

HISTORICAL CHARADES

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Historical Charades by Julia Charlotte Maitland

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JULIA CHARLOTTE MAITLAND

**HISTORICAL
CHARADES**

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HISTORICAL CHARADES.

J. C. Moreland

BY THE AUTHOR OF

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HISTORICAL CHARADES.

CHAPTER I.

A LARGE party of children were assembled one Christmas to pass the holydays at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Percy. There were boys and girls of all ages, cousins, or brothers and sisters, with their parents, and myself, who am Mrs. Percy's youngest sister, and aunt to all the children. We spent many of our evenings in acting Charades, the preparations for which gave us a good deal of employment in the daytime, and enabled us to pass the rainy and snowy weather very pleasantly within-doors.

There are probably few children who have never played at Charades, but for the sake of any who may not know the game, I will give a short description of it.

The players divide themselves into two parties, who take it in turn to act and to guess the word. If grown-up people join in the game, the children generally act, leaving the papas and mammas to

look on and guess. The actors go out of the room, and choose a word of two or more syllables, each syllable or division of the word having a separate meaning. For instance: Improbability, Imp-Rob-Ability, Rail-Way, Ram-pant, Miss-Fortune. After having arranged the part that every person is to take, they return to the company, and represent each syllable in its turn, and lastly the entire word.

Suppose RAILWAY to be the word. Several chairs are placed in a row, with the seats facing one way: the backs represent the *rail* of a bridge. Children stand on the seats, pretending to be fishing, or looking at the river. One walks past as a mother, frightened at seeing her child in so dangerous a place, and calls out, "Oh, come down, my dear Tommy! You will fall over into the water." "Oh, Mamma, indeed it is quite safe; look here!" showing the rail. "Well, if you promise to hold fast by that, you may stay." When the scene is finished, the actors leave the room, and return when ready to represent the next syllable.

Second scene.—A party of travellers following a guide, who shows them their *Way* through an unknown country. The chairs and tables should be arranged so as to leave only a narrow winding path between them; the guide, with a long pole in his hand, goes first, pointing out the *way* to

the others, who follow him slowly and carefully, complaining of the darkness of the night, and the dangers to which they are exposed from robbers.

Last scene.—Eight or ten children seat themselves on the floor: the biggest boy, provided with a whistle, sits in front to represent the engine; the rest hold by each other's dresses, and pretend to be a train of carriages hooked to one another. One boy stands alongside with a bell, as the policeman. When the train is ready to start, the policeman rings his bell, and then takes his place behind the rest as guard. The engine gives a loud whistle, and then a few puffs; the carriages begin to move up and down, and scrape their feet on the floor; the engine puffs faster and faster, as if increasing its pace, and the carriages of course jolt and scrape in proportion. When the train has reached its full speed, a dreadful accident takes place; the train is supposed to run off the line: the carriages fall sideways on the floor, the engine whistles as loud as possible; screams and howls are heard from the passengers; the kicking and struggling become tremendous for a time, but gradually die away, and a few faint puffs from the prostrate engine close the scene.

The great difficulty in Charades is to find new words. The dressing and acting are easy