

Romance of a Hand Organ

Let me relate an experience of mine which redounds to the credit of that much despised instrument, the street hand organ. There may be other instances in which this instrument has figured as the cause of much happiness, but I do not myself know, nor can I believe, that it ever produced any such amount of happiness on any other occasion.

About five years ago I was taking my summer vacation at a resort not far from Newport. The fact was we were engaged, Margaret and I, and we had reached that stage in the courtship that we criticised each other somewhat freely. On a certain evening on which a dance was to be given at the Casino I brought to her a bunch of flowers, the very best obtainable at that time. It was quite difficult to get flowers at this resort, it being some distance from the city, and the difficulty was heightened by the great demand for flowers on an occasion such as the dance in question. Probably, too, I was guilty of forgetfulness in not putting in my order for the flowers several days beforehand.

At all events, the flowers that I did obtain were not so very pretty, and Margaret's face indicated to me, when I presented them to her, that she was not at all satisfied. In fact, there was a distinct sniffing air about her which irritated me greatly. I remarked something to the effect that some girls were like republicans, in that they were ungrateful. She said something to the effect that some men seemed to think more of billiards and tennis and mint juleps than they did of their future wives. Our remarks grew quite pointed and sharp, and during the hull which followed some of them the air played by the hotel orchestra distinctly impressed itself on my memory.

Although this air was one which was supposed to be expressive of but temporary parting, it really meant for Margaret and me a long and weary absence from each other. I was unable to dissociate the painful feelings which this air brought up to me whenever I afterward heard it, for at this meeting, which had opened with a gift of flowers on my part, we gave back to each other the promises we had made. I received back the ring I had given Margaret, and the various letters that had passed between us we solemnly agreed to destroy. The presents were to be returned or retained as each thought fit.

However, there was one gold ring of unique design which I had given Margaret some time before and which was never to be returned to me under any condition except in case she was in need of assistance. At the time it was given to her she had agreed to ever keep it, even if we quarreled and parted. The next day I returned to my occupation in the city and did not see Margaret again.

About five years elapsed between the happening of the event above chronicled and those that are now to be narrated. I was passing down the street in a quaint New England village which in the winter time seemed to be entirely dead like the country round it and which was only awakened into life by the warm breath of spring and the gayeties of the summer crowds who visited it. One of those street piano organs which had grown to be so common in the cities, but were looked upon as a novelty in the country towns, was playing some familiar airs, to which I was paying no particular attention until I heard the air, which turned out to be the funeral dirge of my only love affair. I stopped on the walk some distance away and listened.

The air ceased, and the closed shutter of a house directly in front of which was the organ was opened and a hand which I still had time to see was that of a woman threw a coin or two to the player. The coin fell flat near the player, but another object bounded off some distance toward me. I stooped to pick it up and found it was a ring which had evidently come off the lady's hand who had thrown the coin. A second glance at the ring, to my intense surprise, showed me that it was the ring I had given Margaret five years before. There were the initials inside of it and the curious quaint carving on the outside. Full of strange thoughts, hopes, contending emotions, I involuntarily turned to the house to return the ring to the person to whom it belonged. Just as I reached the door of the house it was opened by Margaret, who had come to get her ring again. A frightened look and a hasty pressure of her hand to her heart showed me how much she was surprised and affected. I said nothing, for indeed the emotions of both showed plainly more than any words I could use. I passed into the house, closed the door, put the ring on her finger and then asked, "Did you mean to send it?" A faint "Yes" was all I could hear. In a moment I pressed her to my breast and, hungry with avidity, sought to satisfy the affection of a heart which had been for so many years yearning for a return. Later on we were married and are willing to admit that we are happy as happy can be.—Exchange.

IRONCLAD FEVER.

A Peculiar Disease That Was Killed by Ventilation.

In the fight between the Monitor and Merrimac it was found that there was not sufficient air in the turret steamers for the crew and that the suffocating gases generated by the explosion of gunpowder found their way below and rendered it practically impossible for the men to work. Necessity therefore compelled the introduction of some apparatus for artificial ventilation.

The old methods in vogue for hundreds of years had been retained even under the new conditions and but for the striking exhibition of direct interference with fighting capacity would have remained for many years longer. In the Monitor was placed a rotary blower, worked by steam. Air was thus drawn from one half of the steamers through a system of pipes and forced into the other. Various changes were made in later ironclads of this period. In some the air was drawn down the turrets and forced through out the vessel, thus rendering them more than ever liable to suffocate the men below in battle, while in others the supply was obtained through armored cylinders and forced out through the turrets.

It was in the early ironclads that a peculiar disease developed which, being confined to those vessels, was soon designated ironclad fever. In this affection the initial symptoms were much like those of typhus, but in a short time severe occipital pain was followed by complete aphonia and this by coma and death. The introduction of ventilating appliances caused the disappearance of this singular disease, and in time these metal boxes, so almost entirely submerged, came to be regarded as probably the most salubrious vessels afloat.—Cassier's Magazine.

SHOOTING IN SCOTLAND.

An Immense Sum Expended Annually in This Form of Sport.

As to the sums spent on shooting in Scotland, so large is the total that it is a difficult matter to arrive even at an approximate estimate. In Perthshire alone there are 465 shootings, of which about four-fifths are let to tenants and bring in about £150,000 a year, or an average of £400 a year, which seems about a fair estimate if it be borne in mind that this is an extensive country and that 50 of its best shootings bring £35,000, or an average of £700 a year. In the whole of Scotland there are about 4,000 shootings, and as each of them must at least employ one keeper and one gillie during the shooting season some estimate may be formed of the money expended in wages and the number of people employed.

In the deer forests and on the larger shootings there will often be from four to six men permanently engaged and from six to eight others working for the shooting season only. In a well known forest where I once spent many pleasant days there were three foresters, three gillies and three pony men out each day. On the grouse ground there were three keepers, with three underkeepers, a kennel man and two carriers going to and from the nearest railway station, a total of 18 men and five horses, not to mention the ponies kept for riding into the forest and those kept to carry grouse panniers. On this property three rifles could stalk each day, while three other parties of two each could shoot grouse, or the six could combine for driving.—Chambers' Journal.

Dead Letter Curios.

In postoffice transactions the lack of ingenuity and even of ordinary common sense is astonishing. The curios of the dead letter office include envelopes legibly cross marked "Return if not delivered" or "If not called for in five days, return to sender" without a word of further specifications. Others bear names without topographical data: "Hermann Kemper, painter and decorator, successor to Ritchie Bros. & Co." Workingmen, foreigners especially, often seem to credit mail clerks with the gift of geographical clairvoyance: "Jan Jansen, at the miners' boarding house, or, perhaps, stops at Mrs. Baumgarten's place"—no town to hint about the state or county of the mining camp. "Please deliver as soon as possible" some such letters are marked and seem often to have been plastered with an extra stamp in the hope of inducing the carrier to give the matter his earliest attention.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Appeals to Fear.

The appeals to fear have well nigh ceased, and yet there is no fact which we are so compelled to see as the fact of retribution. The law of retribution works in our present life. We become aware of it in our earliest infancy, and we never become developed in character until we have learned to fear that which is evil and to shun the consequences of sin. There is a sense of righteousness in all men, and all men know that unrighteousness brings punishment. It is fair to assume that what is a part of man's very structure here will continue hereafter. We may give up entirely the notion of a material hell, but we cannot give up the doctrine of retribution. Suffering must follow sin, and therefore to appeal to fear is not only legitimate, but it is in accordance with the structure of man's nature.—North American Review.

Why Wigwag Rejoiced.

Mr. Wigwag—Did the new carpet arrive all right?
Mrs. Wigwag—Yes; it came intact.
Mr. Wigwag—Hooray! Hip! Hip!
That lets me out!
Mrs. Wigwag—What in the world are you talking about?
Mr. Wigwag—Why, didn't you say it came in tacked?—Philadelphia Record.

GEMS IN VERSE.

OLD FAVORITES.

To Young Men.

Be firm! One constant element in luck is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck. See you tall shaft. It felt the earthquake's thrill, Clung to its base and greets the sunrise still.

Stick to your aim. The mongrel's hold will slip, But only crows lose the bulldog's grip. Small hands shake the jawless hovers yields Drags down the bellowing monarch of the field.

Yet in opinions look not always back. The wags is nothing—'tis the coming track. Leave what you've done for what you have to do. Don't be "consistent," but be simply true.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Faith.

The faith that life on earth is being shaped To glorious ends, that order, justice, love, Mean man's completeness, mean effect as sure As roundness in the dewdrop—that great faith Is but the rushing and expanding stream Of thought, of feeling, fed by all the past. Our finest hope is finest memory, As they who love in age think youth is blest Because it has a life to fill with love. Full souls are double mirrors, making still An endless vista of fair things before. Hence the man behind the faith is strong Only when we are strong, shrinks when we shrink.

It comes when music stirs us, and the chords, Moving on some grand, stark, or soul's With influx new that makes new energies. It comes in swelling of the heart and tears That rise at noble and at gentle deeds— At labors of the master artist's hand, Which, trembling, touches to a finer end, Trembling before an image seen within. It comes in moments of heroic love, Unjealous joy in joy not made for us— In conscious triumph of the good within, Making us worship goodness that rebukes. Even our failures are a prophecy, Even our yearnings and our bitter tears After that fair and true we cannot grasp, As patriots seem to die in vain, Make liberty more sacred by their pang.

—George Elliot.

Unbelief.

There is no unbelief. Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod And waits to see it push away the clod, He trusts in God.

Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky, "Be patient, heart; light breaketh by and by," Trusts the Most High.

Whoever sees "neath winter's field of snow The silent harvest of the future grow God's power must know.

Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep, Content to lock each sense in slumber deep, Knows God will keep.

Whoever says "tomorrow," "the unknown," "The future," trusts that Power alone He dares disown.

The heart that looks on when the eyelids close And dares to live when life has only words God's comfort knows.

There is no unbelief. And day by day and night unconsciously The heart lives by that faith the lips deny— God knoweth why.

—Bulwer.

Art.

Art is the child of Nature—yes, Her darling child, in whom we trace The features of the mother's face, Her aspect and her attitude, All her majestic loveliness Chastened and softened and subdued But more attractive graces, And with a human sense imbued. He is the greatest artist, then, Whether a pencil or a pen, Who follows Nature. Never man, As artist or as artisan, Pursuing his own fantasies, Can touch the human heart, or please Or satisfy our noble needs, As he who sets his work on feet In Nature's footsteps, light and fleet, And follows fearless where she leads.

—Longfellow.

The Angler's Wish.

I in these flowery meads would be, These crystal streams should solace me, To whose harmonious bubbling noise I, with my angle, would rejoice, Sit here and see the turtles rise, Court his chaste mate to acts of love.

Or, on that bank, feel the west wind Breathe health and plenty to my mind To see sweet dewdrops kiss these flowers And then washed off by April showers. Hear, hear my kenna sing a song, There see a blackbird feed her young.

Or see a lark build her nest. Here give my weary spirit rest And raise my low pitched thoughts above Earth, or what poor mortals love. Thus, free from lawsuits and the noise Of princes' court, I would rejoice.

Or, with my Bryan and a book, Loiter long days near Shawford brook, There sit by him and eat my meat. There see the sun both rise and set, There bid good morning to next day, There meditate my time away, And angle on and beg to have A quiet passage to a welcome grave.

—Isaac Walton.

Absence.

The shortest absence brings to every thought Of those we love a solemn tenderness. It is as if to depart were to confess. Seeing the loneliness their loss has brought, That they were dearer far than we had thought Ourselves to think. We see that nothing less Than hope of their return could cheer or bless Our weary days. We wonder how, for aught Or all of fault in them, we could heed Or anger with their loving presence near, Or wound them by the smallest word or deed. Dear absent mind! It did not need Thy absence to tell me thou wert dead, And yet the absence maketh it more clear.

—Helen Hunt Jackson.

Envy.

He was the best of always. Fortune Shone bright in his face, I fought for years; with no effort He conquered the place. We ran; my feet were all bleeding, But he won the race.

Spite of his many successes, Men loved him the same; With one pale ray of good fortune Met scoffing and blame. When we cried they gave him pity, But me—only shame.

My home was still in the shadow; His lay in the sun. I longed in vain; what he asked for I stragglingly was given. Once I staked all my heart's treasure, We played—and he won.

Yes, and just now I have seen him, Cold, smiling and blest, Laid in his coffin. God help me! While he is at rest, I am cursed still to live—even Death loved him the best.

—Aldelaide A. Procter.

Unwashed Days.

The longer on this earth we live And weigh the various qualities of men, Seeing how most are fugitive Or fatal gifts at best, of none and then, Wind wavered corpse lights, daughters of the fen, The more we feel the high, stern featured beauty Of plain devotedness to duty, Steadfast and still, not paid with mortal praise, Best finding amplest recompense For life's ungarlanded expense In work done squarely and unwashed days.

—Lowell.

THE NATURAL BRIDGE.

The fact that the Natural bridge tract is soon to be sold has opened the way for some writers to romance about it.

It is stated that it was a part of the inheritance of Thomas Jefferson, but that is not our information. We have always thought that Mr. Jefferson patented the land—i. e., bought it from the crown at about a shilling an acre.

Mr. Jefferson and George Washington both were farseeing men and good judges of land and "took up" numbers of valuable tracts. Washington particularly, owing to his personal knowledge of our western (Virginia) lands, was fortunate in his selections.

Mr. Jefferson acquired the bridge tract in 1774. Of the bridge itself he wrote that it was worth a trip across the ocean to see, but for a long time its inaccessibility caused it to be seldom visited, even by our own people. The construction of the old James River and Kanawha canal put it near a highway of travel. Later railroad lines came within a few miles of it, and now thousands visit it annually.

Since Jefferson's time the bridge has had many owners. At one period it belonged to the Harman family. Colonel Henry Clay Parsons bought it, about 1881 and formed a stock company to "run" it. His residence there led up to his death at the hands of Conductor Goodman at Clifton Forge on June 29, 1894. To what extent he or his family held stock in the bridge company at that time we are not informed, but the amount held is supposed to have been considerable.—Richmond Dispatch.

Kills Too Much For the Canaries.

An officer of a highland regiment arrayed in a kilt created a sensation in Las Palmas recently and narrowly escaped arrest for being improperly attired. He had landed from the transport Lake Erie, and on the promenade and in the hotel the unusual sight of a "man petticoat" caused a flutter among the ladies.

"Girls turned their heads away on seeing him pass," says El Telegrafo of Las Palmas, "and screamed as if they had seen a poisonous reptile. We noticed that certain ones amused themselves with an insane curiosity as to his Scotch stockings."

After describing the highlander as wearing a garment which "from the waist downward was a kind of loin cloth that exposed half his thigh" El Telegrafo censures the town council for allowing any one to appear in such guise.—London Mail.

A Cure For the Morphine Habit.

Great interest has been aroused in medical circles in Germany by the discovery by Dr. Otto Emmerich of Baden-Baden of a specific against morphine poisoning and that peculiar form of disorder known in Germany as "morphinismus."

The increasing use of morphia among a considerable section of society has been lately exciting much attention, and medical men have been unable to prescribe any efficient remedy. It is claimed for Dr. Emmerich's discovery that it has proved infallible in the numerous cases in which it has been applied. It is a distilled vegetable oil of intense acidity, two or three drops of which are taken internally daily. After a cure, extending from three to six weeks, patients acquire an intense loathing for the use of the morphia needle.—Berlin Dispatch in London Chronicle.

Liquor in Russia.

The Russian government is experiencing great difficulty in its efforts to restrict the almost universal use of liquor among the laboring classes. The minister of finance says the government is anxious "to save the population from the baneful influence of the innkeepers, who, in order to make large profits, adulterated their spirits with noxious and deleterious substances which were proving ruinous to the lower classes. The average peasant was not content with remaining in a public house until he had spent his last farthing, but often pawned his clothes, furniture and future crops. The public houses were acknowledged to be the most powerful agents of ruin and disorganization in the economic life of the Russian people and threatened the impoverishment of the whole agricultural population."

Great Peach Year.

Four millions of baskets of peaches from little Delaware and the eastern shore of Maryland! That is now the estimate made, not by the growers nor the commission men, but by the practical, unsentimental and truthful special agent of the Pennsylvania Railroad company, which expects to handle a large part of the crop. All through the peach growing district in that happy part of the country the report is the same. Not only will the peaches be plentiful, but they will be large and luscious. The yellows, so long the bane of the grower, has almost entirely disappeared, and the small, knobby fruit, which in years past helped to ruin the price of the good peaches, will not be seen this season.—Baltimore American.

Accurate Tunneling.

In a description of the recently opened Central London railway The Builder says the longest separate length of tunnel driven was from the Westbourne shaft to the Marble Arch shaft, the distance being over 1,200 yards, and the work resulted in an error of only five-eighths of an inch at the point where a junction was effected with the tunnel driven by another firm of contractors. In two of the sections bore holes were put down into the tunnel for the purpose of testing the lines, but generally the lengths were driven through so accurately that no recourse to bore holes was found necessary.

FOR THE FARMER.

The record of area of standing timber in the United States compared with a decade ago will form one of the most valuable items in the federal census just taken, says The American Agriculturist. The serious depletion, particularly in the northern and eastern states, has been a matter of much concern for a number of years. Between the requirements for building purposes and the paper mills we will be happily disappointed if the census figures do not show so great a loss as to bear out the earlier predictions of a positive famine period a generation hence. Fortunately the subject of reforestation and the intelligent care of our wooded area is receiving more attention than ever before and should do something to permanently check the disappearance of the forests. In this connection it is interesting to note that the well wooded south, with its infinite variety of trees, is receiving the attention of paper makers, who will probably enlarge their operations in that direction. The south seems to be peculiarly rich in the forms of vegetation suitable for the manufacture of cheap paper not only in her forest reserves, but in other fibers, sorghum, cornstalk, wheat and rye straw, etc. There is certainly opportunity in the southern states to establish this large and profitable industry which in recent years has received so much attention in upper New England, New York, Wisconsin and other northern states. Not only should there be growth in the home trade, but also in exports of paper, which last year amounted to \$5,480,000.

Country Fairs.

It will be but a short time until the fair season will be upon us again, says The National Stockman. These annual exhibitions should be of great benefit to the farmers and breeders, and in most cases they are. It is too true, however, that in many sections our annual fairs are not what they should be. Managers have made the mistake of catering to the tastes of the greatest available attendants, and where the city population outnumbers that of the country the attractions have been of a kind that was not edifying or educating for those who live in rural districts. The original idea of country fairs has been lost sight of by some associations. The blame for this is not so much to be placed upon those who run the fairs in many places as it is upon those who allow them to be run for other than their legitimate purpose. The way to make good exhibitions of this kind is to put good men in as managers and then stand by them with your support and encouragement. This country owes much of its progress and advancement to the country fairs, and they should be maintained and improved upon from year to year.

Pasturing Grain.

Many farmers who grow grain follow the practice of pasturing their grainfields. The benefit to the cows or swine or other stock is decidedly great; but if the pasturing be done under certain conditions it may seriously injure the grain plants. For instance, if the soil in the grainfield be very soft, the stock will trample the roots so deeply into the ground that they will not be able to grow, or in soft ground the roots will not keep their hold when subject to a pull and will come up with the blades. This is quite as fatal to wheat and rye plants as is the trampling of them too deeply. If early sowing and an open autumn have brought a dense mat of rye or wheat, it may be necessary to graze it off. In that case the farmer can, when the frost hardens the ground, turn in his stock and guide them over the field, and no roots will be pulled out or trampled to death. In any case the stock should not be allowed to roam at will over the field nor to pass more than once over any one part of it. Repeated tramping by heavy cows will certainly injure the young grain roots.

Irrigating Gardens and Lawns.

There are some people who are supplied with city water and, having hose, think it a duty to keep the water running all the time, or just as much of it as the water companies' rules allow, notes The American Cultivator. They never allow the soil to get dry or warm if they can help it. Then they wonder why plants and shrubs do not grow better and have more blossoms, and they get up earlier or sit up later to run a little more water on the lawn and garden. They do not know that warmth and occasional dryness are as necessary to plant growth as moisture. Only a water lily would stand such continual soakings. It is to be hoped that those who have made arrangements for the systematic irrigation of their fields are wiser and know that their fields do not want water running through them all of the time.

Judging Canned Goods.

In buying canned goods see that the ends of the cans are concave or sunken. If they are convex, it is proof that fermentation has taken place in the contents, and the stuff is not only unfit for food, but dangerous. When a can is opened, all the contents should be removed, as rapid fermentation in contact with cheap tin generates a dangerous poison.—Texas Farm and Ranch.

Value of Birds.

A French scientist has stated that without birds to eat insects and weed seeds the earth would in a few years become uninhabitable for man. When it is considered that almost the entire food of the majority of birds consists of seeds of some sort and insects or worms, the statement is not improbable.

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