

THE BIRD'S GOODBY.

A wild bird sat in a tree top high, The air was growing chill, And sang a simple melody, As wild birds often will.

WANTED—AN EXPLANATION.

By C. Harry Clandy.

How an Impetuous Bohemian Won the Musical Prize.

The talk had turned on the supernatural, and nearly every one of our circle in the Bohemian club, in whose veins we were, had related some personal ghostly experience or had drawn memory for tales of spirits in other lands. When Jenkins turned to me with a request that I add my mite to the evening's entertainment, I protested that I thought I should be let off—

glass of champagne), and he had been trying to cheer me up, but with ill success. I had reached my home about half past 11, and gone up to my room and dropped wearily into a chair, without even troubling to light the lamp. But I was restless, and I soon rose and went to the window, throwing it wide open. It was clear, the moon was nearly full and almost directly overhead. As I gazed out into the cold, clear air, I heard a clock strike 12, and then another clock farther down town struck, and then a clock in the house—it seemed as if all creation was made of clocks, all striking 12. I turned, intending to go to bed, when my attention was arrested by a cloud, passing over the face of the moon. You know how fanciful a man will get at times—well, I thought that cloud had the shape of Elsa's head, and then, as it passed, it seemed to me as if, for a moment, the moon was not so bright as it was. It was as if some one had turned down the light of the Lady of Night. I laughed dearly to myself, thinking it was a trick of my eyes, and I do not know that it was not. I am merely telling this as it happened.

"Well, as I say, I was about to close the window and retire, when I was suddenly assailed with the conviction that the room was not as I had left it. Something was different; I could not say what, but I had a distinct idea that there was a difference. Puzzled, I started to light the lamp, when I most plainly heard the sound of a low minor chord—a chord struck with a slight roll from treble to bass—a chord that was the beginning and the ending as well of a little song, a poor little thing at best, but one that I had composed and given to Elsa, and one that only she and I had ever heard.

"I turned savagely toward the piano. I knew there was but that one piano in hearing distance, and I knew I was alone in the room. I knew if that piano was the origin of the sound I had just heard that it was produced by some other than ordinary means. I lighted the lamp. There stood the piano, lid open, just as I had left it—silent as I had left it—with the exception that there was the overtone of a pedal held bass note still vibrating softly in the air. I looked, involuntarily, at the pedal. Gentlemen, that pedal was held down! It is monstrous, it is incredible, but it is a fact—that pedal was held down—and even as I looked it was released and came slowly back to its natural position, as if the foot of the invisible performer was taken exceedingly from it.

"To say that I was startled would be to put it very mildly. I was thunder-struck and not a little frightened, not of bodily harm, but frightened as we usually are of things we cannot understand.

"I took a step toward the instrument. As I did so I not only heard that chord again, but saw it struck! I repeat, I saw the keys go softly down and heard the sound, soft, low, but clear as a bell. I stopped, petrified. I turned, walked an uncertain step toward the door, turned again, and then dropped weakly into a chair. 'Well,' I thought, 'I am either dreaming or I have gone crazy or I am seeing a miracle! I must brace up and do something.' But even as I moved to 'do something' there stole through the air the prettiest strain of music, the softest, sweetest, merriest strain I ever heard. I listened, spellbound. I had never heard anything like it before, nor have I ever since. You have all heard that composition that has made me whatever I am—it is called my best composition—but I am a failure as a composer, because I have never since been able to do anything so good.

**One Exception.**  
"I am reduced from affluence to beggary," he faltered.  
In a few words as possible she broke their engagement.  
"I wish to show," she observed haughtily, "that women, contrary to general report, do not necessarily care for things just because they are reduced"—Detroit Journal.

**Naturally so.**  
The Albino—The ossified girl is altogether too proud.  
The India Rubber Man—Yes, I never saw anybody as stiff with her friends as she is.—Kansas City Independent.

On life's highway everybody is not only willing but anxious to take the rich man's dust.—Little Falls Herald.

**Lightning Rods.**  
There was a time when every house had a lightning rod. It was believed that every good man thus protected his wife and children and his home.

It is now known there is nothing in the lightning rod theory; a lightning rod is no protection against lightning, and there was never any danger from lightning, anyhow.

But a lot of other fool theories are still accepted. If we have at last acquired a little sense in the lightning rod particular, why not in other respects? Why continue to accept other silly notions? Why advertise ourselves as fools by accepting the prejudices of fools?—Athenian Globe.

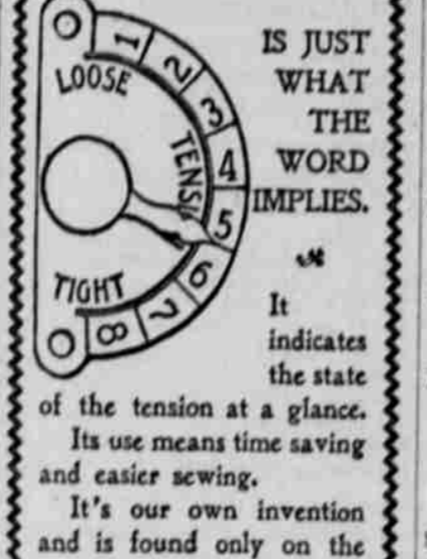
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