

**A COLORED BOY CHOIR.**

A Very Melodious One in Surplice at St. Philip's Church.

New York boasts of the largest surplined colored boy choir in the United States, and so far as is known, in the world. Such choirs are not numerous, and are to be found only in large cities. There are two in New York—one belonging to a Roman Catholic and the other to a Protestant Episcopal church. The latter is the one here meant, and as the music of the Episcopal is so different from that of the Roman Catholic church no comparison between the two can be drawn.

St. Philip's church in West Twenty-fifth street, between Sixth and Seventh avenues, is one of the oldest colored congregations in America. The present building is an ordinary affair of brick and was once used by Methodists. Up to a few months ago the music at St. Philip's was furnished by an ordinary mixed choir of colored singers. Some months before Easter it was decided to change to a boy choir, such as are to be found in Trinity, St. Agnes, St. Andrews and other more or less "high" churches in the city. The present organist, Mr. E. B. Kinney, was engaged to organize the choir, and the first services under the new order of things were heard on Easter Sunday. Mr. Kinney, however, found the task of organization a difficult one. He discovered that, so far as the constant desire to have fun and play pranks with one another was concerned, there was not much difference between colored and white boys. And as the choir consisted of thirty boys, in addition to twenty men, he had to keep his eyes open. In time the youngsters began to submit fairly well to discipline and are now quite tractable. Of course there was no trouble with the men.

The colored race is essentially musical, both in ear and voice, and this fact has caused the choir of St. Philip's to be reckoned among the best boy choirs in the city. Once the youngsters are interested they enter upon the work with an earnestness that would put many a white boy to the blush. In the choir there are several remarkably good soprano voices. Two little colored chaps, Prentice Hutchinson and Howard Braxton, are regarded as especially fine, and to them most of the solos are given. The ages of the boys range from nine to sixteen years.

Mr. Kinney says that as far as he knows he is the only white person connected with the church, though the rector, the Rev. H. C. Bishop, is frequently assisted by white ministers. St. Philip's church is interesting for other things than its choir. It has a very valuable chalice cup, made of gold, which has been insured for \$4,000. It is studded with diamonds, pearls, rubies and other precious stones. There is a legend that two of the diamonds, each worth \$700, were found in the bottom of a trunk belonging to one of the women members of the church and were given to adorn the chalice cup. The altar is a handsome one and was presented by Dr. Ray, a colored physician of some note in this city. The organ is small, but very sweet in tone.—New York World.

**An Anecdote of Benjamin West.**

When Benjamin West, the great American artist—born in Pennsylvania in 1738—was a little boy, one of his school fellows tempted him to a holiday from trap and ball by promising him a ride to a neighboring plantation. "Here is the horse bridled and saddled," said his friend, "so come get up behind me." "Behind you?" cried Benjamin. "I will sit behind nobody." "Oh, very well," replied the other, "I will ride behind you; so mount." He mounted accordingly, and away they rode. "This is the last ride I shall have for some time," said his companion. "Tomorrow I am to be apprenticed to a tailor." "A tailor?" exclaimed Benjamin; "you will surely never be a tailor!" "Indeed I shall," continued the boy; "it is a very good trade. What do you intend to be, Benjamin?" "A painter." "What sort of a trade is that?" "A painter," said the Quaker boy proudly, "is the companion of kings and emperors." "Now you must be surely mad," said the embryonic clothier; "there are neither kings nor emperors in America." "Aye," said young West, "but there are plenty in other parts of the world. And do you really intend to be a tailor?" "Indeed I do. Then you may ride alone," cried the future president of the National Academy of Great Britain. "I will not ride with any one willing to be a tailor."—New York Press.

**Always Dying.**

Life indeed consists in a series of changes of tissue, and the human economy is simply, as far as its material part is concerned, a machine, and primarily depends on food as the most important factor in keeping it in working order. When it is said that we commence to die as soon as we are born, it of course means that certain parts of the body immediately begin to perish; their existence is ephemeral; they come and go, are replenished and decay. They are the dying parts of that system of life, which may last a little while, but which must eventually yield to the inexorable law of nature. The nails, the hair, etc., are observable as an instance of this decay. The same rule applies to every other organ and tissue of the body, though it is not palpable to the naked eye. The skin is always peeling. The food that is taken in the one hour nourishes the system, and ejects that which was taken the hour before.—Gentleman's Magazine.

**Union Butter.**

"Thanks," remarked the star boarder to the landlady at the table, "but I don't care for union butter." "I don't understand you," said the landlady, with an unctuous smile of doubt. "No?" responded the boarder pleasantly. "In union there is strength, you know."—Detroit Free Press.

**A Young Colored Poet.**

The poetic taste and ability of a young colored man of Dayton, O., attracted the attention of members of the Western Association of Writers at its last meeting there, and Dr. James Newton Matthews, of Mason, Ill., writes concerning him in the following appreciative vein:

A month or two ago, while in Dayton, O., I attended a meeting of the western authors. About half way down the informal programme the presiding officer announced the reading of a poem by Paul Dunbar. Just the name for a poet, thought I. Great was the surprise of the audience to see stepping lightly down the aisle, between the rows of fluttering fans and the assembled beauty and wit of Dayton, a slender negro lad, as black as the core of Cleopatra's pyramid. He ascended the rostrum with the coolness and dignity of a cultured entertainer, and delivered a poem in a tone "as musical as Apollo's lute." He was applauded to the echo between the stanzas, and heartily encored at the conclusion. He then disappeared from the hall as suddenly as he had entered it, and many were the whispered conjectures as to the personality of the man and the originality of his verses, none believing it possible that one of his age and color could produce a thing of such evident merit.

After repeated inquiries I succeeded in locating the rising laureate of the colored race, and called upon him. He was an elevator boy in one of the downtown business blocks. I found him seated in a chair on the lower landing, hastily glancing at the July Century and jotting down notes on a handy pencil tablet. Not having time to converse with me there, he invited me into the elevator, and during a few excursions from floor to floor, I gathered from him the following facts: His parents were both slaves—his father having escaped into Canada from the south. His mother is living in Dayton, and he is supporting her and himself on the pitiful sum of four dollars per week. He is nineteen years of age. In reply to a question, he stated that he had been writing rhymes since he was thirteen. His favorite authors are Whittier and James Whitcomb Riley.—Indianapolis Journal.

**Avoiding Waste of Energy.**

This is the season when most men and women find themselves possessed of a new capital of strength and zeal. They are eager for work and overflowing with energy. It is a time of promise, and it is also a time of danger. A great deal of energy is wasted, as all other precious things are wasted, through lack of intelligence and direction. At the beginning of the year of work select the lines to which you can give the greatest effectiveness, and hold to them with resolute persistence. Do not be distracted by the claims of things which interest you, but to which you ought not to give your energy. In this way good causes and good people often become temptations.

Put out of account, so far as personal help is concerned, those things to which you cannot give yourself, and concentrate strength, time and energy on the one, two or three lines of work for which you are fitted and to which you are committed. Avoid waste of strength by using it with intelligence and by concentrating it on a few objects.—Christian Union.

**An October Bluff.**

The tramp went boldly up to the kitchen of a house on Beaubien street and knocked. The lady opened the door. "Madam," he said very respectfully, "can I shovel the snow off your sidewalk?" "The lady was struck speechless. "Excuse me," he repeated, "can I shovel the snow off your sidewalk?" "Snow?" she gasped. "Snow? There isn't any snow on my sidewalk. We don't have snow in October." "I know that, madam," he responded, touching his hat, "but you will have in January, and I thought if you'd give me my dinner today I would be only too glad to come around then and shovel it off to repay you for your kindness." "It was a straight bluff, and he won.—Detroit Free Press.

**A Mysterious Cavern in France.**

Some workmen employed in a quarry at Taverny, a village in the forest of Montmorency, France, while excavating a block of gypsum recently, came upon a cavern, the existence of which had never been suspected. There is an underground gallery about a third of a mile in length and nearly 200 feet below the surface, hewn out of the solid gypsum, while at the extreme end of this gallery is a small opening about 2½ feet in height and about the same distance in width. It is causing considerable interest in scientific circles.

**Black Lightning.**

A correspondent of The Electrical Review, writing from Haines Falls, N. Y., says that during a remarkable electrical storm there recently he and several others "saw distinctly a streak of black lightning." He was taking photographs of the remarkable lightning flashes that occurred during the storm. He says several people saw the black streak of lightning from different points. He asks for an explanation, and wonders if it is a reversal of the image on the retina of the eye.

**A Royalty on Alligators.**

An alligator hunting concession is the latest special privilege granted by the Mexican government. For five dollars for each ton of alligator skins obtained, and seventy cents for each ton of alligator fat, the government grants to the concessionaires the right to kill alligators in the Teolutia, Nautia, Papalapan and Coatzacoalcas rivers.

**Cheap Artificial Eggs.**

James Storey, a Parsons (Kan.) inventor, claims that he has perfected an artificial egg equal to natural hen fruit in every respect. He coats his albuminous mixture with a shell so "true to life" as to defy detection. He says that he can make a carload a day at a cost of only three cents a dozen.—St. Louis Republic.

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