

a snatch, another part took it and ran of exultant, until un-awares the same trick was played on it, and finally, all the parts being greatly exercised in mind, began to chase each other promiscuously in and out, up and down, now separating and now rushing in full tilt together, until everything in the organ loses patience, and all the "stops" are drawn, and, in spite of all that the brave organist could do—who flew about and bobbed up and down, feet, hand, head and all—the tune broke up into a real row, and every part was clubbing each other one, until, patience being no longer a virtue, the organist with two or three terrific crashes put an end to the riot, and brought the great organ back to silence.

Then came congratulations. The organist shook hands with the builder, and the builder shook hands with the organist, and both of them shook hands with the committee; and the young men who thought it their duty to know something about music looked wise, and the young ladies looked wise too, and the minister looked silly, and the parishioners generally looked stupid, and all agreed that there never was such an organ—no, never. And the builder assured the committee that he had done a little more than the contract stipulated; for he was very anxious to have a good organ in *that* church! And the wise men of the committee talked significantly of what a treasure they had got. The sexton gave a second look at the furnace, lest the church should take it into its head, now, of all times, to burn up; and he gave the key an extra twist in the lock, lest some thief should run off with the organ.

And now, who shall play the organ? is the question. And in the end, who has not played it? First, perhaps, a lady who teaches music is exalted to the responsibility. Her taste is cultivated, her nerves are fine, her muscles feeble, her courage small, and her fear great. She touches the great organ as if she were a trembling worshipper, fearing to arouse some terrible deity. All the meek stops are used, but none of the terrible ones, and the great instrument is made to walk in velvet slippers every Sabbath, and after each stanza the organ humbly repeats the last strain in the tune. The instrument is quite subdued. It is the modern exemplification of Ariadne riding safely on a tamed leopard. But few women have strength for the mechanical power. It ought not to be so. Women ought to have better health, more muscle, more power, and, one of these days, doubtless, will have.

Next, an amateur player is procured, who was said to have exquisite taste and finished execution. A few pieces for the organ he knew by heart, a pretty way of varying a theme, a sentimental feeling, and reasonable correctness in accompaniment.

Next came an organist, who believed that all this small playing, this pretty sweetness, was a disgrace to the powers of the instrument. He meant to lead forth the long pent-up force and accordingly took for his first theme the Deluge, and the audience had it poured upon them in every conceivable form, wind, rain, floods, thunder, lightning, with all the promiscuous stops, which are put in all large organs to produce a screeching brilliancy, full drawn, to signify universal misery and to produce it. That man gave the church their full money's worth. He flooded the house.

The voices of the choir were like birds chirping in a thunder-storm. He had heard that the singing of the congregation should be borne upon the music of the organ, and, as it were, floated, and he seemed to be aiming, for the most part, to provide a full Atlantic ocean for the slender choir to make its stormy voyages upon.

A fortunate quarrel disposed of him, and the organ went back to the tender performer. But before long a wonderful man was called, whose fame, as he related it, was excessive. He could do anything—play anything. If one style did not suit, just give him a hint, and he would take on another. He could give you opera, ecclesiastical music, stately symphony of Beethoven, the brilliant fripperies of Verdi, the solemn and simple grandeur of Handel, or the last waltz, the most popular song (suitably converted for the purpose)—anything, in short. The church must surely be hard to please if he could not suit them. He opened his organ as a peddler opens his tin boxes, and, displaying all his wares, says, "Now, what do you want? Here is a little of almost everything!"

He took his turn. Then came a young man of a true and deep nature, to whom music was simply a symbol of something higher, a language which in itself is but little, but a glorious thing when laden with the sentiments and thoughts of a great heart. But he was not a "Christian man," and the organ was not to him a "Christian instrument," but simply a grand gothic instrument, to be studied, just as a protestant would study a cathedral, in the mere spirit of architecture, and not at all in sympathy with its religious significances or uses. And before long he went abroad to perfect himself in his musical studies. But not till a most ludicrous event befell him. On a Christmas day a great performance was to be given. The church was full. All were musically expectant. It had been given out that something might be expected. And surely something was and a little more than was expected. For, when every stop was drawn, that the opening might be with a sublime choral effect, the down-pressing of his hands brought forth not only the full expected chord, but also a cat, that by some strange chance had got into the organ. She went up over the top as if gunpowder had helped her. Down she plunged into the choir, took the track around the front bulwark of the gallery, until opposite the pulpit, whence she dashed down one of the supporting columns, made for the broad aisle, where a little dog joined in the affray, and both went down toward the street door at an astonishing pace. Our organist, who, on the first appearance of this element in his piece, snatched back his hands, had forgotten to relax his muscles, and was to be seen following the cat with his eyes, with his head turned, while his astonished hands stood straight out before him, rigid as marble!

But in all these vicissitudes, and in all this long series of players, good playing has been the accident, while the thing meant and attempted has been in the main, a perversion of music, a breaking of the Sabbath-day, and a religious nuisance. The only alleviation in the case was, that the general ignorance of the proper function of church-music saved the Christian congregation from feeling what an outrage they had suffered.—*Visitor*.