FRANCIS RICHTER'S SUCCESS in LONDON

OPINION OF COLD CRITICS UPON HIS REMARKABLE MUSICAL INSIGHT, HIS TECHNIQUE AND DRIVING FORCE; PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PORTLAND FRIENDS.

BY ALMA A. ROGERS.

FRANCIS RICHTER made his debut as an artist before a London audience on the afternoon of June 26 at Bechstein Hall. The concert was a splendid success, both as regards numbers, enthusiasm, and, best of all, the press reports, which were numerous and excellent.

We had been told that London audiences were cold. Mr. Richter's was certainly not, and it was, too, almost a strictly musical company. The most appreciative interest was shown in his work from the first number, and many recalls were given, obliging him to play three encores in addition to the long programme. The hall, which seats 650 people, was, in spite of counter attractions, at one time entirely full, though, as most people have several engagements for an afternoon in this busiest rush of the London season, not all could hear the whole recital, which began at 3 o'clock and lasted two hours or more. This was the programme:

(a) Prelude and Fugue in C minor....Bach
(b) Gavotte in D minor .....Bach
(c) Pastoral Capriccio .....Scarlatti
Sonata Appassionata .....Beethoven
(a) Des Abends .....Schumann
(b) Scottish Sword Dance...Francis Richter
Fantasie in F minor .....Chopin
(a) Two Etudes—
No. 12, in C minor, Op. 25.....Chopin
No. 7, in C major, Opp. 10.....Chopin
(b) Berceuse .....Chopin
(c) Scherzo in B minor .....Chopin
Rhapsodie Espagnole .....Liszt

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Saturday afternoon was not what would be called a favorable time for an unknown artist to make his first appearance, for a variety of reasons. For example, every one who can goes out of the city on that day for the week-end, as any one realizes who has been in the Saturday afternoon jam at the Charing Cross station, where mobs of people push and jostle and struggle to get car room, let alone seats. Furthermore, this particular Saturday was the last day of the Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace, where thousands upon thousands of music-lovers assembled to hear those mighty choruses, 4000 strong, of the trained singers of the United Kingdom; the first day of which, by the way, Mr. Richter heard, as the guest of Sir Edward Campbell, the distinguished principal of the Royal College for the Blind. Also at our concert hour, the King and Queen opened the Kensington Museum to great numbers. Then there were some other concerts by other people struggling to get a hearing in this maze of musical attractions.

Add to these conditions the very important fact that Francis Richter's concert was little advertised, except in a private way, and his home friends will understand that we felt we had great cause for congratulation over the outcome. Our manager, who is also Paderewski's, and several musical friends who know London conditions, assured us it was a remarkable success, especially for a first concert in the height of the season, when it is so difficult to get people together.

But though all this was very comforting, as well as the personal interest shown in the young artist and the expressions of amazement at his gifts which reached our ears through friends overhearing such comments in various parts of the house, I must confess that my mind was not wholly at rest until the press notices came out on the Monday following, Sunday editions not being in favor with the best papers. I shall give the most important of these without change, but first a word must be said about the British press.

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London is the Mecca of every aspiring debutant, and "the season"—the months of May and June—the chosen time for debuts. Now this is so, not merely because of London audiences, but because the London press is above reproach. The musical critics of the high-class London papers are not to be approached by either money or influence. What they think they say, and good or bad, the artist must put up with it. If they choose to come to your concert, you are fortunate, but if they do not, your manager cannot even go to them personally and urge them. All that is done is to send tickets and programmes to the various papers and pray to Heaven for the rest.

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When Mr. Richter and I arrived in London two weeks before his recital my first step was to call on our manager, Mr. L. G. Sharpe, and see what was being done about advertising. Imbued with American methods, I asked him if he had talked with the press reporters, upon which he gave me a solemn warning to keep away from the London papers. I assured him I had no money to beguile them with, I wanted only to inform them of Francis Richter's existence—to beg the loan of their ears to his wonder-story upon which from long repetition my mind has come to run with the precision of a phonograph. However, I did as I was bid, awaiting the result with fear and trembling. But they came. And why they came or how, I do not fully understand to this day, unless it be that this young man has a guiding star overhead. No public mention was made of his blindness, either in the newspaper statements of his concert or on the larger bills which contained only his name, date and place of the concert.

I further learned not to expect praise keyed in the superlative, that criticisms here meant criticism. But I think no discerning eye can run through the following notices without proof of Francis Richter's claims to rank with the great artists. The critic of the Daily Telegraph has the reputation of being especially severe, but this is what he said:

Pathetic interest attached to the appearance at this hall on Saturday afternoon of Mr. Francis Richter from the fact that this young pianist, who then gave what we believe to have been his first recital in London, is blind. Nobody listening to him, and keeping their eyes away from the platform, would have imagined him to be thus afflicted, so free from slips was his playing, and so fully developed on the technical side. But the latter circumstance is less difficult to account for when it is borne in mind that this artist is a pupil of Theodor Leschetizky. Mr. Richter, we understand, is by birth an American, and was unfortunate enough to lose his sight when only a few months old. One is accustomed to find the musical instinct developed to an unusual degree in the sightless, but still, Mr. Richter's affliction must needs be taken into account in reckoning up his claims to attention. It may be that his very infirmity makes him the more careful, as it were, to dot his i's and cross his t's, and his preciseness—in the matter, for instance, of phrasing and accentuating—were in evidence on Saturday. But this is not to say that the young pianist attacked his programme, which was sufficiently exacting, with any lack of boldness or confidence. From a couple of Bach examples and Scarlatti's charming "Pastoral Capriccio," he passed readily to Beethoven's Sonata in F minor—the "Appassionata"—and gave of that work a performance which was thoroughly sound in conception, as well as resourceful and satisfying from the executive standpoint. As we have hinted, there is nothing in the least slipshod about this pianist's interpretations, and even in the rapid finger-work of the last movement there was never any loss of clearness. Schumann's "Des Abends," though dragged a little, was played with sensitive expression, and in the second half of his programme the recital-giver included the inevitable Chopin group. The afternoon brought him many, and well-merited, tokens of approval.

I forgot to say that the Daily Telegraph is one of the first papers. So also are the Times, Post and Standard. From the Times:

A pianoforte recital was given on Saturday afternoon in the Bechstein Hall by Mr. Francis Richter, who played, among other things, the "Appassionata" sonata, Chopin's fantasia in F minor and the berceuse, a "Scottish Sword Dance" of his own, and Liszt's "Rhapsodie Espagnole." The player's technical accomplishment, considering the difficulties he must have had to contend with through the misfortune of being blind, is remarkable; for he played with absolute assurance, and also with precision and accuracy. His mezzoforte playing was agreeable in quality, but in the loud passages his tone became hard, and the hardness was somewhat emphasized by the tendency which he showed to exaggerate the contrasts between loud and soft. Contrasts of time, too, were a little too exaggerated, especially in the first movement of Beethoven's sonata, otherwise he played it well, putting a great deal of vigor into it and making a striking effect of tone at the entry of the last movement. He showed that he possessed delicacy of touch by his crisp, light way of playing Scarlatti's "Pastoral Capriccio" and some small pieces by Bach and Schumann.

FRANCIS RICHTER'S LATEST PHOTOGRAPH. TAKEN IN LONDON. + IT APPEARED IN THE COURT JOURNAL

The technical skill of Mr. Francis Richter, a young American pianist who made his first appearance in England at Bechstein Hall on Saturday, deserves special consideration, for the difficulties of acquiring it have been increased by total blindness. It is not too much to say, however, that his interpretative faculty has gained rather than lost by his misfortune. His playing revealed an exceptional degree of insight in virtue of which he was able to make clear much that escapes the notice of less careful observers. His gifts in this direction were especially evident in the slow movement of Beethoven's Sonata in F minor, Op. 57, where the added effect was both significant and legitimate. Occasionally, as in examples of Bach and Scarlatti, Mr. Richter read rather more emotion into the music than it can appropriately be made to express, but he found a suitable vehicle for the display of warmth and impetuosity in the F minor Fantasia of Chopin, and secured an admirably vigorous reading marked by breadth and dignity. Mr. Richter gave also an example of his own work. It was entitled "A Scottish Sword Dance," and proved to be skillfully written and wholly interesting, if only partially Scottish.—Morning Post.

Mr. Francis Richter, who gave a pianoforte recital at Bechstein Hall on Saturday, consisting of selections from the works of Bach, Scarlatti, Beethoven and other composers, is totally blind. This sad affliction, however, does not in any way affect his playing, which is distinguished by strength and confidence. A pupil of Leschetizky, he has acquired the masterly technique which is a feature of the performances of those who have studied with that master. In addition, there is evidence in his varied and intelligent interpretations of decided musical instinct. Mr. Richter has composed an operetta of which Messrs. Ricordi, of Milan, think so well that they advise it being translated into Italian with a view to production.—Standard.

Now, critics after all, being human and very much like the rest of us when off duty and deprived of that terrible power of the printed word, they cannot expect to agree in all things. The Sunday Times (not the Times and not of its rank) says the Appasionata was "not poetic". Another critic declares it was "a glorious rendering". Whatever it was, I saw a whitehaired old connoisseur and benefactor of artists, who himself paid for Kubelik's first concert and would have done as much for Francis Richter had he not lost his fortune in South Africa, wipe the tears away after that great Beethoven number was finished. But the Sunday Times says enough good things to be thankful for. If there has been one thing above another that I have dreaded in this effort to put Francis Richter before the world it has been that people should get the idea that because he was blind he was necessarily a freak or phenomenon or any thing in fact except what he is—a true artist with a brain as well-balanced as it is remarkable. The Sunday Times, June 27, says:

This young American pianist, who is totally blind, gave a recital at Bechstein Hall, and showed what is in the circumstances a certainly remarkable command of the keyboard. Accurate execution, a vigorous spirit, and a sane outlook, are the features of his playing. His rendering of one of the Forty-Eight, was essentially modern in its liberal pedalling and interpolation of octaves. His "Appassionata" was not poetic, but in Schumann's "Abends" he revealed a beautiful touch, and a sentiment which took the form of much rallantando. His own composition, a "Scottish Sword Dance," seemed chiefly a vehicle for some quite Lisztian display.

The critic quoted who gloried in the appossionata gives what in my judgment is the most discerning notice of all, for the reason that the writer evidently recognizes Mr. Richter's originality of conception and his right to express himself according to his own artistic conceptions. Moreover, it is this very point which will win him future fame. People who have nothing to give the world but conventionalities have no message to the world, and hence no lasting place in it.

(I very much regret to discover that this particular notice, from what paper I cannot now recall, has been loaned and not yet returned, but I remember especially that the writer, in addition to expressing the usual amazement at Mr. Richter's technique, was especially impressed with the power of original conception displayed in his interpretations, and that he remarks that his ideas command at all times respect and attention. It seems to me nothing finer could be said of a young artist of 21.)

This is from the Pall Mall Gazette:

At the Bechstein Hall Saturday afternoon Mr. Francis Richter, a young American pianist, a pupil of Leschetizsky, gave a recital with much success. He is completely blind, all the more remarkable, therefore, his acquirement of a really admirable technique; it must be obvious that the practical difficulties in the way were very great, demanding great patience, but Mr. Richter's playing revealed the driving force behind a musical nature which would not stop at any obstacle that could somehow be surmounted. It may be that the tone was sometimes hard in the achieving of brilliance, also that the grip, from an interpretative point of view, of Beethoven's "Appossionata," was not altogether sound—the impression was such as to give one the feeling that the whole needed pulling together, so to speak—yet all the same it wak quite evident that Mr. Richter has ideas of his own and the gift for giving them expression. His clean execution was further shown in the playing of some Bach pieces; they also were taken with the right sympathy of effect.

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From Modern Society:

Mr. Francis Richter, a blind pianist, exhibited at Bechstein Hall on Saturday afternoon a fine technique and a command of the keyboard that was nothing short of astonishing. His assurance in attacking the most florid passages, the clearness and rapidity of his execution, and the admirable manner in which he phrased, were wonderful. Commencing with a Prelude and Fugue of Bach, of which he gave a beautifully crisp rendering, he passed from Scarlatti's "Pastoral Caprices" and Beethoven's so-called "Appossionata" Sonata, his reading of which was wholly free from exaggeration. It may be that some of the quieter passages were wanting in tenderness, but as a whole the performance of this work was very interesting. Schumann's "Des Abends" was tastefully expressed, and Chopin's Fantasie in F minor found the pianist well equipped to meet its forcible demands. A "Scottish Sword Dance" from the executant's own pen proved an elaborate piece of writing.

Since so much was said about the "appossionata," Mr. Richter's friends may be interested to know that he played it according to Leschetizsky's teaching, and that it is one of his strongest numbers. At his last appearance in Vienna he won public commendation from the master by his magnificent and touching rendition of it.

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The Musical Standard and the Queen mention the concert as a great success, without adding specially to the force of the criticisms already given. The notice of the London representative of the New York Musical Courier, I have not seen.

In the Court Journal, an "exclusive" publication devoted to the doings of royalty and the smart people, appeared the photograph of Mr. Richter which accompanies this letter. It represents his hands in the Leschetizsky's position. Altogether, not less than a dozen London journals noticed the concert.

Though, as I remarked, I dared not call on the London papers, I had no hesitation in seeing some of the representatives of the big New York dailies, and tell them what their young countryman was doing. I understand something was sent over, but to what paper or papers I am not yet informed. Also, that the Associated Press cabled the news of the concert and that it was known of in Portland next day. But news is slower coming back to this side of the world than vice versa, and at present we are unaware of what was said.

The unqualified success of Mr. Richter's concert settled once for all the question of whether he was rushing into concert work too soon. And this brings me to a point that I think had better be fully explained, sufficient excuse being found, I trust, for making public statement of ordinarily private matters in the fact that it is the people of Portland who have given Francis Richter his education and who still must follow his fortunes with a real personal interest. So far as my own part in this work goes, I have always felt that I held his funds in trust from the Portland people, and that it was a public trust which I had voluntarily assumed. In fact, I still feel so, and shall, so long as I carry on Mr. Richter's affairs, for no one lives, not even himself, who can be more anxious to see him justify the confidence of the Portland public than I; and, as I think I stated in a former letter, I have ever been most careful to keep all accounts of his progress, which were necessarily glowing, strictly within the safe lines of truth. All the letters from my own pen which have concerned him have been more in the nature of personal letters than formal newspaper articles, as everyone must have perceived who has read them. They have virtually been personal replies to the large number of people who wished to be kept informed of his progress, and to whom any less general mode of letter writing, lack of time made impossible.

What I wish to say, then, is that we decided to try for the concert stage last spring in Vienna when we found that not enough money was forthcoming to carry another year's study with Leschetizky through and leave anything for concert work then. For, while at first I saw no further than the necessity of Mr. Richter's education, it became evident in due time that concert work must follow, or else what were we paying Leschetizky $12 a lesson for, other teachers in proportion, and living in the most expensive city in Europe? It was certainly not for pleasure, nor was Mr. Richter in a position to do it solely for self-culture, worthy object though that might be. So after careful consideration of all the circumstances, real and probable we decided to cross our Rubicon. A real Rubicon it was, too, a very great responsibility to assume. If Francis Richter failed—well, who does not know the meaning of failure? Two years' study may not seem very long to prepare an artist. So it is not for most of them. But progress and consequent fitness cannot be measured alone by time, and I can only say once more that this youth cannot be gauged by what others do. When I myself cast up the sum of all that he has accomplished in this time it seems almost incredible.

So success beckoned. We tried for it and Francis Richter has won out once more.

Our original intention was to give his first concert in Paris, then go on to London. But circumstances ordered otherwise, and we now plan the Paris concert the coming season, as well as others in London. Mr. Richter has made some very good friends in Paris, and has the most influential social introductions. While there is still much work to be done, the first step has at least been well taken.

In London Mr. Richter was entertained by Mrs. Whitelaw Reid and others, some account of which I shall put in another letter.

The JOURNAL of A NEGLECTED WIFE

by Mabel Herbert Urner

CHAPTER IX.

November 10.

THERE is something so sad about the doing of anything for the last time. Today I was packing away Horace's Summer clothes, as I have every Fall for 15 years, and my heart was sick with the fear that it was for the last time—that I would never do that again.

Oh, if I could only be told that it was not for the last time! If fate would let me look into the future, and I could see myself once more putting away those Summer things! If only I could be sure that next Fall—a year from now—it would still be I who would again fold them away!

November 11.

Today this letter came from Edith Carrington:

I have said I was spending this week with you. If Frank telephones from Boston, say that I have just gone out—make any excuse, but make him believe that I am with you.

Whatever you may think—whatever your disapproval may be—you will help me in this now. Life owes me these four days of happiness—after that I shall have only memories. The future will hold nothing else.

For myself I would scorn this subterfuge—but I cannot wholly forget my children. Hold any letters that may come in your care. I will come to New York Saturday for a few hours.

What does it mean? "Four days—after that I shall have only memories." Has she gone away with the man she loves for these four days, that they may have this one glimpse of happiness? And then to separate—to send him from her forever?

November 15.

This afternoon a cab stopped at our door and Edith Carrington stepped out. She was in a gray tailored suit, was heavily veiled. The cabman followed with two large traveling-bags.

When I brought her up to my room, I was frightened. She looked so ill. She was very pale, her hands were like ice, and she was trembling violently.

"I want to stay until tomorrow. I can't bear to go home tonight," was all she said.

I brought a warm teagown, made her undress and lie down.

"It is over," she said dully. "He sailed at noon." And then she turned her face to the wall. I felt she would rather be alone, so I left her then. Later when I came in she was still staring at the wall with eyes dark with suffering.

When Horace came, I told him Edith was here, but that she had a sick headache and would not be down to dinner. He expressed his sympathy, and said he hoped she would stay several days. I can see that he is always glad now to have some one visiting me; it makes him feel more free to leave me—to spend the evenings with her!

I took up a small tray to Edith, but she could not eat. She asked me to sit in the room with her—to read or sew—that she did not want to be alone. I was glad to know I could be of some little comfort; I have felt so helpless to help her through it all.

It was not until I was leaving her for the night that she called me back.

"Mary, there is one thing I want to tell you, and then I don't think I can ever speak of this again. You think I sent him away because I had come to feel our love was wrong, and because of the children. That is not true—and I want you to know the truth.

"I have given him up because I knew I could not hold him. I ended it while it was still in my power to end it. I don't mean that he would have left me; his sense of duty and obligation would have held him, but I did not want that. If I had told him that was my reason for parting, he would have persuaded me that I was mistaken. So I lied to him. I said it was because of the children.

"The last thing he said was: 'A word will bring me back to you.' But I shall never send that word. I have ended it now at its best. I shall never see it die the death that such things always do."

November 16.

Edith Carrington has gone back to Boston. Will she have the courage of her resolution? Can she live on the memory of those four days, or later will she weaken and send for him? Once more I am filled with a sense of my powerlessness. I cannot help her—I can only wait.

November 17.

How few books appeal to me now! Beside the real tragedies that in this past year have come into my life, the carefully wrought plots of fiction seem so artificial, so meaningless.

Life is so much more complex, so much more involved than any sectional portrayal of it can be. In fiction it is always some definite solution for some definite problem, in which all the threads of causation are brought to bear on some culminating crisis.

Life—real life—is so unlike this. Its problems are so intricate, so baffling, and for most of them there are no solutions. The threads of causation are hopelessly entangled in a labyrinth of events that solve nothing, prove nothing, unless it be the thwarting, inexorable chaos of it all.

November 18.

I am almost happy today. It is because when I asked Horace this morning about the furnace, about having it thoroughly gone over before cold weather, he spoke of a new furnace. Said this one was nearly worn out, that "we will have to have a new one next Winter, and we might as well put it in now."

"We will have to have a new one next Winter. . . ." That phrase has been singing in my heart all day. It has been so long since he has made any reference to the future, and now this has given me a little of the old feeling of security and permanency in our home.

November 19.

For years we have gone to my brother's for Thanksgiving dinner, and they have always spent New Year's with us. This morning I received a letter from Katherine, my brother's wife, with the annual invitation. I read the letter to Horace at the breakfast table.

"Do you really care to go this year?"

"Why, it wouldn't seem like Thanksgiving anywhere else, would it?" I asked, struggling against the sick wave that always comes over me now at each breaking away of our old customs and our old life.

"Well, I had thought we might have dinner at home this year. If we could have it early, about 6 o'clock, it would give me an opportunity to accept an engagement for later in the evening, partially a business matter with an out-of-town client."

And then, as he saw the color leave my face:

"Of course we will go"—hastily. "I didn't know you cared so much about it."

November 20.

I have written Katherine that we cannot come this year. He was willing to go, almost insisted upon going when he saw how it affected me. But I have no heart for it now. He wants to spend the evening with her. It would be only pity that kept him with me, and I do not want that.

One by one all the ties and customs of our life together are being broken. The end cannot be far off. Will I have the strength to meet it? Now and then my crushed pride cries out that I will never try to hold him through pity. And yet deep in my heart I am afraid, afraid that should it come to his leaving me altogether, I would try to hold him in any way I could, through pity, through my legal right—desperately I would use any claim, any means, just to hold him.

November 21.

In one of the December magazines there is an article compiled from the opinions of a dozen prominent people as to what Christmas gift they would give the world, if it lay in their power to bestow some one thing.

One writes he would give to every child an equal education; another that her gift would be universal temperance; another would confer a wider religious instinct; and still another the equal chance to work.

And I—were the power of the one world-gift granted me—I would satisfy the need for love in the breast of every heart-hungry woman!

November 22.

It snowed heavily during the night, the first deep snow of the season. I was awakened early this morning by the sound of scraping shovels. When I drew up the blinds, the scene was like a great Christmas card. The trees were beautiful, each branch bending patiently under its burden of snow. The street, except for a few tracks in the center, is yet unbroken. A few hours' traffic and all that purity and whiteness will be trampled and soiled.

It is a dry, clinging snow and has filled the window-sills and is packed up several inches against the glass. I raised one of the windows and took up a great handful. There is always something exhilarating to me about the smell of snow—that crisp, illusive odor that is indescribable. Even though it is very cold, for a long time I stood at the open window breathing in the fresh keen air. How wonderful the country would be today. If Horace would only take me for a long sleigh-ride, as he used to do!

I am a little happier this morning—just because of this snow.

November 23.

I have been reading one of John Oliver Hobbs' novels, in which she says:

"It is a mistake to think our prayers are not answered—they are. We get our heart's desire when we have ceased to care for it."

My heart's desire—Horace's love—will I ever cease to want that? Everything I read now which bears on life, love, happiness or unhappiness, I seem to apply in some way to Horace and myself—to the condition of our lives now. I cannot help it; my thoughts always come back to that.

November 24.

Thanksgiving day, and, oh, such a pitiable one! The long course-dinner is over. We had it all alone. Neither of us could eat. I could not swallow past the lump in my throat, and he seemed worried and absent-minded, as he almost always is now. After dinner he made some vague excuse about an out-of-town client and hurried off.

I can see how he hates to lie. All his life he has despised an untruth more than anything else, and now—now—Oh, what power has this woman to change his whole nature—to force him into constant subterfuge and deception?

(To Be Continued.)

MEMBERS OF WATERWAYS COMMISSION, WHO SAILED RECENTLY FOR EUROPE.

Reading From Left to Right—D. S. Alexander, G. McPherson, S. M. Sparkman, Senator Burton, J. H. Cassidy.

NEW YORK, Aug. 27.—(Special.)—The members of the Waterways Commission appointed by Congress sailed recently for Europe to examine the waterways of the old world, with a view to making suggestions for the improvement of the waterways of the new. In the group were Senator Burton, of Ohio; Senator Gallinger, of Vermont; Representatives Alexander, of New York; Sparkman, of Florida, and Cassidy, of Ohio. They were accompanied by Woodbury Pulsifer, Joseph McGann and George McPherson as clerks. The party will work around Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Budapesth, Munich, Strasburg, and then tour Holland.

DOG COMMITS SUICIDE

Kicked Twice, Disgrace Makes Him Kill Himself.

Montclair (N. J.) Dispatch to New York Tribune.

The drowning of John Marvin's dog Gyp in Beattie's Pond, near Montclair Heights, according to the story told by Marvin, was as clear a case of suicide as ever took place. Marvin, who is a farmer, owned the dog for nearly two years. The animal made itself useful on the farm, and had always been well treated.

Marvin called on Gyp to chase the cattle out of a patch of woods, and the dog hastened to do his master's bidding. Gyp got them all out into the open except one young heifer, which gave him a great deal of trouble. The dog finally got it clear of the woods, and Gyp followed it, biting at its heels. Marvin called the dog several times, but Gyp was evidently determined to hunt the heifer until it joined the other stock. When Marvin reached Gyp he gave the dog a heavy kick in the ribs. Gyp did not run away, but looked pleadingly up into his master's face. The look was answered by another kick from the farmer's heavy shoe, which knocked the dog off its feet. Then the farmer walked on toward the barnyard.

As he neared home Marvin looked around to see if Gyp was following him, but he saw the dog trotting away in the direction of the pond. Two hours later the children found the animal dead in about six inches of water on the shore of the pond. Marvin is inconsolable, as he feels that his treatment of the dog was the cause of the suicide.