

The fact of the matter is, that the corporal seemed greatly moved by an air which his little boy, who walked ahead of him, was humming. It was the *O Sanctissima*, the melody of which awakened many past thoughts in Gunn's mind. However, for the nonce, he kept his thoughts to himself.

In dismissing Freidenker with a hearty "good night," he added: "Don't forget to call. It's Sunday, and you have plenty leisure. By the way, how do you use the time on Sundays?"

"Ach!" said Freidenker, "I sleep the morning through. In the afternoon I read the *Teufelsblatt*, and in the night we play sixty-six."

"Well, come around, if you can," said Gunn, when parting.

At eight o'clock next evening, Freidenker could be seen at the corporal's house, comfortably seated in an easy chair, and busily engaged in working a wire through the stem of his long pipe.

"I didn't think that you would be so easily moved, Cap," commenced Freidenker, referring to the corporal, who was so visibly affected the night before.

When his pipe was burning nicely, he continued: "Well, after all, I was glad I was not at that theatre. I might have been hurt in that accident too, by golly!"

"You were very fortunate in escaping," broke in the corporal, but let me tell you of a lucky escape of mine some years ago. After all, Freidenker, it pays to be religious, and—"

"That is enough," interrupted Freidenker, "don't preach to us, captain, the pfaff is paid to do that. Make some music, Maria," he said, wheeling around towards the corporal's daughter.

So to please Freidenker, Mary played a few pieces, at the same time thinking to herself that "music hath charms to move the savage breast," but she didn't dare express it. She gave in succession, "The Watch on the Rhine," "Sherman's March," and several military pieces, and, as a finale, softly rendered (what was then uppermost in her mind) the air of the *O Sanctissima*, which her little brother accompanied with his sweet treble voice. During this last piece the corporal's watery eyes were alternately resting on a lovely oleograph of the Madonna and a beautiful picture of the "Last Roll Call." Mary

had unconsciously awakened a silent chord in her father's breast. As for Freidenker, he was intently gazing at the rings of smoke which gracefully ascended from his yard and a half of pipe. When the corporal's daughter closed the organ, Freidenker exclaimed: "That was good Maria! If I had much money I would send you to one of those music conservatories in my old Heimath."

"Thank you, Herr Freidenker," said Mary, "but I am content if I know how to play a few simple hymns in honor of the Blessed Virgin."

"Now," said Corporal Gunn, "I do not intend to follow up the music with a sermon, but with the permission of our friend here, (looking at Freidenker) I think I can relate something which will interest the company for half an hour. It will be something new to my own family."

"Let us hear it," answered everyone in course.

"Well," proceeded Gunn, "you all heard Father X.— last evening relate that incident of the soldier who escaped the Indian bullets. I was that soldier."

Mary brought her chair nearer, while Freidenker pulled vigorously at his pipe, being unconscious that it was not burning.

"I was a pretty good boy in my young days," continued the corporal. "I sang in the childrens' choir, and was considered a rather fair singer. Many a time I sang that *O Sanctissima* which Mary has played for us to-night. Whenever I hear it I feel greatly moved. When I heard it in church last evening it awakened many pathetic recollections.

"In 1876, soon after gallant Custer and his men made their last charge, I hadn't much to do. One day, passing the recruiting office in one of the large cities, I noticed the stars and stripes floating in front of the door. I fell into conversation with the sergeant in charge, and some days later found myself a private of Company "C" en route to the plains. I was soon promoted to the rank of corporal, but never reached the captaincy as our friend Freidenker would have you believe.

"We saw little fighting except a few skirmishes with an unruly band of bucks, who were ever on the outlook for some one else's store of 'fire-water,' or in fact anything that was movable. In camp, outside