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ABOUT 100 years ago there was a very poor young man who lodged in the attic of an old dilapidated house in the Platz Roemer, in the city of Bonn, Germany.

"Ho, ho!" exclaimed the kapellmeister as he slapped the young man on the shoulder. "What do I see? What do you mean? Do you wish to be forever damned? Come! No black butterflies on Christmas eve! Look! The city is clothed in its wedding garments, the church bells are pealing merrily, and already, in anticipation of midnight, the streets are odoriferous with the favor of Mince pie and greasy fritters. Very soon the taverns will



"Ho!" exclaimed the kapellmeister. illuminate their windows as an invitation and welcome to the passers-by. And above all, monsieur's treasurer did not forget to pay me my salary. Come, comrade! Let us go."

"Ah, you are suffering as always, my poor grand genius!" Then the young man arose brusquely, savagely wiped away a tear that was coursing down his cheek and exclaimed in a violent manner:

"Oh, be quiet! I hate the world! Its pleasures are to me like so many thrusts of a knife. I hate the human race: I hate myself! Genius, did you say? Yes, if that is to be the victim of every torture and every sorrow; to see oneself the subject of insult, suspicion and public indifference; to hear hunger, thirst and disease knock at one's door; to feel that all the sublime voices, all the vast inspirations of one's heart and brain, are stifled by the coldness of death; if it is to be a recluse and a pariah, then, indeed, am I a genius. But come! These walls, the silent witnesses of my despair, give me the horrors."



R. DU PONTAVICE DE HUESSEY

(Translated from the French by George Morehead.)

silence and solemnity of that winter's night. At last they reached the heights of the suburb called Coblenz, which overlooks the ancient city, and were passing through one of its most retired streets when the young man suddenly stopped and grasped the arm of his companion.



"Hush!" he said. "Listen!" Master Joachim, bending his head to one side, seemed to increase the vast

area of his rubicund ears, and in the deep silence of the night he heard, modulated by a broken winded harpsichord, some vague and feeble sounds that issued from a neighboring house. The two friends remained silent and motionless.

Presently they recognized the melody. It was an andante, possessing breadth, sweetness and melancholy, and despite the mediocrity of her instrument and the crudeness of her method the invisible performer impressed upon the music a tenderness of expression that denoted a poetic soul.

"Ah, by my faith!" exclaimed Master Joachim. "If I mistake not, that music is mine." said the young man, while two tears glistened in his eyes.

"Listen, Joachim: listen! It is the andante from my first symphony. Ah! I was wrong a few moments ago when I cursed my fate. God is good, and life is worth living, since here in my native city some one knows me, understands me, loves me! Since my spirit is the consoler of another, and a woman no doubt. Yes, yes: it is a woman, for I recognize the soul, the touch, the feeling of a woman, or rather, of an angel that heaven in its mercy to the poor and despised has sent to earth this festive night as a balm of celestial joy to my poor wounded heart."

"Hush! Hush!" growled Joachim who had become critical on hearing his favorite instrument. "I admit that the performer displays some feeling; but, my good Ludwig, the left hand is feeble, and the arpeggios of the right hand lack finesse and breadth. The method of a pupil, my boy."

"Silence, blasphemer!" replied the younger man, whose face was now refulgent with joy. "That woman does not merely play my music—do you understand? She expresses my thoughts. I feel it here!" he said, striking his heart. "But, come! I must see her, and here is the house."

Eagerly he drew Master Joachim toward a humble cottage. A light filtered through the badly jointed shutter of a lower window, and it was from that room the music came. But as they leaned forward near the window in an effort to hear the better the instrument suddenly became silent as it emitted one last plaintive note that resembled a sob.



the old instrument, the young girl resembled the statue of Melancholy. The light of the lamp illumined her classic profile and blond hair; her eyes presented a peculiar appearance as if they were covered by a veil; she seemed to be blind; in her attitude and features there were tokens of sorrow and resignation, but in the light of her forehead faith and hope shone with rays of divine purity and sweetness. All the surroundings of this young couple betokened poverty, even misery, but a misery bravely borne, a life of toil marked by decency and pride.

"Yes, I remember," said the young man. "It was on Christmas eve, on just such a night as this, that you had that adventure, an adventure that would bring a piteous smile to the face of any but a poor person, and yet I cherish and bless it because it brought a ray of sunshine into the dark shadows of your life. Tell me once more, dear Alice, the story of your adventure. I love to hear you in the deep silence of the night relate the story in your slow and gentle voice, which seems to come from above, while your fingers lightly caress the keys of your old friend."

She resumed her place before the instrument and dreamily played a few chords. "Oh, yes," she said, "that was a divine melody. Alas, I can remember nothing of it but this one air, but that simple air is as broad as the winter sky and as deep as the ocean. Every time I play it the whole scene returns to my memory. You remember, Fritz, you had taken me that night to Aunt Gertrude, who was very ill in her little attic in the Platz Roemer, and as you had some work to finish you left me there for several hours. Sitting at the side of the invalid's cot, I could hear her breathing, and, although I could not see her, I imagined the appearance of her poor face, yellow, wrinkled and emaciated by age, privation, illness and suffering. A profound silence reigned around me. My habitual darkness appeared to be deeper, heavier and more cruel than before, and I trembled as I thought how sad and burdensome this life was to the poor and unfortunate such as I."

"Suddenly some one began to play a piano in an adjoining room. The music commenced with a soft prelude like the beating of a bird's wings in the distance or the approach of a cohort of angels, and as the rhythm expanded and increased I imagined I saw the seraphim, all white and dazzling, descending from the stars and illumining the darkness that surrounded me. Then I was seized and inundated by an overwhelming harmony which opened to me the gates of paradise. Ah, how can I express the torrent of ineffable sensations and delicious pleasures that submerged my senses in those enraptured moments! Inspired by the wonderful notes that were created by the fingers of that magician, everything around me vibrated and lived. Radiant visions greeted my new found sight. Beautiful saints, brilliant with light and glory, pointed out to me the heaven whence they came and whither they returned—without me, alas, the cruel ones! Suddenly all this world of dreams faded away and disappeared in the night; then, vast, profound, religious, consoling and inspired, the andante that I have retained and learned arose majestically in the midst of the mysterious darkness."

"Yes," said Fritz, "and when I returned I found you trembling and weeping, and it seemed to me that the features of our poor old aunt were impressed with an unusual degree of serenity. In fact, I imagined that Father Christmas had paid a visit to both of you during my absence. But on our way home you related to me that strange adventure. Next day I made inquiries and learned that Aunt Gertrude's neighbor was a young musician, mysterious and eccentric, who was on the verge of being dispossessed by his landlord because he was too poor to pay his rent and for the additional reason that he disturbed the sleep of his neighbors by loud and untimely uproars similar to that which regaled your ears."

"Do not say that, dear Fritz, even in fun, or you will offend me. The strange musician whom I heard that night was one of those angels sent to earth by God and known to us by the name of genius." She remained silent for a moment,



"Little sister, why do you not play?" trude's neighbor was a young musician, mysterious and eccentric, who was on the verge of being dispossessed by his landlord because he was too poor to pay his rent and for the additional reason that he disturbed the sleep of his neighbors by loud and untimely uproars similar to that which regaled your ears.

struggling against her emotion. Then in an outburst of exaltation she exclaimed:

"Oh, to hear him once more—only once—would be a foretaste of celestial bliss!"

Instinctively she softly played the theme of her beloved andante as an accompaniment to the following prayer: "Bright king of this holy night—Christmas, Father Christmas, good Father Christmas, who concealeth thy venerable head under the hood of the great red cloak so full of enchantments; thou who this winter's night, with thy snowy beard floating in the frosty air, doth traverse the world and stop by preference before the more humble and sorrowful dwellings to gratify the modest wishes of those simple souls who have faith in thy power—Father Christmas, grant in this solemn vigil the wishes of thy humble and devoted servants. Oh, kind and loving friend of women and children, grant, I pray, that I may hear him once more!" Fritz had arisen, much affected by the fervor of the girl's prayer. He was about to speak when the door suddenly opened and two strangers appeared upon the threshold.

BEFORE the young master of the humble cottage had recovered from his astonishment the elder of the two strangers approached him and said: "Excuse our informal entrance, my master. My friend and I are two very poor but enthusiastic musicians. We were passing through the street when we were attracted by the sound of your piano and could not resist our desire to become acquainted with the artist, the unknown brother or sister, who is concealed in this remote suburb."

"Alas, sir," replied the young man, "we are not artists, but only humble working people. Our life is a very hard one, but my sister sometimes brightens it with a fugitive ray of sunshine by playing, as she did this evening, some melodies that she has learned."

The younger of the two visitors now approached Alice. She trembled visibly when he touched her lightly on the shoulder and said in a gentle voice: "You like that music, my child?" "Oh, yes!" she murmured. "I love it—I cherish it! It is sublime! Only



SEE LISTENED WITH ALL HER SOUL. I feel that I can never play it as it should be played."

"But," said the musician, who was standing now before the instrument, "you have no music. Do you play by ear?"

Upon hearing these words the brother ran to his sister's side and took her hand, while she replied in a sad voice: "Look at me, sir—you who are so fortunate as to have your sight. I am blind."

There was a moment of painful silence. "Ah, my child," said the musician, "God afflicts in this life those he wishes to glorify in the next world. I also have a heavy cross to bear, and sometimes I am tempted to curse my fate, but I always have at my side a divine comforter—music! Let it console us now. What you were playing a few moments ago is not unknown to me. May I play it now?"

Without waiting for a reply he seated himself before the old harpsichord. At the sound of the first few notes the blind girl trembled with joy. Had not the good Father Christmas granted her prayer? Under the touch of a master, light and heavenly as it was, under the stress of that divine inspiration, the old instrument became sonorous and pathetic. Ah, how it throbbled, sang, wept, laughed and sighed by turns! Yes, yes, it was the same that she had heard a year ago at the bedside of her dying aunt. As the volume of music reverberated through the humble room an ecstatic glow lighted the girl's features. With clasped hands, with parted lips and with her poor sightless eyes raised toward heaven she listened with all her soul—as a saint might listen to the singing of invisible angels.

The player also was transfigured. His face no longer bore the bitter and somber expression that we noticed there before he began to play. The fire of enthusiasm now blazed in his eyes; a powerful emotion agitated his lips. Framed in the waving torrents of his long hair, his face was that of a master of human thought.

He ceased playing upon a final majestic chord; then he bowed his head, and his eyes gazed vacantly into space. His thoughts were no longer of this earth. The inspiring power of his own music had overwhelmed his soul and marked his pale features with the traits of genius. Suddenly, in a burst of violence, he arose and ran to the window and opened it wide to the wintry air.

The moon upon its course reigned [Continued on page 7, column 2.]

Shoes. Shoes.

Yeagers Shoe Store

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