

"Oh, I can't play anything yet," said Caroline, generous and unabashed; "but if you want, I'll sing you some of the old tunes."

She went to Margaret's piano as naturally as if it had been the old square piano at home. The little rounded, compact hands seemed to cross the keys. She played softly an introductory measure, and began to sing:

"Tell me the tales that to me were so dear,
Long, long ago, long, long ago;
Sing me the songs I delighted to hear,
Long, long ago, long ago."

Margaret sat in amazement. It was not that Caroline's voice was in the least extraordinary; it was only young and sweet and true. There was nothing extraordinary about Caroline—her dress, her appearance, her manner. She sat singing simply and naturally, an old-fashioned song, "That's something like!" Mr. Allerdycy said enthusiastically.

"Let's have another and another and another! That's what I call music! Not that yours is, too, daughter, understand, but you know I don't pretend to be anything except old-fogy. Those old tunes somehow go to the heart."

So Caroline sang, as she had sung so many times to the folks at home—Emma's old, Lullaby, and Long, Long, Weary Day, and Music in the Air, and Star of the Twilight. She happily granted petitions for certain old favorites of her host—plaintive plantation songs and Scotch melodies and the old sentimental ditties that have endured.

Mr. Allerdycy begged for just one more! So Caroline sang in her strangely moving voice, When You and I were Young, Maggie, Mr. Allerdycy laid a large, capable hand on the small competent hand of his wife.

"But to me you're as fair as you were, Maggie,
When you and I were young."

"That's music!" pronounced Mr. Allerdycy. "That's the real thing! What are you going to make of yourself, my girl—a concert singer? But stick to the ballads; that's your field."

Caroline, now that she had done singing, unconsciously assumed her pretty, diffident manner again; but she laughed out gayly at Mr. Allerdycy's question.

"I guess my fame will never spread beyond my native heath," she said. "I have only this winter. Next year Ted will be ready for college, and I'll be a home body. Don't you think home's a pretty good stage? And then, you have no critics—nothing but appreciative friends."

"Well, I don't know but you're about right," agreed Mr. Allerdycy. "From what I gather, the path of fame's beset by a considerable amount of heartache and disillusion. And when you've reached it—after all, what's a peak? A pretty comfortless lodging."

In the succeeding days and weeks, Margaret frequently remembered her little Alton acquaintance, who was making nimble feet in the conservatory dining room further the interior of nimbler fingers in the practice rooms; but whenever Margaret remembered, there was something else to do, or somewhere else to go, or some one else to see. Besides, her mother frequently had Caroline at the house for the cozy Sunday evenings.

If there were sometimes lonesome week days, Caroline never by any chance mentioned the fact. Or if certain of her dreams before she left Alton for the conservatory had been curiously mingled with the thought of Margaret Allerdycy for her closest friend, no one ever knew.

One day Mrs. Allerdycy suggested, "Margaret, why don't you girls ask Caroline to sing for your benefit Thursday. She'd make a very attractive addition to your program."

"These old tunes—as a benefit concert—in a hall with everyone there—and for pay?"

"Evan so," returned her mother quietly.

"Well, I don't know," said Margaret slowly. "You may be right. It would be something different, and it would be an opportunity for Caroline, too. But of course it might not sound just the same, mother—her singing—in a hall; but I'll suggest it to others."

The gifted young amateurs whose services had been enlisted for the benefit hailed the suggestion with relief. The program resembled the required list of a scholarship contest. Milly Owen's number alone required ten minutes for its performance; and its technical difficulties were such that the lesson hours of the prescribed daily practice were hardly long enough to master them.

Caroline could hardly believe that little songs would make a grateful addition to the program; but she consented to help.

Aunt Hattie wrote from Alton that, since Uncle Robert had business in the city at that time, she had decided to come with him and to be present at the debut of Caroline, whom she considered as in a sense her protégée. Bobby had consented, in consideration of certain indemnities, to accept the temporary hospitality of his grandparents.

Early on the day of the benefit Aunt Hattie demanded to be taken to see the hall in which the affair was to occur. She subjected the stage and its appurtenances to the closest scrutiny, at the end of which she

nodded a knowing head, and made round eyes when Margaret said: "Do you think her voice will carry, Aunt Hattie?" "I'll carry 'em all back to Old Virginia, don't you fear, honey!" "And about—the dress, you know—do you think Caroline—"

Aunt Hattie made her eyes rounder than before. "About the dress—I know."

Margaret sighed in relieved content. Besides a sound knowledge of everyday things like a home and a family, Aunt Hattie was not deficient in a sense of the deeper mysteries of dress.

All the loyal parents and relatives and acquaintances and friends rallied early on the momentous night of the benefit; the house was full to overflowing. In the retiring room, beyond the store, which had suddenly burst into a tropical wealth of greenery, the little artists shivered in a sort of delightful dread.

From the first number,—that Polonaise Militaire, which might almost have been composed against this very night,—straight down through the long and arduous program rendered with an earnest fidelity, if not with artistic musical comprehension, the applause was unintermitted; and it was none the less honest because, for the most part, it was called forth by the performer rather than by the performance. Youth as well as art makes its peculiar appeal.

Aunt Hattie had asked the privilege of serving as "stage electrician" for Caroline's specialty. The curtain was briefly lowered. Aunt Hattie directed that, for the most part, the stage light that had been upon the stage be extinguished; then she placed a pair of candlesticks—old Allerdycy heirlooms—upon either side of the piano desk.

The effect of this simple procedure was charming; the floral display was now only a part of the pleasant, candle-light shadow; and as the curtain was withdrawn, a dear little old-fashioned girl in a flowered, and gowned—the yellow-rose organdy that was also an Allerdycy heirloom—seated herself before the shining, candle-light piano and began to sing.

Simply and unpretentiously Caroline began to sing the old tunes; and a slightly weary, but still loyal, audience suddenly took a new and amazing lease of enjoyment. Caroline knew nothing of stage manner, or of the art of throwing the voice. She only sang, in a candle-light room, folk songs she had long known and loved; and by that curious miracle that for want of a better word we call "appeal," her songs carried—carried even past those walls, into other years and other places. Caroline had only one art—the art of simplicity.

And then—she was kind. She did not leave them mourning overlong because of Aunt Robin Gray, but gave them, with a queer little jangling stick-ate accompaniment like a plucked banjo, the enlivening strains of Dearest Mae. Stanch, prosaic souls and hearts that for want of a better word we call "appeal," her songs carried—carried even past those walls, into other years and other places. Caroline had only one art—the art of simplicity.

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Once, twice, and yet a third time, was Caroline summoned back by an audience grown suddenly hungry for music. And from the neighborhood of Mr. Allerdycy came the request for that connoisseur's favorite. So Caroline in her ruffled yellow rose dress, sitting in the yellow candle glow sang as if she had been singing to one alone, that dearest of paradoxes:

"But to me you're as fair as you were, Maggie,
When you and I were young."

"A veritable Jenny Lind!" held these generous souls. And suddenly in the most natural, and at the same time the most amazing, manner they began to plan another benefit—a benefit the object of which was nothing less than the furthering of Caroline's musical interests. Caroline should be sent to a larger city, to a famous conservatory, to greater opportunities. Margaret and Milly and their set, those delightful young girls, who with the fairy-tale superstitiousness of youth attributed a measure of Caroline's success to her Cinderella druggeries in the conservatory dining room, encouraged and abetted by their several households, planned a debut for Caroline that promised to be almost a pageant.

Not until all had been assured—except the slight detail of Caroline's acceptance of her role—was the announcement made. Caroline had been bidden to the Allerdycy's for Sunday night tea. "I'm so happy," she said blithely. "I'm going home tomorrow. Of course, it's been wonderful—a whole lot of music! I'll never forget it. And you've all been so good—but now time's up. I can hardly wait!" They looked at her blankly.

"But, Caroline—you can't go home!" Margaret expostulated. "You're going east—to study and become famous!" And she related the whole wonderful plan.

Caroline's eyes crinkled with a wonderfully tender, mischievous smile. "It's a beautiful plan!" she said wisely. "Some day I hope you can carry it out. But it couldn't be me—I shall never be famous; it isn't in me. That night—it wasn't at all me—it was the dress, and the candle, and the old tunes. They fairly sing themselves! Besides, I've got my public all I'll ever want—just Alton—just the home folks."

But I thank you just the same." Margaret deplored the burying of Caroline's talent in a little country town like Alton. She intimated as much to Aunt Hattie on the occasion of her acquainting that sprightly relative with the facts. Aunt Hattie's reply was brief and cryptic, "Caroline wasted in Alton? Come and see!"

"I'm inclined to agree with her," said Mrs. Allerdycy. "What better could Caroline win than she already has?"

"Fame," said Margaret. "Your mother and I have managed to get along very comfortably all these years without fame," observed Mr. Allerdycy; "and we could wish no happier lot for our only daughter."

The best place for a girl, before she marries, said Mrs. Allerdycy, "is home. And the best place for her after she marries is home. When you've said that, you've said about all."

"All," agreed Mr. Allerdycy. After a moment's reflection, he amended, "With a few old tunes thrown in for good measure!"—Agnes Mary Brown in The Youth's Companion.

CONVERSION OF MISS GATES STARR

By Scannell O'Neill

Several years ago, when we were a member of the staff of the Chicago Chronicle, a friend of ours, then Rector of the Anglican Cathedral, but now a priest in St. Louis, invited us to accompany him to Hull House to call on Jane Addams and Ellen Starr. We have but a faint remembrance of Miss Addams, but we still recall the little lady who perched on a table was discoursing to a large assemblage on art and to whom we were introduced as the co-founder with Miss Addams, of the famous settlement house. We were particularly interested in Miss Starr for the reason that we had known her aunt, the late Miss Eliza Allen Starr, who had often spoken to us of her niece and of her prayers for the latter's conversion. If Miss Eliza is permitted to know anything of the world here below doubtless she is thanking God in Heaven today that her niece after many years of wandering has at last come home to Roma. For Miss Starr has recently made her submission to the Church, the determining influence in her search for truth having been the Bishops' Pastoral.

Ellen Gates Starr is descended from Mayflower stock through the New England Stars and from the family of Ethan Allen of Concord fame. She was educated at Rockford (Ill.) College, where she was a classmate and became the intimate and trusted friend of Jane Addams. So when the latter in 1889 founded Hull House it was only natural that Miss Starr should be associated with her in that venture. To give an idea of the varied activities of Miss Starr would require much more space than we have at our disposal, suffice it to say that she has been social reformer, lecturer, writer, philanthropist and one of the first of living authorities on the Italian art. She established the Dante and Browning classes at Hull House, and to perfect herself in the art of book-binding she went to England and served her apprenticeship under Cobden Sanderson the greatest master of his craft. On her return to Chicago she set up her bindery which has become famous throughout the country and abroad for the beauty and thoroughness of the work there turned out. Miss Starr's collection of famous paintings hangs in the nucleus of the Public School Art Society of Chicago of which she was the first President. She has been a constant contributor of articles on art and social reform to various periodicals and in "Hall House Maps and Papers" appears her article on "Art and Labor." Miss Addams, in "Twenty Years at Hull House" pays generous tribute to the comfort of Miss Starr's companionship, the vigor and enthusiasm she brought to bear upon the work of the settlement house.

SYON ABBEY HAS SURVIVED FOR 500 YEARS

(By Rev. P. G. Gulliday, Ph. D.)

London, September 2.—One of the most remarkable examples of the perpetuity of the Catholic faith in England is the story of the English Bridgettine nuns of Syon Abbey. It is the only religious house out of all the hundreds that covered the land in the days of the great iconoclast, Henry VIII., that has survived the Reformation. During five hundred years (1420-1920) this community of English nuns has constantly and entirely been recruited from English subjects, despite its long exile from England of three hundred years (1539-1861).

Syon House, still one of the show places of England, was dedicated in 1420. It was suppressed by order of Henry VIII. in 1539, and twenty years later the remaining members of the community were permitted to leave the country with the retiring Spanish Ambassador, the Duke of Feria. After several years of wandering from one convent to another in Belgium the nuns went to Lisbon. The community soon began to increase in numbers and the convent became one of the largest in the Portuguese capital. In 1801, the Bridgettines returned to England, and in 1887, they took up their abode in the Syon Abbey, at Khudleigh.

It is interesting to note that each year at Khudleigh a requiem Mass is said for the soul of William the Conqueror, part of whose lands were made over to the Abbey in 1420 on this condition. This record of half a thousand years is unique in English Catholic annals.

THE SONG OF THE DEATHLESS VOICE

How long shall the Celt chant the sad song of hope,
That a sunrise may break on the long starless night of our past?
How long shall we wander and wait on the desolate slope
Of Thabors that promise our Transfiguration at last?
How long, O Lord! How long!
How long, O Fate! How long!
How long shall our sunburst reflect but the sunset of Right,
When gloaming still lights the dim immemorial years?

How long shall our harp's strings, like winds that are wearied of night,
Sound sadder than moanings in tones all-a-trembling with tears?
How long, O Lord! How long!
How long, O Right! How long!
How long shall our banner, the brightest that ever did flame
In battle with wrong, droop fumed like a flag o'er a grave?

How long shall we be but a nation with only a name,
Whose history clanks with the sounds of the chains that enslave?
How long, O Lord! How long!
How long! Alas, how long!
How long shall our isle be a Golluth, out in the sea,
With a cross in the dark? Oh, when shall our Good Friday close?
How long shall thy sea that beats round thee bring only to thee
The wallings, O Erin! that float down the waves of thy woes?

How long, O Lord! How long!
How long! Alas, how long!
How long shall the cry of the wronged, O Freedom! for thee
Ascend all in vain from the valleys of sorrow below?
How long ere the dawn of the day in the ages to be,
When the Celt will forgive, or else
Trend on the heart of his foe?
How long, O Lord! How long!

Whence came the voice? Around me grey silence fall;
And without in the gloom not a sound is stir 'neath the sky;
And who is the singer? Or hear I a singer at all?
Or, hush! Is't my heart athrill with some deathless old cry?

Ah! blood forgets not in its flowing its forefathers' wrongs—
They are the heart's trust, from which we may never be released;
Blood keeps in its throbs the echoes of all the old songs,
And sings them the best when it flows thro' the heart of a priest.

Am I not in my blood as old as the race whence I sprung?
In the cells of my heart feel I not all its ebb and its flow?
And old as our race is, is it not still forever young,
As the youngest of Celts in whose breast Erin's love is aglow?

The blood of a race that is wronged bears the longest of all,
For long as the wrong lasts, each drop of it quivers with wrath;
And sure as the race lives, no matter what fates may befall,
There's a Voice with a Song that forever is haunting its path.

Aye, this very hand that trembles thro' this very line,
Lay hid, ages gone, in the hand of some forefather Celt,
With a sword in its grasp, if stronger, not truer than mine,
And I feel, with my pen, what the old hero's sword hand felt—

The heat of the hate that flashed into flames against wrong,
The thrill of the hope that rushed like a storm on the foe;
And the sheen of that sword is hid in the sheath of the song.
As sure as I feel thro' my veins the pure Celtic blood flow.

The ties of our blood have been strained o'er thousands of years,
And still are not severed, how mighty a power they bear;
The chalice of time o'erflows with the streams of our tears,
Yet just as the shamrocks, to bloom, need the clouds and their rain.

The Faith of our fathers, our hopes, and the love of our isle
Need the rain of our hearts that falls from our grief clouded eyes,
To keep them in bloom, while for ages we wait for the smile
Of Freedom, that some day—ah! some day! shall light Erin's skies.

Our dead are not dead who have gone, long ago, to their rest;
They are living in us whose glorious race will not die—
Their brave buried hearts are still beating on in each breast
Of the child of each clime 'neath the infinite sky.

Many days yet to come may be dark as the days that are past,
Many voices may hush while the great years sweep patiently by;
But the voice of our race shall live sounding down to the last,
And our blood is the bard of the song that never shall die.

—REV. A. J. RYAN

PEACE THROUGH FAITH

A contemporary publishes statistics on the unchurched portion of this country that may well cause serious men to pause and think whether we are drifting. It is an old saying, but as true as it is old, that a nation's strength is measured by its adherence to religious standards and practical recognition of moral and ethical principles.

Times without number, a warning has been sent out from those entrusted with the religious wellbeing of the nation that we must return to God before we may expect lasting peace secured through justice. It is alarming to realize that religion is disappearing outside the Church and that over twenty-five millions of children in this country totally lack any religious instruction. It is also a dangerous portent that half-hearted instruction is imparted to another twenty-five millions of the youth.

All this forces home the fact that the one great agency for the perpetuation of our national ideas through the conscientious practice of religion is the Church. Outside the Church, religion is on the wane. The above figures running into tens of millions show emphatically that were it not for Catholicism and its mighty influence, there would be little to encourage us to face the future with founded hope.

On the youth of today will rest the responsibilities of tomorrow. Neglect their proper religious training today and tomorrow will rise a generation with an obscure vision of duty and an improper conception of the basic principles of justice and right.

The great World War should teach men the utter necessity of enthroning religion and making it an active force. The millions who lie today in unknown graves from the North Sea to the Adriatic rise before our gaze as a warning. Had the voice of Christ's Vicar been heeded, had men been conscious of their duties and responsibilities, had they the religious faith of mind that would call them back from their worldly designs, an epochal horror would not have overtaken the world and today the nations would be in pursuit of peace and happiness.

The men of today were the youth of yesterday. They knew not their God. A cataclysm ensued. The youth of today will be the men of tomorrow. Let the world heed the lesson learned on the battlefields. God rules whether men will or not. In the latter case, His hand is laid across the nations and the cry of despair is heard athwart the world.

The Church conscious of her mission utilizes every means to teach the youth to know, love and serve God. From their earliest years they learn religious truth. As the years wear on, they practice it and today they are through their early Christian education, the chief bulwark of government and the mightiest power for the preservation of society.

The world without should learn at once its direst need. It is religion. With it, all will be secure. Without it, we must face future wars. No time should be lost by those outside the Church in training youth aright.

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