

THE MUTABLE MANY.

BY ROBERT BARR.

The Story of a Labor Union. A Tale of Present Day Problems. With Episodes from Real Life.

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CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

"You see, you are in Bohemia," cried Barney, leaning joyfully on his many guests, "and the delight of Bohemia is unconventional. I danced after the theater last night. I am as ready as ever to begin again. Shall we not finish because we have breakfast and because we dine at 7? Not so. I am ready for a dance any time of the night or day. Now, Mr. Musician, strike up. 'On with the dance, let joy be unconfined,' as the poet says."

Largely could not have played out of time or tune if he tried. The piano as Barney had truly said, was a splendid instrument, and when the gay waltz music filled the large room each couple began to float lightly over the polished floor. The musician played on and on, mechanically yet brilliantly, and in the paces between the dancers more than one of the girls woke to their host of the music's excellence.

"Oh, yes," said Barney, with a jaunty wave of the hand, "that's one of my friends. The man's a genius, you know, and in music what I am myself in painting."

"Barney, you always say it on too thick," said the young man, "but I know you are a painter's head with flattery if he knows you consider him as clever as yourself. I know your sneering ways, but let me tell you in a moment I mean to show you that I am myself and myself are unrecognized by the mob of commonplace people of whom you are so distinguished a representative."

"Perhaps you imagine I'm a genius," said Barney, with the confidence of true genius. "I know your sneering ways, but let me tell you in a moment I mean to show you that I am myself and myself are unrecognized by the mob of commonplace people of whom you are so distinguished a representative."

"Why, Barney," protested the young man, "in proud of it now, I make myself a jest, but I am not a comedian. I am a serious person, and I am in art what the Universal Provider is in commerce."

"Do get him to play something while we are resting," murmured the lady, thus pouring oil on the troubled waters.

Largely sat in a disconsolate figure, paying no attention to the hum of conversation all around him. His thoughts were far away, in the sunlit room where the dead girl lay. Barney hustled up to him, and the musician came to himself with a start on being spoken to.

"Here are several Hungarian mazurkas—wonderful things—you'll like 'em. Just pull off a few for us while we have some tea, will you? They are all complimenting your playing—they say you know a good thing when they hear it. Won't you have some refreshment yourself before you begin?"

Largely shook his head and began playing the Hungarian music. Barney set down again beside the lady, smiling with satisfaction at being able to pose as the patron of so accomplished a musician. The lady leaned her chin on her hand and listened intently.

"How marvelously he does these mazurkas," she whispered softly. "He brings out that diabolical touch which seems to be in much of the Polish and Hungarian music."

"Yes," assented Barney cordially. "He does play like the devil, yet he is an organist in a church. Ah, well, I suppose Beethoven looks after our music as he does our morals."

"Has he composed anything?" "Who? Satan?" "No, you know very well I'm speaking of the organist."

"Composed. Well, rather. He's an unrecognized genius, but I'm going to look after his reputation. I'm going to bring out some of his works, if he'll let me. He's a very modest man, and—"

"Exactly, exactly," I'm always pushing other people forward and neglecting my own interests; still, I'll arrive some of these days and astonish you all, don't you know. You see, our art doesn't produce men of genius like that organist. The 'upper ten never produce a Shakespeare. Didn't Lord Bacon write Shakespeare?"

with a suggestion of regret in it—sorry they're going, don't you know."

Barney hurried back to his guests, shaking his head and smiling to come again, and receiving such thanks for a most agreeable afternoon. Suddenly there knelt forth on the murmur of farewell the solemn tones of a passing bell. The metallic clang of the instrument gave a vibrant thrill to the somber music, which was lacking in the smooth, round tones of the organ. Largely played like a man entranced, his head thrown back, his pale face turned upward, looking as if life had left it. An instantaneous chilliness fell upon the assemblage, as if of an icy wind had swept through the room.

Freighting into silence the animated strains of conversation, some shivered where they stood, and one girl, clasping her cloak at her throat, pined and said, half hysterically: "This is a joke, Mr. Hope. I must say I don't like it."

"Cursed bad taste, if you ask me," muttered one man, baring his fangs, "as much as I like to see a fellow get a new set of cogs, but the cog separated from the wheel was as useless as a bit of old iron."

Largely stole softly in upon his stricken friend, closing the door stealthily after him, with the bearing of a man about to commit a crime and certain of being caught. Braunt gave him no time to utter a word, but under his frowning, shaggy eyebrows.

"There is some money here, if you are to take it," said the organist, timidly, placing a heap of coins on the table.

"No, not now," murmured Barney, apologetically, as if, had he known it, he would not have interfered.

"Hush," he said gently, the glimmer of tears in his eyes, "don't stop him. Listen. That man is inspired. I never heard Chopin played like this before."

"Oh, he's Chopin, is it?" murmured Barney, apologetically, as if, had he known it, he would not have interfered.

"Wouldn't you like to speak to him?" asked Barney.

"The lady stole softly out, Barney following her to the landing at the head of the stairs. Please don't let her see me," she said, giving Barney her hand. "I want you to see her here again, and let me invite the guests."

"Do do it," said Barney, enthusiastically. "That will be awfully jolly."

"No, it won't be jolly, Mr. Hope, but we'll have some enchanting music. Good-by," said Barney, and he turned and went down the stairs, leaving the lady and the organist standing before a man awakened from a dream, apparently not quite knowing where he was.

"You must have something to drink," cried Barney, cordially. "You look (sawed out), and no wonder. I never heard Chopin played like this before. You get all out of a piano that's in it, don't you know. Now, will you have whisky or brandy?"

"Thanked him, but refused either beverage. He had a long walk before him and was anxious to get away, he said. "Walked Barney. 'Nonsense. Why should you be so nervous? I'm going to respectably carry you. I'll see about the walking; I hope I may do my duty toward the handsome lady.'"

"I can get you a plate of cold meat," said the organist, going into the kitchen and pulling out some silver, eating at it stupidly.

"The organist, who had been a student of the 'Federal March,' like the musician told of a passing bell. The metallic clang of the instrument gave a vibrant thrill to the somber music, which was lacking in the smooth, round tones of the organ. Largely played like a man entranced, his head thrown back, his pale face turned upward, looking as if life had left it. An instantaneous chilliness fell upon the assemblage, as if of an icy wind had swept through the room.

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THE MAGIC BOOK

BY J. CARTER BEARD.

Or How the Princess Fooled the Griffin.

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A very long time ago, when London town was but a small village, there lived a famous scholar, whose house had been broken into by a robber band. The band carried away all they thought worth taking and destroyed everything else—that is, all but an old volume bound in rough, red leather, the lids of which were made of parchment to the last, with the first page of parchment to the last, with a pen made from a quill plucked out of the wing of a phoenix and dipped into dragon's blood instead of ink—the robbers did not take it, because it was secured with heavy chains to a stout oak desk built into the stone wall of the apartment, and they did not destroy it, because they studied it was a prayer book. They were very pious men in their peculiar way. As, indeed, are many of their trade even at the present day. It was not a prayer book, however; it was a book of answers. All one had to do was to knock three times upon the cover, repeat the question to be answered, and say, in Latin: "As I open let it be."

Where any answer I shall see. Open the book and there before your eyes you would find what you sought. But the scholar who owned the book had been carried off by the robbers, and as he was a profound secret of the proper manner of consulting it, and never sought its aid when he had reason to suspect any one was within sight or hearing, it really seemed a question of old volume was no longer of much use to anyone.

A KNOWING LAD. The scholar, however, was not the only one who knew how to use it. It so happened he had a lad about the place named Guy of Wessex, who understood that should be the right way to use the book, for his master had been able to get the book for his master kept the keys locked with a padlock and carried the key about with him. You see, the way of it was this, Guy acted as a servant to the old scholar, ran his errands, brought him his cloak and his crutch—handled came when he went abroad or preceded him when he remained at home—using for the purpose one corner of the same furnace in which his master cooked copious and hearty and hearty, with a lot of small smelling substances together in great crucibles, hoping to discover a mixture that would melt into gold. Back of the furnace he had a small and quiet room, with a lot of alligator, Guy had a hiding place where he crept in cold weather to keep from freezing. Often had he laid there trembling when his master called up all sorts of outrageous nightmares and set them tasks to do, or

When he consulted his magic book, and the boy had caught the formula and knew how to perform the trick as well as the old scholar himself. Indeed, the first thing he did after creeping out from his hiding place, where he had taken refuge when the robbers came into his master's laboratory, was to place himself before the book of answers, knock three times upon its cover and repeat the verse necessary to work the charm. For the wisdom of the book was that it interested him most at that particular time.

Book of answers, tell me true. What I desire that I should do. As I open let it be. Where my answer I shall see. It did not trouble him to say this in Latin, for he understood the language very well, having spent the most of his life, before engaging service with his present master, in a monastery where the priests spoke nothing

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earth. As Guy made his appearance the creature was called out. "Will you call a compact, lad, with me. If my bond servant I, will you. Make all my magic thing, they be. All thy commands, will thou obey. Therefor that were to thy. 'Never,' cried Guy, stoutly, 'to this will I agree.' 'Nay, not so hastily. Hear me through,' implored the griffin. 'If you can hit on something you can do and cannot, why, then 'tis true.' 'The compact's done,' said Guy. 'And I'm done, too,' replied the griffin. 'On these terms, then, I will agree,' said Guy. Upon which the griffin called out exultantly: 'No more in the magic book amid those chains that bound me, broken lie. Curses, master, north, or east, or sky. For I can run and swim and fly. 'Tis Greece, or Italy, or Spain, or France, loosing the creature and mounting upon its back.' 'To Greece, where I shall yet be emperor,' cried Guy, stoutly, 'to this will I agree.' 'Nay, not so hastily. Hear me through,' implored the griffin. 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