

THE MYSTERIOUS ORGANIST.

"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
and simple faith than Norman blood."
Years ago, at a grand old cathedral overlooking the Rhine, there appeared a mysterious organist. The great composer who had played the organ so long and suddenly died, and everybody, from the king to the peasant, was wondering who could be found to fill his place. One bright Sabbath morn., as the sexton entered the church, he saw a stranger sitting at the crumpled organ. He was a tall, graceful man, with a pale but strikingly handsome face, great, black, melancholy eyes, and hair like a raven's, wavy and color, sweeping in dark waves over his shoulders. He did not seem to notice the sexton, but went on playing; and such music as he drew from the instrument no words can describe. The astonished listener declared that the organ seemed to have grown human—that it wailed and sighed and clamored. When the music at length ceased, the sexton hastened to the stranger and said:

"Pray, who are you, sir?"
"Do not ask my name," he replied. "I have heard that you are in want of an organist, and have come here on trial."
"You'll be sure to get the place," exclaimed the sexton. "Why, you surpass him that's dead and gone, sir."
"No, no—you overrate me," resumed the stranger, with a sad smile; and then, as if disinclined to conversation, he turned from old Hans and began to play again. And now the music changed from a sorrowful strain to a grand old piece, and the mysterious organist, "Looking upward, full of grace,
Prayed till from a happy place
God's glory 'sote him on the face,"
and his countenance seemed not unlike that of Saint Michael, as portrayed by Guido.

Lost in the harmonies which swelled around him, he sat with his far-seeing gaze fixed on the distant sky—a glimpse of which he caught through an open window—when there was a stir about the church, and a royal party came sweeping in. Among them might be seen a young girl, with blue eyes like the violet hue, and lips like wild cherries. This was the Princess Elizabeth, and all eyes were turned to her as she seated herself in the velvet-cushioned pew appropriated to the court. No sooner had the music reached her ears than she started as if a ghost had crossed her path. The bloom faded from her cheek, her lips quivered, and her whole frame grew tremulous. At last her eyes met those of the organist, in a long, yearning look; and then the melody lost its joyous notes, and once more wailed and sighed and clamored.

"By my faith," whispered the king to his daughter, "this organist has a master hand. Hark ye, he shall play at your wedding!"
The pale lips of the princess parted, but she could not speak—she was dumb with grief. Like one in a painful dream, she saw the pale man at the organ, and heard the melody which filled the vast edifice. Aye, full well she knew who he was, and why the instrument seemed breathing out the agony of a tortured heart.

When the service was over, and the royal party had left the cathedral, he stole away as mysteriously as he had come. He was not seen again by the sexton until the vesper hour, and then he appeared in the organ-loft and commenced his task. While he played, a veiled figure glided in and knelt near the shrine. There she knelt till the worshippers dispersed, when the sexton touched her on the shoulder, and said:

"Madame, everyone has gone except you and me, and I wish to close the door."
"I am not ready to go yet," was the reply; "leave me—leave me!"
The sexton drew back into a shady niche, and watched and listened. The mysterious organist still kept his place, but his head was bowed upon the instrument, and he could not see the lone devotee. At length she rose from the aisle, and moving to the organ-loft paused before the missionist.

"Bertram!" she murmured.
Quick as thought the organist raised his head. There, with the light of a lamp suspended to the arch above falling upon her, stood the princess who had grazed the royal pew that day. The court-dress of velvet, with its soft ermine trimmings, the tiara, the necklace, the bracelets, had been exchanged for a gray serge robe and a long veil, which was pushed back from the fair, girlish face.

"Oh, Elizabeth, Elizabeth!" ejaculated the organist, as he sank at her feet and gazed wistfully into her troubled eyes.
"Why are you here, Bertram?" asked the princess.
"I came to bid you farewell; and as I dared not venture into the palace, I gained access to the cathedral by bribing the bell-ringer, and having taken the seat of the dead organist, let the music breathe out the adieu I could not trust my lips to utter."
A low moan was the answer, and he continued:
"You are to be married on the morrow?"
"Yes," sobbed the girl. "Oh, Bertram, what a trial it will be to stand at yonder altar and take upon me the vows which will doom me to a living death!"
"Think of me," rejoined the organist. "Your royal father has requested me to play at the wedding, and I have promised to be here. If I were your equal, I would be the bridegroom instead of the organist; but a poor musician must give you up."
"It is like rending body and soul asunder to part with you," said the girl. "To-night I tell you this—tell you how fondly I love you—but in a few hours it will be a sin. Go, go, and may God bless you!"
She waved him from her, as if she would banish him while she had the power to do so. And he, how was it with him? He rose to leave her, then came back, held her to his heart in one long embrace, and with a half-smothered farewell, left her.

The next morning dawned in cloudless splendor, and at an early hour the cathedral was thrown open, and the sexton began to prepare for the brilliant wedding. Flame-colored flowers waved by the wayside; flame-colored leaves came rushing down from the trees; and lay in light heaps upon the ground; and the ripe wheat waved like a golden sea, and berries drooped in red and purple clusters over the rocks along the Rhine.

Incidents of the Seven Days.

We thought on labors for that day were over. We knew the removal of the bridge would block the pursuit for some hours, and we went into park on the side of the hill, above the bridge. The men threw themselves under the carriages to escape the fierce July sun, and in a minute were sound asleep. How long we slept, I cannot say. We were rudely awakened. Under cover of a piece of woods on the other side of the swamp, the enemy established four batteries, and opened one of the most rapid and accurate fires I have ever been under. Our position on the hillside was untenable, and we lost no time in getting out of it. When I say no time, I mean as rapidly as could be done with men awakened from a heavy sleep of exhaustion, amid the shriek of solid shot, the smoke and noise of bursting shells, and the deafening report made by the blowing up of two timbers in a neighboring battery. We were soon ordered into an entirely new position by General Richardson. The other battery had run away from their guns, which stood abandoned until night. We had to bear the brunt alone. For nearly four hours we maintained this unequal combat—one battery against four. It seems to me there was not a moment during these four hours when you could not see in the air the little cloud of white smoke which marks the explosion of a case-shot and, after the second of suspense, hear the whir of the leaden rain, or the harsher whiz of the jagged pieces of shell; while now and then, above all other sounds, would come the angry scream of the solid shot, as it flew over our heads, or sometime struck, with that horribly sound in which you hear splintered bones and mangled flesh. I could not but feel pity for the horses. The men were grand in their splendid energy. The figure of a No. 1—William Fleming, a hard-drinking, quarrelsome Irishman—is photographed on my memory. Stripped of his undershirt, black with grime of powder and sweat, never in the fierce excitement of battle losing the mechanical accuracy of position that had made him the admiration of the recruit, the pet of the Chief of Piece, sending his sponge to the bottom of the bore with his shoulders as square, and leaping out with as jaunty a step, and as knowing a toss of the staff, as if he were simply astonishing the last appointed second lieutenant. I ordered him relieved, and No. 2 stepped up to take the staff from him.

"To the devil with you!" shouted Fleming. "Bring me another bucket of water." For by that time the gun was so foul and hot that even his arm could hardly withdraw the sponge. Then turning to me, he said:

"Excuse me, Lieutenant, but I'm good for an hour more, if you'll only make them loafers keep the bucket full."
But the poor horses stood with their heads hanging down, or lazily nipping the scanty grass; for they were thoroughly seasoned to fire, and hardly noticed it until one of those dull thuds would be heard, and you would see one horse of a team plunging madly or staggering wildly, or sometimes crashing down, an inert mass, as a solid shot tore through his entrails, while his mate would look at him wistfully—I even fancied sadly—as if he were saying, "What's the matter, old fellow?"—*Callifornian*.

Ministers Not Deadheads.

The recent controversy over the propriety of a minister's bringing suit for the payment of funeral fees moves a Troy preacher to remark that he has attended several hundred funerals, and taken many hard colds as a consequence, riding several miles in extreme heat and extreme cold, through wind and storm, consuming many days of time, and often paying something for traveling expenses, but has never received a penny for such services, nothing having ever been offered in more than three or four cases. And nine-tenths of the funerals were of persons who were not members of his own church, and their surviving friends would not even do him the compliment to go and hear him preach—or any other minister for that matter. The preacher continues in this indignant strain: "I recall one instance in a neighboring city when I was sent for in the middle of the night to visit a man who was supposed to be dying. He kept me by his bedside a large part of two days and nights, and at length I went to attend his funeral in a town some twenty miles away. In another instance I was sent for to soothe a crazy man, and actually spent a whole day with him, when I was more than half sick myself, trying, with some success, to calm his mind and turn his thoughts from his ailments. I am sent for by wives to reform their drunken husbands; sent for to reconcile husbands and wives that have parted—persons I never saw, and know nothing about; sent for to help people get work, and for many other purposes which I will not enumerate. For services of this kind I have never received a penny, and never desired it. I do not refer to these matters to complain that the minister is called upon for such services. I am glad to perform them, and glad to perform them without pay, and am conscious that many persons who are not ministers perform like services. It is our delight to help suffering humanity in every possible way. I only wish you to understand that ministers perform far more such gratuitous services than any other class of our citizens. And finally, alas! we marry a great many hopeful couples without pay."

In an English church, recently, after the publication of the bans of marriage by the minister, a grave elder, in a stentorian voice, forbade the bans between a certain couple. On being called upon for an explanation, "I had," he said, "intended Hannah for myself." His reason was not considered sufficient.

Rareness of the Reading Habit.

I think the extent of the habit of reading is much over-estimated even in reading countries. There is a large reading class in Germany, in England, in China, in America, in Iceland, and in the cities of France; outside of these countries and a few colonies, reading is not indulged in. Of all these countries, the United States is the land in which the habit of reading is the most prevalent; and yet the most striking fact about our population is that so few of them read when most of them know how—I mean how to read for themselves, for so rare is the accomplishment of reading out loud that we have to pay money to hear such performers on our language; they are rarer than fair piano-players. Nearly everybody takes a daily snatch at the newspapers, at the summary of news or the telegraph columns, and the base ball record, and occasionally persons follow for days the columns devoted to some singular accident or curious murder—even women have acquired the art of deftly skimming the cream of the morning journal; comparatively few of the entire population, even the educated, read books. Unless a book by some good luck becomes a fashion, and is recommended in conversation, few see it; the number of people who originally seek out the readable book from their habit of craving it is very small. When a new novel is said to have a "run" if 10,000 copies of it are published—10,000 copies for 40,000,000 people. And there are books that "everybody has read, and all the newspapers talk of," which have not got beyond the third or fourth thousand. The late Samuel Bowles once told me his experience. He had written his capital book on the Far West at the time of the Pacific Railway excitement, when millions of people were eager for the information his book contained. Never did book seem to be in greater demand; it was sold in England as well as in America, and all the newspapers in both countries quoted from it and commented on it. Mr. Bowles said that he never met a person who had not read it—or who did not say he read it, I forget which. And yet, he asked, how many copies do you suppose satisfied this enormous demand of everybody? Fifteen thousand filled the market.

I believe the majority of business men read a book very rarely; the majority of young men in business and in society, read little—they do not give their evenings to reading, and are not apt to take up a book unless it becomes the task of society. People who spend a good deal of money on dress, on dinners, or amusements, would think it extravagant to buy a book, and if one is commended to them, they will wait till they can borrow it or get it from the library. They do not hesitate two minutes about an ordinary two-dollar dinner, but they will wait months to borrow a fifty-cent book.—*Christian Union*.

A Shirt Without a Bosom.

A man in Greenfield, whom we will call William, got up the other morning and proceeded to put on a shirt which his wife had just made for him after a new pattern. As she stood at the mirror, curling her hair, she heard a suppressed sound half-way between a groan and an oath, and, turning round, said, laughing, "Why, my dear!"

"Shut up!" he ejaculated. "You are a born fool! Never let a woman attempt to fit a shirt, she can't do it; it is one of the impossibilities."

"But William"—deprecatingly—"Don't you talk—let me talk. Do you think I'm going down town in this rig? A pretty disposition you've got; just because I happened to find a little fault last week with your ironing, you must go and make a shirt without a bosom! Such malicious conduct madam, is unpardonable. Shut up, I say! I won't hear a word. When a starched shirt front is the only finery a man indulges in, is he not excusable for being particular in regard to that, I should like to know? And this thing sits like the d—l. Look how baggy it is here in front, and it feels behind as if there was a board bound across me!" walking up and looking in the glass, hitching up first one shoulder and then the other, after the indescribable manner of men trying on a new jacket.

His wife dared not speak, but, bringing a good-sized mirror from the next room, she held it up behind him for a moment; and perceiving, by his chop-fallen expression, that he saw the point and the front, she ran down stairs to settle the coffee and see that Bridget had set the table geometrically.

As William walked down to his office that morning he said to the first friend that he met: "I tell you, Tom, that little wife of mine is a born genius. Look at this shirt, now. She cut and made it all herself. Do you see; it opens behind; no confounded buttonholes to bother a fellow. Just send your wife up for the pattern." And it was by the way of Tom's wife that Lizzie first knew that William was pleased with his shirts.—*Gospel Banner*.

GET THE BOY'S HEART.

Get hold of the boy's heart. Yonder locomotive with its thundering train comes like a whirlwind down the track, and a regiment of armed men might seek to arrest it in vain. It would crush them and plunge unfeeling on. But there is a little lever in its mechanism that, at the pressure of a man's hand, will slacken its speed, and in a moment or two bring it panting and still, like a whipped spaniel, at your feet. By the same little lever the vast steamship is guided hither and yonder, upon the sea, in spite of adverse wind and current. That sensitive and responsive spot by which a boy's life is controlled is his heart. With your grasp gentle and firm on that; help, never doubt that he has a heart. Bad and willful boys very often have the tenderest heart; hidden away somewhere beneath incrustations of sin or behind barricades of pride. And it is your business to get at that heart, get hold of that heart, keep hold of it by sympathy, confiding in him, manifestly working only for his good, by little indirect kindnesses to his mother or sister, or even his pet dog. See him at his home or invite him to yours. Provide him some little pleasures set him to some little service of trust for you; love him, love him practically. Any way and every way rule him through his heart.—[Sunday School Times.

Reverence for Old Things.

Do you know, anyhow, I don't feel very much reverence for old things that are simply old. I suppose it is heathenish and awfully boorish, but I can't help it. Here the other day, a man bought an old spinning wheel. "One hundred and twelve years old," he told me proudly, and he was going to take it home and set it up in his library and never part with it. And for the life of me I couldn't see why. The man didn't even know the name of the family he bought it of. It had no interest in the world for him beyond its age. He might have gone out into the street and picked up a boulder two thousand years old with just as much local and historical interest for him as the spinning wheel. But that the former owner of that spinning wheel should sell it for money, that did surprise me. It had a world of memories for him. He could touch the treadle and the whirling wheel would crouch out the same old monotone that had droned its drowsy accompaniment to the cradle songs that hushed him to sleep in his baby days; it would sing to him in his manhood and in the long evenings of his old age, of a white-haired "grandma" and a mother with a patient face and beautiful eyes; it would sing of a thousand old-time memories and forgotten faces; it would repeat tender words for him; it would sing how the tender mother's face grew patient and sad and careworn as the years went on, and the beautiful eyes were faded with tears and dimmed with watching, and the lovely hand faded with weariness, until at last one day the whirling wheel stood still, and its silence spread a great, heavy quiet all over the old home. How the man whose grandmother and mother sat at that busy wheel could sell it, I can not understand. But what it could be to the man who bought it is fully as great a mystery. It will sing none of those songs to him. It would be like a man talking Bengalee to a Spanish parrot.—*Burdette in Hawkeye*.

Should Tired People go to Church?

Many of those who stay at home all day Sunday because they are tired make a great mistake; they are much more weary on Sunday night than they would have been had they gone to church at least once; as the time must often drag heavily on Sunday for the lack of something to do and to think about; and the consciousness of having spent the day unprofitably must sometimes add mental disturbance and dissatisfaction to the languor that follows idleness.

Moreover, these tired people would often find refreshment for their minds and their hearts in the quiet services of the church. They would secure by means of them a change of mental atmosphere, and the suggestion of thoughts and motives and sentiments which are out of the range of their work. For a hard-working mechanic or salesman, or housekeeper, or teacher, this diversion of the thought to other than the customary themes might be the most restful way of spending a portion of the day of rest.

We happen to know of several cases in which this prescription has been used with excellent results. Those who were wont to stay at home because they were too tired on Sunday to go to church, have been induced to try the experiment of seeking rest, for their souls as well as for their bodies, in the sanctuary, for a small part of every Sunday; and they testify that they have found what they sought; that the observance has proved a refreshment rather than a weariness, and that their Sundays never gave them so much good rest when they stayed at home as they have given them since they found the habit of church going.—*Good Company*.

Humors of a Paris Restaurant.

There is a good story told of a famous restaurateur warmly recommending to a customer, whom, although rich, he knew to be no connoisseur in wine, a certain Bordeaux, which he alleged to be of some splendid old vintage: "I can vouch for what I say," urged the restaurateur, "for I know it was put in the bottle the day my grandfather was baptized." The innocent victim consented, and the wine was brought in—a bottle so covered with cobwebs and dirt that it looked more like a large rat than anything else. The "cradle" was handled most carefully by the *sommelier*, and the cork was drawn with much ceremony. Imagine the horror of the poor restaurateur, and the hilarity of the customer when a fly came buzzing out, rejoicing at having regained its liberty!

Another fact worth remembering is that, no matter what you may ask for, even if it be a fried piece of the moon, the waiters will invariably reply, "Yes," and either brings it to you, or, returning, assert with sorrow that unfortunately there is no more left. Mery, the well known author, tried this joke on once, and, peremptorily ordered of a waiter a sphinx *a la Marengo*. "I am sorry to say we have no more monsieur," replied the *garcon*. "What! No more sphinx?" exclaimed Mery, feigning astonishment. The waiter lowered his voice and murmured in a confidential whisper: "We have some more, monsieur; but the truth is I should not care to serve them to you, as they are not quite fresh!"—*Whitehall Review*.

AN EASTERN OPIUM EATER.

A clergyman gave a St. Louis congregation, last Sunday, a thrilling account of his terrible experience as an opium eater, telling how from 1847 to 1860 he practised medicine in the Mississippi valley, and having four months of the year, exposed to malaria, commenced to take quinine in from five to ten grain doses. He then added morphine to the quinine, and after a time began to drink whiskey. In 1865 he fully concentrated himself to the ministry, and in 1867 was appointed pastor of the First Methodist Church of St. Louis. There he remained until he was sent to Lexington, Mo. In the latter part of 1870 trouble came upon him and he began to use opium and whiskey to excess. One grain of opium was found insufficient, and he increased the dose until he found himself taking twenty-five grains. His description of his sufferings during this period filled his audience with the deepest sympathy.

ALL SORTS.

The gout may be said to be a beacon on the rock of luxury to warn us against it.

The sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living which are desired to be when dying.

The rice crop of Louisiana this year was one of the largest and best ever grown there.

It is no vanity for a man to pride himself on what he has honestly got and prudently uses.

Let him who regrets the loss of time make proper use of that which is to come in the future.

Ideas generate ideas; like a potato, which, cut in pieces, reproduces itself in a multiplied form.

Cotton planters in northern Texas are employing Chinese laborers to gather their cotton crop.

To endeavor to work upon the vulgar with fine sense is like attempting to hew blocks of marble with a razor.

Happiness is like a sunbeam, which the least shadow intercepts, while adversity is often as the rain of spring.

Do that which is right. The respect of mankind will follow; or, if it do not, you will be able to do without it.

"The book to read," says Dr. McCosh, "is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think."

A wise man ought to hope for the best, be prepared for the worst, and bear with equanimity whatever may happen."

Col. Litterer, of Davenport, estimates the amount of butter now made in creameries in Iowa is 50,000,000 pounds per annum.

Daniel Kelly, of Wheaton, Illinois, had his famous ram, Matchless, and two other high priced rams killed by dogs. His loss was \$3000.

A maiden lady of our acquaintance has resolved to change her name to "Conclusions," having heard that men sometimes jump that way.

Quiz, having drawn a map of the world, was asked why he marked the Polar regions "L. S.," and he said, "Because it is the place of the seal."

The man who has not anything to boast of but his illustrious ancestors is like a potato plant—the only good belonging to him is under ground.

A very rich man said: "I worked like a slave till I was forty to make my fortune, and I've been watching it like a detective ever since for my lodging, food and clothes."

A wicked man in Davenport, being on his death-bed, wished to consult some proper person regarding his future state and his friends sent a fire-insurance agent to him.

A Brockport man dreamed recently that his aunt was dead, and the dream proved true. He tried the same game with his mother-in-law; but it didn't work worth a cent.

Vermont has a law in favor of farmers who lost heavily by dogs killing sheep. A dog tax is levied which has had the effect of putting nine-tenths of the worthless brutes out of existence.

There was a young woman named Hannah, who behaved in a frivolous manner; while her pa stood in prayer, she put tacks in his chair which he sat on, and cut-sed his Hannah.

A lady entered a drug store and asked for a bottle of "Jane's experience." The clerk informed her that Jane hadn't bottled her experience yet, but they could furnish "Jayne's Expecto-rant."

Things are not exactly right.—A careful political economist closely calculates that the women in this county might annually save \$14,500,000 in ribbons, which the men might spend in cigars.

A talkative man annoyed a lady at a dinner party by constantly arguing in favor of strong drink, and at last said to her, "You know, madam, that drink drives away cares and makes us forget."

The tobacco crop in Wisconsin has matured finely. Drought in the Clarksville, Tenn., tobacco district, and also in the Green River district in Kentucky, has damaged the tobacco crop considerably. It is about three weeks late.

A Miss Guah was elected School Superintendent in Mono County, on Wednesday appointed a male deputy, and on Tuesday, married him. This shows how mean women can be when they have the advantage of a man.

The cotton crop in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana and Texas is reported excellent except in portions of the two last named States, where complaint is made of too much rain and damage by worms.

A university student broke through the ice on Lake Montana, the other day, where the water was only 4 feet deep. When he was hauled out and laid upon ice, he faintly whispered: "Boys, I didn't care for myself, but I'm engaged."

The importation this year of heavy draught breeding horses from Europe to the United States is noticeably large, and bids fair to exceed that of 1876, when about 300 animals were brought over. These horses are chiefly of the Percheron and Clydesdale breeds.

A thornless blackberry, called the Wachstet, is described as being less acid than other blackberries, a good bearer where others have failed, and in both heavy and light soils a good berry of medium size; ships and keeps well, came hardy and free from thorns.

The late Senator Sumner was a discriminating man and precise in his manner of statement. At the sale of his personal effects in Boston, \$95 was paid for an old Roman lamp, bearing the inscription, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," to which Mr. Sumner had added, "of all colors."

The United States Consul at Florence, in his unpublished report to the State Department, gives a method of preserving buds for grafting, so that they are good for over a year. They are placed in tin tubes filled with honey, and then hermetically sealed. For short time and distances water is used instead of honey.

Miss Dudu Flother, the author of "Kismet," is to marry Lord Wentworth, an English nobleman, and in two or three years from now, when an aristocratic voice is heard from beneath the pillow remarking, "Dudu, do something to stop that child's noise," the effect will be very funny—to everybody but Dudu.