

# "THE PIPER" PROMISES UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT

Production Now in Rehearsal by  
Community Players Tells  
Beautiful Story

By OBSERVER

In "The Piper" one finds a play so good as to have been translated into French, German and Swedish. It is a prize play, first performed at Stratford-on-Avon, in 1910, and in later years in New York at the New Theater, with Edith Wynne Mathison in the title role. And now, after it has attained fame, the Community players of Winnetka will produce it at the Jane Kuppenheimer Memorial hall at Skokie school, February 12 and 13.

The rehearsals are creating the greatest enthusiasm among the players, all considering the play the most beautiful piece they have yet attempted. They are enthusiastic, too, over the costumes which are being made by a large group of women under the direction of Mrs. Roger K. Ballard—not Mr. Ballard, despite the announcement last week due to a slip of pen or type.

### Children Have Part

Still another cause for enthusiasm is the smooth working-out of the co-operation of school children and adults, by which arrangement, work, fun, expense and honors are shared with the Skokie school on a 50-50 basis. Thanks to Mrs. Ballard's committee, their stage properties will be increased by fifty fine medieval costumes. These, by the way, represent a considerable expenditure for fabrics, more than would be justified did not the Community Players believe that their work is appreciated by the community they aim to serve, and that they must, in turn, constantly enrich the quality of their offerings.

This charming play is founded on the tradition used by Browning in "The Piped Piper of Hamelin." You remember, of course, the appearance of the fantastically dressed Piper in rat-infested Hamelin, the bargain for so many guiders to destroy the rodents, the repudiation of the debt by the

burgomaster, and his revenge in the abduction of all the children. And one may still read upon a certain stone in the village how "in the year 1284, on the day of John and Paul, which was the 26th day of June, by a Piper arrayed in many colors 130 children were led astray, born within Hamelin and lost near the shrine of the Koppelberg." With this record and Browning's poem, the playwright has interwoven many other matters of history and tradition. There were, for instance, in those days Strolling Players, who carried from town to town much information, as well as entertainment. For each town was a little world of itself. But the Church frowned on these wanderers, tramps, outcasts—"masterless dogs" some called them; "without honor, without rights," says the law of that period. "As citizens of nowhere, they had no legal protection at any time."

### Tells Age-Old Tale

It is easy to see how, by making the Piper out of a band of strolling players, the plot enlarged and "motivated." The "Strollers" erected a rude ark in the village street, with Hell-mouth, a common stage property of the time, nearby. While the Piper piped and Michael, the sword swallower, performed his magic act, a scarlet montebank with a pitchfork pushed lost souls into the jaws of hell. All was the boldest farce of which the bargain struck with the burgomaster for the extermination of the rats and the piping them out of the houses into the river was but one act.

The play opens with the refusal to pay the sum stipulated, frankly on the ground that the Piper being without honor and without rights cannot collect the debt. Well, there is no haste about avenging himself. There is time taken to win the children. The animals that thrust their waggish heads out of the windows of the ark are amusing, especially when they remove their heads. And the Piper—again and again he responds to the pleading "Oh, Pipe for me!" "Oh, play and make us dance!" "We're mice, mice, mice!" they cry at last, but he bides his time, till the grownups have gone to church. There is time, too, for the birth of

the love story. What becomes of the children, how the burgomaster is punished, and how a mother's love restores the children is all delightfully enacted.

### Love of a Child

But it is not the happy development of plot that makes this a great play. It is, as in "Peter Pan," the creation of a unique character. Not because the Piper had been cheated did he steal the children, but because of the greed eating out the heart of Hamelin, which would in time consume the children, too. Worshiper at the shrine of the Lonely Man, he typifies all lonely men, the homeless, the "despised and rejected," whose champion he is in the lists against not only greed, but pride and uncharitableness. But he himself lacks love, till it comes to him in the caress of a little child.

Next week's TALK will give the cast.

# Christian Science Lesson-Sermon Will Be "Love"

The lesson sermon at First Church of Christ, Scientist, on Sunday morning, January 31, will be "Love."

Services are held in the Masonic temple at 708 Elm street, at 11 o'clock, and the testimonial meeting is held on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.

Sunday school convenes at 9:35 o'clock.

The Christian Science reading room at 526 Linden street, is open daily from 12 until 6:30 P. M.

Mrs. William Sherman Hay of 645 Sheridan road, with others, assisted Mrs. Albert F. Madlener at her tea for Mrs. Albert F. Madlener, Jr., Tuesday at her home in Chicago. Mrs. Madlener, Mrs. Madlener, Jr., and the latter's mother, Mrs. Frank O. Lowden, received.

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