

The Whole Song

By WILLIS STEELL.

NO one can know the whole song, wrote Goethe in the poem called "Geheimnisse": "Das ganze Lied es kann doch niemand kennen."

And none may know what or how profusely the flowers would have bloomed for the singer Alice Miriam if death had not so prematurely cut short her career. The silencing of her beautiful, clear note while it was beginning to be heard among the other song birds of the Metropolitan opera cannot be thought of without pain.

No one can know this young girl's

a paper the advertisement of a man in Milwaukee who wanted an 'entertainer' who could sing. He offered \$10 a week and board.

"Without saying a word to my people, I got on the train and went up there. I wore a little calico frock and my hair hung down in two braids.

"The place was a saloon—a kind of place with a garden and a little stage. I saw the man's wife first and she liked my voice, but I didn't see the proprietor himself until night when I went on to 'entertain.'

"The guests applauded me, but at the end of my second number the saloonkeeper called me into his private office, and said he:

"How old are you, little girl?"

my voice grew darker and darker. I lost all my high notes and gained no low ones. I was in despair.

"The fifth summer mother and I just gave up and recklessly went down to Lake Maggiore in Italy to try to forget what I was going through. I thought my voice had completely gone, and the knowledge that I owed all the money to one kind, believing woman, which without being able to sing, I could never hope to repay almost drove me to suicide.

"I kept on practicing, however, a little every day, but it was against the grain.

"One day, after my exercises in the hotel, I came down to the pub-

lic room where a gentleman accosted me:

"Aren't you the young lady who was singing a little while ago? My dear young lady if you pursue that method in a month more you will be voiceless."

"Don't you suppose I know that?" I asked angrily.

"Will you permit me to show you a better way to sing?" he said, adding: "I am not yet a teacher and I ask no fee."

"He gave me a lesson that day, and every day for six weeks. My improvement was marvelous. Note after note came back in my voice almost magically. Before I returned to Paris I was singing again as eas-

ily, as freely, as I used to sing when a child, but this time with art.

"How much I owe that stranger! He is now one of Italy's best known maestros."

These simple but enthralling reminiscences were of incidents that preceded Miss Miriam's debut in Italy, where she made at once a distinct impression. They recalled her first real opportunity at the Metropolitan when that impression was deepened. For the season to come the young soprano had been promised the part of *Musetta* and an important role in the revival of "Rosenskavaler." But the lovely, pure coloratura is stilled and no one now can know the whole song.

Just About a Small Town

AT the Grand Central Terminal, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, a man whose lungs are his fortune announces the readiness of the Southwestern Limited train, calling out: "All aboard for Cleveland, Wellington, New London, Shelby, Crestline, Galion, Columbus, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and St. Louis!" Of those communities New London, Ohio, is perhaps the smallest, yet it is not without historic interest.

The oldest man living at New London is Orlando Parley Post, who came from Casanovia, N. Y. He was born in 1832. In 1844, his father, Isaiah Post, and Hiram Woodruff bought 1,000 hogs in the Buckeye State at 2 cents a pound, paying half in cash and half in broadcloth. They drove the hogs from New London, Ohio, to Albany, N. Y., 530 miles. On the way Post and Woodruff, with their brawling porkers, were overtaken by 500 turkeys, from their own neighborhood, also being driven to Albany. The turkeys were fed daily, and arrived at their destination without the loss of one. When the more musically inclined members of that orchestra of 1,500 artists en route tuned up, the grunting, squealing and gobbling must have formed as remarkable an overture as ever burst forth in the woods.

In 1850, when the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, now a part of the Big Four, was under construction, Orlando Post assisted in the grading, using two yoke of oxen on the plow. Among the famous oxen employed in building the Bee Line, as it was first called, at New London, were Jack and Cub, Star and Bright, and Buck and Berry. The highest price then paid for a yoke of oxen was \$115, but a good pair could be bought for \$65. My hat is off to the ancient oxen that hauled many a pioneer to Ohio; and for his aid in putting this country on its feet let our silver dime bear the figure of the head and horns of the ox. The buffalo glorified on the nickel never did an honest day's work in his life.

Though hale and hearty at the age of ninety, Orlando Post has not always escaped illness. Seventy years ago the prevalence of ague in the vicinity of New London gave rise to the report that babies were born shaking, and Orlando Post caught his share of the chills and fever. After a prolonged contest with the disease, he found permanent relief by swallowing twice daily a teaspoonful of gunpowder in a glass of milk. Children of seven years, troubled with worms, chewed black navy plug tobacco and swallowed the juice as an antidote. "There are so many cures nowadays," said an optimist, "that the man must be very obstinate who dies."

The Cabinetmaker.

Of Dante the people used to say, "There goes the man that has looked into hell." The late Eli Thomas, cabinetmaker, often related experiences of his excursions to the world of spirits, where he walked at will. "Heaven is not reached by a single bound," says the poet; but Eli Thomas thought otherwise. To him the New Jerusalem seemed nearer than Mansfield or Sandusky. Because of his adherence to the Swedenborgian faith, his townsmen generally called him Swedenborg. His wife having passed away, he did not wait to the end of life to follow, but declared that he knew her street and number in the celestial city, where her neighbors were angels, and that he could find his way to her dwelling without aid. When questioned as to why he returned from so delightful a region, Thomas always replied that his work in this world was not yet finished. Prof. Youmans said that the visions of the Swedenborgians were due to

the drinking of coffee. It is told of Thomas that he slept at his cabinet shop in one of the coffins which he made.

The Mayor of New London is A. M. Turner. His father, the late Stephen Turner, brought the family from the State of New York to Ohio more than seventy years ago, oxen hauling the party over corduroy roads from Cleveland to the new home in the woods, nearly fifty miles, between sunrise and sundown. This is fast time for the cloven hoof. Stephen Turner supported his family by helping to clear the forest and by splitting rails at fifty cents a hundred, often bringing wild game from the timber. In his old age he spent some weeks with a daughter at Fremont, Ohio. On his way down town one day he met a courteous stranger, who shook hands with him, asked where he hailed from and manifested such interest in his welfare as they walked together toward the business streets of Fremont that he left upon Mr. Turner's mind a most pleasant impression. The stranger proved to be Gen. Rutherford B. Hayes, who had been Governor of Ohio and President of the United States. Up to that time a Democrat, Mr. Turner for the remainder of his life voted the Republican ticket.

A Noted Lunatic.

The "Immortal J. N.," the most noted lunatic that ever wandered over the United States, was fond of visiting New London. J. N. Free, formerly of Tiffin, Ohio, but later of the world, was born about 1826. At 40 he was tall and erect, with a powerful frame, long hair, piercing eye and the look of a monomaniac. He had been a prosperous business man, of strong intellect, considerable talent and more than ordinary literary attainments. In business in California about 1855 he brooded over extensive losses on sea and land, became demented and began to wander up and down the Union.

When the civil war broke out Free fancied that on him fell the whole pressure of the struggle. He held North and South both right and both wrong—right from their standpoints, but wrong from each other's. This he denominated his theory, and he strove to "lift the veil" that the public might understand it. Meetings were held everywhere.

When no one came to hear him at appointed meetings he applied to the Sheriff to be locked up and martyred, if necessary, for the truth. He never paid for anything. On many railroads he carried passes, but it grieved him sorely to find that he could not conquer the close-fisted general passenger agent of the Pennsylvania. Hotels received nothing for meals furnished him. To the proprietor of the New London hostelry where he had eaten dinner he would say:

"Will you throw off half my bill?"

Upon winning the concession he would remark:

"I can't let you surpass me in generosity so I will throw off the other half."

In 1866 he interviewed Jeff Davis in jail at Fortress Monroe, and about that time he advised President Andrew Johnson by letter as to the state of the country.

Free died in the asylum for the insane at Toledo, Ohio, in June, 1906. His body was buried in the cemetery at McCutchenville, Ohio.

Maple Sirup Days.

With what mingled emotions does a man, after long years of absence from his native village, return and dine at the hotel or the bakery! At New London I inquired: "Where is the best restaurant? Of course they are all good, but show me the pride of the town!" What a curious eating house it proved to be! No Greeks frying potatoes, no such dainty as "ross bif" on the bill of

fare, no crashing of dishes, no tipping of waiters, no stealing of hat or coat! I actually forgot my fountain pen on a desk at the post office for two hours one day, went back and found it where I had left it! Verily, the Golden Age seems to be taking a fresh start; or, with Satan brought to book, is not the millennium setting in?

Forty Years Ago.

Upon coming out of the restaurant I met Charles Hamilton, prosperous farmer, who said, as he extended his hand:

"I've heard about you."

"Your father, James Hamilton, claimed relationship to Henry Ward Beecher," I said. "He looked like pictures of the famous Brooklyn clergyman."

"Yes," returned Hamilton, "my father's mother was one of Henry Ward Beecher's cousins. She was a Beecher. When a little chap Henry Ward Beecher was a bawl baby. His folks were worried about him."

Beecher himself said that as a child he was utterly godless. One day his mother caught him in a raid on the preserves, and promptly shut him up in a dark closet as a punishment. "I went into the closet to repent," he declared, "but unfortunately my mother had left some doughnuts in that closet, and my repentance was postponed."

Charles Hamilton had come to town to attend the community sale, a monthly public auction to which flock all the farmers for miles around. Anything a man may desire to sell may be brought to this venue and disposed of to the highest bidder by the payment of a small fee for the service. On this occasion the live stock and goods displayed were as interesting as an old curiosity shop. A one horse, single seated carriage, which thirty years ago would have cost \$100 or more, sold for \$22, though the president of the savings bank had predicted that it would bring but \$4 or \$5.

In a wagon with end gate removed, so that all could see him, lay a long-eared hound of friendly countenance, whose services the owner no longer required. As the auctioneer cried, "How much am I bid for this coon dog?" the old fellow, calmly surveying the crowd, said as distinctly as an animal has ever uttered words, "Take me or leave me—I should worry," the last expression showing that New York slang trickles into far off rural districts. The dog sold for \$2.

Pigeons and Others.

In the nineteenth century, at certain seasons of the year, the skies of this region were blackened with myriads of wild pigeons in their flight across the country. Fifty years ago it was said that the roar of their coming near Oakland, Md., could be heard two miles away. On the ground they were piled from one to two feet deep.

The red squirrel is still one of the tyrants of the woods in the vicinity of New London. Now and then a fox squirrel may be seen gracefully leaping over the ground or from log to log. But both the gray and the black species, once the delight of the rifleman in search of a savory dinner, are now extinct. Though much larger than their red brother they feared him and fled at his approach. An astonishing exhibition of the red squirrel's ferocity took place at the zoological gardens in Cincinnati in 1881. One of the little fellows was thrust into the cage of a rattlesnake to be murdered and swallowed by the writhing monster. Several vicious lunges on the part of the snake having failed to reach their goal, the nimble squirrel at last shot from his perch to the rattlesnake's neck and tore off his head.

WILLIAM B. THOMAS



Alice Miriam.

whole story, either, although the beginning of it—the first chapter—as she told it herself at a little dinner party last winter, opened most interestingly.

She was one of a family of eleven children born to a father who—can't you guess it?—was a Wesleyan minister. Her real name was Alice Pinch.

"Father never saw anything funny in the name," remarked Alice, with a quiet smile, "but half of the time we children did and the other half we hated it."

"I think Dad was rather proud of the fact that one of Dickens's most lovable characters bore his name.

"He was a splendid father, and while there were times in our roving life—for we rarely stayed more than two years in a place—when we children lacked almost everything, it was due to no fault of his. He preached on Sunday, but every other day he was willing to work at anything he could get to do. He would get a job on a farm, in a mill, mending a road, carpentering—anything!"

"I remember Dad's telling us how a man by whom he had been hired to do a rough, dirty job asked him when it was done what his trade was when he was working at his own job.

"I'm a preacher," said father.

"Like hell you are!" said the man.

The child began to sing before she could talk, and when she had reached the staid age of 8 she could carry the solo part (soprano) in the village church chorus. Everybody praised her singing, but the applause of the villagers didn't turn the child's head. She knew she had to learn to sing, but she didn't know where a teacher was to be found.

"I wasn't 12 when I began to try to sing for money to help the family," said Alice. "Occasionally I earned a dollar or two singing at a funeral and once in a great while a lady of our neighborhood gave what she called a musicale and hired me. I used to sing my head off.

"Then when we moved to a little place not far from Chicago I read in

"I told him, and he shook his head and gave me \$10, with the advice to go 'right home to your ma, as this is no place for a child."

"I took the money and followed the advice, but I was heartbroken, for it seemed to me I had been a failure."

Miss Miriam's elder sister had a voice also, and the pair shortly after this experience were engaged to sing one afternoon and evening for the guests of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Their joint fee was \$25.

The children pleased so well that the director invited them to remain for a week as guests, singing or not, as they pleased.

"One day I had gone into the natatorium," said Alice, "and was rather listlessly watching the bathers when a voice reached me from the water which said:

"Aren't you the little Pinch girl who sang the other day?"

"When I owned to it the speaker asked if she might come to my room to see me after her bath. She came and gave me a letter to a lady in Chicago which she made me promise I would deliver personally on my way home.

"She will hear you sing," said my new admirer, 'and who knows what may happen?'"

"What happened is like a fairy story or an incident in the wildest movie drama. The lady, who was the widow of a manufacturer of elevator machinery—she has married again—heard me sing, and within a week my mother and I were on the ocean going to France to find a teacher who would tell me how to sing.

"For five years this wonderful woman paid all our expenses, all my bills for instruction, and without a word of doubt, without a hint of discouragement. She was my fairy godmother in real earnest."

The singer paused at this point as if she had reached the end of her early history. Urged to tell a little more, she complied:

"What comes next I like to forget. I went from singing teacher to singing teacher and with each one