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THE ORGANIST OF SULZBACH

By FRED R. WEBBER

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IN THE little German town of Sulzbach, Josef Rudolstadt was an important man. For more than fifty years he had been organist of the village church. And to be the organist of the village church of Sulzbach is a distinction second only to that of being burgomaster or pastor...

A popular subscription was taken, and the townspeople saw visions of an organ that would be the pride of the lower Rhine-country. Builders were called from Brussels, and in the course of time the organ was built, brought to Sulzbach and set up.

On the day that the work was completed, the question of the old organist's dismissal was settled, for it was learned that Josef Rudolstadt had died during the night.

Now another question arose. Who was to play the new organ? Such a position of honor could not be given to the first man who applied for it. True, Sulzbach had a dozen aspiring organists, yet only two seemed eligible. One was Pierre Esquerre and the other was Karl Rudolstadt, son of the old organist.

Pierre was a Frenchman, and had lived in the town for years. His house was in the lower part of the town, near the Rhine. This, together with the fact that Pierre was a musician of exceptional ability, was all that the people of the town knew about him, for he was a man who kept much to himself. Gossip had never hit upon any explanation of his past. Just why so talented a man should be content to live in a village and teach music was a matter that had never been explained.

Karl Rudolstadt was a man of considerable popularity. He had spent all his life in the town, was well known and well liked. Karl had inherited his musical talent from his father, and had spent years in training, under the direction of the old organ master.

Such a man was fitted for the position, his friends insisted. But there were others who were determined that the Frenchman's great skill should not be ignored. The question agitated Sulzbach for days. It was discussed with much vehemence by the townspeople, and whenever a group of people were seen on the street, it was reasonably certain that the topic of conversation was the Esquerre-Rudolstadt controversy.

Finally a plan was evolved and agreed upon. It was decided to have a trial day, and the rival musicians were each to play. The townspeople were to be the judges, and the selection of the organist was to be by popular vote.

For days the rival musicians practiced on the big organ. Finally the trial day arrived. It had been declared a public holiday, and every man who could brought his family to the church to hear the candidates play.

The pastor of the church announced the conditions. Each organist was to have the privilege of playing whatever he wished. If either of the two refused to compete, the choice was to go to his rival. Every person above the age of eighteen was entitled to one vote, and their choice would decide the question of such moment.

The name of Pierre Esquerre was announced. There was much suppressed excitement when the Frenchman took his place at the organ and arranged his stops.

The people of Sulzbach had never heard such playing. Pierre had chosen only one number. He started with the soft toned stops of the organ, gradually added to his registration, building up his theme as he went, until he reached the climax in a thunder of diapasons that brought the entire audience to their feet.

He left the organ bench flushed, and with a look of conscious triumph. The people were speechless for a time. Then they looked at one another in amazement, for when had any of them heard such playing! They discussed it in suppressed whispers. It was wonderful! But others insisted that Karl Rudolstadt could outdo the Frenchman.

The name of the young German was announced, and the people were all attention. But the rival candidate did not appear.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, then half an hour. The people grew restless. Then it was suggested that Pierre be elected, for by the terms of the trial, Rudolstadt's absence made him ineligible. The German's friends protested, because they knew that Karl was no coward, and that he was not absent voluntarily. Messengers were sent out, but the man could not be found.

A vote was taken and the Frenchman elected.

Days passed, and Karl Rudolstadt did not return. The town was agitated for a while, for it was not usual for a man to leave his family and friends in such a manner, especially in a community where generations live and die, and no one thinks of moving away. Gradually the matter was forgotten, and in the course of time it became a tradition of the village.

The organ and the organist were famed throughout the region, and many tales were told of the wonderful skill of the organist.

Finally, before a fest-day, it was decided to repair the organ. The French organist, now grown old, had kept it in repair, but now it needed a thorough overhauling, and the builders were sent for and arrived.

That night Pierre Esquerre was seen entering the church.

On the following day the master-builder who was repairing the organ, left the church in great excitement and summoned one of the town officials. The builder led the way to the church, and motioned for the selectman to follow him to the organ loft.

"Put your foot on that pedal," the builder said.

The selectman obeyed, but there was no sound.

"What is wrong with the organ? Why will that pedal not sound?"

"Follow me and you'll see."

The master-builder hurriedly led the way to the back of the organ and up a long ladder to a platform. Below were the rows of great, open pedal-pipes.

The builder lowered his light into one of them and motioned for the town official to look.

"A man's feet!" the selectman cried.

After a hurried discussion, a number of workmen were called, and the big pipe was lifted out and laid on the floor of the organ loft. Then the workmen drew from the inside of the pipe the body of the old Frenchman. The men were horrified. No one cared especially for the stouter old organist, but the manner of his death was terrible.

One of the men, examining the body, gave a cry, and called the attention of his companions to a rope clutched in the hand of the dead Pierre.

They pulled the rope out of the pipe, and at its end was a bundle. The selectman's eyes flashed meaningly.

"I have always suspected," he said; "now we shall see."

He cut the leather thongs and unrolled a faded coat of peculiar make that even the younger men remembered as belonging to the missing organist. Inside of this was another bundle, in which was a watch, a watch and several smaller articles of jewelry. In the case of the watch was engraved: "Karl Rudolstadt, Sulzbach, 1817."

The story was clear to all. Before the trial, the selectman explained to the organ builder, the Frenchman had killed his rival and had made way with his body, possibly sinking it in the river. He had hidden in the organ pipe the dead man's coat and valuables, which would have identified him, should the body be found. When the builders came, the Frenchman, alarmed at the possible discovery of his crime, tried to remove the incriminating articles from the organ pipe, had lost his balance and had fallen in himself to a terrible death.

The excitement in Sulzbach, when the news was learned, was great, and many reproaches were heaped on the memory of the dead Frenchman.

The organ is the pride of the village, even today, and the townspeople never grow tired of telling the occasional visitor of its unusual story.

With Prey in Grasp,

Tiger Sensed Danger

Most wild animals are specialists; that is to say, they are highly developed in one particular direction. The tiger is great as a stalker. His feet seem to be shod with silence. A gentleman, for many years a resident of India, cites an experience of one neighbor illustrative of this point.

He had been much annoyed by tigers, and at last tied a bullock out in a clearing and took up his own position in a tree to wait till the tiger should come after the bait. The ground was covered with dried leaves, which in hot weather are so brittle that even the walking of a bird over them can be heard for a good distance.

In no very long time a large tiger slipped out of the forest and slowly edged toward the bullock. His method was so elaborate and careful that the man who saw it used to declare that it would have been worth a thousand rupees to any young sportsman who had witnessed it.

So carefully did he put down each paw, and so gradually did he crush the leaves under it, that not a sound was to be heard. Between him and the bullock was a stump about four feet high, with long, projecting surface roots. This, plainly, the tiger looked upon as a godsend.

He got upon one of the roots, balanced himself carefully, and so was able to walk quickly and silently as far as the stump. He approached so gradually and noiselessly, and his color against the brown leaves was so invisible, that he was close upon the bullock before he was perceived.

Then, instantly the bullock charged. The tiger eluded him, and in a moment more had his paws on the bullock's neck, ready to drag him down. Then, like a flash, he caught sight of the rope by which the bullock was tied, and sprang into the forest.

Mythological Lore

We often speak of Nemesis pursuing someone. Nemesis was the goddess of revenge, who mercilessly hurried to punishment guilty souls condemned by the goddess of justice. Her name has become a synonym for retribution.

"As sure as Fate" is a common phrase. Why is fate so sure? The Fates were three sisters who controlled men's destinies. The first spun life's thread, the second twisted it, and the third cut it off with her shears. They alone dared oppose the sovereign will of the gods, and they issued irrevocable decrees.

POULTRY

COMFORTABLE HENS ALWAYS LAY WELL

Do everything you can to make your hens comfortable. If their health and vitality are kept at the highest level, it will add many eggs to your basket. If your hens are worried by lice and mites, then they cannot lay the maximum number of eggs.

This is good poultry gospel, according to D. H. Hall, extension poultry specialist, who warns us that with the warm weather coming on we will have more trouble with lice and mites than we had during the cooler months, and that everybody should take extra precaution at this time of the year to get rid of these parasites.

Mites can be controlled by spraying the house with whitewash to which has been added enough disinfectant to make a 5 per cent solution. A good coal-tar product, such as cresote or taroleum, may be used as a disinfectant. Carbolic acid is also good. In spraying the house be sure to spray every square inch of surface. If you miss a few mites, then you will have a multitude to deal with the following week.

Lice are found on the individual hens. They spend their entire life on the body, laying their eggs and sticking them to the feathers in small colonies. They can be found in the fluff feathers and under the wings. No hen will go about her business of producing eggs with any degree of efficiency with lice covering her body.

The best method of getting rid of lice is by dusting with a good insect powder. Sodium fluoride is a good parasite killer. Take a pinch of sodium fluoride and dust it into the fluff feathers, under each wing, on the neck, back and body of the fowl.

Work That Counts. My friend, all speech and humor are short-lived, foolish, untrue. Genuine work done, what thou workest faithfully, that is eternal! Take courage, then; raise the arm, strike home, and that right lustily; the citadel of hope must yield to noble desire, this seconded by noble effort.—Thomas Carlyle.

Liberty. The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made themselves, under whatsoever form it be of government; the liberty of a private man is being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God, and of his country.—Cowley.

Nature's Wisdom. Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own; and from morning to night, as from the cradle to the grave, is but a succession of changes so gentle and easy that we can scarcely mark their progress.

Philippine Mohammedans. In the Philippine islands there are about 450,000 Moros, who are Mohammedans. Although the wildest and most fanatical of the natives, they are the only ones who have petitioned to have the United States keep control of the Philippines.

Babylon's Dimensions. It is now believed that the ancient city of Babylon was 14 miles square, surrounded by a wall 50 miles in length, 300 feet high, 100 feet broad at the base and wide enough on the top for two chariots to race abreast.

Taught Value of Potatoes. The potato owes its introduction as an article of food into France to the efforts of the French chemist, Parmentier, who lived on potatoes during an imprisonment of five years, from 1758 to 1763, in Germany.

Education's Impress. The force of education is so great that we may mold the minds and manners of the young into what shape we please and give them the impressions of such habits as shall ever after remain.

Adjusting Your Garter. The final test of poise is the ability calmly to adjust a sock supporter in the face of feminine amusement.—Duluth Herald.

Midget Among Birds. A small humming bird, not very much larger than the ordinary housefly, is common in many East Indian countries.

French Philosophy. All man's misery springs from his inability to rest with tranquility in one room alone.—Pascal.

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