

## TROUBLE IN THE "AMEN CORNER."

'Twas a stylish congregation, that of Theophrastus Brown, And its organ was the finest and the biggest in the town, And the chorus—all the papers favorably commented on it, For 'twas said each female member had a forty-dollar bonnet.

Now in the "amen corner" of the church sat Brother Eyer, Who persisted every Sabbath-day in singing with the choir; He was poor, but genteel-looking, and his head as snow was white, And his old face beamed with sweetness when he sang with all his might.

His voice was cracked and broken, age had touched his vocal chords, And nearly every Sunday he would mispronounce the words Of the hymns, and 'twas no wonder, he was old, and nearly blind, And the choir rattling onward, always left him far behind.

The chorus stormed and blustered, Brother Eyer sang too slow, And then he used the tunes in vogue a hundred years ago; At last the storm cloud bursted, and the church was told, in due, That the brother must stop singing, or the choir would resign!

Then the pastor called together in the vestry room one day Seven influential members who subscribe more than they pay, And having asked God's guidance in a printed prayer or two, They put their heads together to determine what to do.

They debated, thought, suggested, till at last "dear" Brother York, Who last winter made a million on a sudden rise in pork, Rose and moved that a committee wait at once on Brother Eyer, And proceed to raze him lively "for disturbin' of the choir."

Said he: "In that 'ere organ I've invested quite a pile, And we'll sell it if we can not worship in the latest style; Our Philadelphia tenor tells me 'tis the hardest thing To make people understand him when the brother tries to sing."

"We've got the biggest organ, and the best-dressed choir in town, We pay the steepest salary to our pastor, Brother Brown; But if we must humor ignorance because its blind and old— If the choir's to be pestered, I will seek another fold."

Of course the motion carried, and one day a coach-and-four, With the latest style of driver, rattled up to Eyer's door; And the sleek, well-dressed committee, Brothers Shark, and York, and Lamb, As they crossed the humble portal took good care to miss the jamb.

They found the choir's great trouble sitting in his old arm-chair, And the summer's golden sunbeams lay upon his thin, white hair; He was singing "Rock of Ages" in a cracked voice and low, But the angels understood him; 'twas all he cared to know.

Said York: "We're here, dear brother, with the vestry's approbation, To discuss a little matter that affects the congregation," "And the choir too," said Sharky, giving Brother York a nudge, "And the choir, too," he echoed with the graveness of a judge.

"It was the understanding, when we bargained for the chorus, That it was to relieve us, that is, do the singing for us; If we rupture the agreement, it is very plain, dear brother, It will leave our congregation and be gobbled by another."

"We don't want any singing except that what we've bought! The latest tunes are all the rage; the old ones stand for naught; And so we have decided—are you listening, Brother Eyer? That you'll have to stop your singin', for it hurtytates the choir."

The old man slowly raised his head, a sign that he did hear, And on his cheek the trio caught the glitter of a tear; His feeble hands pushed back the locks white as the silky snow, As he answered the committee in a voice both sweet and low:

"I've sung the psalms of David nearly eighty years, said he: 'They've been my staff and comfort all along life,' dreary way; I'm sorry I disturb the choir, perhaps I'm doing wrong; But when my heart is filled with praise, I can't keep back a song."

"I wonder if beyond the tide that's breaking at my feet In the far off heavenly temple, where the Master I shall greet— Yes, I wonder when I try to sing the songs of God up higher, If the angel band will church me for disturbing heaven's choir."

A silence filled the little room: the old man bowed his head; The carriage rattled on again; but Brother Eyer was dead! Yes, dead! his hand had raised the veil the future hangs before us, And the Master dear had called him to the everlasting chorus.

The choir missed him for a while, but he was soon forgotten, A few church-goers watched the door: the old man entered not; Far away, his voice no longer cracked, he sang his heart's desires, Where there are no church committees and no fashionable choirs!

T. C. HARRAUGH.

## LORELEI:

## A TALE OF THE HUDSON.

BY MARY J. SAFFORD.

Then, ere he could utter the answer trembling on his lips, she had flitted across the wide piazza and vanished in the hall, already dusky with the shadows of approaching twilight.

The moon rose late on this, the last evening of their stay, but as they sat chatting gayly in the soft night air, heavy with the perfume of the roses clustering around the pillars, Arthur suddenly proposed a row on the river. Eve and Rex assented, and five minutes after the light boat was pushed off from the shore.

For a time the little group was strangely silent; perhaps all felt the faint, indefinable shadow of pain that ever lingers around the hour of parting. Eve, leaning back in the boat and drawing her slender fingers through the rippling waters, looked so sad that, spite of the repulse of the morning, Rex's heart throbbed high with a sweet wild hope. Could she really regret his approaching departure? Arthur's voice suddenly broke the spell.

"Eve, you look like a picture of Undine we saw at the last Paris Exhibition? Don't you remember Rex? It was by a young German artist and everybody was raving over the transparent effect of the waves through which the hand offering the coral necklace appeared. I hope your Lorelei will make as great a sensation. Eve has given you plenty of sittings at any rate. One every morning, I believe."

"Yes, Miss Tresham has been kinder than I could have ventured to hope. If the picture is a success I shall owe my good fortune solely to her, for as you know, Arthur, I utterly despair of finding the embodiment of my Lorelei."

"Yes, Eve, if you could only have heard this fellow's indignant tirade against fashionable young ladies when I meekly ventured to suggest that you might do for his water-witch, I'm afraid you wouldn't have granted the sittings so good-naturedly."

Rex flushed hotly and began to stammer a confused explanation. A strange smile flitted over Eve's face as she turned, interrupting him.

"I wish it had been any other subject. Do you know from a child there has always been something horribly weird to me in that Lorelei legend? Suppose that among all she lured to death there might have come some handsome young knight she would gladly have saved and yet was forced to see go to his doom. There's a meaning underlying those old legends."

Her eyes sought the young artist's. Arthur caught the look and exclaimed in a tone that only half veiled a sneer:

"I'll tell you the meaning. The Lorelei is merely the symbol of the modern flirt, who for the sake of her own vanity darkens many a fine fellow's life and now and then—we've all known such cases—sends him out of the world altogether."

"Nonsense, Arthur! Men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for love; at any rate not in the nineteenth century. We've grown wiser than our fore-fathers. Haven't we, Mr. Daland?"

The subtle meaning in look and tone were lost on Arthur, who was ignorant of the scene of the afternoon.

Rex bent eagerly forward. "No, Miss Tresham, the centuries don't change men's natures; there are still plenty of us wise or foolish enough to think 'the world well lost' for a woman's smile. Those who have no love to give should beware of waking it."

Van Brunt frowned. "You are right, Rex, and the cold-hearted women who do are the true descendants of the Lorelei. But pray don't spend our last evening in sentimental discussions, let us have some music. Eve, I have never heard you sing."

"Because I only began to take lessons while you were in Europe."

There was an instant's silence; then her voice rose pure, clear and sweet. The air was a strange, weird melody, the song a translation of Heine's "Lorelei." Eve possessed a rare gift of expression, and even Arthur listened as if spell-bound, still in saddest, most plaintive notes, echoes faintly back by the cliffs, the last words died away:

This, with her fatal singing,  
The Lorelei hath done.

"I never knew that poem was set to music!" he exclaimed, "and how perfectly the air suits the words. Who is the composer, Eve?"

She laughed merrily. "Is it possible that I can do aught to please my lord the king?"

"You, Eve!" "Even so. There's nothing very difficult in the air, which however I really think does suit the rhythm. Mr. Daland's picture brought the poem into my head and it haunted me still I tried to set it to music—with better success than I expected."

"Miss Tresham reminds me of the fairy tale of the princess to whose cradle all the denizens of elf-land brought gifts," said Rex.

Something in the tone, the worshipping look that rested upon Eva vexed Arthur. He answered sharply,

"That's no new idea of yours, Rex. I heard the same remark made at the club two weeks ago, and somebody replied that in the same tale an envious fairy, not invited to the christening feast, brought a gift that neutralized all the others. He thought Miss Tresham would be

perfection if only among her many charms and graces she possessed a very common and sometimes troublesome commodity called—a heart."

A glance, sudden and swift as the gleam of blue steel, darted from Eve's lovely eyes, but she answered quietly.

"Very flattering in Mr. De Witt and very chivalrous in my cousin to listen to a discussion of my character in a club-room by a party of gentlemen."

"I mentioned no names," said Arthur quickly while the flush that crimsoned his cheek showed that Eve's shaft had struck home.

"No, but I could readily guess my assailant. As for his opinion I shall say nothing, except that people are very apt to find me what they think me. Mr. De Witt is certainly right from his point of view. I have no heart—for him."

They had been drifting idly down the river as they talked, and the boat now touched the little pier. Rex helped Eve ashore, holding the slender ungloved fingers in a close, lingering clasp, then drew the small hand through his arm and walked on to the edge of the pine wood, where they stopped to wait for Arthur.

The moon, pouring its flood of silvery light on wharf and river, made the shadow of the trees only the more dense. The spicy odor of the pine needles floated to them on the soft night breeze, and the only sound that reached their ears was the lapping of the tiny waves. Rex fancied Eve must hear the loud quick throbbing of his heart. A wild, mad impulse to press his lips to the sweet, proud face so near his own seized upon him, but he controlled it. Almost against his will, as if forced from him by a stronger power, the words, so low and husky that he could scarcely recognize his own voice, were uttered:—"May men really hope to find you what they think you, no matter into what a heaven of happiness those thoughts may soar?"

He almost held his breath for her answer. Was it fancy or did the little hand really press his arm? A moment's pause. Arthur's approaching footsteps fell upon their ears and Eve murmured hurriedly,

"At least faith will go far to keep them on the way."

The next evening found the little party widely separated, Eve on her way to Newport, Rex in his studio in New York and Van Brunt making preparations to join some friends for a month's shooting in the Adirondacks. Mrs. Tresham had given the young artist a cordial invitation to repeat his visit, an invitation warmly seconded by Eve's blue eyes, and Rex had promised to spend a few more days at Hawknest, if he carried out his intention of taking a sketching tour along the Hudson.

Van Brunt's absence from the city was prolonged from week to week. After the stay in the Adirondacks, friends persuaded him to go to Saratoga, then a trip to the White Mountains was planned, and the last days of September found him in Newport. He had heard from Rex less frequently than usual, and the tone of the letters was variable, some written in the gayest spirits, others betraying the utmost depression; but Arthur, who knew that he was working steadily at his Lorelei, attributed these changes to the variations natural to his friend's character.

At each change of plan in his summer tour, involving longer absence from New York, he had urged Rex to join him, but in vain. The reply was invariably that he could not spare the time; he must finish his picture, which he hoped would bring him both fame and fortune. "I'm getting as money-loving as any old miser," he once wrote, "perhaps you can guess why." Arthur puzzled over the sentence several hours without finding any clue to the meaning, and the excitement of a game of polo at last drove it from his thoughts.

On the last night in September, as he sat watching the waves roll in, silver-crested by the moon-beams, two letters were brought him, one addressed in Rex's well known hand, the other bearing Mrs. Tresham's irregular, somewhat illegible characters.

Arthur tore open his friend's envelope first. "Congratulate me," he wrote; "my picture is finished. All who have seen it pronounce it a success. And since your practical mind, old fellow, will judge by its market value, let me tell you that I sold it yesterday for the modest sum of fifty thousand dollars to a rich Californian, named McMichael, with the proviso that it was not to be delivered until after the exhibition. Don't think I asked such a sum; he offered it at once, and De Witt, who brought him to the studio, whispered me to take it, he was one of the men who counted his income at so much per minute and could afford to gratify his whims. Would you believe it? He was so anxious to secure the painting, that mistaking my pause of amazement for hesitation, he added that if fifty thousand were not enough he would give sixty, have the picture he must. Of course I accepted the first offer with thanks, though I confess my conscience reproached me a little. But, oh, Arthur, you don't know what that success mean to me. I have a presentiment that my fate is bound up with it. Never can I describe what I felt when I saw Miss Tresham standing in the moonlight on that cliff, the very embodiment of my Lorelei. I shall go to Hawknest immediately to tell her of my good luck."

A strange uncomfortable foreboding of coming evil ran through Arthur's mind. Why should Rex go to Hawknest to tell Eve of his good fortune? Surely he knew for what reason Mr. McMichael had bought the picture at the fabulous price. And yet if so, why did he make

no illusion to it? Was it possible that he had forgotten the name of Eve's future husband? Evidently—and certainly he could have no better proof of the folly of the fear that had suddenly sprung up while reading the letter, he feared that Rex might have been cherishing a secret love for Eve, a love whose success or failure he had in some superstitious folly connected with the picture.

He hastily glanced over the few remaining lines, folded the sheet and opened his aunt's letter.

Mrs. Tresham, in a somewhat hurried, incoherent fashion informed him that, owing to some business requiring Mr. McMichael's presence in Europe, the wedding would take place early in October, a month sooner than they had expected. "Eve, dear child," she wrote, "is most unwilling to consent to the change. I had no idea she felt the thought of leaving me so much, and would only agree on condition that the grand display in New York should be given up. They are to be married very quietly at Hawknest the night before the steamer sails, no one present except near relatives. Be sure to come on at once, for as Eve has neither father nor brother, you must give her away, and the wedding may take place immediately. We are waiting for Mr. McMichael to hear from Paris before fixing the day."

Arthur glanced at his watch; there was just time to catch the steamer for New York, and the next morning found him rolling up Broadway. Scarcely giving himself time to breakfast, he hurried to Rex's studio, where he received a most joyous welcome. Rex was in the gayest, happiest spirits. After the first eager interchange of questions, Arthur asked to see the famous picture, and Rex, approaching an easel proudly threw back the curtain hung over it and gazed expectantly at his friend.

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Arthur. "I congratulate you with all my heart."

The picture was indeed a beautiful one. The landscape, as Rex had said, was painted from a sketch he had taken during their rowing excursion up the Rhine. Lofty frowning cliffs rose in the foreground on either side of the river. On the right, bathed in a flood of moonlight stood the Lorelei, her golden hair floating over her shoulders as she bent over the rocky verge, gazing into the depths below—Eve Tresham's face, but idealized, rendered more beautiful than ever by a tender, loving look in the eyes, that softened their sparkling brightness. Far below, dimly visible in a shadow, a boat drifted downward toward a jagged rock, round which the rippling waves of the river, touched here and there by the moon-rays, broke in foam. The single occupant, a handsome young knight, reckless of his impending doom, stood erect in the frail skiff, his arms outstretched toward the Lorelei above. The face, with its expression of ardent love and longing, instantly recalled to Arthur's memory Rex's look, when glancing over his shoulder at his sudden exclamation, he saw him gazing at Eve's graceful figure. A thrill of pain stung him sharply. What if his vague suspicion were correct, and love had lent the young artist's brush this unwonted skill.

Still pondering on this thought, he began to stammer a few words of congratulation, when Rex suddenly flung his arm over his shoulder exclaiming:

"Ah, Arthur, you can never guess what that picture is to me. After our visit to Hawknest I vowed that it should be an omen of my fate. If successful, I would speak; if not, my hopes should die with me. That's why I resisted all your tempting invitations, and stuck to brush and palette throughout the summer, except for three short days spent at Hawknest. Now that I have proved what I can do, it won't seem quite so presumptuous in Mrs. Tresham's eyes if I venture to ask her for her daughter. Old friend, you have been like a brother to me, won't you wish me luck in my suit? What a bright, happy look the frank face wore! Van Brunt turned sick at heart."

"Tell me," he said in a low, husky tone, "has Eve given you reason to suppose—"

"That I shall have any chance with her?" Rex interrupted. "Yes it makes me seem like a conceited donkey to say so, but she knew the gulf that separates a struggling young artist from a wealthy heiress, and like the true, noble-hearted girl she is, gave me a little help to cross it."

"She is no heiress, Rex!" replied Arthur quickly. "Mrs. Tresham has just enough to keep up appearances, and is most anxious Eve should make a wealthy marriage. The girl has been trained for that object from babyhood."

"But I can show Mrs. Tresham now, that I can give Eve every comfort; if she herself—"

Arthur laid his hands on Rex's shoulders and said gravely: "Dear old fellow, I have known Eve Tresham from her earliest childhood, and I warn you not to trust—"

Rex flushed hotly; a hasty answer was on his lips, but a knock at the studio door interrupted it, and three young men entered. Hardly were the first greeting over, when one of them exclaimed:

"Ah, Van Brunt, what's this rumor that your cousin is to be married to Mr. McMichael to-morrow? Any truth in the story? I only heard it on my way here."

Arthur could have cursed himself for his hesitation, but the die was cast. There was no time for preparation, the news he had tried to break gently to Rex must fall like a thunder-bolt, but the greatest mercy now was to deal the blow as quickly as possible, so without daring to glance at his friend, he answered hastily.