

MY PLEA.

Give me, O Fate, O Destiny, four walls beneath a roof,
A little cash that I may live and living hold aloof
From humankind of every mold, who'er, what'er it be,
Who think a mint of hoarded gold can give them power o'er me!

Give me, O Guiding Star, a spot, beneath yon arching span,
Where I can hide, in peace, from that especial man
Who thinks, because his prejudice is hard and cold and dry,
That he is more intelligent, more versed in truth than I!

Give me, O Fortune, some far place beyond the eager tongue
Of him who sits in ignorance upon life's lowest rung!
Sahara's wilds, grim solitude, I care not where it be,
But let me live where man's conceit I may no longer see!

Give me, O Luck, O Circumstance, the chance to get away
A thousand miles from that crass chap who has too much to say!
Preserve me from the gabfest trait, the over-plus of speech—
From all who wag their jaws too much I would be out of reach!
—Lurana W. Sheldon, in the New York Times.

THE ORGANIST.

By **RENE BAZIN.**

He was a very old gentleman, at whom the street boys pointed because of his long locks. He wore them long and curling, like the Bretons in pictures, although he had come from some obscure place in Flanders and was living in a little city in the south of France. The people of the neighboring villages, dwellers by the Rhone, folk of the land of garlic, sun, and wind, asked, when they heard him speak:

"Who is that strange man with the northern accent?"

"What! Don't you know him? That is the organist of our cathedral."

His clean-shaven face had the tone of old Delft faïences, in which a tinge of blue can always be seen beneath the white enamel. His face was broadly outlined, like a Roman bust. As to his eyes, they were buried underneath such a forest of eyebrows that only two persons claimed to have seen them—that is, really to have seen them. And yet these persons differed in opinion as to their color.

"They are dark blue," said M. Follis, the priest of the cathedral.

To which the blower of the great organ replied:

"I have seen them oftener than you have, I who blow the organ; they are brown, like the beetles on oak trees."

Blue or brown, they had an anxious tenderness when they looked at Catherine, the only souvenir of the most painful episode of M. Bretwiller's life, his marriage. M. Bretwiller, a musician of the northern school, whose very gaiety was pensive, and whose enthusiasm was melancholy, belonged to the race of those great barbarians who came down from their forests to sunny Rome at the time of the invasions. They felt the sunbeams delightful upon their helmets, and their hearts were stirred by the glow, which awoke within them a new song. Their weapons trembled in their hands at the sight of the beautiful Roman women, and they said to themselves that they would do well to pitch their tents in a land where the olive shades the twofold harvest of grapes and wheat. After their manner, and with great eagerness, they tasted the delights of that foreign land. But to understand is not to be understood. M. Bretwiller made proof of that truth. His southern bride had not the least suspicion what a German musician might be; and she died of it. Catherine alone remained to prove that the organist had been married. She was puny and ill-favored, as the product of two clashing civilizations. Her hair was too curly, her forehead too low, her eyes, which could not decide between the north and the south, had the hue of dead embers. Her mouth, however, was exquisite, modeled after antique types, full and severe, large and always moist, like the lips of shells which sing the eternal song. She sang divinely. Her father knew no greater joy, perhaps he really had no other joy, than to hear the melodies which he composed come forth from that beloved voice and pass above the mimosas in the garden, borne by the air of Provence, which carries music more lightly than any other air, by reason of habit, of the language, and of the fragrance of the flowers. He said to her, simply:

"See, Catherine, the greater part of men have not soul enough for two. They have only enough for themselves. Those who have more soul than they need for themselves are the poets, the philosophers, the musicians and the composers. Above all the composers, for they speak the language least of all subject to restraint, and therefore the most universal. A note has no country. A melody is merely the key which opens the door of dreams in all dialects." He also said:

"I know very well that I am not understood, here in the south. All the members of the chapter have the Italian ear. The priest rebels against the fugue. The chapel-master, M. Catbise, may not even know the names of Bach, Franck and Wagner. The air is saturated with Rossini's cavatinas. My great organ, if I would permit it, would play serenaes, all by itself. Its tremolo is

diabolically easy. It is my honor to strive to implant the German method in this Latin country. I will make it triumphant. It shall reign here some day, and you shall hear 'Tristan and Yseult' in Avignon, and the 'Phantom Ship' sung in sight of the sea by the herdsmen of Camargue!"

Sometimes they went to walk in the outskirts of the city, upon the bare hills where sparse groups of trees point toward the sky. M. Bretwiller tried not to hear the Rhone, which whistled an allegro of amazing lightness; he tried to hear neither the crickets, with their Neapolitan songs, nor the tamarisk shrubs, those unwearied murmurers of lullabies; but when he came upon a pine tree, he seated himself at its foot and took a lesson. "Master of masters," he said, "singer of the north and of the south, self-sufficing, and evolving the same meditative theme, alike beneath the sun and the fog."

But, far more often, M. Bretwiller did not go out. In the streets his tall, bent figure was seldom seen, unless it were on saints' days, half an hour before service and half an hour afterward. He walked along, already improvising, possessed by the idea which developed itself exuberantly in these moments of exaltation. He saw no one, bowed to no one, and did not know that he had reached his destination until suddenly the shadow close to the Roman walls of the cathedral made him raise his head. Then, going in by a door of which he alone possessed the key, he mounted the organ gallery, seated himself, threw a terrible glance at the blower, and played a few chords, with his hand and his foot, to test himself. Then, the time having come, he abandoned himself to the charm of his composition, a charm which, alas, was confined to himself. He was no longer bowed down, but erect, solemn, happy.

The only person who disturbed him in these joyful hours was Catbise, the chapel-master, who responded to him with the little choir-organ; Catbise, who played the chants, a pure southerner, and of the blond kind which never knows self-distrust. This Catbise, who had not composed even a waltz, delighted his audience with preludes, sorrowful airs with flowery variations, tearful strains mingled with Tyrolean warblings, the art, in fact, of the little Italians who smilingly play the violin in the streets. Bretwiller execrated him, all the more so because once or twice a year a certain worthy canon, who had no thought of ill-will, would come to him and say: "How you master your organ, M. Bretwiller! What a pity that you are not always clear! See M. Catbise, a young man with a great future. There is a man whom one can easily understand, and whom one can follow without fatigue!"

Catherine consoled her father for the injustice of men. She was the true cause of this sacrificed life. If you could have penetrated the secret of that old artist's soul, you would have seen what no one knew, not even Catherine herself, that if he remained in that southern land, so rebellious to his art, it was not in order to secure the triumph of his favorite composers.

They Asked for the People's Highway.

They asked for the People's Highway, though never a word they spake;
Dim in the wind of their flight, defeated, unhuman, they spurred,
Dim in the whirling dust that they left in their fatal wake—
They asked for the People's Highway! . . . (The People said never a word).

They have run down a child; and yet, who will say that theirs was the blame?
The child in the road—it fluttered—as silly as fledgling bird!
They turned to the right, they turned to the left, and the child the same—
But they could not stop on the Highway! (The People said never a word).

They have crushed the old lame man, as home from his work he went—
Or, was he deaf, that not at the signal repeated he stirred?
He kept the road, in his stupid way—the warning was sent—
But they could not stop on the Highway! (The People said never a word).

The People are slow of speech, but their thought is to-morrow's law;
And the bolt of their judgment the heavier falls the longer deferred. . . .
When the Red Car mocked and the Black Car scowled, and the People saw
That they would not stop on the Highway—hark to the People's word:—

"Beggars!—a road of their own with their wealth let them build, if they will,
And leave what is ours to us—the right of the plodding herd!
Let the Red Car lord it, the Black Car race with the Red, to kill—
But not on our Highway. This is the People's Will and Word."
—Edith M. Thomas, in Putnam's.

or of his own works, but to save Catherine, who had been sickly from her childhood. A physician in whom M. Bretwiller had confidence had said: "If she leaves the south before she is twenty-five years old she will not live." He waited, watching with a growing hope the restoration of this child who had neither strength nor beauty. From year to year he observed new favorable symptoms. She had a faint color in her cheeks. She walked more firmly. Her voice assumed without effort the grave fullness which indicates a robust life. Would she live? And could they both leave the valley of the Rhone, and make their way to the north, she, after having passed her early youth, he, before his final old age? When she sang he said aloud: "What a joy to be so understood! What a queen of high art you are!" At the same time he thought: "We will leave them all, these lovers of farandoles! I will take you far away. You were almost sentenced to death, and now life smiles upon you."

Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five! She had reached her twenty-fifth year. M. Bretwiller only sought an occasion, and the occasion came to him without his suspecting it. The rumor spread through the city that M. Catbise had composed a mass in sol minor for the approaching solemnity of Easter. At first the organist did not believe it.

"Sol minor? Sol minor? Persons of his sort only write in major, sir! As far as he is concerned, how should he write anything at all, even in a common, hilarious tone? He has not an idea. Catbise cannot have composed a mass; my own in re minor is not finished, although I have been working on it for fifteen years."

It was true, however. When he received the score from the priest's hands a rage took possession of the organist; a rage in which there entered musical passion and a great deal of jealousy. The priest said:

"You will accompany M. Catbise's mass on the little organ, will you not, dear M. Bretwiller? He will conduct."

"No, sir. I only accompany that which exists. Catbise does not exist."

His resignation followed on the same day. The organist wrote it off-hand, without hesitation, without emotion. He was free. He could return to the north and realize his dream of twenty-five years. Only twenty-five years is a great age for a dream.

The first use which M. Bretwiller made of his freedom was to go back to the cathedral and to enter the organ-loft. He tried the haut-bois, which he found of a most superior quality; the celestial voice, which he often used; the trumpet, which did not displease him. With a sigh he said: "Fine instrument, into what hands are you about to fall!" And with the point of his knife he inscribed upon the largest pipe these words, which I have read: "This organ will think no more." It gave him a strange sensation to turn the key in the old lock of the organ-loft.

As he came down the street from the cathedral he went into the shop of a man who sold hot cakes. He used to buy one every Sunday, as he went home from the great organ.

"Adieu, M. Besseguet."
"Don't you mean au revoir?"
"No, adieu."

He did not explain himself, for he was affected. He felt the curiosity of a foreigner in this city which he had not wanted to see during all his life there. He observed the houses, measured with his eyes the trees on the avenues, recognized the passers-by, and saluted them with a slow gesture which followed them.

When he came in front of his garden hedge, he saw a pomegranate blossom which had just opened. "I shall regret that," he said. He went along between the borders of violets which were so fragrant every morning when he settled himself at his piano, and he went past the grape-arbors which he visited so gladly in the autumn, until he came to his daughter, feeling less proud than he had expected to feel. She had already approved of everything. She had more things to regret than he

had; but, after all, since he was so eager to leave the country—

M. Bretwiller was astonished to find that he was held by so many ties to a land which he detested. His nature was insistent. He loved to go to the bottom of questions. He said:

"What matters it to us, here or there? We shall carry with us our happiness, my little Catherine, our dear intimacy which is everything to us."

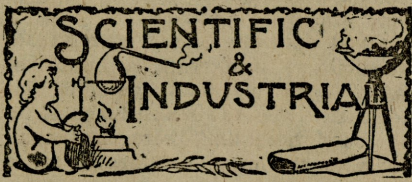
"Undoubtedly."
"We shall live in just the same way."

"Good heavens, yes!"
"How you say that! Are you not happy, Catherine?" He thought: "As to me, there are reasons why I should be sorry. But she? For twenty-five years I have lived for her alone."

Catherine let herself be urged to answer. She hesitated, and ended by saying, without understanding all the cruelty of her words:

"I have been loved by nobody but you!"

And M. Bretwiller went to the north, having learned two things in a short time; that it is dangerous to try to realize an old dream; but that it is still more so, that it is an absolute imprudence, to wish to know the inmost essence of our happiness.—Translated for the Argonaut, by Edward Tuckerman Mason.



Pure iron is only a laboratory preparation. Cast iron, the most generally useful variety, contains about five per cent. of impurities, and the curious thing is that it owes its special value to the presence of these. Pure iron can be shaved with a pocket-knife; impure iron can be made almost as hard as steel.

Dr. Oliver, after many experiments in freezing eggs of hookworm, concludes that hookworm can survive winters in Europe and become epidemic. Recently forty cases were reported from the brick fields in Holland.

Heretofore regarded as valueless, a certain kind of soil, of which there are large deposits in Denmark, has been found to make excellent bricks of light weight and so tough that nails may be driven into them without cracking.

Dr. Gustave Le Bon attempts to sum up in a few pages in *The Independent* his own book on the evolution of matter. This investigator has devoted more time to psychological than material phenomena, but like thousands of others he has been captivated by the suggestive discoveries of the Curies, Messrs. Rutherford and Soddy and Professor J. J. Thomson, and of late his inquiries have taken a new direction. Indeed, Dr. Le Bon has reported finding a form of invisible radiance different from anything previously observed. Other scientific men have been unable to get the same results as he when repeating his experiments, and have detected possibilities of self-deception which the Frenchman may have overlooked. Still, any doubt which may remain as to the existence of "N" rays should not influence any one's opinion concerning the soundness of Dr. Le Bon's ideas about matter. Indeed, these are largely shared by a number of well known physicists, and up to a certain point speculations of this kind are to be encouraged.

Men of science are generally agreed that birds are nature's great check on the excess of insects, and that they maintain the balance between plant and insect life. Ten thousand caterpillars, it has been estimated, could destroy every blade of grass on an acre of cultivated land. The insect population of a single cherry tree infested with aphides has been estimated by a prominent entomologist at no less than twelve million. The bird population of cultivated country districts has been estimated at from seven hundred to one thousand a square mile. This is small, compared with the number of insects, yet, as each bird consumes hundreds of insects every day, the latter are prevented from becoming the scourge they would be but for their feathered enemies.

An Artistic Truth.

Miss Mary Garden, at a tea in Philadelphia, congratulated a Philadelphian on the excellent opera that is produced in the Quaker city.

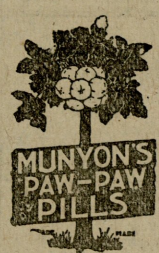
"Really," she said, "you get better opera here than they have in Paris at the Comique or even at the Opera itself."

"The reason? Money, of course. Salaries. We singers, you know, with all our love for art, are in complete agreement with the colored divine who said:

"'Breddern an' sistern, Ah can't preach heah an' boad' in keb'n."

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must give the bowels help. Your choice must lie between harsh physic and candy Cascarets. Harshness makes the bowels callous, so you need increasing doses. Cascarets do just as much, but in a gentle way.

Vest-pocket box, 10 cents—at drug-stores. 85¢ Each tablet of the genuine is marked C.C.C.

A building which it is believed holds the record in this country in antiquity as a Presbyterian church is still standing at Southampton, L. I. Its erection was begun in 1707 and it was dedicated as a church in 1708.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c a bottle.

Educational Helps.

We talk much of education, but make little real progress. Why is this? It is because we are taking our cue for education from without instead of from within. Scheme follows scheme, subject follows subject, but the development of any natural bent the child may possess is almost an impossibility. Conferences with the teachers with a view to taking their opinions upon how best to introduce a system more truly educational and giving them power to classify their scholars into sections with the approval of parents or guardians should go a long way toward attaining a more desirable state of affairs. This, sequent upon or concurrent with more attention of the right kind to the child in the home, wherein much assistance can be obtained from the wonderful books for children written by the few who understand them well, may bring hope where at present reigns something not unlike despair.—London T. P.'s Weekly.

The Cost of Milk.

According to the figures thus far submitted to the legislative milk investigators, the farmers of New England are in reality a noble band of philanthropists supplying humanity with milk at a continued monetary loss. At the latest estimate the profitable price of milk had been boosted to 10 cents per quart and was still rising. And neither the tariff, the trusts, nor the increased production of gold figures in the estimate is responsible for the increased price. No wonder the consumer is inclined to think that investigations are a delusion and a snare.—Boston Herald.

HARD ON CHILDREN When Teacher Has Coffee Habit.

"Best is best, and best will ever live." When a person feels this way about Postum they are glad to give testimony for the benefit of others.

A school teacher down in Miss. says: "I had been a coffee drinker since my childhood, and the last few years it had injured me seriously.

"One cup of coffee taken at breakfast would cause me to become so nervous that I could scarcely go through with the day's duties, and this nervousness was often accompanied by deep depression of spirits and heart palpitation.

"I am a teacher by profession, and when under the influence of coffee had to struggle against crossness when in the school room.

"When talking this over with my physician, he suggested that I try Postum, so I purchased a package and made it carefully according to directions; found it excellent of flavour, and nourishing.

"In a short time I noticed very gratifying effects. My nervousness disappeared, I was not irritated by my pupils, life seemed full of sunshine, and my heart troubled me no longer.

"I attribute my change in health and spirits to Postum alone."

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.