

A PIANO-TUNER'S TALK.

He Talks About the Strange Things He Encounters in His Trade.

"Look out for that rat!" was the exclamation of a piano-tuner of this city to a reporter a few days ago as he stood watching him take a piano to pieces, says the New York Graphic. The words had hardly been said when a large, lean rat jumped out of the instrument and scampered across the room and out of an open door. While he was dexterously removing the rat's nest from inside the piano the reporter asked if rats were usually part and parcel of pianos. The tuner remarked that while probably two-thirds of the instruments in residences were free from the rodents the other third were infested with them; at least that has been his experience during twenty years of his life. Those in the country of cases fully half a bushel of small scraps of paper that had been carried there by the pests had been discovered. The paper and the nests were not so bad, but rats very frequently did the instrument much damage. Rats play havoc with the felts in the action, and he had repaired pianos where the felts had all been eaten away. Occasionally a hungry rat is discovered that shows fight, and the wielding of a broomstick, with the accompanying screaming by the women folk, is necessary to get rid of the animal.

Children oftentimes cause pianos to get out of order, but while the trouble caused by them is usually quickly repaired, there are times when they do more damage than rats. Left alone in the room with an open instrument the spirit of mischief comes over them and a cane or a book is pointed in under or among the strings. The owner returns to play on the piano and then finds it at sixes and sevens. As every thing was all right but a few minutes before, the cause of the trouble can not be understood, and then there is bluster about the house. Should the piano be a new one the maker is blamed, the instrument is condemned and a sharp letter is forwarded to the seller. The repairer with fear and trembling hastens to the scene, the trouble is found, and after apologies, the whipping of the small boy who did the mischief and the payment of the bill for repairs, the piano is left to its fate.

Picking up a five-cent piece lying on the action, the tuner said: "Here is something, too, I find, as well as rats' nests and the work of children. To be sure, money is not worked frequently, especially in any considerable amount, but the finding of two fat pocket-books and a \$10 gold piece I will never forget. The gold had been placed in the piano for safe keeping by a young lady and its hiding place forgotten, and my finding it, of course, made the owner happy. The bringing to light of one of the pocket-books made me \$50 richer, that being a present from his lover. It had been missing for a year, and contained \$500. Detectives had been hunting for thieves who, it was supposed, had stolen the money. The discovery of the pocket-book brought back the recollection that it had been laid on the top lid of an upright piano, and that it had no doubt fallen in the inside, where I had found it.

"Instead of getting a reward I came near being arrested and perhaps sentenced to a term of imprisonment for finding the other purse. Its contents were over two hundred dollars, and, like the other one, having been carelessly left on top of the instrument, it fell inside. Being missed while I was in the house, and the owner of the money, a country justice, remembering where he had laid it, suspicion rested on me as the one who had taken it. When I remarked the mysterious actions of the justice, his wife and two daughters, he told me of his loss and what he suspected, and threatened my arrest unless the money was immediately produced. It was a bad predicament to be in, and what to do puzzled me. The finding of the other pocketbook flashed across my mind. I suggested a search in the interior of the piano, and there it was found, to my joy. The old man took it with so much as saying, 'Thank you,' and to this day I think he holds the opinion that I hid it away in the piano."

IDENTIFIED AT LAST.

An Anecdote Which Bears Every Evidence of Strict Veracity.

That classical anecdote of the English child who, when reminded that she ought to go to her mother, replied: "Her aunt calling me; we don't belong to her," not only proves that a confusion of cases is common to untutored minds, but also that they are deeply attached to pronouns. In the country, especially, says the Youth's Companion, does a love of that part of speech greatly abound. It may be a condition of the natural sheepishness attendant on the closer relations of life, but certain it is that in most rural districts the husband speaks vaguely of his wife as "she," while the other side of the shield is displayed in her reference to "him."

"I was going out to mow that mornin'," said a farmer, when giving his evidence in court, "and I says to her!"

"Whom do you mean by her?" interrupted the judge. "The prisoner!"

"No, no, not the prisoner! She wasn't there!" said the witness, hardly concealing his scorn of the judge's stupidity. "I was talkin' to her. She was in the house fryin' doughnuts."

"Who was fryin' doughnuts?"

"Why, she was! And I said!"

"Your honor," interrupted the opposing counsel, "it seems to me absolutely essential that the identity of this unknown woman should be settled."

"She didn't have nothin' to do with the case at all!" cried the witness, indignantly. "She was fryin' her doughnuts for breakfast, and I says—"



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