fear wore!

Robert—And look at all those buckles on that boy!

(The curtains are drawn.)

Mother—At that time there was only one church in England and everybody had to go to it. But Patience's father and mother didn't believe in it. However, when they didn't want to attend it, and wanted to worship God just as they pleased, the king told them they would be put in prison if they didn't obey. When they heard that Patience's father and some other men decided to hold meetings in secret and they did for a while. Sometimes they would meet in one place and sometimes in another, and several times the king's soldiers caught some of them and arrested them. So finally, Patience's father, who was called Elder Brewster, because he was an elder in the church, and these other men decided to go away from England to another country, Holland, where they could hold church just as they pleased. When they went there they began to call themselves Pilgrims, because a pilgrim is one who wanders around, and they knew they would have to wander about, away from their own homes. They stayed in Holland about ten years and were very happy there, but they began to be afraid that their children would speak Dutch like the children of Holland, and though the king had sent them away from England, they still loved it. Finally, someone suggested America. Now this was away back in 1620, and at that time there were only a few white people living in America and there were lots of savage Indians, so it took a brave person to go there. But the Pilgrims decided to go, because they knew God would be with them and they

could worship Him in any way they pleased and have as many kinds of churches as they wanted and no one could stop them. So, in July, 1620, a part of them left Holland. Their Dutch neighbors were very sorry to see them go, because they liked them. They gave them many gifts to take with them. But when one little Dutch girl brought a doll, the Pilgrim mother wouldn't take it because she didn't want her little girl to have such a gaily dressed doll to play with.

TABLEAU TWO

(When the curtains are opened, a Pilgrim woman is revealed standing behind a table on which is a trunk or box that she is packing. To one side of her is her little girl. A Dutch girl enters and endeavors to give a Dutch doll to the Pilgrim child, who wishes to take it, but they are reproved by the woman. The curtains are drawn.)

Mother—Part of the Pilgrims stayed behind, for there wasn't room enough for all of them in their ship. Those who were to stay behind and some of the Dutch people were at the harbor to tell them goodbye. Just before they left, their pastor prayed the following prayer, asking God to protect them on their journey.

TABLEAU THREE

(All the Pilgrims are on the stage and are kneeling with bowed heads. To the left of the stage are grouped all five Dutch people, who are standing. The pastor or Elder Brewster, delivers the following prayer: "I charge you before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His holy word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech

you, remember it—'tis an article of your church covenant—that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God. Amen.” After the prayer, all rise. Two of the Pilgrims stay with the Dutch, while the others tearfully bid them farewell and leave the stage.)

Mother—They went to England to get their ships, and on the sixth day of September, 1620, 102 of them left Plymouth in their ship, The Mayflower. The ocean voyage was very rough. They didn't see land in America until the twenty-first of November—over two months. The Atlantic had not been crossed many times then, and do you wonder that the children were frightened? (Betty and Robert shake their heads.) Just before they landed on the shore, they had a meeting in the cabin of their ship, and drew up a compact or agreement that they would make such laws as they would need in the colony and that all would agree to be bound by those laws and obey them. Let us see if we can't imagine those Pilgrim Fathers signing the compact,

TABLEAU FOUR

(Curtains opened. Three Pilgrim men are seated at a table while two stand nearby. One rises and reads the compact, which is as follows: “In the name of God, amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign, King James, having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue thereof, to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most convenient for the general good of the colony. Unto which

we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the eleventh day of November in the year of the reign of our sovereign Lord, King James, of England, France and Ireland, Anno Domini, 1620." The reader seats himself, and all the men sign the compact, using a quill pen. Curtain.)

Robert—And, was that their government?

Mother—Yes, that was the way they decided to govern themselves. You remember, I said it was in November when they saw shore? Well, it was the bare, rough coast of Massachusetts that they saw, with the ocean on one side and the wilderness on the other. The weather was very cold and many of them were sick because of the long voyage. There were no houses to welcome them and they were afraid of the Indians, but these people were very brave. They hunted around the coast for a while, trying to find a good place to live, and finally they came to a place where they decided to land, which was called Plymouth, after the place in England where they had been treated so kindly. When they got out of their boats, December 21, 1620; one of the women, Mary Chilton, stepped upon a large rock by the shore and said, laughingly, "I will be the first woman to step foot in our new town." And she was. This rock still is near the ocean and is called Plymouth Rock. Many people go there now to see the place where the Pilgrims landed. Then all the company fell on their knees and thanked God for bringing them out of the perilous ocean, through all sorts of troubles, and had once more set their feet on the firm ground.

TABLEAU FIVE

(The Pilgrims are all kneeling in devout attitude. They remain thus while a quartette sings "The Landing of the Pilgrims," by Frederick W. Root, or "Faith of Our Fathers." Or, someone may recite "The Landing of the Pilgrims," by Mrs. Hemans.)

Mother—This was over three hundred years ago, children, and people all over the United States each year celebrate the coming of these people to America and thank them for all they did.

Betty—Well, and what did Patience do? Was she at Plymouth, too?

Mother—No, she had stayed behind in Holland. But in the meantime she had had a little sister, named Love, who looked very much like her, and she was there. However, she didn't have as good a time as you do. You see, the Pilgrims didn't think it was right to have a good time. They made the children sit for hours at a time, learning verses from the Bible. In fact, they didn't believe in celebrating on Christmas Day. That is, most of them didn't. On Christmas, the governor took the men out to work as usual. Well, when he came home he found some of the children laughing and playing games in the street. The governor was very angry and made them stop playing, saying there should be no merry-making in the streets, and the children were afraid to play for a long time after that.

TABLEAU SIX

(The five Pilgrim children are laughing and playing "Ring Around the Rosie," or something similar. The governor enters and angrily reproves them, shaking one of the children. They look frightened and run from the platform.)

Robert—How did they get their houses built?

Mother—Oh, each man built his own house, but it was very hard work, for the weather was so bad and so many people were sick. But they finally got their houses built and a church, too. You see, they didn't forget God. But they were afraid of Indians and when they went to church, they carried guns. In fact, even the minister carried a gun.

TABLEAU SEVEN

(The entire Pilgrim group is seen passing in a procession, three abreast. The men carry old-fashioned guns, and the women, Bibles. The minister and the governor should lead and two or three men should bring up the rear.)

Mother—When they got to church, they stacked their guns inside the door, so they could seize them quickly in case of an alarm being given. They went to church at about nine o'clock in the morning and stayed until nearly four. The services were very long, but if anyone went to sleep he was awakened by a man whose duty it was to see that no one went to sleep. This man had a long rod with a hard knob on one end and a squirrel's tail on the other. He used the knob end for men and boys, but the squirrel tail end for ladies and older people. Children had to be very quiet on Sunday. They were forbidden to laugh or play, but Love and other good children did not quarrel about it. They liked Sunday and were glad to thank God for His kindness to them.

Robert—But didn't the Indians bother them?

Mother—Well, no, not very much at first, for there had been a dreadful disease among the neighboring Indians several years before, and they were not strong enough to bother the Pilgrims. But one day an Indian, named Samoset, who knew a little English, came as messenger from his chief.

TABLEAU EIGHT

(The Pilgrim men are discovered, talking in pantomime, their guns being stacked nearby. The Indian, Samoset, appears. The men look alarmed and seize their guns, but are soon reassured when Samoset says, brokenly, "Welcome, Englishmen!")

Mother—He was the messenger of Massasoit, the chief of a great tribe nearby. And one day soon after

that, the chief, himself, came to see the Pilgrims and while he was there, a peace treaty was made between them, which was kept for over fifty years.

TABLEAU NINE

(A Pilgrim enters, conducting Massasoit and Samoset. The two Indians seat themselves on mats or cushions. The Pilgrim then leaves and soon returns, conducting the governor and other men. Upon their entrance, the Indians rise, and the governor kisses the chief's hand. The chief then presents a peace pipe, which is smoked by each of them. The governor finally produces the peace treaty which is signed, first by the chief who makes his sign, next by the governor.)

Mother—Well, children, after this, the Pilgrims had many trials and troubles, but other people from England came to help them. And that first year, though they had had much trouble, after their harvest was gathered, they rejoiced together and thanked God for His mercy to them, thus beginning what we know as Thanksgiving Day.

TABLEAU TEN

(All of the Pilgrims and the two Indians are standing, talking and rejoicing in pantomime. Pumpkins, corn and fruit should be used to lend the Thanksgiving atmosphere. They may be placed on a table toward the front, if desired. The children should be interested mainly in helping themselves to the fruit. During this scene, a quartette sings "America, the Beautiful.")

Mother—Now, children, do you think we should thank our Pilgrim Fathers who came and made it possible for us to live in this country happily and comfortably and believe in God, and worship Him as we please, without being disturbed?

Betty—Oh, yes, and Mother, I'm sorry I was naughty and fussed about Sunday, for I ought to be glad I'm not Patience Brewster, and that I'm living now instead of 1620.

(Exeunt Mother, Betty and Robert.)



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