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"Salus populi suprema est lex."

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WHOLE NO.—402

Selected Tale.

THE BLIND ORGANIST'S STORY.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

Before I began my pilgrimage through this vale of tears, my father had decided that, if a boy, I was to be a musician. Unlike Betty Trotwood in "David Copperfield," he was not disappointed in his hopes—I was a boy, and I must be a musician. My father's parents were Quakers, of the strict, old-fashioned kind, and as Nature, with the perversity she sometimes shows in such matters, had slighted their tastes by giving them a son with a natural talent and love for music, they set themselves to work to crush his musical tastes and tendencies; and succeeded so well in their endeavors, that he grew up without any knowledge of, or skill in, "the divine art;" so he was determined to make matters even by giving his son the advantage that had been denied to himself, and his decision was strengthened by the inclination I manifested from babyhood to turn all available objects into drums.

Once having arrived at a decision, my father seldom swerved therefrom; and when I was ten years of age, he bought me a small church organ, had it put up in the largest room of the rambling old farm-house, bought me the necessary tools, engaged a teacher to give me lessons, hung a small rind-whip at one end of the organ,—for in those days they did not believe in moral suasion as applied to children—and set me to work. My teacher was surly and disagreeable; he stormed and scolded, and struck my fingers till they smarted, if I did not play to suit him. I had four hours a day of the steady practice of hateful exercises and dreary technical studies, and if I was recreant to my practice, I received a liberal application of the slender, tingling riding-whip across my back and shoulders. Under this order of things I grew to hate the organ, my teacher, and everything connected with my long tasks. Sometimes braving even my father's anger, no small thing when roused, I absented myself at lesson hours, hid in some secret place till the dread hour had passed, and then sneaked home to receive the punishment which never failed to come. I used to wish that the house would burn down, so that the organ might be destroyed; that my teacher would break his leg, or that my hands would get so lame I could not use them,—but of course nothing of the kind ever happened; and things went on in the same dismal fashion, till I was thirteen years old, when my erabbed old teacher announced his intention of going to America, which intention he fulfilled to my great joy. I played a stately and jubilant voluntary on the organ the day he went away,—the first time I enjoyed the satisfaction of expressing my feelings through the medium of music. After my teacher's exodus, my father made arrangements with the blind organist of the parish church to give me lessons, and I was to go to the church to take them, as my teacher knew the way there himself.

I well remember the first lesson I took from my dear master. I had never seen him before (for he always attended chapel, and lived several miles from the village), and young as I was, I was struck with the wonderful beauty of his face. The features were fine, clear cut and classical; but the great charm of his countenance lay in its expression of perfect purity and peace. He was a large strong man, but he looked gentle as a child,—not the gutturous born of indolence and weakness of character, but the result of self-control and the patient endurance of suffering and sorrow. The solemnity and stillness of the old church—old in the days of the Stuarts; the glorified light from the stained windows, falling on the majestic figure and the righteous uplifted face of my master; and the few sweet and solemn strains with which he prefaced my first lesson, are still fresh in my memory. From this time a great change came over me. My teacher was the only being who ever spoke to me as if he loved me, as if he believed he did from the first time he heard my voice. My mother was dead; I had neither brother nor sister, and my father was stern and cold. Though a wild and wayward lad, I had a warm heart, and would do for word or look of kindness what harsh

words and blows would have made me determined not to do. Instead of looking forward to my semi-weekly lessons as I had formerly done, with dread and dislike, they became the brightest hours of my life; anticipated with pleasure, and passed too soon. In loving my master, I grew to love the noble art he loved so well; my ear and musical taste were both naturally good; my lessons, for my teacher's sake, were always carefully studied and well prepared; and I made rapid progress,—even my stern father expressed his satisfaction in my improvement in very moderate and carefully worded terms. Sometimes when I had done unusually well, or when my master felt like it, when the lesson was over he would play for me, generally beginning with some selection from the "grand old masters," a sonata of Clementi's, sweet and calm and lofty as the sky of his own sunny Italy; some tender movements from the wonderful melodies of Beethoven, or a selection from the stately and intricate music of Handel in the magnificent; but he often finished by an improvisation of his own, which, to my partial ears, suffered nothing in comparison with what had preceded it.

One day—I remember it distinctly yet, though it was years ago—I had played my lesson, "Pierce," to his entire satisfaction; and when I had finished, after a few words of praise and encouragement, he sat down at the organ and played one of John Sebastian Bach's masterly fugues, and then with only the sweetest and softest stops of the fine old organ drawn, he began a voluntary of his own. A few tender strains, like the first faint streaks of light that brighten the eastern sky, swelling to a flood of pure and perfect music as dawn changes to the fulness of day; each measure growing louder, deeper, and more jubilant, as the mellow diapasons and pealing hautboys answered with melodious voices the beckoning hand of the master, till the full major harmonies melted into a sweet and plaintive minor movement, growing sweeter and sadder with every bar, till after a few sinking, quivering notes it died in silence, as day fades to the shadowy evening that is lost in the cold shades of night. As well as I could in my awkward, boyish way, I spoke my admiration of my master's music. My pleasure pleased him, and he, in his turn, spoke to me of the old church, its teacher, more communicative than usual, told me, in homely and forcible phrase, the story of his life, which I shall never forget to my readers as well as I can, believing that the faithful history of any human being holds for the great heart of humanity a sacred interest.

"I was born," said my master, "in that little house I am sure you have often seen, next door but one to the village. My father was a shoemaker and a natural musician, who sung and played the base vi in the Methodist chapel on Sundays. There was five boys of us—about like other boys, noisy and rough. I was the quietest of them, and my mother's darling; and the only one who, like my father, was fond of weekly practices that the choir held, and often on Sunday strayed off to the church here, to hear organ play. On Saturday morning about twenty-five years ago—ah! my lad, how well I remember it!—two of my brothers and I wandered into the churchyard here to play; climb the old yew trees, and hide among the grave-stones. My brother Tom had finished a bow and arrow that morning, and was trying his skill as a marksman on anything that came in his way; he had been shooting at me from behind a grave-stone, and I screaming and laughing, ran, 'till this very porch, and shooting the deer peeped through the key-hole, and called out 'Here I am, Tom; you can't shoot me here.' Tom said, 'I don't believe I can shoot you through that key-hole, but I'll try.' He struck his bow, took aim, and discharged the arrow. I watched it coming with my eye at the key-hole, but the thought of it hurting me never entered my mind. Suddenly it entered key-hole, piercing my right eye. Wild with pain, I screamed, and tried to open the door, but before I could do so faintly. When I came to myself I was lying with my head on poor Tom's lap, he receiving instruction.

watching me with a face, as white as flour. A little stream of blood tickled down my cheek, and my eye hurt me so that I could not open it. As Tom looked at me, he began to cry; I joined my lamentations with his, and in this state, he took me on his back and carried me home, both of us crying all the way there. When we entered the house, Tom was so tired and frightened that he could not say a word, and I told my mother as well as I could the story of the accident. She, poor woman, was sent some by the doctor, and took me in her arms and rocked me till he and small for my age. When the doctor came, he examined my eye, looked very grave, and what he could for me, said I must be kept in a darkened room, with a bandage over both eyes and promising to come again soon, with a few words to my mother, but she did not hear, but which caused her to turn pale and burst into tears, he went away.

"From that sorrowful morning I never saw anything plainly. My right eye grew rapidly worse; inflammation set in, and in a short time I lost the sight of it; then sympathetic inflammation attacked the left eye, and I became quite blind. I believe my poor brother Tom suffered more through my affliction than I did. The thought that he had not intended to harm me was no consolation to him; he scarcely ever left me; when I was able to go out into the darkened world again, he carried me on his back, or led me by the hand wherever he went. I was too young to know all that I had lost; but it seemed very strange and sad to be always in the dark, and sometimes I thought that I should have been willing to die afterwards, if I could have seen for a little while.

"I remember so well how the village looked as I saw it last, on the day the accident befell me. It was a lovely happy morning in the middle of May; the lay in the meadows yonder was nearly ready for the scythe; the river ran shining in the sun, with the willows and alders on its banks dipping its thirsty branches into its clear waters; the little Methodist chapel with its steeple, and white gravestones here and there on the green mound, I never smell clover till the scene all comes back to me just as I saw it that morning; for though but a young lad, I thought a good deal, and took more notice of the outside world than most boys of my age. But as I grew older my strong desire to see grew less, and I was as happy and contented as most boys that see, and when I became a man, I was happier and more contented than most men that see."

"I never tired of music. Sometimes I practiced nine or ten hours a day; it fed my mind with the food that my eyes failed to convey to it and made me much happier than I should otherwise have been. And now my little lad," said my master in his gentle tones, "I am going to tell thee something I would tell to very few beside thee.

"One morning as I was just turned of twenty I went, as was my custom when I could, to the minister. The beautiful service went on as usual, till in the 'Te Deum' I noticed a voice I had not before, singing in the quartette; the same voice sang the solos as I had never heard them sung before, and never have since, except when the same voice sings them. It was a woman's voice, a pure contralto—not very powerful, but wonderfully rich and pure, and sweet. I almost held my breath to listen. It seemed to me that I could have listened to it forever, but it ceased too soon. I listened patiently, hoping to hear it again, but it sang no more that day. That night I dreamed I heard it again; all through the week following it was with me; and the next Sunday morning, in the same parts, I heard it once more—purer, sweeter, and more pathetic than before. I felt that the owner of the wondrous voice, though young had suffered, and was full of sympathy for all who bore the cross of suffering.

"As I went out of the minister that day, in going down the steps I stumbled, and should have fallen had not a kind hand caught my arm and helped me to regain my footing. Before a word was spoken I felt, I do not know why, that the hand stretched out to help me, belonged to the voice that had so thrilled me with its beauty. Directly it spoke, 'I was not mistaken.' I should have recognized that voice among a thousand others. 'Allow me,' it said, 'to help thee down the steps; the rain has made them slippery.' I thanked her as best I could, and gladly accepted her help, wishing that instead of ten there had been ten hundred steps. With a pleasant 'good morning' she left me, blind and helpless as I was in love with her. A young lady I was sure she was, by the small soft hand she stretched out to help me, her composed manner and the clear cultivated tones of the beautiful voice. I'll not tell you," said my master, laying his hand upon my head, "all I suffered nor all I enjoyed during the next three months. Sometimes I suppose, when you are tired, you'll know all about it better than I can tell you. I attended the Cathedral services regularly; happy if I but heard her voice; going slowly out of the Cathedral and lingering as I went down the steps in the hope that she might see me and wish me 'good morning,' as she had done once before, but that alone would have made me happy for weeks. I am afraid my master suffered a good deal through my divided affections. My thoughts would wander, even when I tried the hardest to restrain them, and the time from Sunday to Sunday seemed longer than a month had formerly been; but when Sabbath after Sabbath I went to the minister and heard her voice no more, I grew hopeless and turned to music for consolation. I could find out nothing concerning the owner of the voice that charmed me so, excepting that her name was Agnes Vernon, that she was the daughter of a country gentleman, had come to York to take lessons in vocal music from the leader of the Cathedral choir, had fallen ill, and gone home.

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looked forward to the first Sunday I was to enter on my duties with a good deal of nervousness; at last it came.

"My mother brushed my hair more carefully than usual, tied my new necktie with loving fingers, kissed me and bade me not fear, I was sure to succeed, and my youngest brother led me to church. When I drew the stops for the opening voluntary, my fingers trembled to that I feared I should fall, but by a great effort I became much calmer, and went through the service from beginning to end, without any mistake. At its close, the pastor and several members of the congregation came, and congratulated me warmly on my success, and I went home happier than I had been for years, forgetting in my joy the name and voice of Agnes Vernon. I had been at home a year when poor Tom, my favorite brother, died, with his hand in mine, and my name the last upon his lips. His death was a heavy blow to us all; but it fell the heaviest on me, as I think I need not say.

"After this sad event Agnes Vernon and her beautiful voice became only a tender memory, for grief for my lost brother left no room in my mind for any light or unreal sorrow."

and remarkable amethysts were found here. One was presented to a French king, who wore it in his crown, and the other is said to sparkle in the crown worn by Queen Victoria. There are, too, many interesting and picturesque drives along the bluffs of the bay, and also one to a newly discovered cave filled with relics of the past.

This region will be found equally prolific in animal life. Portions of the forests are but moose-yards, browsing pasture grounds. I have seen, this summer upwards of twenty of these pastures in a radius of thirty miles, and the tracks of these animals were as the tracks of the cattle upon a thousand hills. On this same ground, as my Indian guide assured me, four Indians, out of season, during the deep snow of last spring, ran down on snow shoes and killed sixty moose, leaving their carcasses to rot in the wilderness, all for the paltry price their hides would bring. "This is barbarous," as John said, "in an Indian, but there are some who practice this mode of hunting as well."

The caribou travel on the hard-wooded ridges, the moss-covered ridges. These are abundant in their haunts as moose, but since they do not yard like the moose, but pass and repass from yard to yard, feeding as they go, the hunter thinks them not so numerous. While moose and caribou occupy the same forests in this district, they are yet separated. Here, too, other portions of the same forest are occupied by bears. While other animals pass through these bear districts, yet the latter hold and defend them against all intruders.

Miscellany.

A Naturalist in Cumberland.

Parrboro, beautiful and romantic, is situated on the basin of Minas, a quiet summer retreat. In picturesque bays, islands, and green hill views, it has never been my fortune to meet its equal. You may baffle in its full tidal waters and walk on the beach of the same sea dry-footed a little afterwards, when the tide is out. And woe betide the mineralogist who dares to venture a visit to one of the sister islands that lie half a mile in the bay from the shore, if perchance he tarry long, until warned by the incoming waters which are moved by a law as regular, sure and unchanging as the sun, that danger is nigh. He now lifts his hammer and chisel and satchel of minerals, and commences a hurried retreat, but ere two-thirds of the way is reached the water is knee deep. Deeper and deeper it grows, higher and higher it advances, faster and faster he speeds. His safety now turns upon his casting away the satchel of precious stones. But it contains rare specimens, which have cost much labor to knock out of the rocks. He hesitates; only for a moment, however, and it drops at his feet, and now he leaps through the water and finally reaches the shore weary and exhausted. This is no fancy sketch, but an actual experience. And yet there is not the least danger from the incoming and outgoing tide. Ladies and children walk these shores, collecting minerals and watching the waters day in and day out without a thought of danger.

Parrboro Minas is destined to be the Newport of Nova Scotia. It would be impossible to overrate its romantic position. The Ottawa House, kept by an estimable lady (Miss Wheeler), is a first-class summer resort, located with a view to command the sublime prospects of Cape Blomidon Cliffs, and other mountain peaks, of which there are many, in and about the Basin. Up the mountain side, at the base of which rests the hotel, are many retreats, where you may rest in the mountain ascent and watch the sail-boats near and far on the bay waters, and listen to the song of the birds and the hum of the insects, or examine the entomological specimens that light on bush or crawl on ground. But words fail to describe the pleasure of such scenes. These belong to that rare class of scenery that needs to be visited to be appreciated. Besides its scenery and sea-bathing facilities, it abounds in rare and choice minerals, and is much visited by mineralogists of all countries. Several of the professors and students of our own universities come here every year. A company of nine students from Yale College collected in four weeks, this year, nine barrels of minerals. I collected in a day, in and about the bluffs of Partridge Island, which is not more than half a mile from the hotel the following specimens—Amethyst in quartz, Jasper, red and yellow, stibite, silicious siltor, gypsum, agates, copper, iron; and during my hunting tour my wife and children collected many others, and we brought away a bag of these, which adds much to our cabinet. Years ago, two rare crops,

No Brains.

Judge Ray, the temperance lecturer, in one of his efforts, got off the following hard hit at "moderate drinkers."

"All those who in youth acquire a habit of drinking whiskey, at forty years of age will be total abstainers or drunkards. No person can use whiskey, for years, with moderation. If there is a person in the audience before me, whose experience disputes this, let him make it known. I will account for it, or acknowledge that I am mistaken."

A tall large man arose, and folding his arms across his breast, said: "I offer myself as one whose experience contradicts your statements." "Are you a moderate drinker?" "I am."

"How long have you drunk in moderation?" "Forty years."

"And never were intoxicated." "Never."

"Well," remarked the judge, scanning the subject from head to foot, "you are a singular case; yet, I think it is easily accounted for. I am reminded by it of a little story. A colored man, with a cat of bread and a bottle of whiskey, sat down to dine, on the bank of a clear stream. In breaking the bread, he dropped some crumbs into the water. These were eagerly seized and eaten by the fish. That circumstance suggested to the darkey the idea of dipping the bread into the whiskey and feeding it to them. It worked well. Some of the fish ate it, and became drunk and floated helplessly upon the surface. In this way he easily caught a large number. But in the stream was a large fish, very unlike the rest. It partook freely of the bread and whiskey with no perceptible effect. It was shy of every effort of the darkey to take it. He resolutely refused to take it, at all hazards, that he might learn its name and nature. He refused a net and other mesh efforts, but he would not be taken by a colored neighbor, and asked his opinion in the matter. The owner, surveyed the wonder and then said: 'Sambo, I understand this case; dis fish is a mullet-head, but it ain't got any brains.' In other words," added the judge, "alcohol affects only the brain, and, of course, those having none, may drink without injury." The storm of laughter which followed, drove the "moderate drinker" from the house.

No. 5—Enigma.

I am composed of 23 letters. My 9, 16 is like manner. My 19, 10, 17, 12 is a covering for the foot. My 15, 3, 4 is a farming implement. My 21, 4, 6 is a large body of water. My 1, 22, 11, 18 is a coarse bag. My 14, 2, 20, 7 is to avoid. My 13, 22, 8 is habitually melancholy. My 23, 10, 8 is a slight obstacle. My 19, 20, 23 is a luminous sphere. My 9, 3, 23 is a male descendant. My 11, 16, 17, 12 is a male of birds. My 8, 4, 22 is the hair of wild beasts. My 7, 4, 8 is a nickname. My 9, 16, 9 is a turf. My whole is a good specimen of alliteration.—Gardner Home Journal.

ANSWER TO No. 4.—Charity coveth a multitude of sins.

A PRINTER'S TOAST.—The Printer, a noble type. May his form be lovely, his face beautiful, his line illustrious, his dealings square, his virtues ink-acclearable, his A-change plenty, his sheets be fair, his countenance calm, his nose never be pined and his nose never be blown. May the number of his friends be quadrupled. May his actions stand proof. May he stick to his leaders, be always composed, and act honourable with the devil. And may his columns be crumpled, his d-injectives lammed and his enemies—

BETTER THAN CAPITAL.—The man whose statements can always be taken without question, whose promises are made never to go unfulfilled, whose verbal agreements are as good as his written contracts, whose integrity is of more value in his own eyes than any mere fortune which he could barter it for, will be astonished to find, in this hour of need, with what strength he is beset on every side, and how often he will stand firm as a rock when other men tremble and fall.

BOSTON CHRISTMAS FEEDING.—1 lb. of raisins; 1 lb. currants; 1 lb. beef suet; 4 oz. of chopped apples; 8 oz. of mixed candied peel; 1 lb. 8 oz. of bread crumbs; 1 lb. sugar; 8 eggs; a quart of milk; 2 tablespoons of flour; 4 oz. of pounded cloves and cinnamon and nutmeg grated; some grated lemon peel and salt. Boil six hours.