

A WISH.

What would I ask for thee, wish for thee, sweet?
 Kisses that are peaceful and calm?
 Seas that are stormless and winds that are soft?
 As the low breath of a psalm?
 No, as I love thee, I ask not that life
 Be from all bitterness free;
 Something of sunshine and something of strife,
 Dear one, is better for thee.

Yet would I ask for thee out of my love
 More of its sunshine than storm.
 With just enough of life's shadow and strife
 To keep thy heart tender and warm.
 Faith to look upward in gladness or gloom.
 Hope to bid the dreariest defeat;
 Strength in all sorrow, and patience in pain.
 These would I ask for thee, sweet.

These and yet more would I ask for thee,
 sweet:
 Grace to be faithful and strong,
 Meekness to bear all thy crosses and care,
 Courage to battle with wrong,
 May the good angels who watch o'er the good
 Guide thy dear feet as they roam,
 And in the land that is better than this
 Give thee forever a home!

Boston Woman's Journal.

THE OLD BASS VIOL.

In the gloomy garret of the tavern at Ober-Abelsberg, among other dusty, rusty and worn reminders of the past, lay an old brown bass viol. No one knew whence it came; the year of its birth was a mystery.

In past years the bass viol had occasionally given a sign of life. If a bat fluttered by or a mouse ran over the strings it would begin to chatter, like a talkative woman, to tell stories of the past and to sing songs of the bright days of its youth. Later it would only grumble a little when the wind shook the roof, but when the mice gnawed off all the strings it lay silent and uncomplaining in mold and dust. Immediately beneath this deserted garret was the dancing hall. There the pipes piped and the fiddles squeaked till all the dogs in town howled in anguish and the ears of the dancers were pierced through and through by the sharp, shrill tones. And no one knew how near lay the means of softening this discord with a good deep bass note!

Now, the roguish little red-tails love to build in old lumber, and so it happened that a musical couple chose their silent forsaken bass viol for a home. This circumstance drew the attention of mine host's little Friedel—an enthusiastic ornithologist—to the old instrument, and one day, amid clouds of dust and angry remonstrances from the red-tails, the boy pulled the old ruin from its resting place and dragged it down the attic stairs. The Abelsbergs regarded the bass viol as a gift from heaven. The joiner came and repaired the broken case, the schoolmaster with his great spectacles came and put in new strings, and lo! at the next yearly fair, amid the tones of the pipes, sounded the deep voice of the venerable instrument, as a worthy accompaniment to devout hymns of praise to the patron saint.

It was a new awakened life, and there was great rejoicing in Ober-Abelsberg.

As is the usual custom at these fairs, the way lay from the church directly to the tavern and up to the dancing hall, and of course the bass viol went along too. If his reverence finds its possible to drink wine from the chalice in the morning and from the tankard in the afternoon, it cannot be too difficult for such a venerable bass viol to play hymns in the morning and waltzes and quadrilles in the afternoon. And, as in the church it had breathed out its soul in devotion, so in the tavern the strings sent forth such gay and joyous tones that the pastor himself could scarce refrain from joining in the dance. So it went on for several years, the bass viol serving in church choir and dancing hall, until at one very jolly wedding the bride, dizzy from the wild dance, sank down upon the old instrument and crushed in its back. Then it was laid aside for a year or two, until the Abelsbergs, missing the bass tones, brought out their old friend and patched it up again, and again there was great rejoicing.

Now there came a time which far-seeing men called great and full of promise, but which nevertheless turned many a quiet village into Bedlam. In such a place in ordinary times one could find plenty of good, honest workmen, a few cross officials, a fat priest or two, and perhaps occasionally a thin sexton or pious sister of charity, but now there were only "liberals" or "clericals." No other distinctions were made, and, for instance, the "liberals" had been masculine line and the "clericals" feminine, the matter might have been easily settled; but it was war between friend and friend, between father and son, between husband and wife, between priest and burgomaster, and—between church and tavern.

One would imagine that the venerable bass viol, as common property of both parties, might be a point of neutrality; "au contraire," as the more cultured put it, it became a very bone of contention. The schoolmaster did not play in the choir now, so the new choirmaster—who not only served the clerical banner, but even carried that banner himself—sent to the tavern for the bass viol. But the innkeeper commenced to grumble—"the bass viol belonged to the liberals; the joiner mended it and the joiner was liberal; the schoolmaster put in the strings, and the schoolmaster was liberal now; it was found in the tavern, so the tavern was its home, and the tavern was liberal. So the bass viol, bow and all, was liberal."

Next Sunday the pastor had no text from Holy Writ to expound; the bass viol was his subject. He began cheerfully:

"Years ago, when the bass viol was discovered, it was looked upon as a gift from heaven, therefore it was clerical. Its voice was first heard in the church, and the schoolmaster who first played it in church and tavern was clerical at that time, and if the bride who set on the bass viol and broke its back was not forgotten, he would call to mind that that bride was now the wife of the sexton, and if he, the pastor, finally asserted that the instrument was originally made for the church, no one in town

could prove the contrary, so the bass viol was clerical and belonged to the clericals."

A very clear argument, but unfortunately there was not a liberal in the church. The liberals sat in the tavern and sang drinking songs to the accompaniment of the bass viol.

One evening, however, the chaplain thought to himself, "Actions speak louder than words," and to prove the truth of this saying he stole into the tavern under cover of darkness and took away the bass viol.

The affair became animated at once. The liberals went to the district court, and entered a complaint against the pastor, accusing him of appropriation of the property of others.

"Nonsense!" answered the court. "A whole community in arms about an old bass viol! Go settle it among yourselves." And the liberals took the bass viol back to the tavern.

Then the clericals went to the dean and protested against this invasion of their territory. The dean advised them to go to the bishop, but in the meantime to take back the bass viol. Then the instrument again disappeared from the tavern.

This time the liberals went to the county court. "Don't be silly," was the answer; "break up the old thing."

"But it is not the bass viol we care about!" said the Abelsbergs; "it is a question of right—of honor!"

But the court would not hear them, and so they stormed the rectory and carried away the bass viol.

Now the clericals were furious and went to the bishop. "My dear friends," said the bishop, "you must be firm. If they have the bass viol they will take the organ; if they get the organ they will take the choir, and before you know it they will take the church from over your heads. I am sorry that I can do nothing for you, but you must stand manfully for your rights."

"Stand manfully for your rights." That meant taking the bass viol out of the tavern and hiding it in the rectory.

When this was discovered the liberals, in all the smartness of black coats and white cravats, appealed to the supreme court. But their story had gone before them and they were not even admitted. So they resorted to deep strategy, bribed the keeper of the rectory, who in turn bribed the cook, and got from her the key of the storeroom. The next day as the pastor and chaplain, sunk in prayerful reverie, wandered past the tavern, mingled with the sounds of ungodly mirth within they heard the well known voice of the bass viol.

Then they held a grand party meeting and prayed to the Holy Ghost for wisdom, and when they had thus prayed for wisdom they held consultation and decided unanimously to send a deputation to the holy father, and the head of the church himself should confirm their right to the bass viol.

The liberals held a grand party meeting also, and strengthened themselves with the noble juice of the barley, and thus strengthened they held consultation and the decision was, "If they go to the pope we will go to the emperor!"

So the two deputations set forth, the one toward Rome, the other toward Vienna. The poor old bass viol stood in a quiet corner of the tavern, and was sad at heart over all the silly quarrel of which it was the innocent cause; a quarrel which divided the household against itself and threatened the prosperity of the community. It often sighed for the quiet days in the deserted garret, the peaceful little birds who made their home in its broken case.

It was about this time that a band of gypsies came into the village to beg and steal and make music for those who would be merry. Among them was one old fellow with more wrinkles in his face than you could count, but with coal black hair and beard. He took the bass viol from its lonely corner and played. The Abelsbergs listened in astonishment, for they heard for the first time of what a bass viol was capable.

The wisest nodded their heads and remarked sagely, "There is good ground for the bass viol war of Abelsberg."

The wild music fired their blood, and before they knew it men and women, liberal and clerical, were dancing together in wildest confusion. The old gypsy's thin fingers pressed the strings, and in his hand the bow drew forth weird, bewitching strains that none could resist. Great were the drinking and dancing that night.

The gypsy band had disappeared, and whatever may have been the decision of pope and emperor, the bass viol has not been seen in Ober-Abelsberg since that memorable night.—Translated from the German of P. S. Rosegger by Grace Isabel Colborn for Short Stories.

Different Views of It.

A man walked along Wisconsin street very jauntily, head erect and stepping out boldly. Of a sudden he fell. It was no fault of his, but the water into which he soused and splashed was no less foul on that account. A sweet faced, motherly woman saw him and gave involuntary voice to her ready sympathy in the little exclamation:

"Poor fellow!"

The man arose and pursued his course. Two blocks farther on he met a friend going in his direction. The two stepped and conversed together earnestly, probably upon business matters of importance. As they stood so, a young girl slipped on the crossing, and 'epite of much enthusiastic clutching at the atmosphere, went down in a heap. At which our male pedestrian feelingly remarked:

"If her shoes had been big enough for her I'll bet that never would have happened."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

A Tender Conscience.

Crossing Sweeper—Please gimme two cents for th' clean crossing.

Amused Pedestrian—Why two cents?

"You see, sir, I didn't clean th' crossing myself, but I licked the boy wot did, an' took his broom."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes, sir. But I want ter do the square thing by 'im, an' if y'll gimme two cents I'll give him one."—Good News.

QUALITIES OF THE JAPANESE.

Sir Edwin Arnold's Enthusiastic Opinions of Japanese People.

As for the people, I am and always shall be of good St. Francis Xavier's feeling. This nation is the delight of my soul. Never have I passed days more happy, tranquil or restorative than among Japanese of all classes in the cities, towns and villages of Japan. Possibly that is because I have had no business relations with my kind and pleasant Niponese friends, and have never talked very much metaphysics; but it seems certainly an easy way to keep on the right side of folks to let philosophy and theology alone.

Moreover it is, no doubt, necessary for such experiences to go a little behind that sort of Japan which you find on the Hattobas of Yokohama or Kobe, in the Yoshiwaras of those and the other open ports. At very little distance from the surface, which we civilizing westerners have done our best to spoil, will be still discovered the old, changeless, high tempered, generous, simple and sweet mannered Japan of old.

I frankly confess it has entirely charmed me; and therefore what I say of this Japanese nation, and their manners and customs, must be received with the proper caution attaching to the language of a friend, and even a lover. But where else in the world does there exist such a conspiracy to be agreeable; such a widespread compact to render the difficult affairs of life as smooth and graceful as circumstances admit; such fair decrees of fine behavior fixed and accepted for all; such universal restraint of the coarser impulses of speech and act; such pretty picturesqueness of daily existence; such lively love of nature as the embellisher of that existence; such sincere delight in beautiful artistic things; such frank enjoyment of the enjoyable; such tenderness to little children; such reverence for parents and old persons; such widespread refinement of taste and habits; such courtesy to strangers; such willingness to please and to be pleased.—Sir Edwin Arnold in Scribner's.

Crabs Are Fighters.

Crabs particularly are fighting animals; in fact, they will fight anything. I have seen a crab, in conflict with a lobster, catch the latter over the fore part of the head, where the shell is hardest, and crush it in by one effort. And it rather bears out my idea that the claws of these creatures are particularly weapons of war; that the moment one of them receives severe injury in a claw it drops it off by voluntary amputation, severing its connection with the body at the shoulder by an act of its own will. It seems to me probable that if the claw were necessary for feeding nature would rather seek to cure an injury to it than let the animal discard it altogether.

The species of crab which is most conspicuously a fighter is the hermit crab. Its first idea of independent life is to eat a harmless whelk and occupy its shell; its next notion is to give battle to every crab of the same persuasion as itself that it comes across. Altogether hermit crabs are undoubtedly the most quarrelsome creatures in existence.—Interview in Washington Star.

Education in the Argentine.

There are two universities, one at Buenos Ayres and one at Cordoba, which together counted 993 students in 1889, and delivered 234 diplomas, including 81 doctors of law, 85 doctors of medicine, and 11 civil engineers. In the whole republic there are sixteen national colleges, with a teaching corps of 464 professors and an attendance in 1889 of 2,599 pupils. In the capital and the provinces there are thirty-five normal schools, with 12,024 pupils of both sexes, who become professors and teachers, chiefly for the primary schools.

In Buenos Ayres in 1889 there were 285 primary schools, directed by 1,571 teachers and attended by 64,569 children. In the provinces there were 2,719 primary schools, with a teaching staff of 4,532 and an attendance of 203,186. To resume, the results obtained were 3,042 primary schools, 6,103 teachers, 259,695 pupils, 2,373 primary schoolhouses in the whole republic. Of these schoolhouses 485 are the property of the nation or of the provinces and 1,888 private property.—Theodore Child, in Harper's.

Advance of Public Sentiment.

As an incident of the woman's suffrage movement, it is impossible to pass over the election of Lady Sandhurst Miss Jane Cobden and Miss Cons as members of the London county council. As hostile suits are now pending for heavy penalties against the ladies to test their right to sit and vote, it would be unbecomingly here to do more than wish them success in their brave fight. Their presence at the council board, their useful work on its committees, has already so justified their election that even if the law be interpreted hostilely against them there is little doubt that public opinion would compel early legislative action in favor of the right they claim.—Charles Bradlaugh in Boston Transcript.

A Verse of Scripture.

At one of the Teachers' institutes held a few years ago in Maine, a rule was in force that whoever entered the morning session late should pause at the door and recite a passage of Scripture, a quotation from some poet, or other expression of an idea, for the edification of those present at the session. There was present at the session a plain little old maid, who was continually saying and doing inappropriate things. It seemed to come natural to her. She was late one morning, was this "unappropriated blessing," and pausing on the threshold she electrified those within by remarking suavely, "I love those that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me."—Lewiston Journal.

A Beverly Girl's Queer Ring.

Miss Minnie Kennedy has been utilizing an iron washer for the finger ring, and the consequence is that the flesh has grown around it in such a way as to require the services of a surgeon to remove it.—Beverly (Mass.) Times.

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