

Empty Stockings. Mothers in homes that are happy... children are dreaming already of the morning of the year...

THE PIANO TUNER.

Do, do, mi, sol. In a back room of the great piano merchant, Lufero Reudon, Rue de Valenciennes, the tuner was working on the gloomy afternoon of a Parisian winter...

A pretty maid, a true comedy subroton, in gaudy costume, with an apron of changeable silk, and upon her frizzled hair a delicious little hat with red roses, entered the shop and began to talk volubly to the salesman...

"You are wanted, M. Pierre, at the Hotel du Louvre." "It is very urgent," added the subroton in the bewitching little hat. "At your service."

"On the second floor of the great hotel Pierre Morel was ushered into an elegant salon, where stood open an ivory grand piano, draped with a Japanese cover. Immediately the tuner set himself to work.

"Madame will be well pleased. We just arrived yesterday. This evening after the opera there will be some company. They will dance, and these hotel pianos are always so dreadfully out of tune. But madame will find me all right for once."

elder, of an exquisite beauty, who did not look over 25 though she must have been passed 40. Splendid turquoise shined in her ears. A spray of gemstones performed her coronation...

Juliette Salvini was studying singing and was destined for the stage. She had the finest voice in the conservatory, and everyone predicted for her the future of a "star." Admirers were not lacking, and her beauty made many envious.

"They lived in the same quarter, and often, after their lessons, walked home together. They usually talked of their art. Both had ambition to become some one. From time to time, in the evening, Pierre went to the home of his friend, and under the indulgent eye of her old relative they made music during the hours which to Pierre were hours of delight.

"When he left her, after those evenings of mutual exaltation, the young man could not sleep all night. One day, at length, he ran the risk of confessing his love—in fear and trembling, for what was he to hope that she would love him? Nothing at all, all the same. But this love gave him a supernatural energy, and in order to make himself worthy of her he would become great himself.

"Intoxicated, he threw himself body and soul into his work and dreamed magnificent dreams, in which Juliette was bound to him in a radiant destiny. Things went on thus for two years, which for him fairly flew along. Then, at the final concert of the year, Juliette carried off the first prize for singing and the first prize for opera. This was an event in the musical world. Immediately she had to choose between an engagement in Paris and proposals more advantageous from a material point of view of a manager who wished to take from city to city this new nightingale.

"At first she had written to him quite regularly. These letters were his life. He read and re-read them by heart, supplying in them the passion they lacked. Juliette called herself now La Salvini, and her success was great. She made an enormous amount of money. Left alone in Paris, Pierre worked with more ardor than ever; more than ever he determined to deserve her. Then little by little, the letters became shorter and less frequent. Juliette wrote good news of her health, spoke of her triumphs, rarely a word of love.

"These letters nearly froze Pierre's heart when he received them. Yet he would trust her. In the busy life she led, rushing from city to city, it was natural enough that Juliette should not find much time to write; but, oh, if she would only give it up and come back to him!

He was young, and youth withstands more terrible blows than that. He neither killed himself or became mad, yet, nevertheless, his life was ruined. If his health and his reason came out victorious from the conflict, his ambition fell there. What was the use of composing beautiful works of booming celebration? His inspiration had withdrawn from him. It was an addiction, swift, absolute, irremediable. Yet he must eat. Pierre gave lessons, took up work of an inferior order, transcriptions for the piano, arrangements of such or such a celebrated opera. It was a miserable existence, but what difference did it make to him? And when his difference, his gloomy manners had driven away pupils and publishers, and even this work failed, he at last accepted the position of tuner in the piano store of the Rue du Richelieu, a subordinate position, an inferior calling, which he had now filled for 12 years.

"During these years La Salvini had continued her triumphant journey across Europe and America. Her return to Paris had often been announced. More than one manager had made her brilliant offers. But these reports, which each time made a great noise in the newspapers, were never, never realized. It had even been said that she was afraid of Paris. Her fame was increasing every day. She had not failed in her destiny, and the queen, which she already was at the conservatory, she had now become in very truth, welcomed everywhere, covered with flowers and jewels, celebrated in the papers, never leaving the theatre without an enthusiastic crowd following her carriage.

"And he—was nothing. Of his talent, of his dreams, there remained not a trace. The radiant mirage of his youth had faded into this mechanical occupation, in which he was not even fortunate enough to find forgetfulness. And it was Juliette whom he had just seen—by what cruel chance—she was to sing this evening.

"The tuner did not dream of going home, of making his toilette. He did not think of dining. Besides, time pressed. It was already past seven o'clock. Pierre betook himself to one of the dramatic agencies so numerous in the neighbourhood of the theatre. The agent, judging the man by his appearance, declared that he had not a seat to sell. Pierre insisted, letting it be understood that the price was no consideration.

"The electric light about the theatre shone upon a noisy going and coming of carriages and of pedestrians. The illuminated facade, the municipal guards, immovable, upon their horses, announced a gala evening. Boys bustled about with librettos and programmes. Coupe after coupe, with horses with jingling harness, stopped in front of the theatre. A man, whose evening dress could be seen under his topcoat, would descend, stretching a gloved hand to a woman in a beautiful costume.

"It was nearly eight o'clock. Pierre Morel crowded into the lobby, where the chandeliers threw into effective relief the gorgeous, bewildering mass of people. He climbed up to the fourth gallery, refused to leave his topcoat with the attendant, scoured his seat—all with the dazed air he had worn since leaving the Hotel du Louvre in the afternoon.

"The house began to fill, the musicians in the orchestra prepared their instruments. Every where flowers, diamonds, jewels, a veritable feast for the eyes. Three strokes of a bell sounded, the overture began, the curtain rose with the majesty of an evening of special significance. Pals as death, Pierre Morel did not move his eyes from the stage. When the silhouette of Marguerite at the spinning wheel appeared, it seemed to him that his heart ceased to beat. Ah, what would he not have given to find again his youth, like Faust, his youth for an hour, an instant, his happy, careless confiding youth!

was impossible to remain insensible to them. The success of the presentation was assured. The final performance, and La Salvini surpassed herself. Her voice, clear, dominating without effort the uproar of the orchestra, soared really to the heights of heaven. Marguerite reached its limit and became delirium. All the spectators stood up, breathless, and when she had finished they made her begin again, and the star had to reappear five or six times, and bouquets and garlands rained around the cantatrice—roses, azaleas, lilies of the valley, rare orchids, all the wealth of the greenhouse. Amid this garden of flowers she smiled and bowed, very pale, supremely beautiful.

"It was thus for nearly half an hour, then the star withdrew finally. In the corridors and upon the stairways there were only exclamation and praise. "Admirable!" "What a great artist!" "Who dared to say she had no longer a voice?" "Never before has Marguerite been sung like this!" "It is ideal!" Pierre Morel let the crowd pass out. He started one of the last, and instead of going home, waited near the stage entrance in a dim corner. In a few moments a carriage drove up. The door opened. La Salvini came out on the arm of a man. Behind her they brought flowers, the most beautiful of those which has just been given her. She stopped into the carriage without seeing who was hiding in the shadow a few feet from her. The man took his place beside her, the flowers were heaped in about them, and the carriage started swiftly away.

"No one heard the sobs which escaped from the breast of Pierre Morel. The tuner went to his room, a miserable attic chamber. But there was no question of sleep for the unhappy man. He opened a drawer, took out a little casket, and the key, half rusted, refused to turn in the lock. He pried off the cover, some dry flowers, a piece of ribbon, a piece of manuscript music, those "little things" which all lovers possess. They were the relics of his poor love. For long, long years he had not opened this box, fearing to suffer too much, but to night he felt a savage need of draining the cup to the dregs.

"The flowers, some violets, two or three jonquils, he had gathered with Juliette on some of their Sunday walks in the woods of Sevres and of Ville d'Avray. Their color had faded less quickly perchance than the love in the heart of Juliette. The piece of ribbon had bound her black hair, and Pierre could have pressed it to his lips. The manuscript music was a melody which he had composed for her. "When I have become celebrated," she had said, "I will sing it everywhere." But she had no more remembrance of these words than has the autumn wind of the leaves with which it sports.

"You pay this man," that was all she had to say in passing near him. Ah, had she not paid him long since, paid him as almost always in this life our purest devotion, our best love is paid—by ingratitude? And Pierre pictured her in her salon of the Hotel du Louvre, surrounded by a circle of admirers. He heard the pines of praise, and tears of despair, burning like molten lead, rolled down his thin cheeks.

"Then the morning broke, a grey, wintry morning. The various noises in the street rose to the attic of the tuner, the roar from the tramways, the rattle of the omnibuses were heard again. The great city was awakening under the leaden sky. There was the effort to begin again, the struggle to take up the burden to lift again upon tired shoulders. For it is the misfortune of the poor man not even to be able to suffer in peace. The need of earning daily bread harasses him at peace or work by sorrow, he must take up his work every day.

"Pierre Morel put back his treasures in their repulsive, bathed his red eyes, descended the six flights of stairs and found himself again in the already yawning street. An hour later, in the back room of the shop of Lefevre Renduel, he had taken up his humble occupation again, that of day, that of to-morrow, and of all the rest of his life. Do, do, mi, sol.

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THE CATHOLIC REGISTER JOB DEPARTMENT. 40 LOMBARD ST. TORONTO. TELEPHONE 459. Rev. Father Ryan, Rector of St. Michael's Cathedral, has received the following: 42 Sorauren Ave., Nov. 14, '97. To Rev. Father Ryan: DEAR FATHER: The following resolution was passed at the regular meeting of the Army and Navy Veterans on the 10th inst. That a letter sincerely thanking Archbishop Walsh, Rev. Fathers Ryan and Tracy and the Organist and Choir of St. Michael's Cathedral, and those who so kindly assisted to make our annual parade a success, be sent to the Rev. Father Ryan, and also to express this Society's gratitude to His Grace and the Rev. Father Ryan for the cordial welcome and beautiful address tendered to Her Majesty's old servants on Sunday, Nov. 7. Believe me, your Reverence, Your very humble servant, JOHN GRAY, Rec. Sec.

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