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Some Famous Clocks.

(By Anthony Harland, in 'Hand and Heart.')

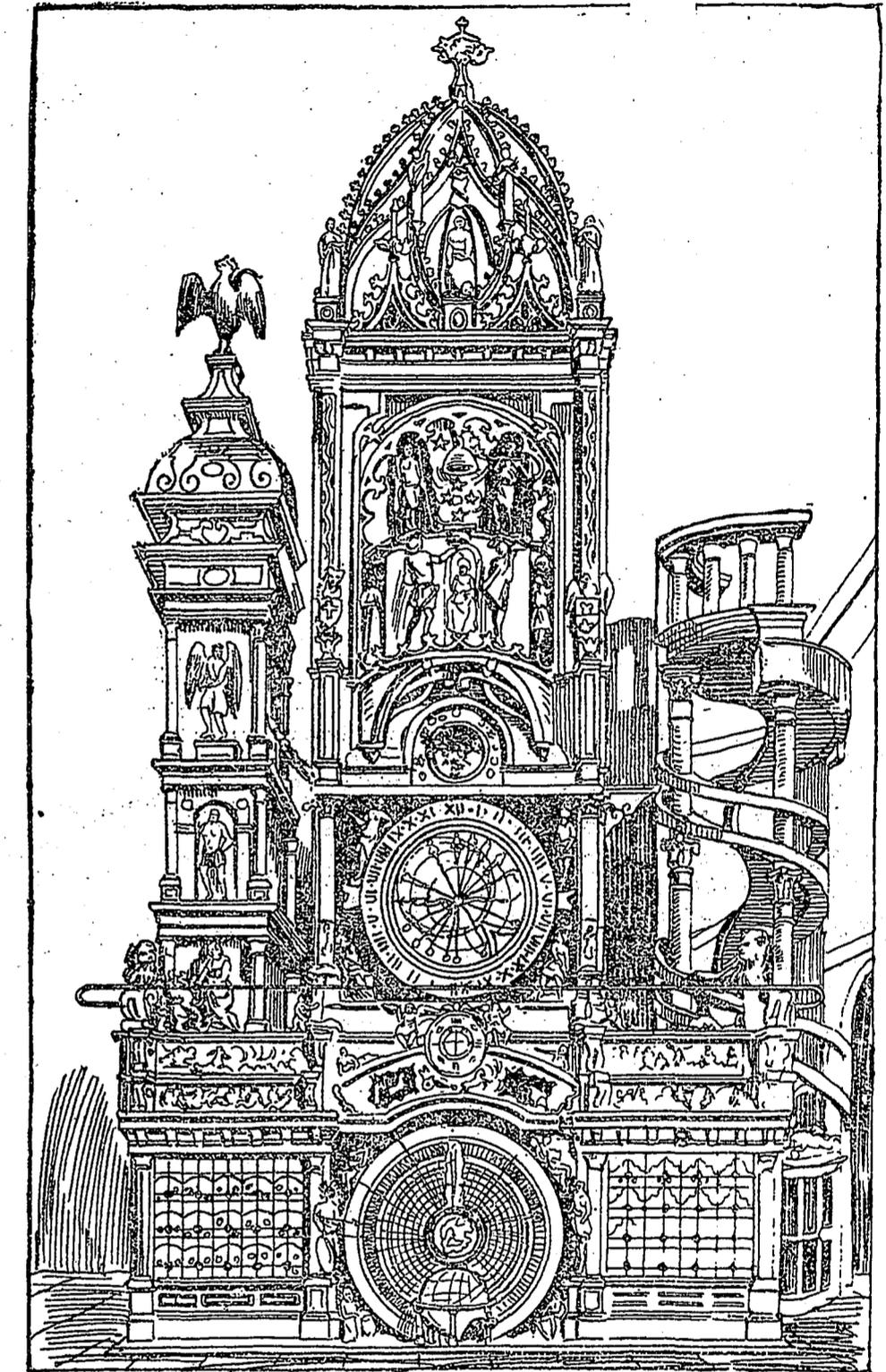
The last great clock which has been added to the horological wonders of the world is a piece of mechanism that vies with the elaborate marvel of Strasburg Cathedral, and puts the processional curiosity of Berne Tower into the shade. This wonderful clock was due to the effort of the renowned Christian Martin of Villingen, in the Black Forest. The Schwarzwald is a wonderful place for native ingenuity, and Christian Martin won the reputation of being the most remarkable of all the deft and patient mechanics of that industrious, thriving, and out-of-the-way district sacred to the legendary lore, pine-clad mountains, tumbling streams, straw hats, musical boxes, and cuckoo clocks.

This latest addition to the curiosities of clock-making is said, in its way, to surpass anything of the kind yet attempted. It is three and a half metres high, two and three-quarters broad, and shows the seconds, minutes, quarter-hours, hours, days, weeks, months, the four seasons, the years, the leap years until the last sound of the year 99,999 of the Christian era. Moreover, it tells on its face the correct time in every latitude of the Northern and Southern Hemisphere, together with the phases of the moon, and a variety of useful information generally confined to the pages of an almanack. It contains a vast number of working figures representing the life of man, the creed of Christendom, and the ancient Pagan and Teutonic mythologies. Sixty separate and individualized statuettes strike the sixty minutes. Death is represented in the form of a skeleton. In another part appear the Twelve Apostles, the Seven Ages of Man, modelled after the description of Shakespeare, the Four Seasons, the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, and so on. During the night time a watchman sallies forth, and blows the hour upon his horn, while at sunrise the chanticleer appears and crows lustily. The cuckoo also calls, but only once a year—in the first day in spring.

Besides the figures there is a whole series of movable pictures in enamel, exhibiting in succession the seven days of Creation and the fourteen stations of the Cross. At a certain hour a youth rings a bell in the spire, and kneels down and folds his hands, as if in prayer; and, above all, the musical works have a sweet and-delicious flute-like tone.

The Strasburg clock, which when perfected excelled every other work of the kind in existence, was contrived by Conrad Darypodius, professor of mathematics in the University of Strasburg; and under his superintendence it was finished in the space of about three years—having been begun in May, 1571, and completed on June 24, 1574.

A curious circumstance is related of its construction. The artisan who contrived and made this clock becoming blind before he had terminated his labor, it became a question of some difficulty and of much importance how the work was to be completed. The public authorities engaged other mechanics; but they, being ignorant of the design upon which the whole was meant to be constructed, were unable to proceed; and the blind artisan, anxious to reap all the honor



THE GREAT CLOCK AT STRASBURG.

himself, not willing that others should have the credit of finishing that which their genius could not have enabled them to begin, refused to communicate any information, but offered to complete the work, blind as he was; and this very wonderful and ingenious piece of mechanism now remains, not only a monument of the genius of the maker, but a curious illustration of the power of habit, as well as of the acuteness communicated to one sense by the deprivation of another.

England has possessed many curious turret clocks, though not at all equal to what may be seen on the Continent. Tourists and travellers in Switzerland who have visited the quaint city of Berne will not fail to remember the performance of the bears on the east side of the clock tower. They will recall how, a little before the hour, the wooden cock—copied, as it appears, by Martin—

gives the signal by clapping its wings and uttering a shrill crow; and how the troop of bears, solemnly and somewhat grotesquely, march round the seated figure of an old man, while Harlequin strikes upon a bell. When the hour sounds, the old man opens his mouth, nods his head, turns his sand-glass, and raises and lets fall his sceptre. Then the bear on the right also bows his head, while a figure on the tower above marks the flight of time by beating on a bell with a hammer, the cock concluding the performance by crowing loudly, as it is said in the Scripture, for the third time. To Londoners of middle age, it seems but yesterday since a crowd gathered on the opposite side of Fleet street to witness the two figures armed with clubs, striking the hours beneath the pediment of St. Dunstan's Church—an exhibition hourly repeated in the neighborhood