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OUR BOY ORGANIST.

WHAT HE SAW, AND WHAT CAME OF IT. (From the Catholic World.)

'How was it, doctor, that you first thought about it?' Well, I suppose I had better tell you the whole story. It may interest you. Just twenty years ago, on a bright Sunday morning, I was hurrying along the road home to Tinton, hoping to be in time to hear the sermon at church. My watch told me that I should be too late for the morning prayer. Happening to look across the fields, I was surprised to see little Ally Dutton, our boy organist, running very fast over the meadows, leaping the fences at a bound, and finally disappear in the woods. 'What could possibly take our organist away during church time? Surely,' thought I, 'the minister must be sick?' and, being the village doctor, I hurried still faster. 'But what could take our organist in that out of the way direction at such an hour, and in such haste? Is it mischief?' I asked myself. But I banished that thought immediately, for Ally had no such reputation. 'There must be something wrong, however; for he ran so fast, and Ally is such a quiet, old-fashioned lad. The minister is ill, at any rate,' said I to myself, 'or Ally would not be absent.' Contrary to my expectations, I found the minister preaching as usual. I do not recollect anything of the sermon now except the text. Rev. Mr. Billups, our minister, had a fashion of repeating our texts very often, sometimes very appropriately and sometimes not. It was Pilate's question to our Lord: 'What is truth?' You will see, after what happened subsequently, that I had another reason for remembering it besides its frequent repetition. The sermon ended, the hymn was sung, but the organ was silent. The silence was ominous. I can not explain why; perhaps it was one of those strange presentiments of disaster, but I fancied our boy organist dead. I loved Ally very much, and my heart sank within as I looked up through the drawn choir curtains, and missed his slight little form, perched up as he was wont to be, on a pile of books so as to bring his hands on a level with the key-board, troling forth his gay little voluntary as the congregation dispersed after service. I missed his voice in the hymn, too; those clear ringing tones which were far sweeter to me than any notes that musical instrument ever breathed. I was so filled with this presentiment of coming evil that I did not dare to ask any one the cause of his absence. 'Pooh!' I said to myself, 'there is nothing in it. I saw him but just now alive, and well enough, if I may judge from the way he cleared those fences and the swiftness of his footsteps as he ran across the meadows.' I thought no more of it until a messenger came two or three days afterward to my office and said: 'Will you please, doctor, come down to the widow Dutton's? Ally is sick.' 'I will come immediately,' said I to the messenger. 'We shall lose our boy-organist,' said I to myself. And so we did; but not as you suppose. Ally became — but I must not anticipate. I found our much loved boy organist in a high fever. 'He has been constantly raving all night,' said his mother, in answer to my inquiries, 'about what he has seen. There has been something preying on his mind lately,' she continued. 'He has been very sad and nervous, and I fear it has helped to make him ill.' In a tone of command, which I find will often elicit a direct answer from patients whose minds are wandering, I said to him: 'Ally, answer me directly, sir; what did you see?' With his eyes still staring at the ceiling he answered in a wandering manner: 'God!'

'I was sorely perplexed what further question to ask, but, thinking to lead him on gradually to some more reasonable answer as I thought, I asked: 'Where?' 'The kneeling people and the priest,' he replied dreamily. 'And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee." And here he burst into tears. Then the remembrance of the last Sunday morning came back to my mind, and I knew now what had taken Ally across the fields, and what he had seen. He was so faint and weak, his pulse fluttered so unsteadily, that I feared the worst, and the anxious, searching look of the mother read my tale countenance. She began to weep violently. 'Mother!' cried Ally. 'Yes, my child,' she responded quickly, and bent over and kissed him. 'Don't cry, mother. God will not let me die till I know what is true first.' 'That is a strange remark,' thought I, 'for a boy like him to make. What can he mean?' 'My darling Ally,' said the widow, 'you do know what is true. You always say what is true.' 'Why should they say it isn't true, then?' asked Ally. 'What isn't true, my dear?'

'God!' answered the boy, turning his eyes upward to the ceiling again, and looking, as it were, at some object miles away, 'and the kneeling people, and the priest. It's true and no lie. This is my body, this is my blood.'— And he joined his hot and feverish little hands together as if in prayer. 'Don't trouble about this,' said I to the weeping mother. 'I know what it is. He has been down to Mike Maloney's, in the Brook woods, and seen the Catholic Mass. Don't refer to it again just now. I will give him some composing medicine, but I wish,' I added, 'that this had not happened. It only tends to weaken him.' Presently I noticed him playing with his fingers on the coverlet as if he were playing the organ. I thought to take advantage of this, and said: 'Ally, my boy, get well soon, now, and let us have a grand voluntary on the organ—one of your very best.' 'For God, for Mass, for the kneeling people and the priest,' he murmured. 'Oh! never mind the Mass,' said I, 'that's nothing to you.' Turning his eyes suddenly upon me, he exclaimed:— 'O, doctor! it seems everything to me. I never can forget it. How could anybody ever forget they had seen Mass. Could you?' 'That I can't say, Ally,' I replied, 'for I never saw it.' 'Never saw it? Why I've seen it?' 'Often?' I asked. 'Well—I saw it—one Sunday, anyway,' answered Ally, with the air of one who had never been anywhere else all his life. 'What was it like, Ally dear?' asked the mother. 'Like heaven, mother, if the angels had only been there.' 'Angel!' said I contemptuously. 'Pretty place to find angels, in Mike Maloney's shanty! Why, it's like a stable.' Again Ally's eyes went up to the ceiling, and while his fingers nervously played an invisible organ on the coverlet, he began to sing, so plaintively and sadly that it quite unmanned me: 'He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all, And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall, With the poor, and mean and lowly, Lived on earth our Saviour baby.'

The widow and I stood watching and listening long after he had ceased singing. In a few moments a lucid interval occurred, and, noticing me, he said: 'Doctor, why can't we have Mass in our church? Oh! wouldn't I like to play the organ for it always till I died?' 'We couldn't have Mass, Ally,' I replied, 'because it is only Catholic priests who can say Mass.' 'Is it? I know I'd like to play the organ for ever and ever for the Mass; but I'd rather be a priest. Oh! a thousand, thousand times rather!' And his pale sad face lighted up with an unearthly glow. Seeing I could not divert his mind from the subject, and fearing to continue a conversation which excited him so much, I quietly gave directions to his mother, and left. I had little hopes of Ally's recovery, but his words made a deep impression on my mind: 'God will not let me die till I know what is true first.' 'What truth can he mean?' thought I. 'Can he have imagined he does not know the true religion? What can have made him think that our Episcopal Church is not true? What strange fancies will get into some children's heads! I should be sorry to lose Ally, but I'd rather see him die, I think, than grow up to be a Roman Catholic. Ugh! and a priest, too, perhaps, who knows? God forbid!' Revolving these disagreeable thoughts in my head as I went down the street, I met Mr. Billups, our minister. We shook hands, or rather I shook Mr. Billups' hand while he shook his head, a manner of his that gave him a general doubting air, somewhat puzzling to strangers. 'Mr. Billups,' said I, 'do you know that Ally Dutton is ill?' 'No, I did not hear it,' he replied, emphasizing the word 'did,' as much as to say, 'But I hear it now.' Although the negative accompaniment with his head would seem to imply that he did not believe it. 'Yes, and very ill, too,' I added. 'If his mind becomes calmer than it is, I think it might do good just to drop in and see him. I fear he has been under some bad influences lately.' 'You astonish me, not to say grieve me,' rejoined Mr. Billups. 'Ally was always a good pious boy, and one of our head boys, as you are aware, in the Sunday school.' 'I mean,' said I, 'that he has been reading or hearing something about Catholics and their Mass, and other things; and it really has made a deep impression on his mind, which ought to be effaced; that is,' I added, 'in case he recovers, which I fear is doubtful.'

'Of course, of course, which ought to be effaced,' repeated he. 'Not a doubt of it. I remember, now, Mrs. White, his Sunday school teacher telling me that he had asked her in class what the sixth chapter of St. John meant. I hope he has not been reading that chapter of the bible too attentively, for it is calculated, I am sorry to say to make a deep, very deep, not to say, in regard to the Popish Mass doctrine, a most alarming impression upon the mind, especially of a boy like Ally.' 'Well, if you see him,' said I, 'not much relying this opinion about the bible being in favor of Catholic doctrines, you can manage to bring the subject up, and easily explain its true meaning to him.' 'Yes, oh! yes! easily explain its true meaning to him,' again repeated Mr. Billups after me, yet looking rather puzzled, as I thought, and doubtful of success; but perhaps it was only his manner that gave me that impression. 'Would to-morrow, think you, do, doctor?' he continued, after a pause, 'I am quite busy, just now.' 'Better,' I replied, 'much better; Ally is very low at this moment.' I do not know what made me say it, but Ally's words came suddenly to my mind again, and I added confidently:— 'He will not die just yet. He will surely be better to-morrow.' I bade Mr. Billups good morning, not at all satisfied. 'The sixth chapter of St. John! the sixth chapter of St. John!' I went on repeating to myself. Strange! I have never read that chapter with any thought of the doctrine of Catholics. And yet, to judge from what the minister said it might trouble the mind, even of a child. As I waited in the parlor of a sick lady whom I went to visit before returning home, I could not refrain from turning over the leaves of a large family bible on the centre table, and finding the chapter in question. I had not time, however, to read many verses before I was summoned to the sick chamber. Attention to my professional duties drove the subject from my mind during the rest of the day, and I returned to rest considerably exhausted and fatigued. 'Now for a good sleep,' said I to myself, 'and a quick one, for I shouldn't wonder if I were called up to Ally again before morning.' But I could not sleep. Tossing to and fro in the bed, I began to question myself about the cause of my sleeplessness; I soon found it. The thought of Ally had revived the memory of that sixth chapter of St. John. 'Well,' said I, 'I will remove the cause by getting up and reading it, and there will be an end of it. Then I shall sleep.' So I rose and lit my lamp, got out my bible, and there, half dressed, read the troublesome chapter. As I reflected upon what I was doing, I felt more like a thief, a midnight robber, or some designing villain laying plans for murder or house-breaking, than as an honest Christian reading his bible; for was I not allowing myself to do what was calculated to make a deep, not to say an alarming impression on my mind, that the Catholic religion was true, and the Protestant religion false? Now, without vanity I say it, few people know their bibles better than I did, and, although I must have read that identical chapter many times, it seemed that I had never read it before. I thank God for that midnight perusal of my bible. One thing I then and there determined, for private reasons of my own, which was to be on hand at Mrs. Dutton's when the minister called; and there I was. Ally was a good deal better and brighter. After some commonplace remarks, Mr. Billups said to Ally: 'You are fond of reading your Bible, are you not, my dear child; and would you not like me to read a little of the Word to you?' 'Oh! yes, sir,' answered the boy eagerly. 'I will read for you, then,' continued Mr. Billups, producing a Bible from his pocket. 'A most beautiful and instructive passage from St. John's gospel, commencing at the sixth chapter.' He said this in such a church-reading tone that Mrs. Dutton, instinctively responded as far as 'Glory be'—but, discovering her mistake, covered it up with a very loud cough. Mr. Billups read the chapter, but quite differently from the manner in which I had read it: slowly and distinctly, where I had read rather quickly, that is, from the beginning to the fiftieth verse; and quickly where I had read slowly, from that verse to the end. 'That's very beautiful, and very strange,' said Ally pensively, as the minister paused at the end of the chapter. 'But, Mr. Billups, is it all true?' 'The bible, my dear Ally ought to know, is all true,' replied Mr. Billups. 'And did Jesus give his flesh and blood, as he said he would?' asked Ally. 'Yes, my child,' answered Mr. Billups, he certainly made all his promises good. 'I wish I knew where,' said Ally inquiringly. 'I asked Mrs. White, and she said she didn't know, and that I asked too many questions.'

A STRANGE STORY.

'So Brown, you tell me, has been appointed executor to Smith's will,' said our major the other day, as we were lounging together against the low wall that divides Carlisle-terrace from the beach. 'I'll venture to say that trusts committed to him won't be as strange as mine were the first time I was made executor. 'Some years since, I received a letter from my old friend and comrade, Ellis, of the —th, telling me that his health had been for some time declining,—"there being," he added, "a trust of some importance to be undertaken, which I wish to confide to no one but yourself." The letter concluded with a cordial invitation to pay him a visit at the snug cottage in Devonshire to which he had retired. Now Ellis was like myself—an old bachelor; and, except his half pay, was, I knew, but little burdened with this world's baggage and accoutrements; so it never occurred to me that the trust I was to undertake could possibly relate to anything more important than the bestowal of legacies on his old housekeeper and butler, or his almost equally antiquated cat and dog. I wrote immediately to accept the invitation, and early the next morning I deposited myself and my portmanteau in the E— coach, which, after a day's travelling, left me at my friend's abode. He was himself standing at the garden wicket, ready to give me a cordial welcome. There was nothing very death-like in the clear, bright glance of his eye, or in the firm grasp of his hand; and I wondered internally what the massive he had sent me could possibly mean. However, I kept my thoughts to myself, and followed Ellis into his neat little dining-room, where the snowy tablecloth was speedily