

HER HITS.
A dear little music is waiting apart—
The mother of children three.
"My Lord," she cries, in the hush of her heart,
"Why should I have a gift from thee?
I have heard the angels sing Thy birth,
I have followed Thy shining star,
And here at the shrine of all the earth,
Lo! I and my children are."
"And all in the glow of the Christmas morn,
My gold to lay at Thy feet,
I am leading my darlings with care unorn,
With bows that are pure and sweet,
O never had grown from the mines such worth
As the treasure to-day I bring
To the beautiful shrine of all the earth,
To the glorious Infant King."
"My children three, with their waving hair,
And the fearless look in their eyes,
They lay Thy name in their vesper prayer,
And at matins when they rise,
Nothing they know of the dole and death
Of souls that with sin have striven,
They kneel at the shrine of all the earth,
"Or such is the Kingdom of Heaven."
"They stand in the shadow of pine and fir,
They listen, and floating through
They catch the answer that a sent to her
Through a rift in the upper blue:
"Since the Christ-child came to the weary
earth
No gifts are to Him so sweet
As the children's hearts, with their joy and
care,
Lovingly brought to His feet."
—Margaret E. Sangster, in Harper's Young People.

MUSIC-MAD.

The Story of a Christmas Eve Wedding.

(Original.)
"Struck one chord of music, like the sound of a bell."
"T was Christmas eve, and the young people of Dayton had just completed trimming their church for the festival days, a day and a night, and were chatting together as they sat on the final touches."
"Oh, dear, how glad I am it is finished," said Kate Blossom; "my fingers are as rough as nutmeg-graters. Isn't it too bad that we couldn't have had the wedding?"
"Hush! and her companion, Alice Baker, in a low voice; "there is my darling. She might hear you."
"Well, she knows we are all her friends. I am sure I am as sorry as I can be for her; but I think that Maurice Dawson is only music-mad, and if he would give up all that nonsense about 'lost chords' and 'music in the air,' he would be as sane as anybody."
"But he is losing his health; it is affected by his mania, so it must be real."
"Nothing but monomania. If some one would burn up all that music, he would give up trying to be a genius, and attend to his business."
"Hark at May; isn't she sweet?" whispered Kate.
She had just finished a wreath of evergreens, and while waiting for a place to hang it, had thrown it over her head, where it rested, giving her some faint idea of the look of one of Guido's saints. The stained glass window at her back, and the introspective look in her dark eyes, added to the illusion. She was one of the favored few whom every body loves, and as the girls regarded her rapid execution they stopped working and chatting, and became suddenly silent. At the same moment some one entered the organ-loft, and touched the organ with a practiced hand. The full, rich, pleading tones rose high and swelled into a grand burst of exquisite music, that maintained its supremacy for one entrancing moment, then quavered and trailed, and wandered off into an intricacy of unmelodious discord.
"Poor fellow," said one of the girls, with a shudder. "It is dreadful to hear him."
May Allen took the wreath from the halo of light in which she stood. Her face was transparent.
"Did you notice how nearly he accomplished the closing strain in that cantata? If he could have held the notes in the repeat, but that is where he fails—only he will succeed yet. I am sure that when he does, he will be well again."
"He ought to go to work!" exclaimed Alice Baker, impatiently. "I have no patience with him."
"Work?" retorted May, with sudden anger, which was rare to her. "Who would harder than he to find and maintain that equilibrium of music that is always escaping and tormenting him? Do not the best judges who have heard him say that his compositions are wonderful? And he would be to music what Poe was to poetry if he could succeed. I wish I could help him."
She wrung her hands and burst into an ecstasy of weeping.
"All the young things crowded about and kissed her, while Alice Baker looked on in pardon for her thoughtless speech. May was too gentle and good to hold anger long, and peace was soon restored. But when the girls had finished their work on the church decorations, she slipped up stairs and stood by the side of the "mad musician." Maurice Dawson. He was nervously fingering some manuscript notes that lay on the rack before him.
"Is it the Christmas music, dear?" she asked, gently, as she came to his side.
He started and laughed merrily.

And when the chorus of endless bliss that the organ once heard when the morning stars sung together for joy."
So he wandered on. Not one word for her whose young life he had blighted, whose loving heart he had well nigh broken, who had comforted and consoled him as best she could, with a few tender words of hope for the future, and tried to lure him away from the tempting presence of his enchantress. But he turned from her with an angry shrug of the shoulders.
"They are calling you below," he said, as the voices of the girls came up to the organ-loft. "I suppose they're afraid to come up, ha! ha! This is Christmas eve, isn't it? What was I to do for me think. O, there was the music! I have it now, and all but those lost chords. And there was a wedding march. Who was to be married?"—with a sudden touch of suspicion in his manner—"you, was it May, to Hiram Wright?"
"Oh, no! no!" cried the poor girl, covering her face with his hands. "In mercy, no!"
"He has no music in his soul, but he is rich, and he has always loved you, May. You know that I never marry you. The exact does not mate with the dove. Yes, May, marry your black-browed lover, and he can blow the organ bellows while I play divine symphonies for the world to hear and applaud. Do they do that, say! Oh, it is a sweet madness! are you crying? I can play tears and sighs! I love them—ha! ha!"
Then she left him and went down-stairs with a heavy, heavy heart. There were the girls and the young men who had called for their sisters and sweethearts. Among them was Hiram Wright, who had neither sister nor sweetheart there.
"He's waiting for you," said Kate Blossom, tucking her little thumb into her pocket. "I wouldn't lose it for any thing," she admitted in May's ear, "because George Simpson sent it to me from Paris, and it has our initials on the band. There's Hiram Wright waiting to see you home."
"Oh, no! no!" said May, "I never marry you, eagerly, 'walk that way with me. I can not hear his company just now."
The church was prettily trimmed with its arches and wreaths of evergreen, and the organ-loft was illuminated by a lamp at the evening service. The girls hurried about getting their wraps and hoods on for the air was cold—and chatting altogether as they did so.
"I hope old Michel will have it good and warm to-night," said one, as she shivered about.
"There's Maurice up-stairs, girls; he mustn't stay," suggested Alice Baker.
"Oh, he goes home when he gets ready, and I don't think he'll stay," May would overhear her. "Poor fellow! they say he's poor as a church mouse since he's given up his business, and gone to studying music."
"May did hear, and smiled to herself at the congruity of the statement. What if he were a church mouse? He would be a good deal poorer. But an unbalanced mind! Who could restore the treasure of intellect that he had so nearly lost!"
On their way home, Hiram Wright mania, and when they were alone, whenever there was an opportunity poured into her ear his insidious words. At last, stung by her silent contempt, he asked her tauntingly what she had done with her "mad lover."
"He must indeed have been a mad man, but he was not prepared for the superb anger of the woman he loved and who now openly scorned him.
"Mad he may be, as you say," she retorted, "but I don't think he's mad. I call Heaven to witness that I would rather die with him than live with you."
The young man persisted as if she had not spoken.
"Why do you refuse the love of a man who can give you everything, for one who can give you nothing? What comparison is there between us?"
"None; or if you insist there is one, that I can give you. You are in love with yourself, and Maurice is in love with me. It is disloyalty to him to even speak his name to you."
"And yet," he sneered, "he leaves you to come home in my company, while he follows the pretty things of a whim, and makes a fool of an idea, a chimera of the brain."
"We will not discuss him further, and after this I do not wish your further acquaintance. Mr. Wright," said May, with dignity.
"Do you mean what you say, May Allen?"
"I do; you have proved any thing but a friend to Maurice Dawson since calamity overtook him. You know that I was his betrothed, and that this very Christmas eve we were to have been married; but for this unhappy visitation. Yet you force your unwelcome attentions upon me, when you would not dare to address me if Maurice were here."
"Have you finished?" inquired the young man, in a husky voice, "because if you have I will go, and—"
"If I can help it never see your face again. And for your mad man, I don't think I shall ever see him again, and he goes to a mad-house, where he is certain to end his career."
Poor May. She walked into her home with dilated eyes, and such an expression of despair on her face, that her mother rose from her chair by the open fire, and demanded in a frightened voice:
"What is it? What has happened, May, to make you look like that?"
"And May sobbed it out on her mother's shoulders, ending with the despairing refrain:
"And this is Christmas eve, when every one ought to be so happy!"
"May," said Mrs. Allen, gently, "we are not put into this life only to secure happiness. We are put into it to suffer for others. Can you not think less of yourself, and of Maurice, and wait patiently until there is a change. Sometimes, my child, the darkest hour is just before the dawn."
"I will try, mother," said May, sadly. "I wish now I had not spoken as I did to Hiram Wright. But he looked so strong and triumphant and seemed to rejoice so at the weakness of poor Maurice that I could not bear it. I only wish I may never see him again."
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