

THE PALACE OF DOOM

STRANGE LEGEND OF A MYSTERIOUS STATUE IN ROME.

It pointed the way to a scene of silent and dazzling splendor—the fate of the man who solved the enigma of the Finger Message.

There stood in Rome many ages ago a beautiful marble statue the mystery of which attracted the attention of all the wise men from far and near. Nobody could remember when it had been erected, and nobody knew what it meant.

It was the figure of a woman, tall, strong and supple. She stood erect, with her right arm outstretched, her mantle falling in graceful folds about her figure, on her face a look, half smile, half frown, luring, yet appealing, but always holding the observer by a strange feeling that it roused of mystery, glory and horror.

But even all that, written so clearly in the mystic signs that art uses, might have been overlooked by the people had it not been for a more material puzzle presented by the statue. On the third finger of the outstretched hand was written in unfading letters, "Strike here." And therein lay the mystery.

Years came and went, and wise men puzzled their brains to find the secret. Seers from faroff lands came to Rome, attracted by the statue, and still it stood, mute, cold, inexplicable.

One day a young man stood before it. He had grown up with the idea of solving the mystery, and each day since he was a little child he had come for a few moments and stood silently gazing at the strange countenance.

He had learned to love the face, the wise lips that looked as if they might part and tell the secret that ages had yearned to know, but through these ages only he had been sincere in his search. Faithful through all disappointments he had gained strength and wisdom, and now as he stood before the statue the sun, halfway up the eastern sky, shone full upon the image.

A strange thrill passed through the man, and, looking in the direction indicated by the pointing finger, he saw, some yards away, the shadow of the outstretched hand on the ground. He gave a low cry, and, after noting the spot well, he departed.

That night at midnight he went to the place and began to dig in the ground where the shadow of the hand had fallen. A long time he worked, never ceasing his digging, when suddenly his spade struck something hard.

Then his zeal increased, and, clearing a space, he saw beneath him a trapdoor, with a great stone ring. Grasping the ring he pulled open the door and started back, dazzled, for a flood of light burst upon him from out of the depths.

Quickly recovering, the young man looked again and beheld a wide marble staircase descending from the trapdoor. Throwing down his spade he passed through the door, down the steps and found himself in a vast hall. The floor of this room was of marble, pure white, while the walls and ceiling were of the same material in many colors. The huge pillars upholding the vast dome shone like alabaster. Rare paintings hung upon the walls, and rich rugs lay strewn upon the floor.

In the center of the room a fountain stood. The water in its basin was as pure as crystal, but not a ripple stirred its surface, and no pleasant lapping charmed the ear as it does when water falls from on high, for, though the fountain was apparently perfect, no water rose from it to fall again.

On seats running around this silent fountain were many men in rich brocades and costly fur robes. Lifelike they looked, but to the touch they were as marble. It was as if in the midst of life death had come and petrified these beings in mockery.

Around on tables and benches were scattered piles of gold and precious gems. Delicate enameled vases and swords inlaid with gems added their wealth to the place.

But rarest of all the gems was a great carbuncle, which stood in a corner of the room and from which came the sole light by which the place was relieved from darkness. In the corner opposite to this stone stood an archer, his bow bent, his arrow on the string, aimed at the carbuncle. On his bow, shining with reflected light, were the words:

"I am that I am. My shaft is inevitable. Yon glittering jewel cannot escape its stroke."

As he looked on all this in silent wonder the young Roman heard a voice utter one word—"Beware!"

Then he passed into the next room and found it fitted up as magnificently as the one he had just left. All manner of couches were about this room, and reclining on them were wonderfully beautiful women. But their lips were sealed in this place of silence.

From there he passed on, finding many more wonders—rooms filled with treasures of art, stables filled with fine horses, granaries filled with forage. Everything that could make a palace complete was there.

The young Roman returned to the hall.

"I have here seen," he said, "what no man will believe. I know that of this wealth I should take nothing, but to prove to them that I speak truth can be no harm."

Then he took in his arms a jeweled sword and some rare vases, but suddenly all was dark.

The charm was broken. The arrow had left the bow and shattered the carbuncle into a thousand pieces. Pitch darkness overspread the place.

Then the young man remembered the warning, but too late. And there he probably adds one more to the silent watchers in the magic chamber.

Has this story a moral? Let those answer who have eyes to see.

Writers of Songs

Twenty Thousand Compositions Copyrighted Per Year and but Twenty Genuine Hits Made. National Fads in the Musical World.



HENRIETTE B. BLANKE.

CONSIDERING the fact that nearly 20,000 musical compositions are copyrighted each year at the office of the librarian in Washington and at the same time about twenty of these become genuine hits, it is only reasonable that the music publisher feels as though he has drawn a prize in the lottery when a real hit is secured. There is some doubt as to the biggest selling hit on record, as conditions are constantly changing, and at the present time a song or instrumental number to be a hit must sell in the neighborhood of 300,000 copies, while a few years ago if a publication sold 100,000 copies it was acknowledged a hit. This is owing to strong competition and largely to the reduction in the price of sheet music. When sheet music sold at 50 cents a copy the publisher was perfectly satisfied if the sale reached 100,000 copies and was willing to pay the composer 5 and 6 cents royalty on each copy. Today the composer receives 2 and 3 cents per copy, and sheet music retails for 8 and 23 cents a copy, which clearly explains why a song must sell many thousand copies to mean great profits to publisher and composer. Then, again, in the days of fifty cent sheet music the public would accept a song and cling to it for months or possibly years, but today a song or instrumental number may become a hit and be shelved in less than three months. This applies principally to popular songs, such as "Everybody Works but Father" and "Tammany," which sold faster than the printer



J. BODEWALT LAMPE.

could supply copies for a short time and were forgotten just as quickly. "After the Ball" probably netted more actual profit than any song published during the last twenty years, for the whole world was humming the refrain within a few months after it was issued.

In the past few years many hits have been recorded, such as "On the Banks of the Wabash," "The Blue and the Gray," "In the Good Old Summer Time," "She Was Bred in Old Kentucky," "Navajo," "Bedelia," "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" and just now a ballad, "When the Mocking Birds Are Singing in the Wildwood," by Henriette B. Blanke, who, by the way, is one of the two women song writers in the United States today who enjoy the distinction of having written a 1906 song hit, the second woman being Miss Klare Kummer, composer of "Dearie." Instrumental numbers have proved an important factor in music publishing, the greatest successes probably being the marches by John Philip Sousa, which were suddenly dropped by the public after the Spanish-American war, and characteristic marches became popular, such as "Georgia Camp Meeting," "Smoky Mokes" and "Rastus on Parade." These negro compositions in turn gave way to the Indian intermezzos, such as "Hiawatha," "Laughing Water," "Navajo," "Big Indian Chief" and a score of others, which, according to many, savor very much of the genuine old ragtime. The reign of Indian songs and Indian intermezzos was interrupted by the sudden popularity of Irish songs and Irish intermezzos, such as "A Bit o' Blarney," "A Sprig of Shillalah," etc., and then came the Mexican songs and the Mexican serenades, which have been more or less popular the past six months, until just recently the public decided that the Germans should have a chance, and as if by magic a new march entitled "Happy Heine," by J. Bodewalt Lampe, which is decidedly German, caught the popular fancy.

Music publishers, realizing this abrupt change in public taste, are now issuing German marches and German songs, expecting the German craze to last until some other nation, possibly Sweden, asserts its rights and establishes a new swing in melody that will become contagious. There is little or no jealousy shown when a melody becomes a craze, as the sons of Erin enjoy the melody of "Happy Heine" and dance with as much vim as they did to the strains of "A Bit o' Blarney."

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THE BLUEFISH BRIGADE.

What Happens When the Blues Make a Charge Upon Menhaden.

"When menhaden or herring are driven upon the beach by bluefish, as they often are, so that they can be carried off by the cart load," said a fisherman, "there is very seldom found among them one of their pursuers, and if one is found it is likely to be a fish that is diseased or that has been hurt in some way. The bluefish follows to the very verge of the water, but there it stops, and it is so powerful and alert a swimmer that, close as it is, it still easily keeps clear of the land. The menhaden or herring are no mean swimmers. They could come as close and keep off the shore as easily as the bluefish do, but not when the bluefish are after them. Then they are like men pursued to the edge of a precipice. It is almost certain death to jump, but they must do that or turn and take the chances of breaking through the pursuing line.

"When the bluefish—there may be 3,000 or 4,000 of them together—sight a school of menhaden, they go for it like a brigade of heavy cavalry, cutting and slashing, snapping and biting right and left. The menhaden are simply overborne by superior weight, and there is nothing for them to do but flee. If they are driven toward the shore, the land is to them what the precipice would be to the man. They must take it or they must turn and try to fight their way through. Many do turn and try to swim under or over or around the savage bluefish, and some escape in this way, and some are snapped up, and some are maimed and then cast ashore, and many of them, crowding together, are so closely pressed that they are practically forced ashore.

"Sometimes fish that are not cast up very far flop down into the water again. A high wave may set some free. A fish thus liberated may find its fins so damaged that it can't swim, and it is cast up again. Weakened by its rough experience, it may fall a prey to some of the bluefish yet lingering offshore. It may escape."—New York News.

SERIES OF SHIPWRECKS.

The Most Singular Chain of Marine Accidents on Record.

The most singular series of shipwrecks on record began with the loss of the English merchantman Mermaid, which was driven on the rocks of Torres strait in October, 1823. The officers and crew clung to the shattered vessel, which was held fast upon a sunken ledge, until, a few minutes before the doomed ship went to pieces, a passing frigate picked them up.

The Swiftsure, as the latter craft was called, resumed her northward course, to be foundered in a terrific gale three days later.

Her combined crews were saved by the warship Governor Ready, on voyage to India, May 18, 1830. The last named, overtaken by a storm, was stranded on a barren coast, her three crews to a man succeeding in reaching the shore.

After staying a week on the inhospitable island they were taken off by the revenue cutter Comet, which a few days later sprang a leak and sank in spite of all efforts to save her.

Fortunately a rescue ship was again on hand, the four crews being saved by the Jupiter.

Even then, however, the chain of disasters was not broken, for the Jupiter just as she was entering the harbor of Port Raffle turned turtle and went down with scarcely a moment's warning. Her crews barely escaped with their lives, to be picked up by boat sent to their aid.

Thus the crew of the Mermaid was wrecked five times in one voyage, that of the Swiftsure four times, and the Governor Ready three times and the Comet twice.

The rescues had been purely accidental in every case, none of the ships having been sailing as a consort or even to the same port.

Though the weather had been tempestuous and the escapes barely made, not a life had been lost.

Safe.

In a mediaeval German tale it says that the parish council of a small village met one evening to discuss certain improvements in the water supply. In this debate the town's one watchman entered the room quietly, placed in a corner his lantern and spear and sat down to listen to the argument. Suddenly a councilman turned to him fiercely.

"Fritz," he cried, "what are you doing here? Who is to watch that nothing is stolen in the village?"

Fritz, with an easy smile, answered: "Who is there to steal anything? We are all here?"

An Odd House.

One of the best known houses in Northamptonshire, England, was designed to represent the days, weeks and quarters of the year. It has four wings, facing the four quarters of the heavens, to represent the four quarters of the year; 365 windows, one for each day; fifty-two chimneys, one for each week, and seven entrances, to represent the seven days of the week.

Pretension.

The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone blind custom, what overgrown error you behold, is there only by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.—Emerson.

In England, under the Tudors, the man who gave to a beggar was fined and the recipient of the gift was punished.

Strangers to Fear

King Victor Emmanuel and Queen Helena of Italy, Who Braved the Perils of Vesuvius—The King and the Tourists. A Polite Monarch.



KING VICTOR EMMANUEL.

IN and about Naples during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius the king and queen of Italy have been prominent and picturesque figures. The peril into which the king has gone in his anxiety to afford all possible relief and safety to sufferers from the seismic disturbances has placed him in a most favorable light and enhanced his popularity as a monarch. When Pliny the elder saw the smoke over Vesuvius in 79 A. D. he set sail for the cities at the foot of the mountain in some of the vessels of the fleet he commanded with the view to rendering assistance. When King Victor Emmanuel learned of the desperate straits of the people living in the vicinity of Vesuvius he took a train from Rome to Naples and thence set forth in the direction of the volcano in that typical twentieth century vehicle, the automobile. While speeding his machine over the ash strewn country he was struck by a heavy shower of cinders and almost lost in a whirl of ashes, but he did not suffer the fate of Pliny and came back alive, though the fiery contents of Vesuvius had been spread so thickly in front of his motor car that he had to abandon it and walk.

Danger, like love, levels all ranks, but this is not the first time the ruler of Italy has shown himself to be democratic. His tendencies in this direction are due in part to his wife, Queen Helena, who was a princess of Montenegro and was brought up "without any nonsense." When she became queen she was shocked at the amount of waste and extravagance in the palace and showed her attendants that, without being less dignified, it was



TYPICAL SCENE IN NAPLES: "FIVE LEMONS FOR A CENT."

possible to live much more economically. The young royal couple are fond of living in a "palazzina" of modest dimensions and simple decorations, and it was here that the king once received the Premier Zanardelli. The interview was in the queen's drawing room, and the statesman, struck by its plainness, exclaimed, "How simple everything is, your majesty—no show, no luxury."

"Yes," replied the king, "but what would you say if you saw my apartments?"

Since the eruption of Vesuvius drove thousands of people from their homes Queen Helena has been at the king's side aiding and suggesting in the task of affording relief. The dispatches have told how the people have kissed the king's hand and the queen's gown, exclaiming, "God sent you to us!" The more superstitious of the peasants have unbounded faith in the king's powers, and the story is told of a woman who cried, "If thou art our king order the volcano to stop."

King Victor Emmanuel III. was born in 1869 and married the Princess Helena of Montenegro in 1896. They have three children, the heir apparent, Humbert, prince of Piedmont, born in 1904, and two daughters, Yolanda and Mafalda. The king and queen are devoted to motoring and have had many adventures on such trips. He is but five feet three inches in height and the queen is tall. One day passing through a small village a breakdown occurred and a crowd was attracted to the spot. In the crowd were two English motorists. Secure, as they thought, in speaking in a strange tongue, they carried on the following conversation:

"Pretty motor car." "Yes, and the lady is pretty too." "More than can be said of the man. Did you ever see such a little man in such a big car?"

"I am out of brandy. I wonder if he can supply me. Shall I ask? Perhaps he speaks French."

"I shall be most happy to oblige you," said the king in perfect English. Then he added:

"Can I be of any further use to you? My kingdom is at your disposal, and it is not so small as its monarch."

"The deuce!" exclaimed one, while the other merely gasped, "The king."

PIANO EXPERIMENTS.

Playing by Sweeping the Strings With a Feather.

Open wide your piano so that the wires are exposed. Over the wires place sheets of music, and when you strike a tone you will find that it has a rattling sound. If now you play a tune in the same manner, with the sheets of music still lying on the strings, it will sound as if the instrument were a banjo. Anyhow, it is a good imitation.

Now remove the music sheets and press down gently, but firmly, the keys belonging to any cord. Take the simple cord C, E, G, for example. The keys must be pressed down without sounding them and held down while some one gently brushes the strings with a feather or a straw. The effect will be as if the cord were played far away and is heard by you as very soft tones.

Change the cord, always pressing down the keys without sounding them, while the feather still sweeps the strings lightly. In this way you may modulate or play a slow piece, and the effect will be very beautiful, indeed, as if heard from a great distance.

The reason of this is that ordinarily a damper rests against each string, but when the corresponding key is struck or pressed down the damper is raised. In sweeping the strings with the feather, lightly, only the strings that are undamped sound, the others being held mute by the dampers, but if the touch of the feather is too heavy even the other strings may sound, so your care must be in making a light and delicate touch.

Now press down a key gently and hold it. Strike very hard the octave above this key, but do not hold it after striking the tone. When the wire of the tone struck has been sufficiently damped, so that it does not sound so loud, the pressed down key will be heard to "sing" clearly, even though it was not struck. This is because every note struck is composed of several notes, being in reality a cord in itself, and each note contained in that cord causes the corresponding note in the keyboard to vibrate, or "sing," in sympathy if held down in like manner.

The other notes that will sound under these conditions will always be the fifth above the octave, the second octave and the third and fifth above that, and these tones that sound are called "overtones."

For illustration, if C in the lower part of the piano be struck, any or all of their keys are first pressed and held down.—Philadelphia Press.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

When you are all done but finishing, you are just half done.

If you have time to boast about being worked to death, you have not much to do.

Some people are so unfortunate that their troubles make people laugh instead of cry.

A man who underestimates himself may be tiresome, but he is not a circumstance to the man who brags.

People may disdain a compliment, but they feel a tender little spot in them where it hit and refused to be dislodged.

It is a theory growing in conviction that the man who says a mean thing about another isn't as mean as the man who carries it.

The man who travels over the path behind you wisely looks at your footprints and sees where you could have avoided many a pitfall.—Atchison Globe.

Tiny Trees.

The midget of the whole tree family is the Greenland birch. It is a perfect tree in every sense of that term and lives its allotted number of years from 75 to 130 just as other species of the great birch family do, although its height under the most favorable conditions seldom exceeds ten inches. Whole bluffs of the east and southeast coast of Greenland are covered with "thickets" of this diminutive species of woody plant, and in many places where the soil is uncommonly poor and frozen from eight to ten months a year a "forest" of these trees will flourish for half a century without growing to a height exceeding four inches.

Strange Dances.

Queensland's government aboriginal settlement on Frazer's island holds a weekly dance for the blacks. Among the bundles of old clothes sent to the settlement there are often ball gowns, so the girls sport décolleté dresses. Neither sex wears boots. The sexes have to dance separately.—Sydney Bulletin.

Shrewd Guess.

Senior Partner—We must be careful not to give Billings any more credit. He's evidently losing money. Junior Partner—How do you know? Senior Partner—I heard his remark today that "life is full of ups and downs." No man ever admits that until he begins to strike the down.—Philadelphia Press.

Rejected.

"I have called," said the confident young man, with a manuscript sticking out of his pocket, "to see whether there is a vacancy in this office."

"No," replied the melancholy editor as he looked round the place; "I'm sorry to say there is none. Even the waste paper basket is full."

A Change.

"Well, well! There goes Miss Strong. When I saw her last she was posing as a bachelor girl. That's her hobby."

"All that's changed now. She dropped her hobby for a hubby."—Exchange.

NOTICE OF SCHOOL BOND ELECTION.

Notice is hereby given to the qualified electors of "The School District of the City of McCook (also known as School District Number Seventeen.) in Red Willow county, in the State of Nebraska," that upon the written request of at least one-third of the qualified voters of said school district, Education of said School District requesting and consenting thereto, an election will be held at the usual places of voting in said School District, to-wit: The basement of the Commercial hotel in the first ward in the City of McCook, and in the hose house in the second ward in said City of McCook, on the twelfth day of June, A. D. 1906, between the hours of nine o'clock a. m. and seven o'clock p. m., on said day for the purpose of voting on the following proposition, which is hereby submitted to the qualified electors of said School District:

"Shall the Board of Education of 'The School District of the City of McCook, in Red Willow county, in the State of Nebraska,' issue the bonds of said School District in the sum of thirty-six thousand dollars, for the purpose of building and furnishing a school house for said School District. Said bonds to be of the denomination of five hundred dollars each; dated on the first day of July, A. D. 1906, and interest to be payable at the rate of not over four and one-half per cent per annum, interest payable semi-annually on the first day of January and July of each year until paid, interest on said coupons shall be borne by the Fiscal Agency of the State of Nebraska in the city of New York. Said bonds to be offered in the open market and sold to the highest bidder for not less than par value of each dollar. Coupons shall be attached to each of said bonds for each semi-annual installment of interest, which said coupons shall be signed by the President and secretary of said board. All of said bonds shall mature on the first day of July, A. D. 1928, and interest begin to run on the first day of July, A. D. 1906. Provided that should said bonds, or any part of them, be sold subsequent to their date, the amount of interest then due shall be endorsed as a credit upon the coupons first due on said bonds. Said bonds to be numbered consecutively from one to seventy-two and issued in three series, series one shall consist of ten bonds numbered one to ten inclusive, and may be redeemed by said School District at any time after the first day of July, A. D. 1915. Series two shall consist of the said bonds numbered twenty-five to forty-eight inclusive, and may be redeemed by said School District at any time after the first day of July, A. D. 1921. Series three shall consist of the said bonds numbered forty-nine to seventy-two inclusive, and may be redeemed by said School District at any time after the first day of July, A. D. 1927. Said bonds shall be signed by the President and counter-signed by the Secretary of said board. 'Said clause be in lieu of coupons upon all the taxable property in said School District, a tax, in addition to all other taxes, sufficient to pay the interest on said bonds as it accrues and to create a sinking fund to pay said bonds when they may become due.'"

Said proposition, as submitted on the ballots, to-wit:

FOR the Proposition to Issue School District Bonds and Tax.....
AGAINST the Proposition to Issue School District Bonds and Tax.....

Submitted and authorized by the Board of Education of "The School District of the City of McCook (also known as School District Number Seventeen.) in Red Willow county, in the State of Nebraska," this first day of May, A. D. 1906.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF "THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF MCCOOK, IN RED WILLOW COUNTY, IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA,"

Attest: C. W. Barnes, By E. H. Doan, Secretary, President.

In testimony whereof, by order of the Mayor and Council of the City of McCook, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal, in the City of McCook, in Red Willow County, in the State of Nebraska, this fourteenth day of May, A. D. 1906.

W. A. MIDDLETON, Clerk of the City of McCook.

NOTICE FOR BIDS.
Sealed bids will be received at the office of the City Clerk, at the City Hall, McCook, Nebraska, until 8 o'clock p. m., May 25th, 1906, and opened immediately thereafter for contract to construct sidewalks and curbs, such as the City of McCook may cause to be built during the present municipal year with the following material:

Flag stone per square foot.
Cement per square foot.
Vitrified brick per square foot.
Tiling slabs per square foot.

Curbing of the above materials 24 inches, 18 inches, 12 inches thick, per lined foot.

Including labor and material to be furnished by the bidder and subject to the provisions of Ordinance No. 125.

The council reserves the right to reject any and all bids.—5-18-25.

W. A. MIDDLETON, City Clerk.

BEGGS' BLOOD PURIFIER
CURES catarrh of the stomach.

SMOKING UP DIMES
is many a young fellow, when that same dime might be a corn that would grow into the sturdy oak of

A BANK ACCOUNT
into whose branches he might some day climb to spy out chances in real estate and other things.

Young men, quit smoking up your dimes, begin TO DAY and bring your first few dimes to the

First National Bank
McCook, Neb.

Ayer's

This falling of your hair! Stop it, or you will soon be bald. Give your hair some Ayer's Hair Vigor. The falling will stop, the hair will

Hair Vigor
grow, and the scalp will be clean and healthy. Why be satisfied with poor hair when you can make it rich?

"My hair nearly all came out. I then tried Ayer's Hair Vigor and only one bottle stopped the falling. New hair came in real thick and just a little curly."—MRS. L. M. SMITH, Saratoga, N. Y.

100¢ a bottle. I. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.

Thick Hair